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"THE PROFESSION WHICH I HAVE EMBRACED REQUIRES A KNOWLEDGE OF EVERYTHING"

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The Belgian Horse

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IN ORDER that the student in Animal Husbandry may become a reasonably good judge of live stock he must first, through actual contact with the various classes, types and breeds, become familiar with the desired characteristics of each. Reading is valuable and no student ever does too much of it, but practice is better and no one gets too much of this.

The Belgian horse, as all readers know, belongs to the draft group and so must conform to the type which we look for in draft horses intended for heavy work. Draft horses should be built for the draft business. Hence we must look for size and weight—massiveness. The heavier the horse is the better, provided he has quality with his great size and here is where the fine points of breeding come in. The real trick is to get that combination of size and quality desired. Overlarge horses are very often rough and ungainly while those of highest quality generally lack substance. However, the value of a heavy drafter, particularly of such a breed as the Belgian is placed very largely according to the size and massiveness of the animal. Weight, properly carried, means power and power is the draft horse's only reason for existence. Look for size in the Belgian.

The typical Belgian is a very massive animal. He is fairly short and extremely compact. Every good horse is short on top. Horsemen like to see close-coupled

drafters with heavy muscling apparent throughout. The Belgian of the best type is a short-topped, thick, closely coupled horse with heavy muscling apparent on all corners of his thick-set body. While weight and thickness count most, quality must not be overlooked. Of recent years Belgian breeders have been paying a little more attention to this point. Smooth, flat, clean bone is desired and plenty of it. The light-boned horse rarely carries sufficient weight and draft power. Very coarse joints are objectionable and the hair should be fine in quality.

In action a bold, free movement is looked for in all draft horses. At the walk or trot the horse should go straight and true lifting his feet well off the ground, showing the sole of the foot while in the air, and placing it down squarely and without a stilty or stubbing movement. The knee should be well thrown forward and the hock neatly picked up and flexed well under the body. Action counts considerably in all draft breeds but the student will notice a certain lack of snap in that of many Belgians as compared with our best Clydesdales, for instance. The Belgian is slightly inclined to be sluggish in movement in keeping with his extremely massive body and his great weight. No other breed carries so much weight in as small a space.

Belgian horses have comparatively