

# Agricultural Brevities

## Pelts

New uses for silver fox furs have resulted in a pelt crop this year, twenty-eight times larger than in 1923. In less than fifteen years the annual crop has increased from 6,000 pelts to more than 170,000. The pelting season starts in November and runs through the winter months. Last season's pelts brought fox farmers \$7,114,500.

## Foreign

Cotton acreage in Argentina this season is officially estimated at 909,000 acres compared with 707,000 acres in 1934-35. Planting was completed early in December. Harvesting usually begins late in May. The Argentine government is encouraging cotton cultivation. The Argentine crop last season was 295,400 bales of 478 pounds each.

The 1936 series of Colonial wool sales opened in London with prices for practically all descriptions registering advances over the closing rates of the previous series on December 6, 1935.

The hog census in Germany just completed reveals a substantial increase in the number of bred sows over a year ago. This indicates heavier market supplies of hogs during the second half of 1936.

Drastic restrictions on imports will limit German purchases of American apples and pears during the 1935-36 season (November 1 to May 31). Whatever fruit is allowed to enter Germany this year, will probably sell at very high prices because of the scarcity of good apples and pears.

## Soybeans

Because increases in soybean acreage in the future will be largely for commercial uses, the job of developing new varieties becomes more complex than in the past when plant breeders worked for varieties with high forage, says W. J. Morse, soy bean specialist in U. S. Department of Agriculture. The job is more complex because the breeder is now concerned with oil, protein, amino acids, lecithin, iodine, minerals, texture, carbohydrates, flavor, cooking quality and vitamins of the bean—qualities demanded in some or all commercial uses.

About one-half of the beans harvested last year will be used in the manufacture of industrial and food products such as flour, soy sauce, diabetic and infant foods, breakfast food, lard and butter substitutes, candies, roasted beans with a nutlike flavor, health drinks, paints, varnish, glue, plastics, printing inks, oil-cloth, linoleum, rubber substitutes, glycerin, insecticides and livestock feeds.

## Wages

During this winter farm hands have been getting the highest pay they have received in four years, according to the



**ACTION IN THE TOBACCO FIELD**—This type of machine shown here in use in Maryland sows, mixes fertilizer with soil and lists all in one operation.

Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the Department of Agriculture. Day wages without board ranged from an average of 70 cents in South Carolina to \$2.50 in Massachusetts and California with an average for all states of \$1.37.

## Prices

Wool prices which were stimulated by an unexpected pickup in trade late in December are expected to continue near the present level for the next few months. In January, buying declined somewhat but wool prices continued to advance. Wool imports have not kept pace with the increased consumption during the past three years with result of a marked reduction in the heavy stocks which had accumulated during 1929 to 1932.

## Bovine T. B.

A baffling outbreak of bovine tuberculosis in the government's herd of dairy cattle at Beltsville, Md., was discovered in a test made late in January. The outbreak involved 82 positive reactors and 11 "suspects" in the herd of 378 animals. All the cattle involved were cows, heifers and calves. No bulls of the 25 in the herd were affected.

The cause of the infection has baffled officials. For 18 years the herd has been in an accredited status. A regular test in October of 1935 disclosed one reactor. The cattle of the herd are housed in eight different buildings. The possible source of the infection is now the subject of a special investigation.

## Hog Cholera

Crystal-violet vaccine for the prevention of hog cholera is announced by the U. S. Department of Agriculture as a promising addition to the products developed for the control of destructive animal diseases. Crystal-violet is a chemical dye, one of many substances the biochemists have used in their efforts to destroy the infective elements and at the

same time preserve the protective element. Tests have given about 99% satisfactory protection against hog cholera.

## Housing

A farm building is no more durable than its roof. Up to date information to help a farmer choose right kinds of roofing materials for different buildings appears in Farmers' Bulletin 1751-F, Bureau of Agricultural Engineering, U. S. Department of Agriculture. The title is "Roof Coverings for Farm Buildings and Their Repair."

Farmers' Bulletin 1749, Modernizing Farmhouses, U. S. Department of Agriculture, contains comprehensive information on costs and details on remodeling to meet a variety of needs. It contains floor plans, photographs or sketches of 13 typical farm houses which have been

remodeled by their owners with descriptions and costs of the work.

## Free Seeds

Ten thousand times "NO" to requests for free seeds says the U. S. Department of Agriculture. In a special release to the farm press the department says that for thirteen years it has been trying to convince 100,000,000 people that it has no free seeds or plants, yet again this spring, thousands upon thousands of requests are pouring in from farms, suburbs and penthouses.

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**Over the Hill to the Graveyard**

Lives of 36,000 persons were crushed out in automobile accidents in 1935. Ninety per cent of these fatal accidents were due to careless drivers. The greatest increase in auto fatalities is on rural roads.