

YOUR DOG AND MINE

BEDDING

By EDWARD C. LOUD

Bedding plays an important part in dog culture. The right kinds keep down fleas by preventing their breeding, prevent hookworm to a limited extent, and the frequent change of bedding makes it possible to check the spread of skin infections.

When one realizes that the flea does not pass all of its life cycle on the dog, but that the part of the cycle from egg to flea is spent in decaying organic matter, one appreciates importance of proper bedding. When it is also known that bedding in the winter accounts for the development of the hookworm, the subject becomes important. I have tried to estimate the features and values of the ordinary kinds of bedding. I have no way of knowing the costs of such bedding in all the various sections of the country. Some cost nothing. Peanut shucks are often given away at the plants, while in the north they cost up to 50 cents per bag. Peat moss is costly or inexpensive depending upon the distance one lives from the peat bog. Paper costs from nothing up to 50 cents a hundred lbs. Hence at best I can estimate at the economics and you can figure the cost by inquiring at the sources of supply in your own locality.

I shall divide the types of bedding into the following groups. No bedding—Bedding from grasses—From paper—from wood by-products—From peat moss—Cloth bedding—Patent beds.

No bedding at all is preferred by some breeders. Opponents to the practice point out that wear off the elbows and hocks and that their coats look badly when they are kept on cement or bare boards, but this is not necessarily born out in practice. Highly polished boards, in warm kennels are clean, and do not damage the coat. Then too, they require frequent cleanngs, the cracks must be kept filled, and the building must be heated in winter for all but heavy coated dogs.

Paper Bedding—In many kennels where small dogs are kept it is the custom to use whole or torn newspapers. It keeps the owner busy preparing the beds, but in these cases the dogs are kept in small runs and allowed to defecate in them. This is a very inexpensive bedding, but the paper does not absorb all of the waste which leaves an odor so characteristic of the kennel maintaned under this method. Generally deodorants which are more powerful in their own rights than the other odors are used and so the visitor smells the disinfectant which if it has a pleasant odor, believes the kennel immaculately clean. The disinfectant gets into the dogs hair and remains for many days after the dog is removed. The chief advantage of newspaper is in keeping up the appearance of cleanliness; its disadvantage has been mentioned, but in addition puppies chew the paper and dogs seem to become infected quite readly by lapping up food or chewing on bones which have become contaminated.

Bedding from Grasses—Hay, marsh hay, straws, are among the most common. There is something about these that looks very comportable to the human eye, for which reason it is generally concluded that they are excellent for dogs. So they are if precautions are taken. They all make excellent material for fleas in breed in. They must be either well dusted with a powerful flea powder, or changed quite frequently. They can be used in manure or composite piles and need not be burned, prividing thore are no parasites on the dogs. The safest precaution however is to burn all bedding, and make sure. These dry grasses are relatively inexpensive and provide warmth in winter if sufficient is allowed the dog to pack down and make a good mattress under him. The chief error on the part of the kennel man is to elevate the dog house and then provide a thin bed. Plenty of hay and straw is necessary.

Bedding From Wood By-Products

Shavings, sawdust, excelsior and similar products are excellent for bedding, especially if made from cedar with cedar with its wholesome aroma and attractive color. Excelsior is the poorest of them all, with the exception of chips which are sometimes sold in the guise of shavings. Well dried shavings and sawdust are absorbant and clean. Shavings can be obtained either in bales or large bags. Next to cedar, pine is best. They are soft and comfortable. For winter shavings are preferable and should be supplied for out door kennels, four or more inches deep. Unless cedar is used, it is wise to mix some good flea powder with the sawdust or shavings.

Peanut By-Products. Peanut shells and ground peanut shells are being used in many places and make reasonable good bedding. The ground shells are absorbant if well dried, but the shells unground are not absorbant to any extent. A disadvantage is that they are often eaten in large quantities by dogs and puppies. Some pups have had to be taken to a vetenarian to have the packed shells extracted from the intestine. There is little nourishment in the ground shells. The latter are dusty and should have some flea powder mixed with them. When damp they are not as clean as sawdust.

Peat Moss—This is unually heralded as being excellent because it can be used later in the garden. It is black and dusty and very absorbant. It requires considerable time in crumbling it up and not until it becomes considerably damp will the dust stay down. The chief disadvantage is its ability to breed hookworm when used indoors in winter. The hookworm egg must hatch and the larva undergo several changes before it is infective. The warmth of the dogs body on the bedding, and the character of the material allows it to perpetuate hookworms even in winter. This is especially so when used for puppies which will not always run outside to defecate.

It has been suggested to spray the moss with an oily solution which would kill parasites and keep the dust down. This might then be an exceedingly worthwhile bedding.

Cloth Beds.—Many people have tried improving beds for their dogs in kennels, by building frames and stretching heavy cloth across them. Pipe framing to which canvass has been fitted and fastened to the frame with light rope has been found useful. It is not useful in winter except in heated kennels and then too there is a tendency for dogs to scratch holes through their beds. The advantage of such beds is that they are very clean and can be detached from their frames and washed. When dogs are taught to lie down withoutscratching at their beds, cloth proves excellent in warm locations.

Patented Beds—There are on the market a number of types of very excellent beds, more of which should be used. These are of several types and they have been made with the idea of the dogs comfort primarily in mind. Some of them are medicated so that no fleas can live in them and they give off an odor or dust so that the dogs coat is constantly treated to prevent fleas. They indeed are a delight not only to the dog, but to the owner, who finds less treatment of his dog necessary o keep him comfortable.

IMPORTANT

Convict: I want you to get a small saw to me the next time you send me a pie.

Wife: Oh, so you can cut through the bars?

Convict: No, so I can cut through the pie!

SHAME!

You complain that you have had to support your wife's famly? the court questioned the man seeking a divorce.

Yes, your honor.

How much of a family has she?

Four children, your honor.

Who is their father?

I am, your honor.

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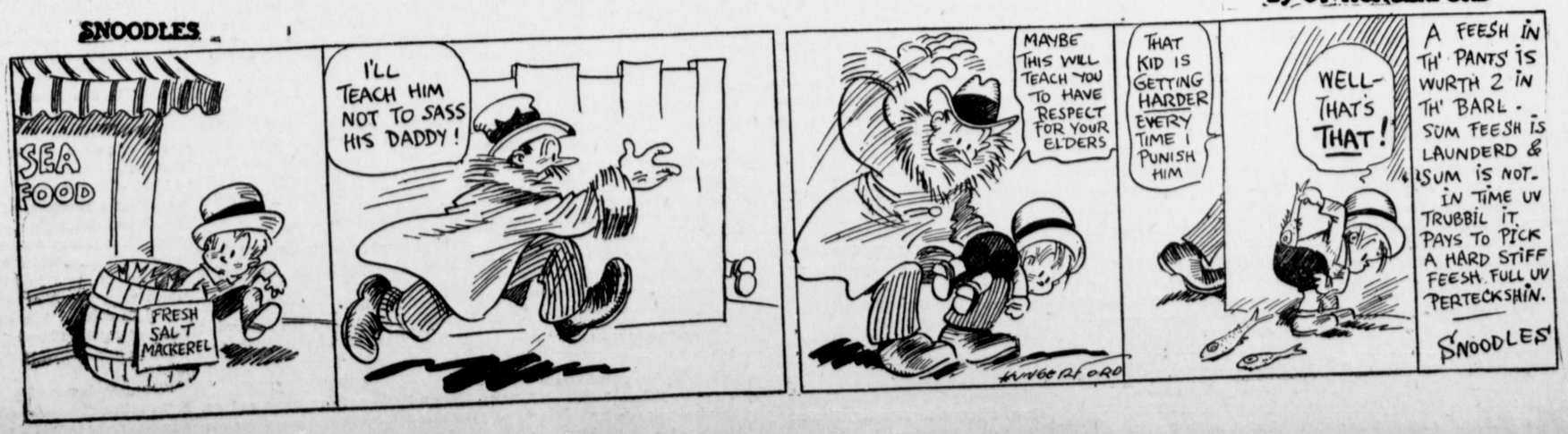
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