

THE HORSE.

Retention of the Meconium or Constipation in Foals.

Retention of the meconium in foals is probably responsible for more fatalities than any other abnormal condition. During foetal life the liver of the foetus secretes a small quantity of bile. This becomes inspissated in the small intestines and formed into balls almost black in color, of a gummy, sticky nature, and of various sizes, and is called *meconium*, and it gradually passes backwards into the large intestine. At birth a considerable quantity exists, mostly in the floating colon and rectum, and under normal conditions its expulsion commences soon after birth and continues at intervals until it is all expelled, which is usually in about 24 hours, after which the faecal matter is yellow. The passage of yellow excrement indicates that the meconium has been all voided, and that now passing is the excreta from nourishment taken after birth.

While retention of the meconium may occur under any, and all conditions, it is more frequently observed in early foals, whose dams have been fed on dry fodder and have had little exercise during the winter. The foals of mares that have had regular exercise or light work during the winter, and been fed on laxative, easily digested food do not so frequently suffer, but the condition is liable to occur even under these circumstances, and is not unknown in late foals whose dams have been on grass for a greater or less length of time before parturition. Again, the condition is very liable to occur in foals of dams whose milk has been escaping for some time before parturition. The first milk, or fluid that escapes from the mammae after, or shortly before parturition, is of a different character, both as to appearance and constituents from real milk. It is of a clear, viscid nature and of an oily appearance. It contains more constituents of a laxative nature than milk does. Its function is to nourish, the young animal, and at the same time exert a slightly laxative action upon the bowels. It is called *colostrum*, and if from any cause, the young animal is deprived of it, there is a greater danger of retention of the meconium than under other conditions. At the same time it must not be considered necessary, or even desirable to substitute purgatives when the colostrum is absent. The administration of purgatives in such cases, (unless in very small doses) usually complicates matters, and renders incurable, a condition that in all probability could have been successfully treated.

The meconium, as stated, exists in lumps of a tough, gummy nature of about the consistence of putty. In the majority of cases, where it is not spontaneously passed, these lumps, with which the rectum is full, are so large that the little animal has not sufficient expulsive power to force them through the anus. In such cases, it is obvious that purgatives are harmful, as they act upon and fluidify the contents of the anterior intestines, increase the backward action (called peristaltic action) of the same, but have practically no action upon the contents of the rectum. We can readily see how this, by increasing the action of the anterior intestine, without removing the obstruction to the escape of faeces from the rectum, will increase distress and lessen the hope of successful treatment. Hence we should be very careful about dosing the foal with purgatives or laxatives, but depend largely upon mechanical treatment.

Symptoms.—The symptoms are plain. The foal arches his back, elevates his tail, and makes ineffectual efforts to defecate. At first the distress is not great, but as time goes on these ineffectual attempts become more frequent, more violent and longer continued, and the periods between them shorten. He becomes restless, rolls on his back, takes little nourishment, becomes tucked up in the flank, grinds his teeth, becomes weaker and weaker, suffers intense abdominal pain, looks around to his side and eventually dies.

Treatment.—As stated, purgatives should be avoided in most cases. When the first symptoms are noticed the attendant should trim the nail of his fore finger, oil it, get an assistant to hold the foal, and then carefully introduce the finger into the rectum and remove all the lumps that he can reach. In the mean-

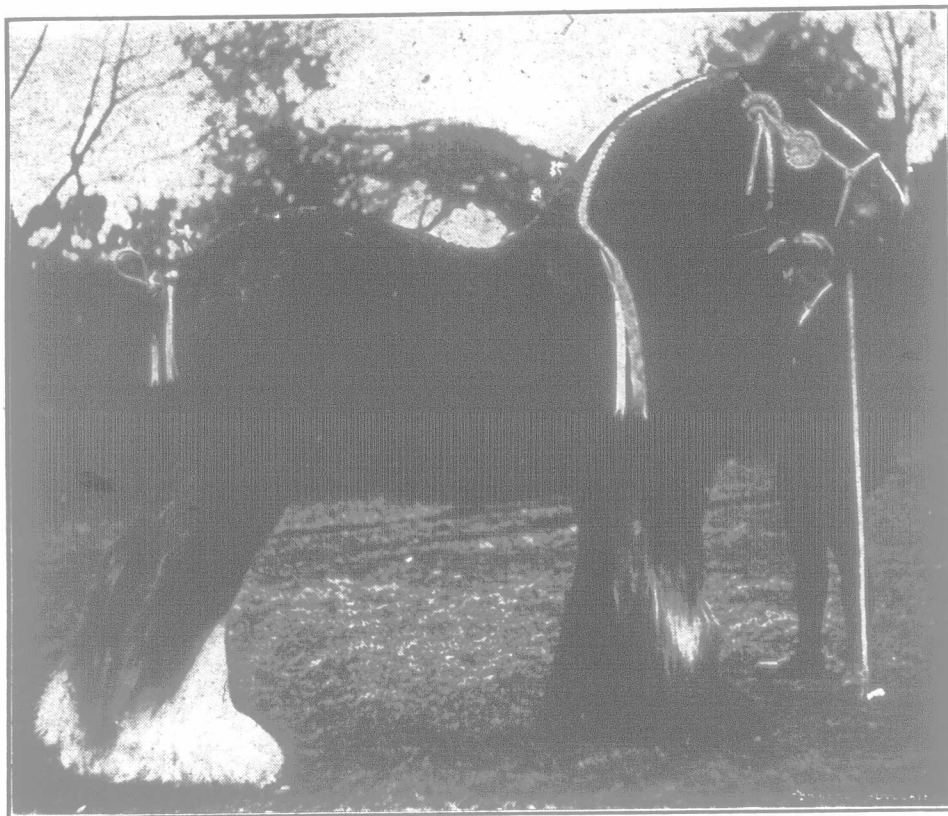
time the foal makes expulsive efforts, and as the meconium is removed from the rectum, a fresh supply is forced backwards into it, and it is not unusual for the operator to be able to remove a pint or more. This should be followed by the injection into the rectum of a liberal supply of soapy warm water, or warm water and linseed oil or glycerine in equal quantities. In the course of two or three hours, the operation should be repeated, and every few hours afterwards until the faeces become yellow. So long as the meconium reaches the rectum, and can be removed by the finger, or by the use of a doubled wire, it is not wise to give any medicines whatever by the mouth, but when this is not the case, it is well to give 1 to 2 ounces of castor oil or raw linseed oil, the former preferred, but in no cases should drastic purgatives—as aloes—be given, except in very small doses, as diarrhoea is easily excited and very quickly reduces the strength and vitality of the foal. It is good practice to remove the meconium, as stated, from all foals. The operation, when carefully performed, so as not to irritate or scarify the parts, does not injure the foal in the least, and in all cases saves more or less exertion, and while in many cases it is not necessary, it is wise to be on the safe side, and anticipate trouble, rather than wait for its symptoms. The lives of many foals would be saved if this precaution were taken early. Foals should be carefully watched in this respect, until the faeces voided have a yellowish color, after which there is little danger of constipation if the dam be properly fed.

WHP.

LIVE STOCK.

Is the wool stored in a dry place?

At East St. Louis, Ill., on May 1, the 80 Aberdeen-



Roycroft Forest Queen.
Champion Shire mare in England.

Angus cattle auctioned, under the auspices of the breed Association, averaged \$145.

A few middlings are good on which to start young pigs.

"Swat the fly" is a threadbare slogan now, but just as worthy of being observed as it ever was.

Don't neglect to dip the sheep and lambs. The expense is negligible and the results highly remunerative.

Keep all calf pails, and the utensils with which milk comes in contact, scrupulously clean. Scald them with hot water and then expose them to the sun during the day.

Statisticians estimate that \$25,000,000 represents the loss last year in the United States from tuberculosis in cattle and swine. No doubt figures on Canadian losses would also convey some alarming information.

To make a real success at the fall shows, begin now to care for the prospective entries. It is no honor to win on an untrained, poorly fitted animal just because competition is lacking. Make your entry worthy of the red ribbon if it is the only one in its class.

The actual value of silage increases in sympathy with the price of wheat, corn and millfeeds. Plan to fill the silos heaping full and if there is some corn left over for the crib, so much the better. Store cattle will not suffer if they have plenty of hay, straw and silage.

Farmers and stock breeders generally do not ap-

preciate the importance of exercising caution and using preventive measures to forestall and eradicate contagious diseases. Tuberculosis and contagious abortion are two diseases that require attention in this country.

The 49 Shorthorns sold at the 11th annual sale of S. A. Nelson & Sons, Malcolm, Neb., averaged \$355. The 11 bulls averaged \$217 and the 38 females \$305. Peachbud 3rd, by Ceremonious Lad, with a cow-calf at foot by Royal Sultan, realized \$1,025, the top price of the sale.

If it is not possible to allow the pigs access to fresh soil, do the next best thing and throw sods into their pens daily. Also keep a mixture of minerals available to them at all times. A combination of wood ashes, charcoal, sulphur, salts, bone meal and lime is good and easily obtainable.

The trough in the lambs' creep should contain ground oats, bran, cornmeal or cracked corn, or oil meal—one or all. Do not feed more than they will consume quickly, and after they are done eating clean out the trough and feed the remaining meal to the pigs. All feed for the lambs should be fresh.

George Allen & Sons, Lexington, Neb., disposed of 49 selections from their Shorthorn herd on May 2, and realized the average price of \$495. Five bulls averaged \$537, and 44 females, \$484. Lavender Princess 7th, calved January 3, 1912, sold for \$1,105, being the top price. Sultan Ray at \$700 topped the bulls.

On May 3 the Hopley Stock Farm Company, Atlantic, Ia., realized an average of \$620 on 51 Shorthorns disposed of by auction sale. Nine bulls averaged \$728 and 42 females, \$595. The herd sires, Sittytown Archer, Count Augustus, and Village Beau were appreciated by the visitors, who paid good money for calves by these bulls, or cows in-calf to them.

The American Aberdeen-Angus Breeders' Association staged a show and sale at Chicago on May 2 and 3. The 68 bulls sold on May 2 averaged \$184. Black Knight of Greenwood, a bull calved on January 30, 1916, sold for \$775; that being the top for males. On May 3, 42 females were auctioned at an average of \$208. Blackburn 10th, of Greenwood, by Edgerton S., which was also the sire of the bull mentioned, topped the females at \$500.

John Hepburn, a Nova Scotia subscriber to the Farmer's Advocate, in a short letter recently received, voices his disapproval of the views of those city men who advise the passing of a law to prevent the slaughter of calves under one year old, asking the question, "What is a man to do with his calves who runs a straight dairy business, keeping all the cows he has feed for?" He would also like our subscribers who have grown clover on certain fields every third or fourth year for a number of years to give their experiences, and wonders whether they get as good a stand now as they did at first.

Increasing The Swine Herds A Safe Enterprise.

Apparently there is no enthusiasm amongst farmers in regard to increasing the number of sheep, and as beef raising is a slow process, any appreciable increase in the visible meat supply during the next twelve months depends upon a larger swine population. With hogs selling at more than sixteen dollars, f. o. b., and many brood sows already gone to the shambles, there can be little danger of creating anew such market conditions as existed in the fall of 1914, if farmers should build up their swine herds again by the retention of more breeding females. Prevailing prices will encourage those who are not provident in respect to the future to dispose of everything fit for pork, and thus their volume of output will continue to be small. Sows bred this spring to farrow in the fall will drop their litters when grain should be plentiful, and with the numbers of meat animals inadequate to meet the demand, the price for the finished article should be high enough to compensate for the risk incurred and the grain fed. On the other hand, a pig farrowed this spring can be bred to produce young in the spring of 1918 and its growing period, as well as the growing period of its offspring, will be coincident with the season for clover and other green feeds that can be utilized to cheapen production. Until agriculturists, cattle feeders especially, get into the cow business a little more enthusiastically the supply of finished cattle cannot have any very great damaging effect on the market. Conditions are now in such a state as to make any increase in live stock a commendable move and a safe enterprise. Particularly with swine, however, can the output be increased in a reasonable length of time, and the sooner one is prepared to market the product, the more likely is he to realize handsomely on the investment. For these reasons it appears that an increase in the swine herds of this country can be brought about with little danger of loss and with splendid chances of fair remuneration to the producers. The bacon type, of course, is the desired kind and even after the war ends Canada should be prepared with an adequate volume of supply to retain the position in the British market gained during the past two years.