

BREEDING AND MANAGEMENT OF HEAVY DRAUGHT HORSES

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Heavy horses should be bred more extensively. In breeding use only the best sires obtainable. If the resulting filly is a better individual than her dam keep her in the stud and sell the dam.

THE breeding of draught horses has been strongly advocated by a number of writers of late. Truly there are many reasons why the heavy draught is the best horse for the farmer to raise. The docile temperament of most heavy draughts, the ease with which they are broken to usefulness, the early age at which they can be worked, their splendid working ability, their high average fecundity, and the ready market awaiting them, are their chief recommendations.

To breed successfully a man must first choose the breed best adapted to his personal likes and the market he aims to supply. This article deals only with that most noble breed, Clydesdales, a breed which has proven eminently satisfactory to Ontario requirements.

THE FIRST ESSENTIAL

To the farmer the first step is to procure a good mare. Small scrub mares of indiscriminate breeding, though often good slaves, are seldom good brood mares. If a man has not a pure bred he should have a mare possessing the general characteristics of the breed he intends to raise. If the mare has a few crosses of pure bred sires, so much the better and if so he should keep to that breed that the crosses represent, and should let no glib-tongued stallion, or a lesser service fee cause a deviation into the paths of cross breeding. Such paths have been proven by dear experience to be the ruination of horse breeding.

The next consideration is to be sure the mare has no hereditary unsoundness. It would be better to leave horse breeding to your neighbor and to buy your work horses than to breed horses cursed with any of the hereditary ills to which horse flesh is heir. Ringbone, spavin, curb, heaves, roaring, ophthalmia and weak feet, are most serious.

The practice which is much resorted to of breeding mares physically unfit for anything else should be discouraged in every way possible.

USE THE BEST SIRE

In selecting a sire, get the best you can, even if he be not as convenient as one of less merit, and even if he be stood at a higher service fee, remembering that the difference in resulting foal, will more than pay for the inconvenience and increased outlay. In making your selection con-

sider rather the foals a sire is leaving, than the individuality of the horse, for many first class show horses are but indifferent breeders.



A Typical Clydesdale Stallion

From the Dunrobin Stock Farm owned by D. Gunn & Son, Ontario County, Ont.

First consider the quality of the horse, then the size. Clean flat bone with silky hair, no "greasiness" or "neatness," pasterns of medium obliquity ending in a large hoof head which in turn expands into what a Scotchman calls a "foot like a tub" is what we want. Then, too the constitution must be considered. A prominent breast, strong shoulders laid well into a deep chest, surmounted by a good crest should appear behind a pleasant countenance. Strong loin muscles, a short back, deep, well sprung ribs should connect squarely formed, powerful croupe and haunches to the pleasing fore-quarters. Gaskin muscles should be prominent, while the hock should be strong, angular and free from any approach to puffiness. In action, a stallion should first of all be the embodiment of good spirits. His walk should be clean and sprightly. His trot should be expressive of control, square action in front, trappy action from the side, and carrying the hocks well together behind without any tendency to interfere. In color, a good individual is never a bad color.

Trouble is sometimes found in getting mares in foal. But this is usually overcome by some one of the many practices known to all first class grooms. It might be said, however, that a horse during a heavy season is not so likely to impregnate a mare, "hard to catch" as a horse serving but a few mares.

An in-foal mare may be worked until the day she foals if she is properly handled. If the mare has heavy work to do work her easy. Do not make her back heavy loads or strain herself in any way. It must be remembered that there are

now two lives to be supported, so her feed should be nourishing and properly balanced. In-foal mares, doing light work, fed on cut, unthreshed oat sheaves should be in splendid condition in the spring. Mares doing heavy work must be fed in proportion, including laxative ingredients, such as turnips and beans.

NEAR THE FOALING TIME

When the mare comes near her foaling time, she will become sluggish in her work—do not hasten, overhear or excite her. If you have the date she is due to foal, you will know when to expect the new arrival. However, there is no infallible rule, usually the mare shows wax on her teats a few days before she foals, and immediately before foaling she becomes restless and there is an increased secretion of waxy milk, the colostrum. Be on hand if at all possible when the mare foals. If all the breeders made a practice of doing this the mortality among mares and foals would be greatly decreased. It is well to have the mare foal as early in the spring as possible, and to foal in the stable. To prevent joint ill, thoroughly disinfect the box stall where the mare is to foal. Don't be half hearted in this, clean the stall out, then sprinkle a pail or more of fresh lime over the floor, and a solution of zanolium or other disinfectant around the walls. Then bed the stall with clean straw and plenty of it. When the foal is about to arrive, examine the presentation and see if it is normal. If the presentation is abnormal, send at once for experienced assistance to have the presentation corrected. If help can be given the mare when the foetus first makes its appearance, some of the most difficult presentations can usually be corrected before the labor pains become severe, thus ensuring a live colt and a healthy mother.

PRACTICE DISINFECTIO

When the colt has arrived, after the navel cord has stopped its strong pulsations, tie the cord near the colt's belly with a strong disinfected string. Then sever the cord. Before letting the tied navel out of the operator's hands, disinfect it with a 10 per cent. solution of formalin, and after that or better still, a patent preparation, "Bismuth formic iodide." Then leave the colt and mother alone for a couple of hours. Usually by that time the colt will be sucking. If the



A Clydesdale Mare

Formation of fore quarters, showing the bone wanted and feet like "tubs."



A Clydesdale Mare

Showing proper conformation of hind quarters. Owned by D. Gunn & Son, Ontario Co., Ont.