

HORSES.

Wintering Idle Horses and Colts.

The economic wintering of idle horses offers food for thought and practice more markedly this year than usual. With hay selling at from \$17 to \$20 per ton, and oats about 55 cents per bushel, with a probability of an increase in the price of each, the man who has to winter a few horses which cannot be used to earn their keep has reason to consider how he can do so with as little cost as is compatible with health and vigor. It must, of course, be understood that it will not be profitable to allow the horses to fail too much in flesh. This applies especially to horses that will be required for spring work, also brood mares, as when these are allowed to become thin and weak, their value either as workers or breeders is so reduced that it requires more food and time to make them up again than has been saved in food during the winter.

In regard to weanlings, we think it unwise to attempt to save the food. The ultimate usefulness and value of a horse depends so much on his care and food during his first winter that, while, of course, care should be taken to waste no food, we do not find it profitable to attempt to economize. In a recent issue of "The Farmer's Advocate," an article appeared, entitled, "The Winter Care of Weanlings," and, notwithstanding the scarcity and high price of food, we think that weanlings should be wintered largely as detailed in that article. With yearlings and older animals it is different, and any system that lessens expense, and at the same time keeps the animals in fair condition should give fair results. It must be understood that whatever food is given it must be of good quality. Musty or partially-decayed material must not be fed. This applies to all classes, but especially to brood mares. It cannot be too thoroughly understood that partial decay, especially in roots or silage, or water containing decaying animal or vegetable matter cannot with safety be fed to horses. Musty or dust hay or oats is very undesirable, but not nearly so dangerous as decay, even though slight, of the foods mentioned. Decay of this kind tends to produce in horses a disease known as cerebro spinal meningitis, the first symptom of which, generally, is an inability to swallow. This is usually followed by progressive paralysis and death in a few days. We have known of many cases of this kind caused by feeding horses silage that had become just a little mouldy, or roots that were beginning to decay. Cattle can eat such food with reasonable impunity, but horses are unable to withstand the toxic effects.

In our opinion, idle horses should be given a daily ration of grain, preferably oats, but other grain, as wheat, rye, peas, barley or corn, or a mixture of any or all of them may be used. It

is probably hardly necessary to say that when the heavier grains are used, the bulk should be correspondingly less, as we take it for granted that too much will not be fed when the feeder is endeavoring to feed cheaply. We think chopped or rolled grain gives better results than whole, and when any grain other than oats is fed, chopping is practically necessary. While the allowance of grain may be small, it is necessary to allow a sufficient quantity of bulky food to satisfy hunger. Either hay or straw, or a mixture of them, must be given for this purpose. When necessary, hay can be dispensed with altogether, but when a little can be given, it does not require so much grain to keep the animals in fair condition. A little time and care spent in the preparation of the food is profitable. We consider that the hay or straw, or both, should be cut, and the roots pulped.

For a grain mixture, we would suggest three parts, by weight, of oats to one part barley. If peas or wheat is to be added, about one-half of the weight of the barley would be about right. This mixture should be chopped and mixed with its own bulk of bran. If the food be mixed in the proportions of, say, one bushel of cut hay or straw, or a mixture of them, a peck each of silage and pulped roots, and a gallon of chop thoroughly mixed and allowed to stand for a few hours before feeding, a slight fermentation and heating occurs, the whole mass becomes somewhat moist, and the flavors become mixed, which makes it more palatable, and thus more easily digested. It is not wise to allow fermentation to take place to too great an extent. Sufficient quantities of mixtures of this nature are made for cattle to last for two or three days, but for horses not more than enough for one day should be made. For an ordinary horse, about one-half bushel of this should make a fair meal. For small or young animals, of course, the amount should be less, in proportion to size. If this amount should be found insufficient to satisfy the hunger of some of the animals, a little whole straw or hay should be given.

We are not prepared to say just what the actual cost per day feeding as above would be. We could figure it out at what a person who had to purchase everything, say at \$18 per ton for hay, 55c. per bushel for oats, 15c. per bushel for mangels or turnips, 20c. per bushel for carrots, and, of course, we would have to exclude silage, as, so far as we know, it has no set market value, and cannot satisfactorily be used, except when taken freshly from the silo. We think that, even at these prices, the cost of keep would not be, at most, more than half of that when whole hay, oats and bran, with a few roots, are fed. The farmer who produces his own food can figure more correctly what the actual cost of the different foods are, and hence can estimate the daily cost more correctly.

It is necessary that the animals, whether work

horses, colts or brood mares, get regular exercise, in order that health and vigor may be retained. Where possible, it is better to stand the animals in box stalls when in the stable, but we appreciate the fact that this is not possible in the majority of cases. When they stand tied in single stalls, exercise becomes more necessary. For work horses or brood mares, the best way to give exercise is in harness. A drive of five or six miles daily should be given, but in many cases time will not permit of this, and exercise must be given by turning the animals in the yard, field or paddock. Of course, when two or more horses are turned out together, their shoes should be removed to lessen danger of injury by kicks. Especially is this the case with brood mares, for whom regular exercise is more necessary than for others. When at all possible, it is wise to drive them daily, as, by so doing we know that they get the exercise, and are not standing in the barnyard or paddock, and it removes the danger of abortion being caused by fighting with other horses, slipping, etc.

Horses that are expected to work in the spring should be gradually prepared for at least a month before work is expected to commence. During this preparation, the principal food should be hay, oats and bran. The change from the mixture mentioned should be made gradually, and exercise in the harness on the road or at light work should be given daily. The amount of exercise or work should be daily increased in order to get them in proper condition to do a full day's work when needed. Too often this precaution is not taken, but the team that has been idle all winter is, without preparation, put to regular work in the spring, and the driver often wonders why the horses tire so easily, get sore shoulders and become thin. A little consideration will convince any person that an hour or two daily for a month given to preparing a team for spring work is time profitably spent. "WHIP."

Breeding Light Horses.—My Most Profitable Mistake.

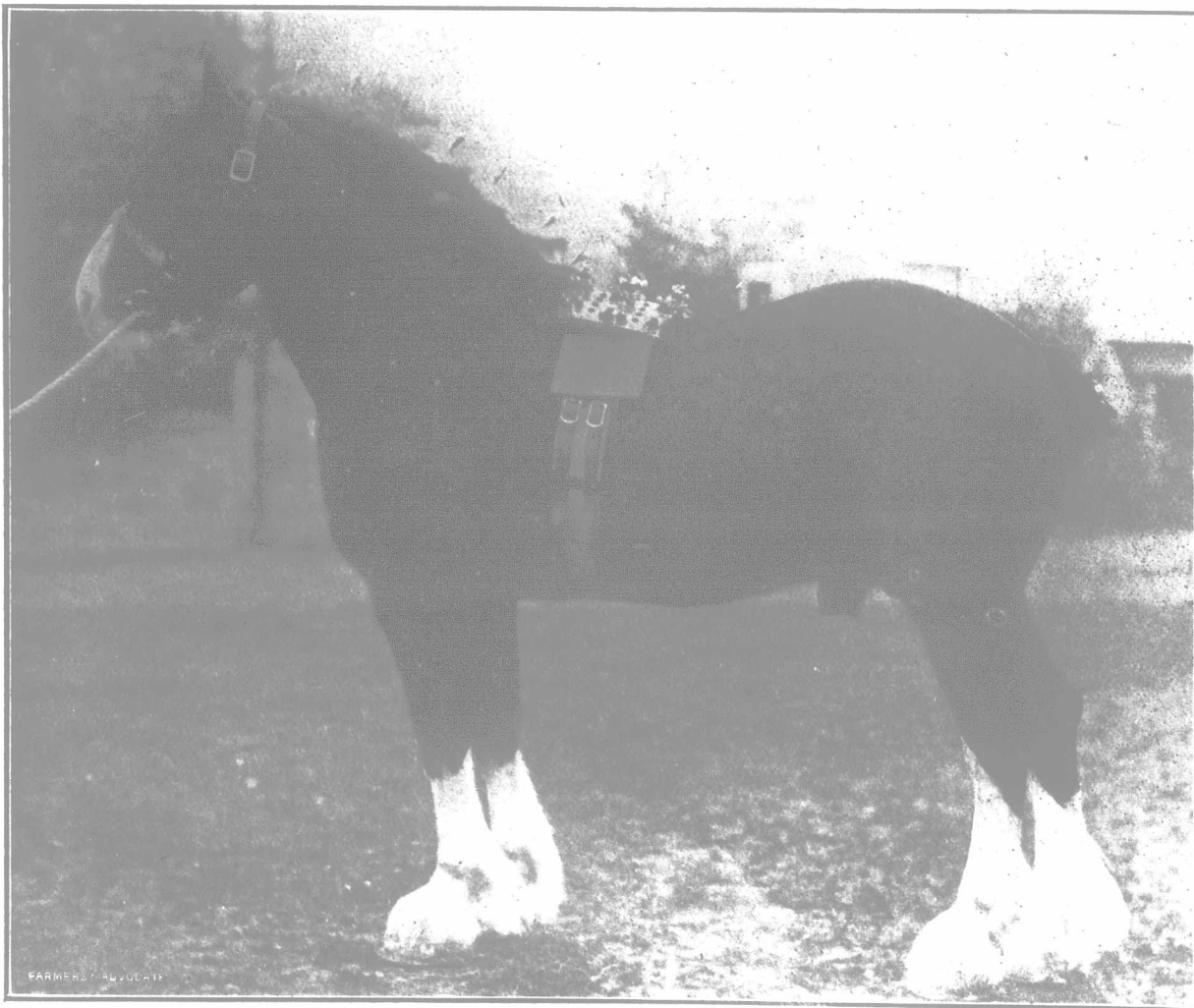
We are all prone to make mistakes, but there is an old proverb which says: "It's a wise man, indeed, who does not make the same mistake a second time."

I consider that, during my efforts to be a successful farmer, one of my greatest mistakes (and one which a great many farmers are making at present) was that of raising horses of the lighter breeds. As a rule, this type of horse is of very little use to a farmer, often becoming so crippled as to be of little use to anyone. Of course, I was not always so wise on this subject. "Experience is the best teacher," and I wish to show how, in the end, I profited by my mistake in breeding blood horses.

My father used to keep a couple of heavy mares for breeding purposes, and raised one or two colts a year—usually two. Thus, we always had a good supply of cool-blooded horses with which to do our farm work. We had a neighbor, though, who bred and trained blood horses entirely, and he could be seen passing up and down our road at a lively pace almost every hour of the day. This looked very easy work to me, and more exciting than following some heavy work horse. Of course, I never stopped to consider the expense, etc., connected with such sport.

In due time my opportunity arrived for managing the farm. Eager to follow my neighbor's example, I neglected breeding the heavy mares, and in their place I got a couple of blood mares. The latter proved excellent breeders, so in a few years I found myself the owner of a number of almost useless horses. At least, we found them of very little use to do the work on a dairy farm, where there is so much team work and heavy hauling to be done. Then, when it came to breaking these colts, we found it was not convenient to hitch such skittish creatures to a farm wagon. Accordingly, light rigs and harness had to be bought for driving on the road—additional expense. And, as everyone knows what sudden notions these high-lived colts will take for jumping into ditches or climbing fences, there were often some repairs to be made to harness or rig after each trip. This caused more expense. On the other hand, a Clydesdale colt can be hitched to almost any sort of vehicle, and will trot along like an old horse.

Well, to continue my story, in a few years we were the possessors of quite a stock of light horses of a class which we found difficult to dispose of. The majority of them bore some blemish, as spavin, etc. Had they been colts of a heavier breed, a slight blemish would not have hindered their sale greatly, as they would still be fit for work. Moreover, a colt of the heavier breeds can be trained to do considerable farm work, such as harrowing, rolling, etc., when they reach two years of age. A blood colt is of practically no use until three or four years old. Usually, at four years, one will know whether it will make a good driver or not. There need be no mention made



Scotland Yet (14839).

Clydesdale stallion; brown; foaled 1906. Bred by J. Ernest Kerr. Sire Royal Favorite.