

FIRST PRIZE ESSAY.

Profitable Horse Breeding in Manitoba and the N. W. T.

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I would preface this essay by saying that it is intended to deal chiefly with profitable horse breeding for the farming community, which includes the bulk of the horse raisers of this province. To those who make a specialty of raising horses for speed, either at the run, trot or pace, it does not address itself.

Primarily, then, there are several considerations which must govern the selection of any particular line of breeding by the average breeder. Among others, the following are some of the foremost, viz.: the colt when grown must be salable at such a price as to pay a fair profit on the cost of raising; it must not require a great deal of technical knowledge to breed, raise and train him successfully, and there must be as few culls as possible.

Taking up, then, the first consideration, viz., the salability of the colt, we must ascertain what classes of horses are at present, and are likely to be in future, in good demand at paying prices. Among these we find the following, which may be called the staple lines in horseflesh, such as draught horses, 1,500 pounds weight and upwards—the heavier the better, large, stylish carriage horses, neat, good actioned roadsters, and clever saddle horses.

To draught horse breeding nearly all of the attention of farmers has so far been paid, for the following reasons:—Firstly, their Ontario mares were mainly of the heavier types, and such a course seemed to be "in line." Secondly, the colts were believed to be more easily raised and broken than those of the lighter breeds. Thirdly, farmers expected to be able to use on the farm such few of the colts as they could not sell; and lastly, perhaps not the least cogent reason, the service fees in this class were usually lower than in the others. The first reason seems to be a good one as long as there is a ready sale for this class of colts, and the part of the second which relates to breaking on the old plan, which in most cases was only begun at three years old, no doubt had some truth in it. On the other hand, as regards the ease of raising draught colts, my own experience goes to show that the lighter breeds are quite as hardy, and exhibit more pluck in sickness than the heavier ones; while, although the better blooded colts require rather more grain in proportion to their weight, they do not cost more per head to bring to maturity. Reason No. 3 has been exploded of late by the number of colts which are still staying on the farm—colts that never attained to the expected weight, and which, on account of the large over-supply of this kind, were almost unsalable. Too much regard for a low service fee is, no doubt, answerable for much of this, but the experience of even careful and progressive breeders in this line gives rise to a grave doubt as to whether, under our climatic disadvantages, a large enough percentage of Manitoba-bred colts will be got to tip the beam at say 1,400 pounds to make draught horse breeding a paying business, even after we have banished scrub stallions, and adopted better methods of feeding and housing our colts. In any case it can only be done, I think, by making the pick of the heaviest stallions and mares.

Turning next to carriage horses, we should aim to breed them from 15½ hands up, any good color, bays for choice, with plenty of bone and power and good action. Considering the type of mares most common in this country, I think that they will best be mated with a large Thoroughbred sire, with good flat bone, and as much "quality" as is compatible with large size, for, whereas the Cleveland Bay, Yorkshire Coach, Hackney and trotting horse all claim to be carriage sires, they are (as a class) all more or less lacking in the blood-like appearance which is known as "quality," and which the colt can not be expected to derive from his dam, she probably being common-looking enough herself. Further, the Hackneys and, I think, the trotters too, are usually rather wanting in size for this line of breeding. If, however, a farmer has one or two blood-like mares of good size he will probably do well with any of these sires, but don't forget the "if." As some confusion seems to exist even yet in the minds of many as to what constitutes a Thoroughbred, it might be just as well to state here that a Thoroughbred can only be a pedigreed English race horse, or a descendant of such ancestors. He is not a trotter in the sense of *tracing* at the trot (although all road breeds are indebted to this blood for whatever good looks they may possess) and cannot, therefore, be one of those horses which, owing to the advancing popularity of the Thoroughbred sire, are now being called blood horses by their grooms, but which, they tell us, have trotted miles or quarters in phenomenal time in private trials. The Thoroughbred is descended from an Arab ancestry, and from them he has inherited his good looks, while excelling them in the three valuable qualities of size, speed and endurance. As a sire he has, undoubtedly, the greatest prepotency of any breed, owing to the purity of his breeding, and this should have a great deal of weight with the breeder when so many of his mares are of mixed, or, owing to their having been bought from a dealer, of uncertain origin. Knee action, on the other hand, is not a characteristic of the Thoroughbred, being inimical to fast galloping, and, if the sire of this breed is used the mare should be chosen with good action,

even if the sire should be possessed of it. The colts from this line of breeding which do not show enough style or are blemished will make the very best general purpose farm horse, having the pluck and endurance for which the Thoroughbred is noted, weight enough for any reasonable load, and can trot home at eight or ten miles an hour without being laid up for a week. The mares should range from 1,200 to 1,300 pounds, or even somewhat heavier if not too coarse, be low-set and well-turned; the minimum of weight is, of course, dependent on the size of the sire, who should, however, weigh 1,200 pounds or so.

Roadsters may, I think, be divided into two classes, although the two may overlap one another, viz., the pleasure horse and the business horse. In the first class the sire is preferably a Hackney. They should range about 15½ hands in height, be well turned, and show plenty of knee action. Such horses are at present in very good demand, and will always command a good price as showy horses for the lighter classes of city driving. Style is, of course, a *sine qua non*, and they should, therefore, be bred from mares with some blood and of good shape. In the second class the sire should be a well-bred trotting horse, about 16 hands high, with good bone, action and looks. The latter class are not intended so much for show as the former, but for fast road work, in which they undoubtedly excel the Hackney. The dams should be of the better class of clean-limbed mares, not too common looking. The trotting horse having so far been bred solely to a standard of speed, this is more likely to be reproduced in the foal than good looks, in which some of the best trotting families are notably deficient. Therefore, as looks sell, the trotting sire must be chosen specially with reference to his appearance. Those who are not inclined to value good looks very highly should acquaint themselves with the low prices at present asked in the United States for plain-looking horses, even when well-bred on trotting lines. In the choice of one of the two above lines of breeding each breeder must use his own judgment. A smart pace on the road being the object in the second class, a farmer possessed of a mare of suitable size and appearance, with a fair trotting gait, will probably do best with a well-bred trotting sire. But if his mare should be well-bred and not possessed of this trotting instinct, I think the Hackney will probably give the best results; for speed, in this the highest-priced class, is of no account whatever. Hackney-bred colts have a "finish" which is much rarer in trotting-bred colts from ordinary mares, and this is a taking point with the dealer; and further, those who raise fast trotting roadsters will have to contend with the competition of almost all American breeders of light horses in their own markets, which is a point worth considering. Above all avoid a pony stallion, even though the sire of his dam should be second cousin to a stable companion of Maud S; if our roadsters lack one good quality more than another, it is size.

For saddle horses the best sire by long odds is, of course, the Thoroughbred, although many useful hacks are bred from the Hackney, mated with mares such as indicated under "roadsters." But if the sire is to be a Hackney, and I think this is only advisable in the absence of a Thoroughbred stallion, the mares should have a good dash of blood. Although this class, when properly bred, raised and trained, bring, especially when combining size, substance and quality with good manners, some of the very best prices, still I consider that the training of them, in order to bring such prices, requires not only that experience which may be gained by all, but natural gifts as well not common to many. On the other hand, it may be said that the better bred broncho mares, if possessed of bone and substance, afford excellent material close at hand from which to breed this class of horses. If, therefore, these are to be raised they will, in most cases, be better sold to the dealer to train at two or three years old, or an experienced horse breaker should be secured to train them, giving the "broncho-buster" a wide berth, at any rate as far as the finishing process is concerned.

In summing up, although I believe that any of these lines of breeding, with the foregoing reservation as to draught horses, will pay a fair profit if properly conducted, still I give personal preference to the carriage horse type outlined above, for the following reasons, viz.: (1) No other line promises better prices for really good individuals. (2) Colts, blemished or otherwise depreciated in the market, can be used to the very best advantage on the farm, whereas it will be a problem what to do with blemished or undersized roadsters or saddle horses. (3) The market is never glutted with this kind; and lastly, the fillies from this cross will make the very best brood mares, either to breed back to the Thoroughbred or to cross with Cleveland Bay, Yorkshire Coach, Hackney or trotting sires.

Whatever your line of breeding, begin well; see that your mare is in good order when put to the horse, as a lack of thrift at this time not only affects her chances of impregnation, but is evidence of a smaller store of nourishment for the foetus, and this must affect its development. After she is well on in foal, at slow, steady work in the hands of a careful man, avoiding all jerking, overloading and excitement, with, for the last month or so, soft food and daily exercise in the yard, the brood mare should do well enough. Many breeders affirm that boiled barley has a tendency to cause abortion in

mares, but I have no personal experience on the subject, as I have avoided it, not being anxious to prove the truth of the assertion. I like boiled wheat, even though a grain here and there should pass through whole. Occasional bran mashes also, at a time when purgatives are interdicted, are of great service in loosening the bowels—a point of importance before foaling—and in cooling down the system of a mare, which has, perhaps, been fed a good deal of grain all through gestation in order to keep her working.

TO BE CONTINUED.

Our Scottish Letter.

Four weeks have passed since last we addressed the readers of the ADVOCATE; since then much has happened in Scotland. Cattle and horse sales have taken place in different places, the weather experienced has been of the most favorable description, the seed time is nearly over, the season for traveling horses has come into view, and the lambing season on lowland farms is nearly over. Much that has taken place will not be of special interest in Canada, still as farming there and here is not altogether dissimilar a few items may be coned over.

No class of cattle have in recent years acquired greater popularity than what are called blue-greys, the produce of a Cumberland Shorthorn white bull and a Galloway or Aberdeen-Angus cow. Generally the former cross prevails in the border counties where Galloways abound, and the latter in the north-east where we have the A.-A. polled breed. Carlisle is a noted market for white bulls and their crosses, and at the sale held there on 16th March the white bulls made good commercial prices, running from £25 to £38 a piece, while the crosses also were in demand. The bulls reared in Cumberland and Westmoreland have a character of their own, being bred from milking families, and the blue-grey ripens fast. Staffordshire and other English counties, as well as Dumfriesshire and Galloway, are good customers for the white bulls, some of which are pedigreed, but possibly quite as many are not. It is not to be inferred from this that these bulls are not well-bred. On the contrary, they have long pedigrees, but the strains are not of the fashionable beef-producing Shorthorn lines, and many of them have never been registered up. The Galloway breeders had their innings at Castle-Douglas three days later, but it must be admitted that they did not make a first-rate appearance. Last year business was very rosy, the supply of bulls was just about equal to the demand, and good prices ruled. This year every breeder seemed to think it his duty to keep his bull calves entire. He concluded that, all the farmers in Galloway were dying to own a Galloway bull, and hence the supply far exceeded the demand—animals were offered as bulls which would hardly have made respectable steers. Mr. Cunningham, Tarbreoch, is the great Galloway enthusiast; he stuck to the breed in fair weather and in foul, and now reaps his reward. His first prize yearling, The Pathfinder II., was got by Camp Follower, out of the champion cow, Madonna, and Mr. Thomas Graham, Skipton, bought him at the sensible figure of £57. The fourth prize winner was also from Tarbreoch, and was got by Royal Liberty. He was sold for £41. A third from the same herd, which was eighth in the class, was bought by the Messrs. Sherman, and goes to the Balig herd at £40. He is a strong youngster. For eight bull stirks Mr. Cunningham drew an average of £29 8s. 9d., but his average last year for ten was £35 10s. The Drumlaurig herd of the Duke of Buccleuch came second to Tarbreoch. It was represented by ten bulls, and amongst them were found the second and third prize winners. The former, Sir Duncan 5903, was sold for £26 10s., and the latter, McDuff 5905, for £22. The best of the remaining Drumlaurig bulls were sold for £21, £23 10s. and £24. Mr. James Henderson, Dykehead, Dumfries, got £31 and £19 for the fifth and a commended bull, respectively, and Mrs. Fraser, Glaisfers, got £25 for the sixth bull. These prices show that good bulls of the Galloway breed can be grown to good profit, but the unfortunate tail of cattle shown at the 1894 sale reduced the average somewhat seriously.

Tuberculosis and its connection with the diseases of the human family have been brought prominently before the public in a lecture delivered in Dumbarton by Principal McCall. Too little attention has been paid to this disease in the past, and now that the sanitary authorities in our large towns are refusing to allow carcasses affected with the disease to be sold in any form as food, the farmer is beginning to realize that he may lose money, and indeed with many the potential mood is unnecessary, for they have lost money by it. The butchers suffer most. Carcasses affected with the disease are so difficult to detect before death, that many a time the butcher knows nothing about the disease being in the carcass until after the price has been paid for it and the animal slaughtered. The sanitary inspectors then swoop down on him, condemn the carcass as unfit for human food, and he loses the whole. This is a bad state of matters, but worse remains, for it is generally agreed that if it is deleterious to eat tuberculous flesh, to drink tuberculous milk is much worse. What is proposed is, that farmers and all interested should agitate to have tuberculosis scheduled the same as pleuro-pneumonia is, and that compensation be paid for every animal slaughtered. Until this is

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