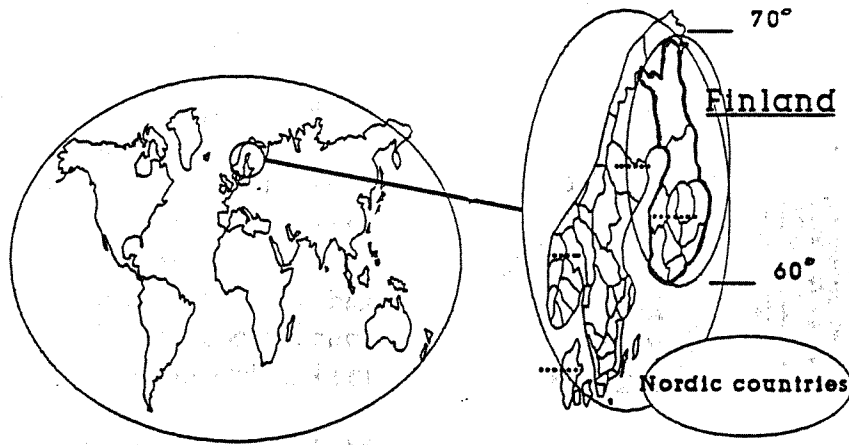


Development of Fur Animal Farming

In the Stone Age men hunted wild fur bearing animals for clothing for themselves and also to trade with other goods. Interest in furs increased and furs became a trade article. Fur prices increased which resulted in more intensive hunting. Efforts to regulate hunting were made but undoubtedly it is the domestication and farming of the fur animals that have saved these species from extinction.

Even though fur farming, compared to other forms of animal husbandry, is fairly young, most fur animal species have been raised in captivity already over a hundred of animal generations. The first mink farm was started in the U.S.A. by 2 men, Phillips and Woodcock, also regarded as pioneers of the mink industry, in northern part of New York State during the American Civil War.

The historical starting point of modern fur animal farming is considered to be in the middle 1890's on Prince Edward Island at St. Lawrence bay in Canada. There were two different stocks of silver foxes. These silver fox stocks were the origin of the farm bred silver fox.



How Finland Became a Fur Farming Country ?

Fur animal farming spread to Europe and especially to the Nordic countries quite soon after it had been 'discovered' in North America. Even though it has been reported that there was a fox farm close to Stockholm as early as the 1820's, officially fur animal farming started in the Nordic countries in 1914 when the first silver foxes were imported to Norway from Canada.

Similarly, fur farming was started in Finland with silver foxes in 1916. However, raising trials with regular red foxes captured from the wild had already been done in the early 1910's.

Animal husbandry has a long history in Finland. Most Finns still have their roots in the country. Fur farming has become a natural extension to the traditional farm animal husbandry to thousands of Finns. Not only people with experience in animal husbandry and their close ties to nature but also Nordic climate, a natural environment for fur animals, have made it possible for Finland to become one of the leading fur farming countries in the world.