

# Annual Humane Trap Competition

The American Humane Association (AHA) established a humane trapping committee in 1926 and began a humane trap contest in 1927 for a suitable replacement for the foothold trap.

One person who made regular entries into the competition in the 1940s was Frank D. Crippen of Glens Falls, New York.

In 1940, Frank won \$50 for outstanding work done during the previous year. He improved previous traps in the Alive and Unhurt Class and Leghold Class. In 1941, Frank won \$100 in the Alive and Unhurt Class and \$25 in the Traps that Hold without Injury Class.

In 1942, he won \$50 in the Leghold Class with the trap pictured in this article and owned by Randy McCullough. Note the initials stamped on the pan and the trap tag. A spring powered chain was used to hold the animals foot. He was second in that category to O.L. Butcher who won \$100. Frank also won \$20 which was part of a special prize.

Each annual competition was held in the AHA headquarters in Albany, New York on Decoration Day (now called Memorial Day). The traps were displayed in the Mason Room of the building. The four judges spend all day testing the various devices on display. The judges included Dr. Ned Dearborn, John J. Slautterback of the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Edward A. Preble and Henry A. Teal who was Superintendent of the Law Enforcement Division of the New York State Conservation Department. Teal substituted for Professor LeRoy Stegeman of the New York State College of Forestry in Syracuse as he had been called in the service of his country.

Each entry was judged on four main qualifications including humaneness, efficiency, practicality and reasonableness of cost. The goal of the Association was to provide traps that would do everything that the steel foothold trap would

do and to increase humaneness. Not only did they support invention of new types of traps but also improvements to those traps previously entered into the competition.

"To produce better traps, a device must first be born in the mind of the inventor. The first product is almost never a perfect thing, in itself. It must await years of use and improvement before it becomes a finished model from which others may be manufactured and used extensively. It is for this reason that we have continued to encourage the perfection of devices which have been entered in our contests in other years."

Scot H. Dahms  
2270 W Willow Lane  
Peru, Indiana 46970  
[ranger1971@comcast.net](mailto:ranger1971@comcast.net)  
765-327-1531

