Stock.

Management of Sows.

ATTENDANCE AND BEDDING.

As opinions differ upon the matters of attendance, bedding, &c., I will give *my reasons* for advocating this system that I follow myself, as all who venture to offer advice to others should be able to do.

Many pigs frequently meet their death in their early days, even with the best of mothers, from two causes. Most sows get as close to the wall of the sty as possible; and when the bed is scanty, there is nothing but the young between the mother and the wall. After suckling, the noses of the pigs that take the bottom row of teats are often completely covered by the udder (especially where the udder is largely developed), so that while mother and young are sleeping, several of the latter are suffocated for want of air. To avoid this the rail is advocated, and no doubt, though not an absolute safeguard, is very beneficial; but where there is a good elastic straw-bed, the side forms a cushion against the wall, and prevents the sow crushing up to it; while, from its porous nature, sufficient air penetrates it to supply the youngster, who with his head under the udder would otherwise be suffocated. Then some sows, particularly those who are large and unwieldy, throw themselves down most awkwardly among their litter, and the poor little one lying on the hard floor is crushed to death in a moment. This would not be the case when there is a good bed; a pig may be so lain on for a considerable time when there is a good foot of straw under him, and come out quite fresh; he is also able to protest against the treatment, and this he generally does vigorously, when all but the most careless mothers will get up and give him a chance; add to these, which I think sufficient reasons, that both mother and young are much more comfortable, and do so much better upon a nice warm soft bed than they do upon a sawdust or chaff-sprinkled floor, that I am satisfied of the excellence of the plan of providing them with plenty of straw.

DIFFICULT PARTURITION.

There are many reasons, too, why it is wise to be in attendance upon a sow during pigging. Cases of difficult parturition occur, when assistance is imperative, though in anything like extreme cases proper veterinary assistance should be sought; some sows also are extremely restless, and with continually getting up and lying down are likely to hurt their pigs, which at first are almost always very helpless. I once lost nearly an entire litter of my sow Nellie (whose breeding properties have previously been noted), through no one being with her. For her first four or five litters she had the habit, directly a pig was born, of jumping up and standing till the next labor pain, when down she went, all in a heap, right on the top of any youngsters that might happen to be there. Bed or no bed, when weak and new-born, none could survive such treatment, and in the case in point, expecting her to pig during my absence from home, I gave particular instructions to my men how to act. She was rather inclined at such times to be savage, and they durst not go near her; the consequence was that thirteen out of seventeen pigs were lost through not being safe-guarded till parturition was over, after which no more careful mother could be found.

PUERPERAL FRENZY.

Sometimes sows devour their young directly they are born, probably through an unhealthy craving of their semi-carnivorous nature; and here it is obvious attendance and removal are the only measures. Sows are also occasionally, though rarely, seized with a sort of puerperal frenzy that induces them to jump up nd worry to death each unfortunate youngster directly it is born; this is altogether different to the propensity to devour them, and is akin to the frenzy which sometimes induces a young heifer to attack her calf, and to the frequent massacres of their young by rabbits and ferrets.

USE OF A HURDLE IN THE STY.

If ever I am apprehensive of an outbreak, or am consulted by others in a like fix, I arrange for a hurdle to be firmly fixed parallel to one wall of the sty, with just sufficient room between it for the sow to stand up and lie down in without turning round; the one end of course is close to the wall running at right angles. Within this the bed is placed, and when the sow is in, another hurdle is firmly driven in crosswise, and well fastened, thus forming a cage, which prevents her damaging either her offspring or attendants, as she is only able to get up and down, and cannot possibly turn round. The little ones are removed as fast as pigged; and, when parturition is quite completed, it is tried to soothe her by gently rubbing her udder; if she turns over and seems pleased with this, one of the strongest of her pigs is brought and kept by her, taking care not to let it get near her nose till it has sucked; but if she gives it milk pretty freely, then it is allowed to go into danger, when generally after a little she will take to it The others then may be introduced to her, taking care in like manner that all suck before getting up to her head; and should she, as is mostly the case, become quiet with them, the hurdles may be taken away, as the crisis is over. Sometimes two or three trials are necessary before all is happily arranged, but it is very rare indeed, when labor is over and the pigs have sucked, that any but the carniverously disposed will willingly harm them.

After either one of these experiences with a sow, it is not wise to retain her, as she generally behaves just as badly the succeeding litter; there are, however, cases where the intrinsic value is so great that it is desired to retain them at any risk, and as the best preventive of the evils of puerperal frenzy, I offer the above suggestion of enclosing them between hurdles as the most practical I am acquainted with for those who are given to devour their young. A safeguard is more difficult, but, if inveterate, the mother may be kept so confined altogether, the young ones only allowed with her just for their food, and then removed to a place of safety till too large for her to hurt; but this entails a deal of work and attention, and certainly one experience of the sort would satisfy me; the butcher would save all further trouble.—[W Godwin in English Live Stock Journal]

The Brood Mare.

The object we have in view in horse breeding should be an annual improvement. The investment is remunerative when applied in good shape, soundness, and vigorous action, combined with the stoutest and most fashionable blood in the several classes. Horse breeding can alone pay by the breeding of the very best, for which the demand exceeds supply, and which phase of the market has ruled strong for years without alteration; the difficulty is to get horses good enough.

It is important to regard constitution in the parentage, apart from the essential consideration of size, freedom from hereditary blemish or defect, good sound legs and feet, a symmetrical body, wind, eyesight. Action is contributed by the mare in regard to force, by the sire with regard to direction. These are influenced by the deep shoulder, the moderate arm, length and muscularity of the forearm, a well defined trapezium at the back of the knee and well-defined sesamoid-bones at the upper posterior portion of the fetlock, shortness from the knee down; length in all bones, capability of mobility in the superstructure. Good shoulders are deep and well laid back in all good horses Quality in the hind-quarters is determined by proportion of parts. Loins, thighs, gaskins, hocks—strong loins, muscular thighs and gaskins, clean bold hocks, the point of the hock in all cases well defined. We thus have considered the bases of speed, action, endurance. Beauty of proportion and style of movement are features no harness, hack, or hunter breeder can afford to despise; and the same holds good in regard to heavy draught horse stock for export.

Leading breeders have always a high standard as a fixed aim; in some cases their efforts excel, in others fall short of their beau ideal. When such is the case the mare is invariably at fault. An upstanding roomy mare—that is, one with a lofty fore-hand, a long barrel, well coupled up or ribbed home, wide across the hips, deep at fore and back rib, evidencing length, and gentle obliquity, but no droop, in the quarter, on short fat, clean legs—this would be the brood mare of our choice to recoup outlay.

Mares with their first foals require the greatest attention. The mare should be served nine days after foaling, and again tried at the end of a fortnight. If the mare then refuses, it is conclusive; but should she stand, she must be tried on the termination of another fourteen days' interval. Mares have a strong aversion to smells—viz., tar, carrion, vegetable putrefaction The leaves of the willow and of the savin are equally obnoxious. Pine varnish is the material that should be used, rather than tar for palings. All excitation should be avoided—the neighing of entires, &c.

The most eligible time for foaling are the months of March, April, and May. In the first of these months they must be housed, unless the weather is most favorable A roomy, sheltered, and well-ventilated box is a desideratum. No draught, nicely littered down, level and soft in surface, not too deep. The mare must be watered three times a day. Mares at this season are liable to gorge themselves with clean litter, and they frequently exhibit a morbid appetite, which must be restrained. Therefore dry, used litter, taken from under other horses, is the best for present use. Register the time when the mare should foal down. Ten days before she is likely to foal make the necessary preparations, and frequently examine her at least twice or three times a day without disturbing her; and as the event nears, a nocturnal visit or two must be paid. A roomy mare, naturally fed, neither too gross nor too poor, seldom requires external aid. A waxy substance on the teat, a sinking and expansion of the pelvis, rendering the act of parturition easy, are unmistakable signs. After delivery the mare will lick her foal—leave her to it, but watch the placenta or afterbirth that it does not recede, and when it has come away, remove it. Give the mare a nice pailful of warm linseed gruel, succeeded by a bran mash. Get the foal to suck as soon as you conveniently can. In any case of difficulty or doubt, do not delay to call in your professional friend and adviser, the qualified veterinary surgeon.

Variety of feeding is held by many to be a very safe plan. Just prior to foaling down, and after foaling, reliance for a copious supply of milk is usually looked for in those seasonable products—green meat or tares, lucerne, trefoil, and clovers. Most of the treatment relative to the brood mare accepts the cardinal features of first-rate management applicable to neat stock—quiet, cleanliness, supervision.—[Agricultural Gazette.

Breeding Large Males to Small Females.

There are different opinions entertained as to this, whatever may be the advantages sought for in the practice, such as obtaining an increase of size in the offspring, improving their quality, etc. But if a few plain rules were carefully considered in carrying out this system, I think a more general agreement would follow among breeders in its practice.

We will take the stallion and mare to begin with. If he is the tallest by 6 to 8 inches, and is extra heavy and coarse-boned, while she is light in weight and thin in form, the fœtus she bore would be so disproportionably large as to make it very hard and painful for her to give birth to it; and in doing so, neither she nor her offspring might survive the parturition. But if the colt happened to live, it would probably grow up a weakly, misshapen horse, of small value. Supposing the stallion to be very compact in form, with fine bones, and especially a fine head, and the mare be also of compact form, with rather a broad pelvis and large belly, although not so tall by 6 to 8 inches, and of considerably less weight, she may be safely bred to a male so much larger than herself; and, as a general rule, she would give birth to the fœtus without danger to life, and it would grow up even in shape, and make a smooth, serviceable animal of increased size and power.

These principles will apply to breeding cattle, and more particularly with Shorthorns, for their calves are almost invariably dropped of small size. The bones of the parents are so fine, they have the faculty, in growing up, of clothing them with a greater percentage of flesh according to the size of bone than any other breed of cattle.

The same line of conduct may be pursued in breeding swine and sheep. In the case of long-wooled rams, like the Leicester and Cotswold, one of nearly double the weight of a full-bred or high-grade Merino ewe may be safely bred to it, for the bones of the ram are but little if any coarser or heavier than hers, and the offspring will come so small as to make parturition safe and easy. After this, if the ewe proves a fair nurse, the lamb will grow with surprising rapidity, mature a year or more earlier than its dam, and attain 50 to 75 per cent. greater weight, full form, fatten much more rapidly, and make mutton of a superior quality.—[A. B. Allen in National Live Stock Journal.]