

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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of the "Farmer's Advocate" to advise all farmers to go in for pure-bred pedigreed stock, and we do not believe it would be the best thing for all, but we know of no other way of improving the productive qualities of either milk or meat making animals than by the use of pure-bred males of the special milk or meat producing breeds, the weeding out of the unprofitable members of the herd, and the substitution of such as will give a fair profit for the food consumed over and above that required for subsistence. And there is now little excuse for failing to avail oneself of this means of improvement, as good male animals of the improved breeds may be purchased at prices little above what they will sell for to the butcher after their term or service, or their services may be secured for a moderate fee, such as any farmer can well afford to pay.

There is at present a good supply of pure-bred males for sale in the hands of breeders, and the prices asked, as a rule, are not out of proportion to the cost of the stock from which they have been bred and the expense of raising them, for it should be remembered that in the case of the beef breeds the calf has had the whole milk of a cow for a season, while in all breeds somewhat expensive feeding must be practiced in order to have the animals in attractive condition, as buyers will take them only when in good flesh.

The lessons of the stock-yards and produce markets constantly teach that only the best quality brings the best price, and in practice it costs little more, if, indeed, as much, to produce the best quality as it does to raise an inferior grade. There need be no fear of over-production of the best, and we all know that the inferior often goes begging for buyers while the superior finds ready purchasers at any time. To those who have resolved on improving their stock, we would say, the sooner a commencement is made the better, and no more favorable time is likely to present itself than now.

HORSES.

Retention of the Meconium in Foals.

At birth the intestines of a foal contain a considerable quantity of faeces, of a dark, almost black and tarry appearance, existing in lumps of various sizes, and about the consistence of putty. This is called the "meconium," and is formed during foetal life. It is necessary that this material be expelled, else the little animal will soon become ill with what is usually called constipation. The fact in many cases is, the meconium has passed backwards by the normal peristaltic movements of the bowels, the rectum has become filled, and efforts to expel it are made, but it exists in such large lumps the foal has not sufficient expulsive force to overcome the resistance offered by the sphincter muscles of the anus, and hence is not able to defecate. The symptoms presented are as follows: A few hours after birth the foal shows symptoms of uneasiness, elevates his tail and makes vain efforts to defecate; as time passes the symptoms become more marked and continuous. After a time he refuses to take nourishment, lies a good deal, rolls, lies on his back, rises to his feet, takes the natural position for defecation, and makes expulsive efforts; lies down again, etc. If relief be not afforded, inflammation of the bowels will occur, followed quickly by death. This condition is the cause of death in a large percentage of foals every year, and is more likely to be noticed in early foals than in those of mares that have been on grass for some time before parturition. Irrational treatment in such cases is liable to be followed by serious and often fatal results. When the cause of the symptoms is understood, we can readily see that the ordinary practice of administering purgatives is irrational and harmful. We know that the trouble is the meconium exists in the rectum in such large lumps the foal is unable to force them through the anus; we also know that a purgative acts upon the anterior intestines, both small and large, but has very little, if any, action upon the contents of the rectum, whose function is simply to act as a reservoir for the faeces until it becomes filled, when, by what is called a reflex nervous action, its muscles contract, and this, aided by a contraction of the muscles of the abdomen, forces the contents out of the anus. We can therefore see that if we, by administering purgative agents, stimulate peristaltic action of the anterior intestines, and also render their contents somewhat or quite fluid, and in the meantime do not remove what may be called a mechanical obstruction to their exit, we complicate matters rather than relieve. The newly-born foal, while probably quite smart and active, is, at the same time, very delicate and very susceptible to the action of medicinal agents, and even small doses of purgative medicines are very liable to set up diarrhoea, even when the meconium is not retained, and diarrhoea very quickly weakens the foal, and is often difficult if not impossible to arrest. We should, if possible, avoid giving purgative agents to foals, and it is very seldom a foal requires them, especially when the first milk ("the colostrum") of the dam has been taken. This is really not milk, but a clear, viscid fluid of a laxative nature. In cases where there has been an escape of milk from the mammae for some days previous to birth, as sometimes occurs, it may be well to give to the foal a small dose of laxative medicine, as an ounce of castor oil, to take the place of the natural laxative that has escaped prior to birth, but in the majority of cases this is not necessary, while in no case should more drastic purgatives, as aloes or large doses of linseed or other oils, be given. The ordinary practice of giving a laxative to all foals as soon as born cannot be too strongly condemned. Of course there are rare cases in which it is necessary to give laxative agents, but they are few, and when one exists great care should be taken, and small doses of castor or raw linseed oil be given. In cases of retention of the meconium, mechanical rather than medical treatment should be adopted. The nail of the fore finger should be trimmed, in order to prevent scarification; the finger then oiled, and introduced into the rectum, and all the meconium that can be reached should be removed. Any person who has never done this will be surprised at the quantity he can generally get. As the contents of the rectum are removed, a fresh supply will be forced backwards from the intestines, and in some cases a couple of pints or more will pass. After all reachable has been removed, it is good practice to inject into the rectum six or eight ounces of a mixture of equal parts raw linseed oil and warm water, or of soapy warm water. This operation should be repeated every four or five hours, until it is noticed that the contents of the rectum are yellow, which indicates that the meconium has all passed and the

faeces formed from nourishment taken after birth have reached the rectum. When this condition, which usually appears in about 24 hours after birth, though in rare cases much longer, has been reached there is little danger of constipation. In fact, while in many cases the foal can expel the meconium without extraneous interference, it is good practice to anticipate trouble in all cases, and give the described attention to the meconium. This will save the foal the necessary expulsive efforts to expel the faecal matter, and thereby conserve its strength. Another point worthy of attention, the neglect of which sometimes is responsible for serious losses, is to observe whether the foal urinates in the proper manner. In rare cases we find a false membrane occluding the exit from the bladder, and where such exists of course urine cannot pass. If ineffectual efforts to urinate be noticed, this condition should be suspected, and the assistance of a veterinarian, or other expert, should be secured to pass a small catheter, break down the membrane, and thereby allow the escape of urine from the bladder. When this is not done, unless the urine escapes through the urachus (a foetal canal leading from the bladder to the navel opening, and which should become obliterated at birth), which may have remained pervious, there will soon be inflammation, and probably rupture of the bladder, which of course will prove fatal.

"WHIP."

Fitting the Collar.

The collar should fit so snugly that there can be no slipping and sliding over the shoulder side-wise, and the attachment of the traces should be so adjusted that they will cause no sliding up and down, or any uneven or intermittent pressure on any part of the shoulder. If the top of the collar is not of a shape to grasp the neck firmly, a stiff pad that can be fitted to the neck should be used. There should be no rubbing of the collar over the top of the neck; the latter should be grasped firmly, and move with the lateral movement of the collar. As the horse moves forward, first one side and then the other of the collar is thrust forward of the other, the load pulling back on it produces a sliding of the collar over the shoulder first to one side and then the other, provided there is room in the collar for it. If you will stand to the side of a horse and watch the movement of his shoulder as he walks, you will notice that the upper end of the shoulder-blade has no fixed position, but moves backward and forward. As the upper end moves in one direction, the lower end moves in the opposite direction, the fixed point or center of motion being midway between the two ends of the shoulder blade. It is very important that the point of attachment of the trace be directly over this center of motion. When it is so placed the rotation of the shoulder about this point is not interfered with; when it is placed too high the upper end of the shoulder can move forward only by pushing the load out of the way, and the alternation of pressure on the sloping surface causes a certain amount of rubbing, even if the collar fits well, and a sore at the upper end of the shoulder blade is likely to be the result. Placing the attachment too low does the same for the point of the shoulder. In addition, either improper attachment greatly increases the amount of work the horse must perform, as the load must be pushed out of the way at every step. This is a very prolific source of stiffness in the fore quarters.—[Prairie Farmer.]

Management of the Foal.

Once the act is over, let the foal shuffle into life in his own weak and helpless way. Let him for the present be the staggering Bob of the loose box, in which there is no such thing as a manger for him to creep under to his own injury, nor are there any projections, ragged hooks, or nails, nor anything whatever except the framework of a well-floored square or rectangular room. Let the foal find out his own way of sucking the mare. If the attendant attempts to assist the foal the mare will utterly fail, because no one can bend the neck of a foal into the required position, still less can he hold it there during the time of sucking. As the foal strengthens, he will in a few hours so worry for the milk that even a ticklish mare will eventually become so accustomed to his movements and his frolics that she must give way to him. If no one startles the mare she will not tread on him, even accidentally, nor injure him in any way. Here and there a mare will obstinately refuse to allow a foal to suck, and then the attendant should put a blinker halter on her, and hold her during the perseverance of the strong and determined foal. This should be done very frequently during both day and night, or the desirable approach to nature will not be attained. Young, vigorous mares have a copious flow of milk, quite out of all comparison to the size of the udder. Bad milkers must be supplemented by cows' milk and sugar. When the foal is three days old, both it and the dam usually understand each other sufficiently well to be left entirely alone.—[Ex.]

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