



# U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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## CHINCHILLA RABBITS MUST BE BRED FOR BOTH FOOD AND FUR TO BE MOST PROFITABLE

While the Chinchilla rabbit is a valuable addition to the domestic breeds of rabbits and offers unusual possibilities to persons who will develop its good qualities, it is important that breeders pay special attention to commercial rather than fancy qualities, according to the Biological Survey of the United States Department of Agriculture. The future of the breed and its ultimate popularity depend solely on its economic value as a food and fur producer.

Chinchillas are a comparatively new breed, especially in the United States, and many inquiries are received by the department for an accurate description of the breed and for information concerning the food and fur value. Leaflet 22-L "Chinchilla Rabbits for Food and Fur," prepared by D. Monroe Green, of the Biological Survey, has just been published by the department to furnish the information so often requested.

The color of the pelt of the Chinchilla rabbit is especially attractive and this is responsible in large measure for the widespread popularity of the breed. The markings are unique and difficult to imitate successfully, so that they make the fur attractive for garments and trimmings and for other uses of the fur trade.

"The Chinchilla, perhaps more than any other breed of rabbit," according to Mr. Green, "has been widely heralded as a 'fur rabbit' and many exaggerated and misleading statements have been made regarding the value of its

fur and the large profits to be derived from the sale of the pelts. This has had a tendency to create a false impression and has led many to invest large sums in breeding stock, with the expectation of a rich reward, only to learn from hard experience that the claims made were exaggerated.

"As with all domestic rabbits, Chinchillas must be bred for both food and fur to combine the returns from the two commodities and thus derive the maximum profit on the labor and capital invested."

The principal need of the Chinchilla breed, says Mr. Green, is the development of larger individuals. Greater size of frame must be developed if the required weight of flesh is to be added, and the size and color of the pelt must be improved if its value as fur is to be increased. Progressive breeders realize this, he says, and are making earnest efforts to develop larger animals. Already some bucks and does of fine color have been produced weighing 9 or 10 pounds, illustrating what can be done by careful breeding and feeding.

A copy of the leaflet may be obtained from the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

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