

INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS

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BIOLOGICAL SURVEY BEGINS FIRST NATION-WIDE FUR FARM INVENTORY

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The U. S. Biological Survey has begun a nation-wide inquiry to assemble basic statistics on fur farms of the country.

First of its kind and extent in the United States, the project has been started by sending questionnaires to individual fur farmers on Bureau mailing lists. Fur trade associations and other agencies are cooperating by making other lists available. The Biological Survey is also requesting State directors of extension work and county agricultural agents to furnish the Bureau names of fur farmers in the various counties.

Individual fur farmers who do not receive questionnaires are requested to write to the Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., for a copy.

Data obtained through the questionnaires will be assembled and tabulated with the help of W. P. A. workers on a project established in the Biological Survey's Section of Fur Resources. The information compiled will be made available, but individual returns will be confidential.

"This inventory," says Bureau Chief Ira N. Gabrielson, "will provide basic information that has long been needed by the fur industry and individual fur farmers, as well as by governmental and research agencies. No one now knows even the number of fur farms in this country. Such statistics are available for Canada, Norway, and some other countries, but only estimates have been made for

the United States. These vary from 15,000 to 30,000 for the number of fur farms and from \$20,000,000 to \$50,000,000 for the investments involved, and such widely varying estimates have little usefulness. Few statistical facts are thus available to furnish even a partial picture of the fur farming industry at a given time or, what is more important, to show the tendencies within the industry. With the importance of fur farming not generally appreciated and because of the lack of statistical background, support is frequently uncertain for financial and government support or for needed research programs".

Data requested on the questionnaires include market value of fur farms and animals, number of employees and wages paid during 1937, acres of muskrat marshes maintained, and numbers of muskrats taken on the marshes. Detailed statistics are also requested on silver foxes, cross foxes, red foxes, minks, martens, fishers, raccoons, chinchillas, and beavers. These include the highest price and the average price received for live animals and for pelts, the number of animals on January 1 and December 31, and the number of animals born, purchased, sold, died, and killed during the year. The number of pelts sold is also requested.

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