

HORSES.

RAISING DRAFT COLTS.

R. C. McGowan, Huron Co., Ont., in Horsemen's Experience Competition.

To have the best success in raising draft colts, it is necessary to have a good mare of some one of the draft breeds. The breeder may choose whichever breed his fancy leads to. They all need the same treatment, so far as rearing is concerned. If not already the possessor of a fairly good mare, we must buy one.

I do not recommend buying a very long-priced mare where capital is small, especially an imported one, as we have seen many disappointments with those. We tried this ourselves once, and had to wait till our two-year-old filly was eight years old for the first foal. She was a Clydesdale. We then got one every other year, till we had four colts, and then fifth next year, and that was all. That was the best luck of quite a number we had the opportunity to know of.

There are some people who raise colts for years who are so fortunate as never to know what trouble with colts is; some mares seem to be extra lucky. Other breeders lose all, and many mares, too. We have been raising draft colts for twenty-six years, sometimes lucky, and again with nearly all kinds of trouble, and I think if this competition is going to be a benefit to the horse breeders of the country, it must deal with the troubles frequently met with. Assuming the mare is in foal, steady work, moderate feeding and gentle handling are essential to success. If not worked, the mares must get exercise some other way. It is well to have them sharpshod if there are ice and slippery places around. Never draw them in soft footing; this has been the cause of most of our losses.

When the time for parturition is near, and we are looking for the foal to arrive soon, the mare is put into a box stall and turned loose, and, if possible, we try to be with her when she foals. To do this, I make a comfortable place near-by, and stay there all night. You will meet some who condemn this way, and go out occasionally to see how she is; that is no good, as I have left a mare all right, apparently, and returned in 15 minutes to find the foal delivered. When expecting a colt, have convenient to hand a good strong string, a knife, a little carbolic acid or other disinfectant, a couple ounces of cascara (bitter), a small veterinary syringe, some sweet oil or raw linseed. If around when the colt comes, first see that there is nothing to hinder breathing; then, if the navel cord has not been broken, tie it with the string about one inch from the body, and again about two inches further away, and cut between the cords and apply a weak solution of carbolic acid or whatever disinfectant is at hand; this is to prevent so-called navel-ill. But I believe cleanliness is even as good a preventive.

Clean the stall out thoroughly now, and at least twice a day, and bed it fresh as long as the colt stays in it. I use cut straw when it is at hand, as it does not hinder the colt moving about. If the colt can stand up unaided, let it hunt a while for its first meal; if it gets it in an hour or so, no hurt; if it is tiring to the colt and the attendant to worry about this too soon. But the first milk is very necessary to the welfare of the colt, and well it is if it has not leaked away before this time. When this has been the case, or when the mares have not been on the grass, there is often trouble before the milk, as we say, comes through the colt, which should be in about 18 hours, seldom less, sometimes a little more, and all yet be well.

When the colt is about two hours old, it should get two spoonfuls of cascara, given in a little of dam's milk, unless, when the mare has been on grass a while, not leaking, then it may be all right to wait until the first symptoms of sickness appear, which will be rolling, and drawing the legs up to the body, and suffering pain; and if not relieved, bloating is another sign. Give two teaspoonfuls of cascara every two hours, and apply flannels wrung out of hot water across the bowels. Use a little of the oil, injected with the syringe, and some have removed some of the hard lumps by inserting the finger and drawing them out; inserting a strip of hard soap for this purpose is worthless, if not injurious. Never give trouble is worthless, if not injurious. We once gave castor oil, its after-effects are bad. We once gave a colt 50c. worth of castor oil, without any results, and followed it with a tablespoonful of spirits of turpentine. When relief came, we next had a bad case of diarrhea, which we got checked (after a good many remedies failed) by the use of laudanum, fifteen drops every two hours. If the

colt leaves any milk, it should be drawn by hand, never allowing it to get old milk.

Be very careful not to overfeed the mare the first few days, especially wet grass. She ought to be let out as soon as the colt can follow, just to let the colt get a sun bath, which is life to it. Don't leave it out in rain till it is a few weeks old. Sometimes water will be noticed leaking from the navel. This is usually in male foals, and is a very dangerous symptom, and often starts when the colt is a few days old. At this time there is not enough of the navel cord left to tie it securely. It may be tied by the use of a needle and silk thread (white preferred); draw the navel cord gently, and when the skin is brought away from the body about an inch and a half or so, so as to allow the needle to be passed through, close by one side of the navel cord about an inch above where the cord enters skin; then pass it back by the other side, and tie it securely. Leave this tie in for three days, when it ought to be all right, if the operation was properly done, and to leave the stitches longer will make a sore.

Begin to handle the colt right along, every time you come near it. Catch it and hold it firm; don't let it break away; better not to try to hold it at all. Once it learns that you mean no harm, it may come up to you. If it ever gives an opportunity to scratch just behind the mane, don't fail to try it, and see how quickly it will be friends, and start to nip at your sleeve.

If a mare is a poor nurse, or she is needed for work too much to give the colt a chance, better to wean it young and hand-feed it. I think it is a poor practice to allow the colt to follow to the field when the mare is at work. Shut it in the stall, and leave it some feed that it likes. Bring the mare to it once each forenoon and afternoon, taking care that she is not overheated when she comes.

the weaning time comes, the colt that has been properly handled and tamed has a great advantage, as it comes to you, instead of running in terror to the far corner of the stall; and if it has been given a chance to eat out of a box of its own in a corner of the stall, it will know where to look for its feed now.

Take care of its feet by keeping them rasped off level with the frog; don't cut the hoof away round the frog with a knife; only use the rasp, and go round them about once a month in winter, when they run in box stalls. In summer they are likely to wear off on the ground, so as not to require much trimming.

CARE OF THE MARE AND FOAL.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

I have read with a good deal of interest the various articles on the care and management of brood mares and foals, and it makes me feel like giving my experience. We always try to give a brood mare plenty of work. After foaling, I always allow a mare three or four days' rest, and then, if I have work to do, she must take a share of it. Care is taken not to draw her heavy for the first week; after that she does any and everything that is to do until the day that she foals again. I have even had to hurry her home from the field, and pull off the harness. Some claim a mare should not be worked for a couple of weeks before foaling. My experience has been work her till the last hour, and no bad results. Some may think I have not had much experience. In the last twenty years, we have had from one to three colts a season, and seldom had any bad luck, all but one or two being strong and hearty. I raised twelve colts in the last four years, and not one of them was weak, and nothing was

done to the cord, only tie it, and that only in four cases. In those four years, the three mares did all the work on the farm (100 acres). They are draft mares, and bred to imported Clydesdale stallion, as draft horses are the most profitable for the average farmer to raise.

We never had but two cases of abortion, and each case was an idle mare. I know of a number of abortions this winter, and they are idle or over-fat mares. Where a mare is loaded with fat, and idle, the foal is apt to be weak. If nothing better can be done, turn the mares out in the yard every day for an hour or two.

A word about colts: Turn them out every day after weaning, no matter how cold they will keep warm. I turn my horses out every day, unless very stormy or wet, and have not had a horse with a cough or cold for five or six years. Care should be taken with a sucking colt not to let it get wet until two or three weeks old. It is usual to wean at four to five months old. By that time the colts eat well, and if a week or ten days is used to wean in, by gradually lengthening the time between nursings, the colt never frets.

Perth Co., Ont.

WILL M. TURNBULL.

That prevalent disease of young colts known as joint-ill, is, in the opinion of veterinarians, due to a germ which exists in the earth or dust or dirt on stable floors, and gains entrance to the circulation by means of a navel opening. The parturition stalls should be thoroughly cleaned, floor and walls sprinkled with lime, and well bedded. When the foal is born, the navel string and opening should be at once thoroughly dressed four or five times daily with an antiseptic solution, such as a five-per-cent. solution of carbolic acid, or 15 grains corrosive sublimate to a pint of water, or one part formalin in ten parts water, till the opening has closed and healed.



First Baron (imp.) [6413] (13447).

Clydesdale stallion; bay; foaled 1905; sire Hiawatha. Imported and owned by T. H. Hassard, Millbrook, Ont.

The weaning may be done any time after the colt is two months old, by feeding it liberally on bran, boiled oats and green feed, and keep it in stable, letting it out often for a while when the dam is not in sight.

To learn it to drink milk, will perhaps test your patience a little. I find the best way is to take the colt away from the mare at noon, give it nothing to drink till the next morning, then milk the dam and try it with that. When using cow's milk, prepare the milk; mix it with one-third water, add a little brown sugar (never use white sugar—it is apt to constipate), give about a quart at a time, and give it about every two hours through the day, if the colt is very young. After three or four weeks it need not be fed so often. Reduce gradually to three times per day, but don't lessen the quantity of milk given; if the milk is plenty, it is well to let it have it all winter. After a time, skim milk may be fed in place of whole milk. We often had colts do better right through the weaning than they did while on the dam. One, I remember, weaned at three months, weighed 600 pounds at six months. Another, a Clydesdale filly, weighed 1,330 at sixteen months, was weaned at two months old. When