

HORSE

The Stallion Question

The articles that follow herewith have been submitted on the question of grade, scrub and purebred stallions. The prizes are given in the order in which the letters appear. It is gratifying to observe that more attention is being given to this matter and further suggestions from practical horse-breeders are invited. It is all too evident that our stallion registration laws are not all they should be, and that active steps should be taken by our horse-breeders to remedy existing evils. Agitation for reform will never come from grade and scrub stallion owners. It is to the owners of purebred horses and mare owners generally that we must look for the initiative of action. And certainly our horse-breeding interests require that something should be done.

Comparative Use of Purebred and Grade Stallions

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

It is difficult to say what percentage of the farm mares are bred to grade stallions, but in this vicinity I think twenty per cent. would not be an overestimate. Some farmers keep a little scrub stallion of their own, work him all the time and breed their own mares. It is easy to see the folly of such breeding in looking over the horses through the country. I know of several men who have been breeding mares that way for ten years or more and have nothing better to-day than they had at first—a lot of small, poorly built, inferior animals. If these same men had bred along one line, to purebred stallions, they would have now a uniform lot of high grade horses.

I have in my barn a mare that is fifteen - sixteenths blood Percheron. Three years ago I bred her to a horse that I supposed was purebred, and got a nice mare colt that would have been thirty-one-thirty seconds, but I found that the sire was only a grade; therefore the colt is nothing.

There are two laws of nature that make it important to use purebred stallions: the law that like begets like, and the law of atavism, or reverting to back generations, commonly called back-breeding. The former is the greatest law of nature. When a man is raising colts he expects them to be like the horses they are bred from, and they almost always are. Therefore if he is breeding to a good, sound purebred horse he will get colts of that kind, and if he is breeding to an inferior scrub horse he will get colts of that kind. Then this law of atavism comes in. Sometimes a colt will not prove to be like his parents, but will develop characteristics of his great grandparents, or even farther back than that. Now if a man breeds to a purebred horse, even though the colt does possess some characteristics of back generations, it isn't going to be a bad characteristic, because the horse is from good stock for a good many generations back. But if he breeds to a grade horse the colt is more subject to this law, and the horses it reverts to may be very poor and inferior.

In certain states on the other side the government has taken up the subject and provided laws regulating the use of stallions. I think our government should do as much, and that more articles in farm papers on the subject would help to discourage the use of grade stallions.

Sask.

GEO. H. GRANT.

High Percentage of Stallions Uncertain Breeders

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

Having raised some good horses and experienced some of the difficulties that beset the horse-breeder, I will give my opinion on registered and grade stallions and other points related to the subject of stallion registration and licensing now being discussed in THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE.

"The best stallion possible to obtain" is my motto, but I have been forced to breed fine mares to grade stallions, for the reason that none of the registered stallions in this district are not sufficiently sure to warrant one breeding to them and taking long chances on getting no foal. This seems the great trouble with stallions in this country, particularly some of the imported horses. One of the stallions in this locality foaled only three mares out of eighty he was bred to. He is a registered horse and cost his owners \$4,000. He was used again last season and will not foal better than five per cent. of his mares. Farmers paid five dollars down for the service of this horse, so what can they be expected to do, especially when the only other registered horse in the locality was equally as uncertain as a breeder?

In the old country, farmers' organizations in each locality rent stallions for the season. The owner of the stallions usually had about four horses covering a large section of country. Two of these were good and proved sires, the others would be young or doubtful. These stallions were changed around. The young horse was tried, and if the doubtful horse proved to be no good he was sold. The old stallions would wind up the season with a high percentage of foals. Until we have some such system here, some way of changing horses and a better class of stock-getters, horse-raising is dead from a quality point of view.

It seems to me that something should be done to protect our horse-breeding interests. One of the best ways would be for farmers to form organizations for owning stallions, buy several to cover a fair sized section of the country and change them every six weeks or so, so that every farmer would have an opportunity of using the best. Government aid to the horse-breeding industry might also be tried. Horses are as important as railways and it takes considerable money to buy first-class stallions.

Alta.

HORSEMAN.

1913 Futurity Races at Calgary

Two futurity races for the Alberta Provincial Exhibition of 1913 have been arranged for by the directors of the association. The races are for foals of 1910. The Sunny Alberta Futurity is for trotters and pacers owned and foaled, or bred in Canada, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Washington, Wisconsin and Iowa, best two in three, mile heats for a purse of \$1,500. Entries close December 31st, 1910, with a payment of \$35 on each foal, when a description and breeding of the foal, as to color, sex and marks, must be given. May 1st, 1911, a payment of \$10 is due on each foal that is to be kept eligible. November 1st, 1911, a payment of \$10 is due on each foal that is to be kept

eligible. August 31st, 1912, a payment of \$25 is due on each foal that is to be kept eligible. June 2nd, 1913, the colt must be named. A starting fee of \$50 must be paid the day before the race.

The Chinook Derby is for running horses for foals of 1910, owned and foaled or bred in Canada west of the Great Lakes, or in the states above named; one mile for a purse of \$1,500. Entries close the same date as the Sunny Alberta Futurity, and payments require to be made on the same dates and in the sums specified.

Weed Out the Scrubs by Law

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

The discussion opened recently in your journal on the subject of stallion laws is timely. Any law or regulation which will tend to improve the quality or size of our horses will be a blessing to all farmers in the West, for to be convinced that improvement is not only possible but necessary one has only to look about him and see so many small, ill-shaped horses trying to do work beyond their capacity; see the farmers driving four or five of these kind of horses on an implement which could readily be handled by three good sized ones, or drawing half a load of grain to town when they might as well draw a good load. It might be argued that heavy horses cannot be driven so fast on the return trip, but, granting this, the less number of trips will much more than make up. Railroads find it economical to haul heavy loads; then why should the same principle not apply to farmers?

Then why do we not have more large, well bred stallions? And the answer is, the "scrub" stallions are in the way. The owners of costly, well bred stallions must necessarily charge a higher service fee, and it is surprising the number of farmers there are in every district, who, owing to the difference of a few dollars in the service fee, will continue to breed their mares to a scrub stallion, thus producing colts which at four years of age are worth from \$75 to \$150 less than colts sired by the better stallion. Such farmers should be protected from their own folly. The presence of scrub stallions not only deters men from investing in well bred stallions, but these stallions, by splitting up a district, compel owners of well bred stallions to charge a higher fee than if they had all the business of the district.

I think, therefore, that the small, ill-shaped and unsound stallions should be weeded out, and a yearly examination by a qualified veterinarian, as suggested in THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE, would be a very good way of accomplishing this. Of course, it would not be desirable to have the regulation too severe the first year, but the



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