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HORSES.

Retention of the Afterbirth.

The retention of the foetal membranes, "placenta" or "afterbirth," beyond a certain time after the expulsion of the foetus from the uterus, must be looked upon as an accidental or pathological condition, which requires attention. The membranes are usually expelled with the young animal, or soon after it is born, but, unfortunately, this is not always the case, and retention may occur in all classes of animals. It is more frequently noticed in the cow than in the mare, but the symptoms and treatment are practically the same in both, although it may be remarked that the condition is more serious in the mare, and more liable to be followed by serious results if not promptly attended to, but even in the cow neglect to give proper attention is usually followed by serious and frequently by fatal results.

CAUSES.—The causes are hard or impossible to understand. The accident occurs under all systems of management, and in all kinds and conditions of animals. It is doubtless more frequently observed after cases of abortion or premature birth, but no female, under any condition, is exempt.

SYMPTOMS.—The symptoms are generally so well marked that no mistake can be made in diagnosis. There is usually a greater or less mass of the membranes—sometimes only the umbilical cord; sometimes a mass almost reaching the ground, with little water bags at the lower end—hanging from the vulvar orifice, the lips of which are often swollen and injected. If the weather be warm, decomposition soon takes place, and the odor becomes very offensive. In other cases nothing is noticeable, except when the animal is lying on her abdomen; then the pressure on the uterus forces its neck into the vagina, and if any portion of the membranes has passed through it will be visible. And in others, again, nothing whatever is to be seen whether the animal be standing or lying, the whole mass being retained in the uterus. After about the third day after delivery, the neck of the womb is usually closed, and unless a portion of the membranes has passed

into the vagina before this period, the entire placenta is imprisoned in the uterus, and a manual exploration will not always discover it without forcing the hand through the constricted neck into the uterus. In some cases only a small portion of the membranes is retained. In many cases the animal does not evince any uneasiness; sometimes, when the portion of the placenta hanging outside the vulva is heavy, when the creature is standing, the pressure upon the neck of the bladder is so great that difficulty in urinating is noticed. There may be symptoms of abdominal uneasiness, whisking the tail, stamping with the feet, and making vain attempts as if to micturate, with slight and brief uterine contractions, which may eventually lead to the expulsion of the placenta. When expulsion does not take place decomposition of the membranes soon takes place. This occurs more quickly in warm than in cold weather. The odor is offensive, and a sanious, brown-tinted discharge, composed of debris of the membranes and secretions from the irritated lining membranes of the genital canal, flow from the vulva. The discharge is more abundant when the animal is lying or when she extends herself to urinate. In such cases the health of the animal often suffers; there is dullness, more or less prostration, diminution in the secretion of milk, impaired appetite, increased temperature, and other indications of illness. Complications from placental retention are numerous and serious. Contact with the decomposing membranes may so irritate the lining membranes of the womb as to occasion inflammation of the same; there is also danger of blood poisoning, either of which condition is always serious and often fatal. Under the most favorable circumstances there usually remains a local irritation, which interferes more or less with the thriftiness of the animal.

TREATMENT.—When spontaneous expulsion does not take place within a reasonable time after delivery, say 12 hours in the mare and at most 48 hours in the cow (and if the weather be warm 24 hours), the membranes should be carefully removed by hand. Medicinal treatment has not proved serviceable. It has been stated that the accident occurs under all conditions; at the same time intelligent attention to the mother tends to prevent it and hasten expulsion. Females should be made comfortable both during and after parturition. Chills should be avoided, and, especially in cold weather, they should not be allowed to drink cold water for a day or two, and if the stable be not quite comfortable clothing should be provided. When the membranes are not expelled with or shortly after the foetus, it is not well to interfere for a few hours, as there is a danger of excessive bleeding if the attachment to the uterus is forcibly severed at once. After the periods mentioned have elapsed, and still expulsion has not taken place, extraneous interference should be resorted to. If a considerable mass protrude, gentle and steady traction may succeed in completing expulsion, but in many cases—especially in the cow—it will not; in which case, in either mare or cow, the operator must roll up his sleeves, thoroughly oil his hands and arms grasp the protruding portion in one hand, and insert the other into the womb and carefully separate the membranes from the uterus. In the cow care must be taken to not tear off the little lumps (cotyledons) to which the placenta is attached, but carefully separate the membranes from each, removing the portions, as detached, from the womb, and grasping them with the other hand. In the mare, where these lumps do not exist, detachment is more easily effected. In some cases the attachment is very close, and it takes considerable time to remove the mass, which often is done in sections, but the operator must have patience and remove all. Where there is retention, and at the same time no mass apparent, the operator will often have to use some force to introduce his hand through the partially contracted neck into the uterus, when he will feel the membranes. In these cases the union is often severed, and the membranes are simply imprisoned by reason of the contraction, and are easily removed. After removal the womb should be flushed out with about two gallons of some good disinfectant, as a two per cent. solution of Zenoleum or phenyle, heated to 100 degrees. There is usually more or less of a discharge after a case of retention, and it is good practice, in order to prevent danger of blood poisoning, to give the animal about 25 drops carbolic acid in damp food twice daily, until all discharge ceases. "WHIP."

T. J. Taylor, P. M. Cumberland Mills, via River Gilbert, Beauce, Que.: "Comparing my numbers of the 'Advocate' of 1875 with numbers of 1904, shows the praises the 'Advocate' is receiving are well deserved."

Has the address label on your Farmer's Advocate been changed to 1904? If not, your subscription remains unpaid. Kindly remit at once.

Study Horse-Breeding.

In the course of his remarks before the horsemen at the recent Spring Stallion Show, Mr. W. S. Spark urged the breeders in different districts to make their localities famous for the production of one particular class of horses, rather than try to produce all classes in one neighborhood. This advice is sound. It is another step in the course of specialization. It embodies the principle of concentration of force as opposed to a "Jack-of-all-trades" policy.

In some parts of the country, this course is unconsciously followed, owing to the natural inclination of the farmers in a particular district to produce certain classes, rather than to any fixed policy on the part of the breeders as a body. Norfolk County, Ontario, for instance, prides itself on the splendid showing of its harness horses at its fall fairs; while Ontario County claims as good, if not better, Clydesdales in larger numbers than can be found in any part of Canada of equal extent. Many other localities might be cited where the horse stock has become famous for its uniformity and excellence, proving a source of great profit to the producers. Some localities have their special favorites, largely depending upon the nationality of the farmers who first located there. Wherever you find a neighborhood of thorough Scots, there we generally find good Clydesdale horses; while people of English, American or other extraction favor this or that other breed, the object of all originally being not so much to produce horses for the present-day markets, as to breed animals best suited to do their own farm work and driving, according to their own tastes. Conditions, however, are now changed, and horse-breeding has to-day become not only a regular farm operation, but also a commercial enterprise. It is the commercial aspect with which we are particularly concerned.

Sires suitable to produce the different market classes of horses have many times been described: the big Clydesdale or Shire for heavy-drafters; the Hackney or large Standard-bred for carriage purposes, and the Thoroughbred for certain classes of army horses and English hunters; but whatever the classes raised, great care is required in selecting the particular individual sire used. Not all stallions of the heavy draft breeds produce high-priced draft horses, neither does every Hackney sire get first-class harness horses, largely because of the lack of uniformity in the mares with which they are mated, and also because of the difference in weight, height, individuality and breeding of the sire.

Horse-breeding is such an intricate science that, for best results, it requires more than a casual examination of the sire and dam to be able to predict, with any degree of certainty, what the offspring shall be. Size is important, but it is not all. There must be quality, and that indefinable thing called "character," which is the individual manifestation of what, in breeding parlance, is designated prepotency, or the power to transmit inherited characteristics. Too often, breeders forget about the law of atavism or reversion, which simply means that any animal is liable to display prominently characteristics not common to its immediate ancestors, and one of the most striking evidences of this law is seen in the varying size of our horses. Everyone who has observed closely has seen big, solid horses the offspring of a medium-sized, comparatively fine-boned, sound, rugged horse and a good quality, roomy mare, and has also seen the opposite result—the overgrown, abnormal-sized stallion siring stock lacking in uniformity of type and quality, and not a readily salable stamp. All this goes to show how necessary it is, in breeding horses particularly, to know something of the ancestry of the breeding stock to be used. There should be more study of the history of the breeds, and more study of the mares to be mated. Every farmer who contemplates using any particular sire should first make himself familiar with the characteristics of the ancestry of that horse by reference to the studbooks of the breed or to reports of shows and studs published from time to time in the agricultural papers.

The problems of horse-breeding have had much discussion of late years. Now, let us see some tangible evidence of a more intelligent understanding of the requirements of the industry and the intricacies of the science by more judicious mating for next season's colts.

The Governor-General's Prize.

The conditions for the Governor-General's prize at the Toronto Horse Show (April 26th to 29th) are as follows:

Best four-year-old Canadian-bred gelding or mare, suitable for riding or cavalry purposes, not less than 15 hands, and not over 15 hands 3 inches, to be sired by a Thoroughbred stallion, such sire to be approved by the judges.

Name of sire and pedigree and description of dam as far as obtainable shall be given with entry.

All competitors shall be examined by the committee's veterinarian before entering the ring, and certificate of soundness handed the judges.

The competitors shall be undocked, and shown in hand.

The prizewinners shall be sold by auction in the ring immediately after the awards have been given, and all money received in excess of \$225 for each horse shall belong to Canadian Horse Show. Entry fee, \$2.00.

First prize, a silver cup, also \$50, presented by His Excellency Lord Minto; second prize, \$25; third prize \$15, by the association.