

Grass for Horses

Any practical man knows or should know that a horse which has to work hard during the day will not be able to obtain sufficient nutriment from pasture grass to keep him in condition and in shape for performing his daily work. A horse that works during the day should not have to stand up all night and pick grass from a pasture in order to keep from starving. The working horse needs rest for his tired limbs and sleep and comfort for his weary muscles. The majority of farmers feed their horses at least once a day during the summer season and some of them three times, yet others will work their horses and ask the horses to depend on grass alone for a living.

Grass, it is true, is an excellent condiment for horses that have been worked hard and fed heavily for some time. A horse that has become run down in condition, when turned grass will rapidly pick up, if he is not worked too hard at the same time. But to expect a horse to do a day's work and gain his living from a pasture field is certainly asking too much. There is no better way of putting a horse or team out of condition than to start in by working them hard every day and then allowing the animals to depend upon grass for their support. While it may be advisable to allow working horses to go out to grass, the grass should be counted upon largely as a supplement to their regular feed and not made the whole ration as is frequently the case. It will cost something to feed them grain it is true and one often thinks, when he turns his horses out to grass after a day's work without feeding them that he is saving feed, and incidentally money. But a reaction is bound to come and if you do not supply the fuel or feed to the horse, you may rest assured you will not get returns greater than what you have put into him of the work giving constituents of feed.

Unless the pasture is very good, and the stock when placed on the same is fat and strong, young growing animals, colts, calves or any other stock can be fed a little grain daily to advantage. If the stock is good, the extra feed will so improve the animal that it will be produced at less expense, and this supplementary feeding will make money for you, rather than add to the cost of production. A horse that is not worth feeding and feeding well all that he will eat clean is not worth keeping. The poor, half-fed animals are the ones that not only suffer themselves for food, but they cause their owners to suffer, as such animals are never

anything but an expense. They are usually too weak to do their day's work and are too ugly and thin to sell for anything like what their real value should be.

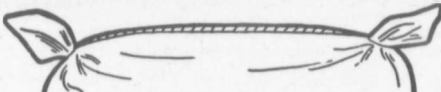
If horses can be allowed in a field near a stable so that they can go to the stable at will and procure some dry hay or fodder, that has been placed there for them, they will do much better than when upon grass alone. At this season of the year, especially, when the grass is soft and tender and contains a large percentage of water, it is advisable to furnish some supplementary food to the horse on pasture. The horse's system seems to call for it, and they not only need it, but often suffer from the lack of such food during the pasturing season.

It is much easier to keep a horse in order by a little judgment and regular feeding than it is to get him into condition after he has once become run down and weak. Keep this in mind and do not allow your farm teams to get in poor flesh from overwork and lack of attention simply to save feed. Such a practice will undoubtedly increase your expense account instead of saving money as it often appears to the casual observer. There is nothing like grass to tone up stock, and all growing stock should be turned to grass as soon as it is good enough for them in the spring. With the work animals, however, grass alone is not a sufficient ration and if it is not supplemented by other feeds of a more substantial nature, the owner of the stock, while he may save money directly on the cost of the feed that he would otherwise give his animals, will lose much more through his stock becoming thin and out of condition, and being unable to perform the work that is required of them.

Getting in the Hay

Ed. The Dairyman and Farming World.—As the haying season is again at hand, the all important question arises, as to which are the best methods of handling the crop so as to have it contain the highest feeding value and get it stored in the barn with the least labor.

In this part of Ontario the method followed by most farmers is to cut in the afternoon late enough so that the hay does not dry very much on the swath that day; next morning, if the feeder is put to work as soon as the dew is off, that hay will be ready for hauling to the barn by 2 p. m. if the weather is at all favorable. This method has the advantage of doing away with coiling which entails a lot of labor.



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The quality of the hay handled in this way seems to be just about as good as one could desire.

One essential point, which the writer has always made a practice of cutting clover when some of the earliest heads are turning brown. Timothy hay, if wanted for cows, should be cut when the bloom is almost full, but if for horses, the cutting should be deferred until the bloom has all disappeared.

A great mistake is made when hay is left to get too ripe. The sugar and starch then turns to woody fiber and much of its digestibility is lost. One essential point, which must be closely watched when storing hay away in the barn is to see that the bundles are thoroughly pulled apart or there is sure to be a musty spot in the mow where the fork reaches the bundles.—Alex. F. Scott, Stewart Co., Ont.

Harvesting Alfalfa

Col. F. D. Coburn, in his excellent work, "The Book of Alfalfa," published by Orange Judd Company, says that ordinarily it is not well to cut alfalfa immediately after a heavy rain, because the wet ground will operate against proper curing. Begin cutting in the morning when the dew is well off. If the weather is fair, the tedder ought to follow about two hours behind the mower. It is a mistake to think that the sun is the great curing agency. Too long exposure to the sun makes the curing all the more unsatisfactory, besides drying the leaves in such a way that they crumble and drop off.

J. E. Wing says there is a principle to be observed in making alfalfa hay that applies to making hay from all clovers. If it can be so managed that the leaves are not at once burned and dried to powder, the moisture from the stems is the more easily removed. Leaves are natural evaporators of sap; stems are not. Therefore, while the leaf has yet pliancy and some semblance of its natural conditions, it is most effectively carrying away the sap of the stem, but when it is dried up it no longer aids in drying the plant at all. Therefore the best hay in all respects is made partly in the shade, in loosely turned windrows, or in narrow cocks.

Two or three hours behind the tedder, Colored Coburn advises starting the hay rake and keep it going regardless of the noon hour, and unless the alfalfa is very heavy it may be put into small cocks, this to be completed before the dew forms. The hay may be left in these cocks for four or five days, as found necessary, and then stacked or stored in the barn. Many prefer to leave the hay in the windrows until the second morning, turning them by hand or otherwise before noon and putting into cocks in the afternoon, letting these stand for two or three days. If it is left in the cocks over three days, they should be moved or the plants under them will be smothered. All agree that alfalfa should not be in the swath over two or three hours. Most who have ever used a tedder like it if the alfalfa is less than half in bloom. If half or more in bloom the