

# The Colt's First Lessons

## His Future Usefulness Depends Largely on His Early Training

THE first thing in training a horse is to get his attention; second, make him understand what is wanted. The education of the horse is based on reward and punishment, and each should immediately follow the act.

The plan generally followed is to break the colt to being led and handled before it is weaned, and to break to harness between the ages of two and three years. Colts should not do heavy work until they are four years old and should be accustomed to it gradually.

Before a colt is broken to being led it should be taught to stand tied; this applies to unbroken horses of all ages. To do this, put a strong halter on the colt; then take a rope about 14 feet long, double it, putting the loop under the horse's tail as a crupper, twist the two ends together about three times so the twisted rope lies on the colt's back a few inches ahead of the tail, then let one come forward on each side of the horse, and tie them together in front against the chest just tight enough so that it will not drop down; then run a surcingle loosely around the horse behind the withers, tying into it the crupper rope at both sides.

Have an additional rope about 12 feet long, run it through the halter ring, and tie it at the breast to the rope that forms the crupper. Tie the other end of the rope to a solid post, allowing about three feet of slack. Leave the colt tied for an hour. Another method is to have a loop in one end of the rope, run the lead strap through this loop, and tie it with a little slack to the rope that forms the crupper, the other end, of course, being tied to a solid post.

### Teach Him to Stand Tied

While tied the colt should be gentled and accustomed to being handled on both sides, on the hind parts, and on the legs. To do this, hold the headstall in one hand and with the other hand pet and rub the colt, first on the neck and head, then on the back and sides, and last on the legs. To gentle the hind parts take a stick about four feet long, wrap a gunny sack around one end, and tie it. Allow the colt to examine the stick with his nose, then rub it all over his body.

With this arrangement the colt's hind legs may be rubbed without placing one's self in danger of his heels. If he kicks at it do not hit him, but allow him to examine it again, and proceed as before. This lesson should continue until the colt will stand being approached from either side and rubbed all over. The second day he may be tied up again and further gentled with sacks, blankets and noises until he has no fear of them around him, under him or upon him.

Another method of gentling a horse is to tie the halter rope to

the tail. This forces him to go in a circle. When he gives in and stands quietly he may be harnessed, saddled, mounted, accustomed to strange sights and sounds, and handled with safety. This is one of the best aids in use in gaining a horse's submission.

The horse is now ready to lead. Loosen the rope from the post, step off from the horse, and

### Breaking the Colt to Drive

After the colt has been broken to lead he may be accustomed to the harness and trained to rein. The horse should never be hitched to a waggon or ridden before he is broken to drive in the harness. He should be trained to answer the ordinary commands. In familiarizing the colt with bit and harness the "bitting harness," which

consists of an open bridle with a snaffle bit, check and side reins, and surcingle with crupper, may be used. This rigging is put on the colt, leaving the side and check reins comparatively loose, and he is turned loose in a small paddock for an hour.

The second lesson consists of teaching the colt the feeling of the reins, which may be tightened somewhat. The third day the driving reins may be used and the colt is taught to go ahead. Click to the colt, or tell him to "getup," use the whip, and let him know what is meant.

Both sides of the colt should be trained, as objects viewed from different angles may frighten him badly. Driving in a right and left circle will facilitate this training.

The next lesson consists in teaching the horse to answer the com-

mands of "Whos!" "Getup," and "Back."

After teaching the horse to go satisfactorily in the biting rig, the work harness with breeching can be substituted. The traces and breeching should be joined loosely together and gradually tightened as the work progresses, thus familiarizing the colt with the sensation of wearing the collar and breeching. He is then ready to be hitched to the waggon or cart, single or double. —Farmers' Bulletin 667, U. S. D. A.

### Horse Efficiency

By A. H. Denton

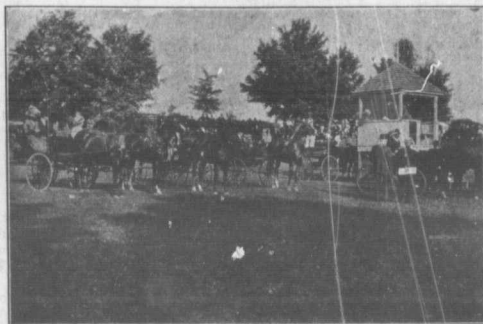
ONE of the most frequent sources of loss on the farm is an insufficient return from work horses.

Have you satisfied yourself on the following points?

Do your horses earn enough to pay for their feed and care, and enough to meet the interest, depreciation, and other expenses, as harness costs and shoeing?

It costs \$100 annually to keep the average horse, in Minnesota, but this horse works only a little more than three hours each working day. This makes the horse labor cost approximately 19 cents an hour.

Do you handle the horse labor on your farm so that the annual cost of keeping your horses is less than the average, or so that the number of hours worked is greater? Both methods will reduce the cost of horse labor. (Continued on page 9)



Placing the Carriage Classes at the Lanark Fair.

tell him to "come," following the command with a pull on the rope. As soon as the horse advances pet him, then step away and repeat. He will soon follow without the pull on the rope.

The next day the crupper should be put on at the beginning of the lesson, but should be discarded after a short workout and the halter alone used so that the colt will not depend on the crupper rope. These lessons should be continued until the colt leads satisfactorily.

To break to lead without crupper ropes use a strong halter with a lead rope. Step back about six feet from the colt, opposite his shoulders, clucking to him, and pull on the rope. The colt will be forced to take a couple of steps; reward him, cross in front to a similar position on the other side and repeat the command with a pull. Continue the lesson until the colt follows. Never pull straight ahead on the colt; he can outpull. Use diplomacy rather than force.



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