

Our Scottish Letter.

The prevailing topic of conversation amongst our stock-owners here is not a pleasant one. More than six months ago an outbreak of

FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE

was reported from Norfolk, and the Board of Agriculture foolishly, as some think, allowed the cattle first attacked to live as they were through the worst of the disease before it was detected. Some time after, another outbreak was reported in the same county, and on this occasion the

other cattle. Where calves are fed off fat at three or four months old, as is the case in some parts of England, the black calves got by an Aberdeen-Angus bull out of ordinary cross-cows have sold as high as £5 a head. At one of the sales, Mr. Schroeter's, down in Sussex, a local fancier paid £19 for a steer calf which he means to feed for the Christmas shows, and £40 was paid for a heifer calf being nursed by her dam. The absence of horns and the high prices given by butchers for these black calves per cwt. make it certain that the breeding area for them will extend.

THE LONGHORNS.

A strenuous effort is being made to resuscitate the famous Longhorn breed of cattle, and the second volume of a new series of its herdbook has been published. About twenty years ago, or it may be more, the first attempt to found a herdbook for them was abandoned. The renewed attempt is highly commendable, but it may be doubted whether any good purpose is served by trying to make this breed popular. Mr. Westman, the Secretary, who is responsible for the recent publication, makes out a fairly good case for them, and certainly shows that as cheesemaking cows they are superior to the Shorthorn, but their hideous horns and hard, unfattenable carcasses are great drawbacks in these days when the demand is all for early maturity. Doubtless, as the breed on which the immortal Bakewell first experimented, one would not like to see the Longhorn extinguished, and they may linger long, but it does not appear to be sound business to breed cattle of their type at this time of day.

Mating the Ewes.

Profit in sheep-breeding largely hinges on the proper mating of the ewes at this season of the year. Firstly, there must be no excessive increasing of the flocks, no overdoing of the fields with in-lamb ewes as winter comes on, and crowding later on with sheep and lambs. Secondly, all ewes mated ought to be in sound and thriving condition. Thirdly, the whole flock ought to be young, or, rather, not old. As regards over-stocking the ground, it is very tempting to increase our flocks, as they pay better than most other stock, and so long as there be room for increase without overcrowding, the larger flocks are decidedly advised. Yonder 20-acre unprofitable arable field may, perhaps, be put down to pasture, and will allow of a score more ewes being added to the regular breeding flock, but unless wider runs are given in harmony with the increase of the flock, no profit will be made; that is, of course, if the fields have carried an average of stock before. It is not practicable, as a rule, through decreasing other stock to increase sheep much, because ovines must not form the sole stock of the fields, nor that by a good deal. Neither may sheep-breeding to a profit be conducted if the flocks to which the rams are introduced are not sound in body or limb.

That ever-to-be-dreaded disease, foot-rot, has robbed many a flockmaster very sorely. And farmers have themselves to blame many a time. I have seen actually halty rams turned with sound flocks of ewes. The disease is contagious, therefore only needs wet weather to assist it to run through the whole flock, for that common foot-rot is very contagious is an accepted fact. No flock, therefore, is fit to mate that is not free from the disease, and no ram fit to use that is not sound on his feet. Else it is seen when the ewes get heavy in lamb the disease rages to a disastrous degree, for you may not dress the feet much at that stage of the ewe's pregnancy, lest you cause premature birth. And a dozen more ailments I could name had I space, that sheep are subject to, and which should be held if ruling sufficient to demand the culling of the sufferers from the breeding flocks.

Mating too old or too young animals is a common practice, but it is not attended with profit. The ewe is within the proper age to breed from when a yearling or one-shear year, until the mouth is full, as shepherds term it—that is, until there be eight broad incisor teeth put up. At the latter age she should be culled, because her next movement will

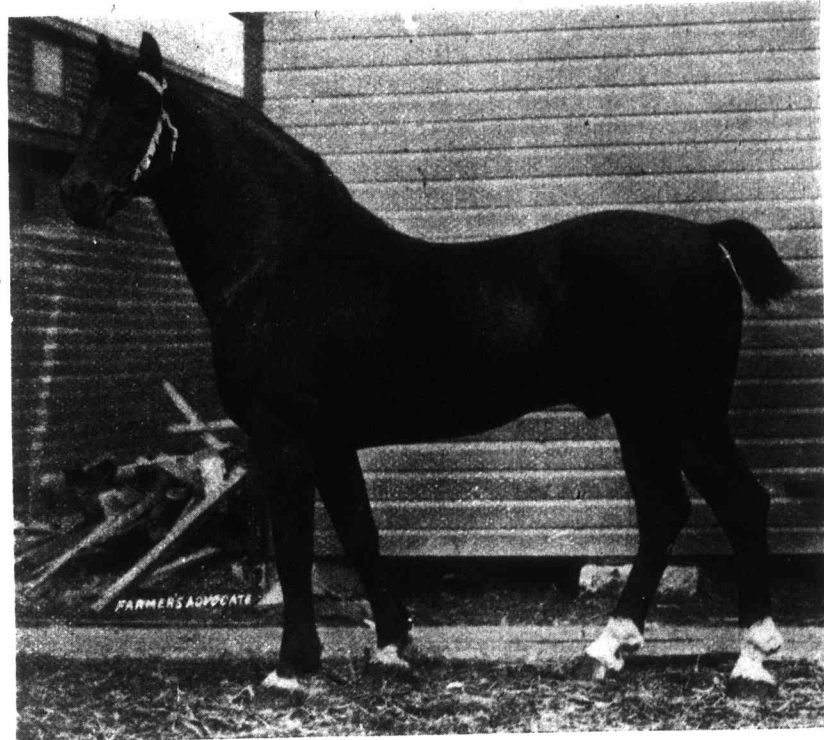
be downhill. The yearling has at mating time two full-sized incisors and six lamb's teeth in the front of the mouth. To breed the best lambs it is essential that ewes be not too old, not too young, yet how often do we see such mated as have teeth wide apart, or in some instances with scarcely any teeth at all.

Then there is the over-impatient flockmaster, who desires to get rich in a hurry. He cannot even wait for the lambs to pass the stage of lambhood before he must needs begin to breed from them. So they are mated when little over six months old, and bring lambs in their yearling season. But there are great losses, taking one year with another. There are bad yearling times, dead lambs, abortion, and puny young lambs brought forth, which, although alive, hardly survive long, because of lack of milk and a bad nurse generally. And even at best the lambs are not fit to bring into the breeding flock at any time, as they do not make average specimens of their race, not one out of twenty. The greatest drawback, however, I have found in this early breeding is the loss of, now and then, the young mother, a drawback which would not befall were it not that mating had been conducted at too immature an age.

While the ram is with the ewes they should be kept in quite a thriving state, but I am not in favor of providing over-stimulating diet. In fact, I am against flushing in its true sense. So long as grass, "seeds," clovers, rape, mustard, and such-like go, the ewe's runs cannot be too fresh and fruitful, but it is better to draw the line at trough food, such as corn and cake. The latter food is over-stimulating, over-fattening, and is sure to be missed afterwards, because you may not continue forcing your flocks at high pressure all through until lambing time. And if you flush and do not keep up the stimulating rations to a considerable extent, your ewes become very poor against yearling time, so that many a mishap and many a complaint befalls, abortion among others, that might have been prevented if more rational feeding had been practised all through. Wherefore it appears that flushing ewes at this season while with the ram does not lead to profit. A good deal more has to be said on profitable sheep-breeding, but must stand over for the present.—*Novus Homo, in Stock-breeder and Farmer.*

Fall Colts Preferred.

Fall colts can be successfully raised if one is prepared to care for them in the right manner. True enough, there are few fall colts raised in this part of the country. I will speak from what experience I have had, and that isn't much. I have raised two fall colts, and I like them better than the spring, for the reason that your mares don't have to work so hard as they do in the spring, and the flies don't have as long to torture the little colts while they are young. Then the next spring when grass comes the colts are a good age to wean and turn out. I think it a good plan to have two or more, so they will be company for each other. I let mine run with the mares all winter, stabling and feeding grain night and morning. I didn't have to work my mares while they were suckling, but better work

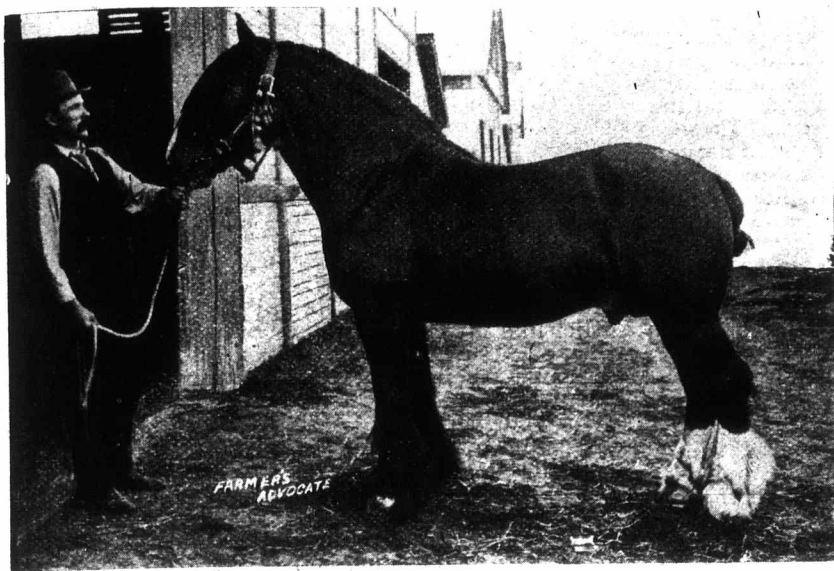


PRINCE DANEGELT.

Hackney stallion. First prize and sweepstakes, Winnipeg Industrial Exhibition, 1900. OWNED BY J. T. MOONEY, WAWANESSA, MAN.

them in the fall and in the spring and raise colts, too, at the same time. I don't think a brood mare should be worked any during the time the colt is following her, as I think both the colt and mother will do better if not worked, unless it be some light work. I think the greatest reason that there are not more fall colts raised than there are, is because the majority have not tried it, and don't know the advantages of it.

J. L. GRIFFIN.



BELSHAZZAR 13855.

Imported Shire stallion. First prize and sweepstakes at Toronto Industrial, 1900, and at London Western, 1899 and 1900.

OWNED BY MESSRS. HAWDEN & M'DONELL, EXETER, ONT.

slaughter powers possessed by the Board were enforced with vigor. After a period had elapsed, during which the local authorities grumbled sorely about the restrictions, these were removed, and the cattle and sheep trade resumed its normal conditions. No more was heard of the disease until some weeks ago, when an outbreak was reported in the district of Holderness, near Hull, in Yorkshire. Once more the strictest measures were taken, and there is no further account of the disease in that quarter. But scarcely had the country time to recover from this scare, when an outbreak was announced in the Vale of Clwyd, in North Wales, right across England from Holderness, and hardly was it in hand when a further outbreak was reported in Wiltshire, and now, one week from today, the officials of the Board of Agriculture declared the disease from which lambs in Perthshire were affected to be the dreaded murrain, and to-day (Friday, 28th Sept.), for the first time for seventeen years, no market is being held in Perth, and the whole question of what is to be done is being considered by the leading lights of the Board of Agriculture in London. In connection with the Perth report, the diagnosis of the official experts is being challenged, and there is little doubt that there is some ground for suspending judgment. In the meantime, after the second outbreak in Norfolk, cattle affected with the disease were found to be coming in from Argentine ports, and the slaughtering ports of this country were shut against them. The Argentine authorities have now retaliated and closed the ports of that country to British cattle. This will have an injurious effect on the sales of pedigreed stock, which are due in ten days, and meanwhile the dislocation of trade in Perth and the north is serious. It will be most unfortunate if the diagnosis of the officials is pronounced incorrect, but it would be more unfortunate to have allowed foot-and-mouth disease to pass unchecked. It is better in a matter of this kind to be over-stringent than too lenient.

ABERDEEN-ANGUS SALES.

The series of sales of Aberdeen-Angus cattle conducted by Messrs. Macdonald, Fraser & Co. (Ltd.) has just been concluded. Three sales were held in the north of Scotland, and an equal number in the south of England. It is noteworthy that the best prices, both north and south, have been given by a new patron of the breed, and that his headquarters are in Ayrshire, in the heart of the great dairying districts of Scotland. Mr. Kennedy, of Doonholm, Ayr, is the gentleman in question, and he has made an excellent start, buying good cattle of good breeding and not overfed. He has been guided in his purchases by Mr. Ralston, Glamis, the agent of Lord Strathmore, whose herd is one of the best in Scotland. Generally trade at these sales has been satisfactory, good averages being realized, and some idea of the extent to which the breed is now cultivated in districts widely apart may be inferred from the fact that these sales have this week been held in Buckingham, Sussex, and Stafford, and, with the exception of one or two animals, all of those sold were purchased by buyers in England. Many landed gentlemen find these cattle to thrive well in the south and along the downs, and although the calves at first seem small, the prices given for them by the butchers show that per cwt. or stone they sell dearer than any

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