Most scientists and historians have agreed that man was originally a hunter, and only secondarily a collector of seeds. We can only speculate on how animals were originally domesticated, but it has been suggested that the abundance of grain around campsites seemed to attract the wild animals and that some were captured. Primitive man lacked the facilities to maintain the larger and more aggressive members of the species, so he probably caught the smallest—the runt of the litter! It is also equally probable that the first selections were for docility, and subsequent selections were for size or color or shape and a variety of incidental features. The scientific approach in the selection of animals and the derivation of breeds, has occurred largely within our lifetime.

A fact of which those in the field of plant science are only too aware, is that their science and the development of the agronomic side of civilization and agriculture probably have a similar derivation. Wheat (Triticum aestivum), barley (Hordeum vulgare), and millet (Panicum spp.) in Asia, Africa, and Europe, and maize (Zea mays) in the U.S., made the solid foundations for the agriculture of our neolithic ancestors. We can only guess what happened to bring about the first cultivation of our cereals, but their subsequent agricultural history is relatively well established. It has been stated that there were many centuries during which the food gatherers of history worked on a hit and miss basis, and it was probably more or less by an accident that the species that we have today were selected, improved, and stabilized. Who could say which