

The Horse to Breed and How to Breed it

There is perhaps as little or even less attention given to horse breeding by the average farmer than to any other branch of his business; and yet, in the opinion of the writer there is no other industry in which a hundred acre farm can derive more pleasure from and which will give greater returns. Horses are, and have for some time past, been selling for good prices, and the indications are that all the horses that our farmers can raise will be required at prices that will pay them well provided they raise the right kind. What I mean by "the right kind" is, a first class horse of whatever breed you have a preference for, and that the market demands. It would not do if every person were engaged in breeding one class. We have a market for the heavy draft, carriage, roadster, and saddle horse, and each of these can be bred with profit on our Canadian farms; but, as a farmer, I am compelled to say that the heavy draft horse is the most likely to prove profitable for the average farmer to raise. There are several reasons why I make this statement.

(1) The heavy mare is most suitable for the average work on the farm.

(2) The heavy colt can be broken into work and will earn his keep at a younger age.

(3) The work on the farm is well suited to fit a heavy horse for future usefulness, when he is sold to go into our large towns and cities for dray purposes.

(4) There are very few farmers that have time and experience to raise more than one out of ten light horses that are really first class and even then he is not likely to get what it is worth; but some dealer is likely to reap much the greater profit.

SELECTING THE SIRE.

What is wanted in a draft horse is size and quality combined. There are some of our breeders who lose sight of quality in order to get size and others sacrifice size in order to secure quality; but in order to attain the best results, it is necessary to have a fair amount of both. I always select a horse with a good broad forehead, a bright clear eye, a nicely set ear, broad open jaws set well apart, and not a meaty but a clean cut throat, neck well arched and carried down well into the shoulders, a good depth from bottom of neck to bottom of chest, forelegs well set back under the body and well muscled, chest prominent broad and sturdy bone, nice silky hair, moderately long, sloping pastern, good feet, withers well carried back, good spring of rib, strong back, nicely turned quarters well muscled down clean, broad, strong hook; a good walker, picking up every foot squarely, and setting it down squarely.

We will take it for granted that you have a good mare and use such a sire as I have described, and that you are producing the feed on your own farm, as all Canadian farmers should.

CARE OF THE HORSE.

Then a word about the care; it is a great mistake to overfeed or pamper a horse beyond a certain stage. I believe in always breeding a sire mare. There is no reason why a mare if properly hitched and properly driven should not work right up to the time of foaling; in fact, I have taken the harness mare to allow time to foal and have never had a loss by so doing. If the mare is to foal early before grass time, give her

a few boiled outs and a liberal supply of bran with a little lax seed occasionally. If she is getting plenty of grass, nothing of this kind will be needed. After foaling, ordinary feed will do—good oats, bran and well-cured hay. Never allow the foal to follow the mare when working, but keep it in a well built roomy box. Never expect the foal to eat with the mare, but always provide a small box in the opposite corner to feed the foal in. Teach the foal to eat early. A few ground oats and bran with a little milk is a desirable ration. The foal will not take much at first, but will soon show a readiness for hearty meals. In the early part of the season, it will always pay to allow the foal to suck sometimes during the forenoon and also in the afternoon, giving the mare a drink and a few oats to eat while the foal is sucking. It will benefit both the mare and the foal. Accustom the colt to being handled by leaving a halter on and occasionally taking hold of it when feeding the mare. Never wean the foal too quickly but by degrees. It is best to keep the mare and foal to take two or three weeks to do it. Feed foal often, both during the time of and after weaning. Never allow two foals to feed out of the same box. One is sure sooner or later to become master and secure the lion's share. Give the foal first-class care throughout the winter. Always be careful to give mares plenty of exercise in the late fall and winter after the work on the farm is done.—John Gardhouse in Farmers' Institute Report.

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Selecting a Stallion for Breeding

Dr. A. S. Alexander, one of the most reliable and sound authorities on the horse to the south of the line, gives the following timely article on horse breeding:

The time is at hand when the farm mares will be mated and it has never before is it important to select a suitable sire. There is a pressing demand for heavy draft seedlings of good quality, weight 1,600 pounds and up, and no reason to conclude that the demand will not continue for many years to come. In breeding this year decide not only upon the breed most suitable in every way, but determine that this breed will be stuck to faithfully until at least five top crosses have been made. Where this is done the resultant animals will be practically pure bred and after that standard has been attained no retrogressive step should be taken—no outcrossing to an alien breed be permitted. In examining the stallion to be used do not look at his pedigree alone. That may look attractive by reason of the gaudy seals attached. Look at the horse first and the pedigree second. See that he is sound in all important essentials, especially that he is free from the following hereditary or transmissible unsoundness: Roaring, heaves, grease, stringhalt, chorea, spavin, sidebone, ringbone, curb and eye troubles. See, too, that he is really a draft horse, not merely a large horse made to weigh a ton by reason of the fat upon his ribs. Figure out what he would weigh in an ordinary condition and then decide that if comparatively thin he should tip the scales at not less than 1,800 pounds. Be sure that he has not only bulk, a well rounded hindquarters, a good girth and attractive head and neck, but likewise grand quality, ample clean flat bone, well defined strong

tendons and fully developed, well formed, sound, tough feet. Avoid flat, shelly, brittle feet, with evidences of sidebone, convex sole, rings or cracks. This is all important. The feet must be ample, of good shape and sound, else we cannot expect to breed from the stallion horses for hard work that will stand up to the test, even upon hard pavements in the city. Prefer, too, the horse that is well rounded in body, but at the same time possesses a good neck, good, long and strong muscles at shoulder, back and hip. Then see to it that he is a free, brisk walker and trotter, fully flexing his joints, carrying his legs straight forward, with light line and turning up his shins both fore and aft so that the soles are shown to the observer. It is necessary that he should be a brisk walker, for heavy draft horses do their work at a walk and should get over the ground as rapidly as possible when drawing a heavy load. It is necessary that he should be able to trot freely and well, for the ability to trot imparts vigor, activity and soundness. If possible select a sire that has great individuality, type and character, as he will most probably produce more impressive progeny than a more ordinary stallion. Having selected such a sire, present it an insult to mate him with an old broken down unsound mare. It is necessary that both parents should be sound if we are to obtain sound offspring. It is not always the sire's fault that the foals are poor in quality, for the unsound mare will frequently counteract the good qualities of her superior mate. It is time to stop expecting the impossible in horse breeding. We should only expect superiority in the progeny of the legacy of superiority. We should not look for figs from thistles or sound foals from unsound parents. Both parents should be sound at least and unless they are sound the progeny will not be mated. We have already far too many nondescript, mongrel, misfit, unsound horses in the country. Why breed more of them?

Montreal Horse Show

Montreal's seventh annual horse show, held on May 8-12, was a success, both in attendance and the quality of the exhibits. The entries totaled 725. Horses from Ontario and other outside points were prominent among the exhibitors.

There was only a small representation of Clydesdale and Shire stallions. Messrs. R. Ness and Son, of Howick, Ont., had the grand champion in the splendid Clydesdale stallion Rejected, a notable winner at Toronto, Ottawa, and other shows.

There was a splendid turnout of pairs of heavy draft teams. Eleven pairs were shown at one time for inspection, all of them owned and used by Montreal firms.

The harness classes aroused the greatest enthusiasm. The local exhibitors had pitted against them Crow & Murray, of Toronto, and Mrs. Adam Beck's winning entry at Toronto. For the Governor-General's prize, Wild Apple, sired by Tom Flynn and exhibited by Wm. Newman, Outremont, Que., was placed first. Miss Wilkes, of Galt, was leading winner in the roadster, hunter and harness classes.

In the thoroughbred, standard bred and roadster classes there was a fair showing. For the best Hackney stallion, any age, Duke of Blackpoint, sire of Duke of Connaught, was the worthy Reginald, exhibited by Dr. John Watson, Howick, Que., was an easy winner.