



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release FRIDAY, JUNE 20, 1941.

FUR INDUSTRY MAY HEAD INTO TAILSPIN,
ASHBROOK WARNS, IF SALES PRICES RISE.

Danger that the American fur industry may head into a spiral with an equally rapid descent towards the end of the year is a possibility unless a reasonable price level is maintained by American furriers, Frank G. Ashbrook, fur expert of the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, warned members of the Fur Farmers' International Summer School in Milwaukee today (June 20).

The Fur Farmers' Summer School is holding a 3-day session, which ends today, in conjunction with the 18th annual meeting of the American National Fox and Fur Breeders' Association, a mutual, non-profit cooperative organization of American fur farmers.

Though there probably will be an increased consumer demand for fur coats and other fur pieces this year, Ashbrook cautioned the industry to maintain a reasonable price level. "There will also be a large supply of furs," he declared, "and if prices are unreasonable the public may stop buying."

"This coming season furs produced on farms in the United States will be in greater competition with those from foreign countries than ever before," he added.

The American market is well-stocked with the products of fur farms, Ashbrook said. When the war began in Europe, the world production of silver fox pelts was well over 1,000,000, and mink skins were not far behind. Most of these pelts will be sold in the United States this season.

Pelts from Canada, Sweden, Finland, and other countries are being shipped into the United States, he said. "Our country is offering the retail distributors the furs of the world. Never has the fur trade had such a variety of furs."

With few exceptions, all furs produced in the world today will have to find a market in the United States, the Federal fur expert said. "Our farmers can expect that competition may curtail a rise in price on farm-raised furs."

Ashbrook predicted that silver fox will remain a highly profitable article for retail promotion this year because it is still a highly popular fur.

Silver fox is plentiful, he said, and this year's crop of pelts produced in the United States and Canada surpasses all others in beauty.

Production of mink fur will increase considerably this year, Ashbrook believes. "There may even be an increase in the production of foxes," he added. "Not necessarily silver foxes, but the newer color types."

Tracing the history of the fur farming industry, Ashbrook said that since World War I no branch of animal production has attracted wider attention or developed more rapidly than fur farming. The constantly increasing demand for furs, the decreasing supply of fur animals in the wild, and the style developments originating in the United States are mainly responsible for the rise of the fur farming industry, he said.

- C -