

Scientists

Improve

Mink Food

James R. Leekley, research scientist at the Petersburg Experimental Fur Station, has conducted feeding experiments with mink to prevent a condition called cotton fur that makes pelts worthless.

An iron supplement in the diet seems to do the trick, according to Agricultural Research Service scientists. Cotton fur, the problem, occurs when mink are fed a diet high in fish.

It causes gray-to-white underfur, poor growth, light-colored carcass and anemia. Cotton fur has been prevented by iron injections.

Getting the iron into the system along with the food is the obvious improvement over the injection method, the researchers said.

Leekley conducted the experiments in cooperation with the Alaska Agricultural Experiment Station and the University of Alaska. He worked with two scientists at Beltsville, Maryland—biochemist C.A. Cabell and statistician T.B. Kinney.