

HORSES.

PREPARE STALLIONS FOR THE SEASON.

The failure of mares to breed, or the production of weak foals by some that reproduce, is not always the fault of the mares. The vigor of the foal when born is dependent in no slight degree on the vigor and constitution of both parents at the time of copulation and conception, and not due entirely to the manner in which the dam has been used during pregnancy, nor to her health during the term. In order that a stallion may give satisfactory results in the stud, as regards not only the number of foals he will sire, but also the strength and vigor of the same, and their likelihood to live and make useful and valuable animals, he must be in good health and vigorous during the stud season. Unfortunately, many sires spend about nine months of the year in comparative or complete idleness. The practice in many cases is to remove his shoes after the season, turn him into a box stall (often a small one), and allow him to remain there, without exercise, until a couple of weeks before the next season commences. The owner has no work or driving for him to do, has no time to give him exercise simply because he should have it, and either has no suitable paddock or lot into which to turn him for a few hours each day, or is afraid to do so on account of the danger of him injuring himself while galloping, etc. The writer has in mind one highly-bred stallion, an excellent individual, that has been used in this way for a great many years. This horse has been bred to the best mares of his class in the section in which he is owned, and travelled during the stud season of May and June, and, while he has sired a few high-class animals, the percentage of good ones is much less than the quality of sire and dams would warrant. A horse that goes practically without exercise during several months of the year cannot have the necessary muscular, respiratory and nervous energy that is necessary in order that he may do himself justice in the stud. The writer has in mind another horse-breeding establishment where a number of stallions of different classes are kept in the stud. The stallions in this stud are too numerous to be given regular exercise either in harness or on the halter without the employment of several grooms, and, as a consequence, no attempt is made in this line, but the owner has several paddocks of an acre or over each, well fenced, and each stallion is turned into a paddock for a few hours every day that is not extremely rough. They gallop around the paddock and have a good time generally, and it is very seldom an accident occurs. In this way the constitutional vigor is kept up, and the percentage of foals produced is much greater and the percentage of weak foals among those produced much less than in the case cited where no exercise is allowed for several months.

It is probable that the experience of all owners of stallions, or of those whose observations have been directed in this line, will be much the same as the above. If this is the case, it can readily be seen that, in order to get the best results from sires, it is necessary to not allow them at any time of the year to become constitutionally weak, either from want of exercise or the necessary food. Stallions in moderate condition have always proved more potent than those either in gross or quite low condition. The question then arises, "How are we going to prepare the stallions that have already stood in idleness the greater part of the time since last season to give satisfactory results the coming season?" The answer is, "Get to work with them as soon as possible." It will only be a few weeks now until they will go on the road for the season, or stand at the owner's barn, as the case may be. Of course, the preparation must be somewhat gradual. Daily exercise should be commenced at once. The manner in which the exercise should be given will depend upon the class and upon the tastes of the groom. Heavy horses can be exercised either on the halter or in the team at light work, or even in single harness at light work or on the road. The lighter class of harness horses will probably be exercised in harness, or, if preferred, on the line beside another horse in the saddle, while Thoroughbreds can be exercised in saddle or beside a saddle horse, or, if educated to go in harness, can be driven. If they can be given the necessary exercise in doing something that has to be done, of course the expense will be less; but exercise they must have in order to give them the necessary tone and power to give satisfactory stud service. A heavy stallion should be given a couple of hours' light work or four to six miles of a walk daily at first, and the amount of work or walking exercise gradually increased until three or four times that amount is given. The lighter classes should be given proportionately more. We consider that when work or driving is to be done, the stallions should be kept at it steadily during the term between seasons, except possibly for a month or six weeks after the season, when it is well to lessen the grain ration, and proportionately lessen the amount of work.

In preparing horses that have been idle for months, of course, regular grooming is as necessary as exercise, and the food should be of good quality and easily digested, and in proportion to the labor performed; but the groom should always be careful to not allow them to become excessively fat. The food to be given under these conditions does not differ in kind or quality to that which should be fed to horses being put into condition for any purpose. The administration of drugs should be avoided. It is a mistaken idea that stallions should be given medicines, stock foods, nerve tonics, etc. Under no circumstances should a healthy animal, whether it be stallion or mare, be given drugs. If any disease exists, recourse should be had to drugs, but those given should be those indicated by the disease existing. Medicines that tend to lay on fat quickly, give a gloss to the coat, etc., are very dangerous, as they cause fatty degeneration and disintegration of tissue, and if continued for any great length of time, permanently injure the constitution. Good food, good grooming, good general care and regular exercise is all that any horse needs or should be given in order to get him in condition. "WHIP."

DENOUNCES THE SCRUB STALLION.

ADOPTION OF A NEW BREEDING SYSTEM.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate": I have read with great interest the different items and opinions of writers as regards the stallion and horse-breeding interests, and respectfully ask for space to express my opinion. In the past twelve years I



Baltimore (imp.) (8729).

Hackney stallion; chestnut; foaled 1903. First in class of ten, Ontario Horse Show, Toronto, Feb., 1907. Imported and exhibited by Graham Bros., Claremont, Ont.

have owned and travelled different breeds of horses—roadsters, general-purpose and draft—and own at present a four-year-old registered Shire stallion that I purchased at the London exhibition when a yearling. He is sired by the noted imported English Shire horse, Moulton Rufus. I do not say that all non-registered stallions are unfit for public service, but I strongly denounce the scrub stallion, for they are a great hindrance to the improvement of horse-breeding, that are peddled around the country at such a low fee, calling at each man's barn (which the owner of a good horse cannot do); thus many are induced to use them on that account, finally to their sorrow and loss, and the country here is filled with scrub mares. The breeders seem too short-sighted to see this far ahead, so it is high time that something be done to prohibit the use of the scrub stallion for public service.

I do not approve of the present insurance system of breeding, where payment is made only when mares prove to be in foal. I claim that every man that breeds a mare, and has the service of a good horse for a full season, has a just right to pay a service fee (supposing a \$10 fee is the charge), say to pay \$4 at the close of the season, and the balance, \$6, if his mare produces a living colt. This would induce owners of mares to return mares regularly; also, the stallion to be limited to a given number of mares, according to age of stallion. I think for a three-year-old, 30; a four-year-old, 60; five-year-old, and upward to 12 and 14 years, 70 to 80 mares. The stallion owner could afford to travel his horse for a lower fee, pay his expenses at close of the season, and wait for his profits till the mares produce their foals. I would like

to see all stallion owners adopt this system, and much better results would follow. I do not approve of the Government inspection and license act on registered stallions, but am willing to fall in with anything reasonable for the improvement of our noble animal, the horse. W. J. NATT, Algoma, Ont.

PEDIGREE NOT EVERYTHING.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

I have been reading in your valuable paper the letters on this most important question, the license, lien and inspection act. It seems to me it is a rather lean affair. If our unregistered Canadian stallions are to be barred out, to make room for a lot of long-haired, boggy ones that are imported, I think it is a shame. I will give you a little of my experience in colt-raising. I owned a nice, three-quarter-bred mare, which I bred to a Standard-bred stallion, which, in my judgment, was a good one. The colt which I received was worth, at four years old, about \$65, while my neighbor raised a colt from a half-Clyde mare and a mustang stallion which, at three years old, was sold for \$130. Now, I think a long pedigree, even if it be registered, is not of very much account. I might mention many such instances as this. We farmers, on fifty or one hundred acre farms, do not require a big, heavy draft horse, nor yet too small a one. We want a horse that can do any kind of farm work, or hitch to a light rig and not look out of place. If I owned a stallion, I would not like to ask my neighbor to give me a lien of ten or fifteen dollars on the colt.

I can imagine the answer he would give me. Suppose I buy an imported stallion for \$1,500, and he gets blemished, will I have to turn him aside? If the Government passes such an act, it is going too far. If we make a mistake, we are the ones that have to suffer. When the inspectors were going through our township, they would not stop long enough for a man to take his horse out of the stable to show him. I met them, having my team with me; they said, "These are the kind of horses we want in this country." I want to tell you that this team can be sold for \$400 any day, and they were bred from a light-bred mare and an unregistered Canadian-bred stallion.

When we want to purchase a horse, we don't ask if his sire is registered or not. If the horse is the kind we want, we buy it. Some people want a certain class of horse, while others want another. If I want to raise a colt, I choose the horse that suits me best, whether registered or not, and will continue to do so. The farmers in this section are interested in raising good horses, and are quite capable of managing it themselves. I have heard the opinion of a great many farmers, and they are not in favor of any such act. Oxford Co., Ont. G. H. ELLIS.

CROSSING THE OCEAN DOES A HORSE NO GOOD.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

I have watched with much interest the controversy about the stallion inspection and lien act, and would like to voice the opinion of nine-tenths of the farmers in this locality by saying that, if the act is allowed to go through now, there will be a greater and harder task before the people, in the course of about two years, to repeal it. If the same amount of interest were taken by the Legislature to improve the general run of brood mares, it would be much more to the point. It is the mare that has as much to do with the quality of the colt as the horse—perhaps more. And then, too, if the stallion owner was a little more particular about the kind of mares he breeds his horse to, it would tend to improve the mares of the country as much as any act passed by the Legislature. As for the scrub stallion being hard to eradicate, I don't think we should have to call on an inspector to tell us farmers