

THE HORSE.

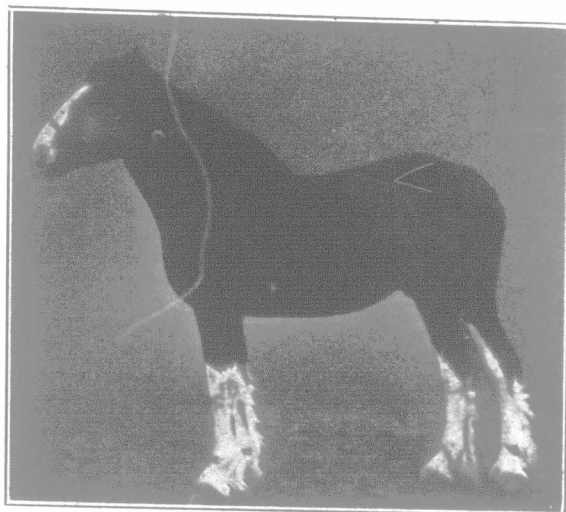
The Examination of Horses as to Soundness.

While the official examination of horses as to soundness is solely the province of the veterinarian, and his certificate alone is of value in courts of law, there is no reason why the ordinary horseman cannot attain reasonable skill. In the strict sense of the term, any abnormality is an unsoundness, but if this definition were always acted upon, very few horses would pass as sound, as there are few that are absolutely sound, that is, that do not present some abnormality—for instance, a scar, a few white hairs as a result of a sore shoulder or back, a slight enlargement, the result of an injury, a wart, etc., are abnormal. Hence the definition usually accepted and acted upon by veterinarians and courts of law is somewhat as follows: "An abnormality that interferes with, or is liable to interfere with the animal's usefulness is an unsoundness. Hence the man who passes judgment in regard to soundness must of necessity have a knowledge of the various diseases and abnormalities that impair the usefulness or value of a horse; he must also be able to discriminate between degrees of the same disease or abnormality, and decide whether that which exists should be considered serious or not. For instance, a small splint when not situated quite close to a joint is not usually considered sufficient to condemn a horse, while, if it be large, double or quite near a joint, it is more serious. Again, slight bursal enlargements in the region of the fetlocks (usually called wind-galls) are not considered serious, but if quite large and tense they certainly constitute unsoundness. In order that a man may be able to detect unsoundness, he must be perfectly familiar with the appearances of, and the sounds made by the organs when in a healthy state. This knowledge can be acquired only by actual and extensive observation. Theory is not sufficient here; he must have actual practice. For instance, a man may study the anatomy of the eye and be able to state or write an accurate description of the normal eye, and at the same time not be able to recognize a normal one at sight. Familiarity with the different appearances of the different organs, or the different appearances of the same organ, all within the region of soundness, is necessary to enable a man to detect disease when it is present. It must be remembered that there are many divergences or differences in appearances or conformation of the various organs, not constituting unsoundness. As an example, we might mention the hock. There is probably no part of the anatomy that admits of such varied conformations, and we might say roughnesses, due to what may be called hyper-development of the various bones, the relative position one bone bears to another, as regards angles, etc., and still be sound, as this joint. In fact, it often gives the most expert veterinarian trouble to decide whether or not the hock is sound; hence, not only in respect to this particular, but to a greater or less degree to all points, it is necessary that the prospective judge examine carefully the different normal conformations and appearances, in order to be able to detect abnormalities.

In examining a horse, we consider him both standing and in motion. We first examine him when standing, and in order to do so thoroughly we must be systematic. We start at the head on the near side. First pass the hand carefully over the poll and search for symptoms of existing or pre-existing poll evil. If there be swelling or soreness, we condemn him; and although neither be present, if there be scars or cavities that indicate that he has at some time been operated upon for this disease, we are justified in pronouncing him unsound; as, while in many cases a perfect cure has been effected, it is not unusual to have a recurrence of the disease months after an apparent cure has been effected, and where suspicion exists we are not justified in giving the horse the "benefit of the doubt." His ear, then the forehead and then eye should be examined for any abnormalities. The latter is a very important organ, and one in which disease may exist, even to cause total blindness, and still there be no apparent alteration of structure to attract the attention of the casual observer. In order to examine the eye it is necessary to stand the horse with his head in a clear light, but the sun must not shine either in the eyes of the horse or the examiner. Being familiar with the appearance of the healthy eye, we look carefully into his eye, and if we become suspicious that there is anything wrong, we make false motions to strike the face with our hand; if sight be normal he will draw his head away at each motion. We know that the pupil is quite elliptical in the normal eye, and when we see an eye in which it approaches the spherical, we suspect disease. We also know that the pupil dilates in darkness, and quickly contracts when the light strikes it, so if we are suspicious we can shade the eye with our hand to allow the pupil to dilate, then suddenly remove the hand and watch it contract. As contraction is very rapid, it requires quickness of sight to detect it, but when we see an eye in which the pupil remains quite large in a strong light, we may at once decide that it is diseased. If cataract be present, except in the early stages, we are able to detect it. When we cannot decide in the way mentioned, we take the horse into a darkened stall and examine with a candle, but this examination can be done successfully and satisfactorily only by a veterinarian. Passing from the eye, we look carefully for bony or other enlargements or malformation of the face and cheek. We then come to the nostril. We look carefully at the mucous membrane, in order to detect disease that alters its condition or appearance, as nasal gleet, influenza glands, etc. Then we reach the mouth, which should be carefully

examined. It is good practice to examine both sides of the mouth now, so that when we are examining the right side of the animal, we will not need to open the mouth. We look carefully at the incisor teeth to see that he is neither under-shot nor parrot-mouthed. While either of these conditions is more correctly termed a malformation than an unsoundness, it is a serious matter and must not be passed unnoticed. We find that either condition, when well marked, interferes more or less with the feeding abilities of the animal, and is often accompanied by an improper working together of the upper and lower molars. Hence we condemn a horse with a mouth of either kind. We also examine his incisors carefully to estimate age, as it is principally by the appearance of these teeth that we are able to judge. The molars indicate age until four years, but they are difficult to see, hence we depend largely upon the incisors. In cases of parrot-mouth or the reverse, the teeth do not undergo the normal wear, hence we cannot depend upon them. We should also examine the molars to see that there are none missing or decayed. The mucous membrane of the mouth and tongue should also be carefully observed for normal conditions.

(To be continued.) WHIP.



Denholmhill Prince.

A Clydesdale winner at several shows in 1919. Bred by W. W. Hogg, and sold to a Virginia breeder at a good figure.

LIVE STOCK.

Use some fly repellent on the stock.

Pastures in many localities are suffering from the drouth, and stock are not making desirable gains.

The Carpenter & Ross sale of 227 Shorthorns averaged \$1,425. This is considerably below the average made in 1919, when 172 head averaged \$2,142.

In the best herds there is bound to be a percentage of calves that should not be kept for breeding purposes. Inferior males calves should be altered.

Some breeders apparently lay a good deal of stress on those letters (Imp.) after a pedigree, but of what value are they if the animal hasn't individuality?

Already this season cattle have been seen racing wildly around the fields, evidently stampeded by flies. Shade and running water in the pasture field is an asset to the stock raiser.

Did you ever note the number of inferior herds seen on pasture during a day's trip across country? If the inferior grade or cross-bred was a good grade with character and quality, the returns from the herd would be considerably enhanced.

Just because wool prices are not equal to those of the past four years, some sheep owners talk about going out of the sheep business. They should think twice before acting upon such an impulse. What other class of stock gives equal returns for money invested?

The work of the spittle beetle is again noticed in some fields. This tiny black beetle sucks the juices from the grass plants and imbeds itself in a frothy mass on the side of the plant. Comparatively little injury is done, although stock apparently avoid feeding where the beetle is working extensively.

The movement now on foot to cope with and eventually to eliminate tuberculosis from our herds should have a direct bearing on the health of humans. Whole-hearted support should be rendered by Government, consumers, producers and packers. Disease-free herds is the goal towards which every producer should be working, and his efforts should be backed by the public.

Through an Order-in-Council the duty which has existed on cattle entering the Dominion from the United States has been removed until February 7, 1921. This is done to permit of re-stocking Canadian farms, principally in the Western Provinces, which have suffered from excessive drought during the past few years. It is claimed that the prospects for grass on the prairies is excellent and apparently there is a possibility of securing feeder cattle at a reasonable figure in the Western States.

Australian Notes.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

The United States Government has informed the Australian Government, in reply to an effort on behalf of the long-wool association, that the embargo against ruminants must stand against any country where the disease of pleuro-pneumonia exists. This means the veto against the introduction of any Australian live stock, which is considered to be unnecessarily cautious. It is considered that as sheep do not contract the disease, and doubtful if they would carry the germs at all, that the embargo could be quite safely waived. Even in horned cattle, which alone are liable to attack, the disease is quickly and safely treated by the inoculation if caught in time, by injecting in the butt of the tail some of the virus drawn from an affected beast.

The winter this year opened rather gloomily in Australia owing to the lack of copious rains. This is the third dry year in succession. Wide belts have for a long time been with practically no rain, while the specially favored coastal centres have only been living from hand to mouth. Should this winter continue in drought another quarter of the live stock will perish, increasing the total losses to one-half. In the grazing districts there are hundreds of miles without stock at all—either they have been removed or have perished.

Sir Joseph Carruthers, whose farm lands are in the 3,000-foot zone, has been conducting exhaustive trials with Canadian-bred wheats. He declares that the variety known as Ruby is the best he has ever tried. The specific advantages are extreme earliness, high yields, and splendid quality grain. It does not necessarily follow, however, that this wheat would be equally successful in the warmer belts.

While the war was running the British Government induced a number of Victorian farmers to grow flax at a guaranteed price of £170 a ton. At their request the growers were allowed to sell on the open market, when the extraordinary price of £325 a ton was reached. In addition the growers had a good asset in the seed, which is by reason of the impetus realizing high rates.

Owing to the high price of sugar the Victorian Government is guaranteeing 35s. a ton for beet, which is almost double that regarded as a payable price. The industry is not largely pursued, but its expansion now looks hopeful.

The Farmer's party, who hold the balance of power in the Federal Parliament, have carried a motion decreeing that so far as primary producers are concerned their income tax is to be based on a five-years' average. This is to minimize the effect of droughts.

An important discovery has been made in the commercialization of the great rabbit pest. Hitherto in the work of removing the fur in the hat industry the pelts were so destroyed as to possess no leather value. But by using a chemical solution this is now obviated, which means millions sterling a year, and thus easing the leather market.

Sydney, Australia.

J. S. DUNNET.

Our Scottish Letter.

May is ending. The latter weeks have been suitable for vegetation, but it has not been possible to make good the time lost in the earlier part of the season on account of the excessive rain. Taken all over the season of 1920 is to see late crops, and, unless Providence be kind, a late harvest. The grub has not been at work as in some years recently. Should there be warmth during the remainder of the season the crops should be up to a full average. The wheat crop is considerably less than it was in 1918 and 1919. This crop is not much grown in Scotland. Oats are our leading cereal. Work is being prosecuted with vigor, and on the whole the policy of "Ca canny" does not have many patrons amongst those in the ranks of agricultural labor.

Interesting literature is now appearing bearing on general agriculture. The Farmer's Club, London, is an institution before which from time to time important papers have been read. Recently there have been papers on Cockle Park pasture experiments and the making and storing of farmyard manure. Cockle Park is the Northumberland Experiment Station. It has become historical as the scene of a series of experiments in the reclamation of rough pasture on inferior land. Professor Douglas Gilchrist, who now controls the Station, reviewed the situation in a paper read to the Farmers' Club a month ago. The key to the success of the pasture there is found in an American formula "Phosphates are the key to Agriculture." The application of lime to bogland has been accompanied by the best results both in England and Ireland. By the use of basic slag which contains a limited quantity of lime, at Cockle Park the grazing season has been greatly prolonged; the grass land has been more than quadrupled in value; the bulk of the old land hay has been increased, and the quality improved by over twenty per cent. These results have been proved by demonstration at Cockle Park. In addition, it has been proved that mixed stock grazing—that is, grazing with bullocks, sheep and horses, gives the best results in respect of cleaning the pasture, and keeping the sole of grass level and sweet. The best means of improving moorland grazings are found in encouraging the growth of clover plants. By sowing wild white clover and plowing it down the fertility of the soil is enormously increased. Those who have followed this practice have found that the oat crop out of an old clover field is generally far too heavy. The white clover appropriates the nitrogen that is in the air and greatly enhances the fertility of the soil in which the nitrogen is buried.

Stock, especially pedigree stock, of all kinds continues to make phenomenally high figures. A dispersion sale of Shorthorns was held at North Loviston, Nigg,