

The Breeding and Management of Clydesdales at Home.

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Clydesdales are bred in almost every part of Scotland, from the Mull of Galloway to Cape Wrath, and from Ardnamurchan Point, on the Atlantic, to Fife Ness, on the German Ocean. Although our country is small, the temperature within these limits varies greatly—thanks to that mysterious affair known as the Gulf Stream—consequently there is a big difference between the methods pursued in the various districts of the country. Brood mares are the foundation of the stud, and these may be divided into three classes: Those kept for breeding purposes only; those kept partly for breeding and partly for the performance of the daily routine work of the farm; and those kept for exhibition and breeding purposes, by no means an easy combination to work successfully.

Dealing with the first class, breeders generally try to keep the mares outside all the year round. This is possible in most districts, and cold is not nearly so detrimental to health as rain. The dividing line between wintering out and wintering in is not temperature, but climate. The cheapest way to keep a breeding stud of this kind is to give them the run of stretches of old pasture, well sheltered, and during winter let them have in addition an allowance of about 40 pounds of oats per week mixed with chopped oat-straw, a few swedish turnips in the forenoon, a pailful of boiled feed, say turnips, cut hay and bran, in the afternoon, and as much oat-straw as they can eat. This was the system followed in the old Keir stud, and it was successful in the maintenance of a high birth-rate. In 1887, 28 mares were served, and the result was 20 foals; in 1888, 29 mares were served, and there was 19 foals; and in 1889, 32 mares were served, and there were 18 foals. Where the fields are unsheltered it is customary to have open sheds in the corners of the fields, in which the animals are fed, and where they may take shelter from the blast. As a rule, however, unless a bar be placed across the entrance, as is done in some cases, the stock prefer to be outside in all weathers. Fife-shire boasts one of the best Clydesdale studs in Scotland—that of Sir John Gilmour, Bart., at Montrave, 550 feet above sea level. The winter is protracted, and east winds prevail during the earlier months of the year. The mares are left entirely to the freedom of their own will in the matter of taking shelter, with the result that they prefer to defy the elements. During winter they are fed twice daily with a total of about fourteen pounds per diem, the constituents being bruised oats, chopped hay, and a few raw swedes. Rock salt should always be kept in front of the mares, so that they may lick it when feeding.

The number of studs of mares kept solely for breeding purposes is not increasing in Scotland, and the second class of brood mares is by far the most numerous. Scots farms, as compared with Canadian homesteads, are of small extent, but on a very large number of them a foal, or it may be three or four foals, are bred annually from the mares which do the ordinary work of the farm. On a large farm, where this system is pursued, the mares in foal while working are allowed about 168 lbs. of bruised oats to the pair per week, with a small allowance of swedes, and good hay in abundance. It is customary in some cases—it may be in most—to give each mare about 2 ozs. of Epsom salts every Saturday evening during winter, and when foaling date comes in sight more bran and linseed is given than at an earlier date. Breeders are unanimous that mares in foal should not be put into cart yoke after they have reached half way in pregnancy, and even when put between the shafts at an earlier stage they should not be "hacked." The "backing" movement appears to have a tendency to cause them to abort. This is a good ration for a mare working up to within a week or ten days of her foaling date: One pound oats, one-half pound barley, one pound bran, one pound bruised oats, one pound cut hay and straw, with a few turnips and a little salt and treacle, three times a day. It is a moot point amongst breeders whether they should allow their mares to become fat when in pregnancy. A good deal depends on the means employed to keep them in condition. A prominent breeder in Galloway used to keep his mares in very high condition. They were regularly wrought on the farm, and the owner had less deaths at foaling time than most of his neighbors. During pregnancy the mares are fed on bruised oats and linseed cake, with a very few swedes, and good hay or straw in abundance. In six years in this small stud, where 31 mares treated in this way were served, 29 produced foals. Only one foal died at birth, and twins were in one case dropped which lived for six weeks and then died. Given steady, cautious work and careful handling, breeding mares are all the better for being liberally fed. Near to Glasgow much heavy carting of manure from the city is done, and the allowance per week for each horse or mare in a farm stud is three bushels of bruised oats, Indian corn and cut hay, in the

proportion of two bushels (about 70 pounds) oats to one bushel Indian corn. The boiling of food is not now generally approved, and the health of the stock is, as a rule, much better without it. On an Aberdeenshire farm work horses and mares are fed six times a day—5 a. m., mash consisting of 2½ pounds oats, 3½ pounds bran; 5.45 a. m., 2 pounds oats; 11 a. m., 2½ pounds oats; noon, 2½ pounds oats; 6 p. m., 2½ pounds oats and 3½ pounds bran in a mash, as in the morning; 8 p. m., 8 pounds raw turnips. Hay is given without stint as an accompaniment.

Show mares are ticklish animals to handle, and many a hundred pounds has been lost in the vain endeavor to obtain living, healthy foals from mares kept for exhibition purposes. Suppose a man wants to show his mare as in foal at the H. & A. S. show in July, 1906, he should begin now by keeping her in good healthy, thriving condition, and have her stunted early in spring. Once he is sure she is safe in foal, he should not rush the feeding, but keep her going on steadily, and, in particular, avoid undue excitement or over-feeding about the tenth or eleventh week, when there appears to be a natural tendency to abort. After this is past she may get about 16 to 20 pounds of food per day, consisting of bruised oats and cut hay, oatmeal at night, wet, and well mixed with bran and linseed, and sometimes treacle. The philosophy of success in feeding brood mares in foal is summed up in a sentence—"Keep the bowels open." A successful exhibitor of this class of stock keeps his mare by herself in a small paddock, well sheltered and well watered. She gets five meals a day, which is quite as good as comes the way of a saloon passenger on an Atlantic liner. The diet is: 5 a. m., boiled or steamed mash, consisting of cut straw, bran, turnips, beans, treacle, and about a wine-glassful of linseed oil; 10 a. m., cut oat-sheaf mixed with bruised oats; 1 p. m., drink consisting of peas, meal, oil-cake meal, treacle and bran; 5 p. m., same as 5 a. m.; and 8 p. m., same as 10 a. m. Highly-fed mares should not be allowed to run out at night: they are more ready to catch chills. But in plain English, the game of trying to breed and exhibit Clydesdale mares in foal is not worth the candle. Sometimes show animals of either sex or age are troubled with swelling of the limbs, or "itch." The late Lawrence Drew had a useful recipe for the disorder: One gallon of pure train-oil, and one bottle of spirits of tar, mixed with a few handfuls of sulphur until the whole is brought to the consistency of cream. Before application see that the parts affected are well washed with soap and water. After a mare has foaled she should be "sheeted" for a few days, to prevent chills, and on no account should she be turned out to graze while hoarfrost appears among the grass.

Young stock will be of increasing interest in Canada now that so many breeding fillies have been imported. Foals here are generally weaned when from four to six months old. In the best breeding districts the second week in October is not an uncommon weaning date. The best way to wean a foal is to hand-feed the dam for about a fortnight before with bruised oats and cut straw and hay. The foal learns to eat out of its dam's trough, and when the weaning day ar-

rives it is not left to starve, but soon gets accustomed to a diet with which it is already partially familiar. In some cases mare and foal are grazed for a week or ten days in a field of young grass in which it is intended that the foal should be wintered. When the critical moment arrives the mare is led quietly out and the foal kept at a distance from the fence. This is a course which is only possible where fences are up to the mark. The more common way is to keep the foal inside for a week or ten days after the dam has been removed. The diet during this imprisonment may consist of a little porridge, mixed with bran and sweetened with treacle. The allowance should be limited at each meal, but these meals should recur at frequent intervals. The next development may take the form of bruised oats, mixed with bran and cut hay, and dampened with treacle and water. A small supply of good hay should be always at hand. After being turned out to graze, foals in most parts of Scotland are kept outside day and night in paddocks with sheds where they may take shelter if so minded. They should be fed four times daily during winter on a combination consisting of oats, cut hay, bran and treacle, steamed, and allowed to settle into a kind of cake, which may be cut up into desired quantities. Foals and yearlings should receive their food in a rough, open state, and free from undue richness. Foals intended for the show-ring in the following spring or early summer get liberal feeding in long troughs placed in the fields where they graze, and they are most successful in the show-ring when run out in all weathers. Galloway breeders are most successful in this department. They do not believe in the boxing system at weaning, but make it their business to see that their foal never loses flesh, but goes forward all the time. Such foals get about 12 pounds each per day of bruised oats and linseed cake, divided into two equal diets, and when one year older the same treatment is given, the quantity being increased by about two pounds per day overhead. A fixed daily diet in one stud is 2 pounds oats, ½ pound maize, ½ pound peas, and ½ pound bran, all bruised and mixed with cut hay.

Young stallions, of necessity, receive different treatment from that meted out to the fillies. Increasing numbers of colt foals are bought up, either privately or at the autumn auction sales, by those who make a specialty of bringing out such stock. After coming home to their new quarters such colts may be put out to graze in a small paddock, and receive a daily ration of bruised oats, cut hay and linseed cake, to the extent of from 12 to 16 pounds per head daily. This may be given in three diets of equal parts. Another daily ration at this stage is 10 pounds bruised oats, cut hay and bruised maize, or, as it is called, "chop," with 6 pounds carrots, fed in three equal diets. During the ensuing four months of summer no hand feeding is given, except to show colts. At the close of that summer the youngsters should be boxed, each having a box and small exercising paddock to himself. During this second winter of their existence such colts may receive 15 pounds chop and 9 pounds carrots per head daily, with an evening mash of boiled beans, peas, oats, rye and Indian corn, mixed with bran



From a painting by Paul Wickson.

"Dinner Time."