

Action in the Draught Horse

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There are men to be found (and plenty of them) who claim that at the present time the quality of action in the draught horse is very much overestimated, that it serves no useful purpose and is simply more or less of a fad. They argue that the most desirable quality in such a horse is his ability to move heavy loads, that in the performance of his ordinary work he should never be asked to trot any way and consequently it makes little difference whether he extends his front feet in a straight line or rolls them in or out, whether he goes with his hocks well together or wide apart so long as he performs his work in an efficient manner. Now, while there may be an element of truth in these claims, there is another side to the question.

Every competent horseman knows that there is a well established type for each kind of horse and the nearer a horse approaches to this type the closer he is to perfection. Experience also teaches that the closer an animal approaches to perfection in the conformation the more likely he is to have good action; in other words that poor action is the result of poor conformation and that good action may be expected where we find good conformation. This article, however, is not intended to argue the point, but rather to look at the subject as we find it.

ACTION HAS VALUE

The man who has a draught horse to sell will soon find out that it makes a great difference in the value of the animal whether its action be good or bad. In judging of the action of a horse the experienced horseman can form a fairly accurate idea by watching how he stands. Viewed from in front the fore feet should extend straight ahead and not point either in or out. If the toe turns in like a pigeon the foot will be rolled out when extended. If the toe turns out like a man when standing the foot will be rolled inwards and he will probably interfere. Viewed from behind the hocks should be close together and the legs equidistant apart down to the pastern. Some horses stand with the hocks well together and the pasterns wide apart which formation is known as "cow-hocked," others just the opposite, hocks wide and pasterns close; in either case the animal cannot be a good mover.

ATTRACTIVE ACTION

When in motion at either the trotting or walking gait the front feet should be extended in a straight line, the knees should be well bent, the foot lifted well up from the ground and show the whole of the shoe at each step, with a brisk, prompt, vigorous way of going which is so attractive to horsemen and which adds so much to the value of the animal.

Viewed from behind the hocks should always be close together whether standing, walking or trotting. A horse which goes with his hocks wide cannot by any possibility even be considered anything but a bad actor. In fact, it can be laid down as a rule that a horse cannot go with his hocks and pasterns too close unless he interferes. Compare a gait such as described above with the horse that goes slouching and shambling along trailing his feet through the dust and tripping over the slightest obstruction and you can readily see why the one has a much higher market value than the other.

CHOOSE HORSES OF GOOD ACTION

The breeder may rest assured that whatever his own private opinion on the subject may be it will pay him to produce the horse with attractive action. In the selection of stallions it is of the utmost importance to choose only good actors that have a prompt, vigorous, energetic way of going even though they may be a little deficient in weight. While, everything else being equal, the heavier a draught horse is

the more valuable he is, it is a safer proposition to breed to an 1,800 lb. horse of good quality rather than to one which would weigh a ton but is of poor quality. Get weight with quality if you can, but never sacrifice quality for weight.

There never was a time when the farmers of this country had brighter prospects in the raising of draught horses than the present. The man with a good well bred mare who uses good judgment in selecting a sire need have no fear of the result so far as the market for his produce is concerned.

Seed from the Alfalfa Plant

Hy. Glendinning, Ontario Co., Ont.

Alfalfa for seed is quite profitable in some seasons. There is however more uncertainty about the crop than with a crop of seed from either red or alsike clover.

The conditions under which alfalfa seed is generally profitably produced are: First, the field



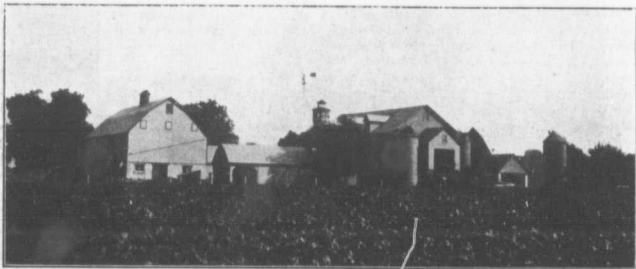
The "Golden-Hoofed" Animals of the Farm

The illustration herewith shows a large flock of sheep that were raised in the northern part of Peterboro Co.—Photo by Mary A. Hales.

should have been at least two or three years in alfalfa before attempting to raise seed. Secondly, the seed is generally secured from the second cutting. The first cutting should have been made not later than the middle of June.

While alfalfa is a very rapid grower, it is a very slow plant to mature seed. If the first crop is cut about the middle of June, it will take until the last of September or October for the seed to properly ripen. This brings it into the time when we may expect frost.

The first crop if left for seed often produces a fine yield. I fear that there will be some dis-



A Rear View of the Farm Buildings at the Lakeview Stock Farm

For description of these buildings read the article on page 7.—Photo by an Editor of Farm and Dairy.

appointed men this season who are attempting to grow alfalfa seed. I have seen some fields left for seed after cutting the first crop from a new field of alfalfa. There is a good bloom but very little sign of seed. The young plants have not the vigor to produce seed. It takes two or three years to mature the plant for profitable seed production.

The question is often asked: "Will the plant die, as will red clover, after it produces seed?" My answer is: No, alfalfa being a perennial crop production does not kill it. The heaviest crop of alfalfa that I ever grew was the year following a crop of seed.

Protection of Sheep against Dogs

J. P. Johnston, Middlesex Co., Ont.

There has been a great deal of trouble taken of late to prevent the spread of hydrophobia. The edict has gone forth in certain districts, that all dogs be muzzled. This was a wise step. Dr. Osier in speaking of hydrophobia says: "In North Germany it is relatively rare, owing to the wise provision that all dogs must be muzzled. In England the muzzling order has been followed by a complete disappearance of the disease." Muzzling means a great deal of inconvenience to the owners of dogs, but the protection of the human race is essential.

There is a two fold benefit derived from preventing the canines from running at large. Besides protection from hydrophobia, sheep would be protected from those ravages which are so fatal to a successful flock. The value of sheep cannot be well estimated. For besides the direct money returns derived from them, there are many other valuable assets—as cleaning the land of weeds and improving the fertility of the soil.

It is only right that a plea be made for the protection of these silent friends of the farmer. One only requires to watch a flock, that has been "worried" by dogs, to have his sympathies aroused. One night the writer went out to watch his sheep. They had been chased and bitten by dogs. Taking his stand beneath the shade of a large tree the owner watched the sheep. It was pitiful to see them. They would stand in the shadow of the tree and look out into the moonlight, when they thought there was no danger they would venture a little from their cover, but at the slightest alarm they would run back to the shadow of the tree and stand listening. This continued till two o'clock.

A man could not watch this dumb fear so long and not swear vengeance on their cowardly enemy. For while people were peacefully sleeping these defenceless creatures were passing the night in agonizing fear. But the waiting snore came to an end. The sheep began to sniff the air, then huddle. There could be seen a long black object approaching stealthily along the fence. Then the sheep took fright and fled in a panic, as a large black dog bounded out after them. But he was to be checked in his one-sided

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