Build the Wellhouse Cottontail Box Trap

David E. Lantz / USDA Farmers' Bulletin 702 / revised 1929

TRAPPING.

Rabbits are easily trapped or snared, and while these methods of taking them are slow, they are always feasible when cottontails infest woodlot, orchard, nursery, field, or garden. Many are caught in old-fashioned box traps set with a figure-4 trigger with cord attached to hold up the box lid.

An improvement on this familiar trap, widely used in the Middle West, and often called the Wellhouse[5] trap, is a box 21 inches long and about 6 inches high and 4 inches wide (inside measurements) made of 6-inch fence boards, preferably old ones. The box is closed at the rear and has a wire door in front which swings inward from the top, a cleat at the bottom preventing its opening outward. The trap is set and the wire door kept open by a wire trigger rod held in place by two staples in the top of the box. The trigger rod is bent downward into a loop or figure 8 near the rear of the trap.

[5] After the late Fred Wellhouse, of Topeka, Kans.

As the rabbit enters the trap and crowds into the back part it presses against the loop, moves the trigger rod backward and is imprisoned as the wire door is released and falls. Bait may be used but is unnecessary, since cottontails frequently take refuge in dark places from enemies or inclement weather.

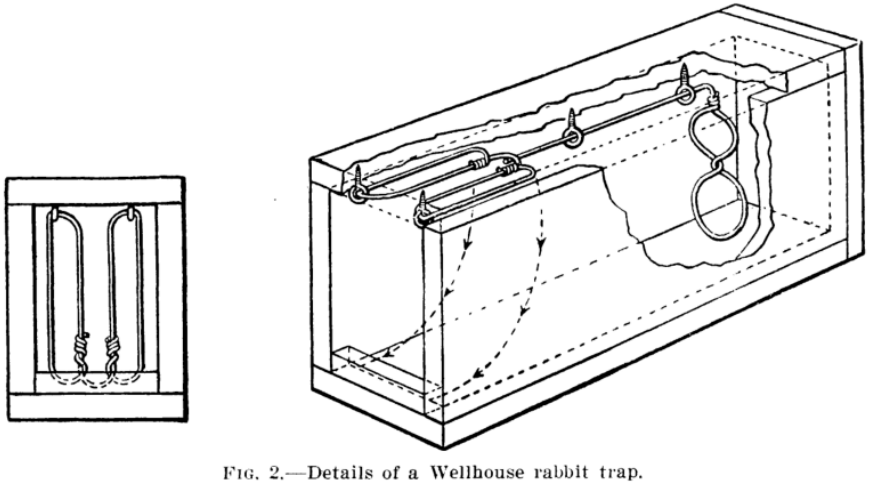

FIG. 2.—Details of a Wellhouse rabbit trap.

The materials needed for making a Wellhouse trap are: Four boards 1 by 6, 21 inches long, for the top, bottom, and sides; a piece 1 by 6, 8 inches long, for the back; a small cleat for the door stop; 28½ inches of wire for the door; 22 inches of wire for the trigger; 4 small staples for hanging the door and trigger; and nails (Fig. 2).