

IDLE HORSES.

At this season of the year, when but little work can be done on the farm, the horses which are idle require more care than is usually bestowed on them. They should never be allowed to remain in the stable during the entire twenty-four hours; they should be turned out into the barn-yard for several hours daily, unless they can be exercised at light work. Over-feeding of idle horses, on the whole, produces more injurious effects than under-feeding, yet both extremes are to be avoided. Young colts will winter well on good hay, with an occasional feed of ground oats, carrots, or bran mash to prevent costiveness. They should, if possible, be kept in loose-boxes,—not more than two together. The feet require a good deal of care, they should be regularly pared down, made perfectly level, and prevented from getting long at the toe. Working horses whose feet have suffered from shoeing and hard roads can be very much benefited by having the shoes removed, and letting them run for the winter unshod. Unless the bone is diseased, corns and weak heels will recover, and the feet, with a little care and sensible management, will improve in every way.

Care should be taken that when a horse is only to be temporarily idle, the feed should be lessened, and soft diet substituted for the stimulating oats or corn.

DANGER FROM HIGH FEEDING IN IDLE HORSES.

(*Hæmaglobinæuria*.) Our readers are aware that for the maintenance of the animal body a regular supply of nutrient material must be supplied which is utilized by the digestive system of organs, and converted into such a fluid form as admits of its being absorbed and assimilated by the tissues.

In this way, growth and waste of tissue are provided for, and the size and vigour of the body maintained. It will readily be understood that there is a maximum and minimum limit to the quantity of nutrient material thus required and consumed.

This quantity and kind of food is usually well known to those whose business it is to feed horses—taught by experience—but it is a department of management which is not sufficiently studied by our agriculturists. Yet it is well known that those who are experts in feeding are the most successful. It must be borne in mind, that the more work a horse has to perform, the more nutrient material he will consume; and that horses at hard, regular, daily work, require a liberal allowance of nitrogenous food to compensate for loss of substance in the performance of their work. On the other hand, when idle, the demand is lessened, and capability of consumption is also decreased—consequently, if a horse in vigorous health is, from some cause or other, kept idle for several consecutive days, no change being made in the allowance of nitrogenous food, an accumulation of unabsorbed or unassimilated nitrogenous elements takes place, the blood is surcharged with nutriment, and a plethoric condition is the result.

In such cases the animal spirits are buoyant; when he is taken out, he is playful and inclined to go fast. However, this false animation does not last long—he goes probably half a mile, then he stops, perspiration covers his body, he becomes stiff and unable to progress, the loss of power being most apparent in the hind quarters. Sometimes it becomes complete, and he falls down, unable to get up. The muscles of the quarter are swollen and hard, the pulse and breathing quickened, and the urine becomes thick and black, like porter or coffee, is rich in nitrogenous substance and the colouring matter of the blood, and, even under the best of treatment, it often proves fatal.

It is thus evident, that we cannot with impunity continue to feed idle horses as high as when at work.

It should be a rule, never to be deviated from, in every stable, to lessen the quantity of oats or other nitrogenous food when working horses have to be kept idle even for a day or two; not only so, but they should never remain twenty-four hours without exercise.

OTHER EFFECTS OF HIGH FEEDING ON IDLE HORSES.

Swollen legs.—In addition to the system of vessels which carry the blood to and from the tissues, we have a system of absorbent vessels and lymphatic glands whose duty it is to convey the lymph fluids of the body. Under high feeding and want of exercise, these glands, particularly in the hind leg, are apt to become inflamed, producing swelling and intense pain in the groin, and down the leg. It is usually called a *weed*. The swelling is due to interrupted circulations in the vessels which often burst, and the cellular tissues of the leg become infiltrated, the swelling diffused and pitty. With a change of feed, the action of a purgative followed by diuretic, hot fomentations, bandaging, and, when the pain abates, moderate exercise, the swelling usually disappears; but it leaves the vessels weak, dilated, and prone to subsequent attacks.

Cracked Heels.—Debility of the absorbents of the legs tends to induce congestion and inflammation of the sebaceous glands of the legs, particularly in the thin skin covering the hollow of the heels. This tendency, of course, is aggravated by exposure to wet and cold, and the reaction induced by leaving the heels wet to dry spontaneously by evaporation in the stable; but in most cases the direct cause is the plethoric condition owing to high feeding and insufficient exercise.

Thrush is, in many cases, another consequence of dietetic errors, although in some it is due to neglect or mismanagement of the feet themselves.

It consists of a subacute inflammation of the sensitive frog, whereby, instead of the natural tough, elastic horn, a soft pulfaceous substance is formed, and discharged from the clefts of the frog, which gives off a most offensive odour. It is attended by tenderness, if not by positive lameness, and may, if neglected, lead to more extensive disease.

First steps in Farming.—Young Man's Department.—Dairy-Cattle.

We all think we know a good cow when we see her; but, in spite of our supposed knowledge of the animal, there are very few good judges of cows to be met with, or else we should not see such extraordinary decisions at our cattle-shows. You know that the desirable qualities of cows vary with the uses they are intended to serve. It would be absurd to look for the points of a shorthorn in a Jersey, or the form of a Devon in an Ayrshire. Each has its own peculiar beauties, and the man who breeds the one is often prejudiced against the other. All breeds are good in their way—one for stall-feeding, another for grazing, a third for milk, and, again, a fourth for butter; and of these several kinds, we must each choose for himself the sort best adapted to the land he occupies and the food he has at hand. It by no means follows, however, as I shall show further on, that because we happen to farm inferior land we must be contented with inferior cattle, for a very small outlay for additional food will make our second, class pastures equal, nay superior, to the best grass-lands in the province.

Now, in judging of dairy-cattle, what are the principal points to be determined? And, first, of the cow: if her digestive powers are imperfect, she won't be worth a farthing. The signs of good digestion are the same in all animals: a large stomach, broad hips, deep loin, and well-rounded ribs; the brisket should be moderately deep and broad, to afford play to the lungs and heart. But here we may note, that,