

Weight of Shoes at Shows

At a meeting of the council of the Hackney Horse Society of England the other day it was resolved that henceforth at shows the weight of the shoes shall be limited as follows:

For all horses (exclusive of yearly colts and fillies) exceeding 14 hands, no shoe may exceed 2 lb. in weight. For all horses not exceeding 14 hands and for yearling colts and fillies, no shoe may exceed 1½ pounds in weight. A special veterinary surgeon will be appointed, whose sole duty will be to examine the shoes of all horses, and if he is of opinion that any shoes exceed the prescribed weight, he is to have the power to remove and weigh them. If found to exceed the weights mentioned the horse will be disqualified from competition.

The Draft Horses of France

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

French draft horses have attained to a large measure of popularity in all parts of the world. Most European countries, South Africa, South America, the United States and Canada import breeding or working horses from France. The Argentine Republic and the United States are the chief buyers of the French drafters and the breed they buy chiefly is the Percheron. The Percheron, however, is not the only draft breed of the French. It is the breed chiefly exported and the one we see most of on this continent, but there are, four other draft breeds in the Republic distinctly French in their characteristics and in their way as popular in their various home districts as the Percheron is in his, or as he is now in America.

All French draft horses contain large admixtures of foreign blood. The Percheron, for example, is the product of the crossing of the Arab or Barb horses upon Norman stock—the heavy war horses of the middle ages when men fought in armour and the animals they were mounted on required to be strong, heavily built and powerful. They got their name from the old province of Perche, the district in which the breed originated. Originally they were coachers, noted for their ability to trot rapidly and haul heavy loads, grey usually in color and from 15.2 to 16 hands high. The modern Percheron was developed to meet the demand for heavy horses. He is essentially a heavy drafter now, but with increasing size and weight the French have been able to maintain in the Percherons the old-time activity which distinguished the breed as coachers. The Percheron of today is a horse with the rapid moving abilities of the coachers continued with the substance and size required in drafters. The Percherons we have here in America are cross-bred horses developed by crossing the old type of Percherons with the Boulonnais.

The Boulonnais horses which have been used largely in giving the Percheron size, are the most characteristic perhaps of all the French drafters. Their home country is the district around the city of Boulogne, but they are bred and used in other parts of France to a very large extent. They are cart horses primarily, show rather less action than the Percherons, are slower, and as modernly developed may show any color possible in horses, and some shades that are rather uncommon, such as red and blue grey. One may see them used for heavy draft purposes in almost every town in France. In Paris, particularly, they are much used in heavy haulage. The original Boulonnais stock, so far as it can be traced, is of native origin, but during the eighteenth century the old stock was crossed with the Arabs and Barbs, bringing in a strong Oriental mixture of blood and giving to the breed of today the various colors for which it is noted. The French have always been strong on crossing their native horses with the Barbs and Arabs. Government agents are kept in Arabia always searching for horses to be used in the breeding of army horses or for use in improving existing breeds. They are zealously aware of the value of the rapid moving, powerful drafters they have developed from the use of Arabian crosses and are in no danger of allowing the breeds to degenerate in these particulars anyway.

In addition to the Boulonnais and Percherons the French have three other breeds of drafters, the Ardenne horses, the Bretons and the horses of Normandy. The Ardennes are not very widely bred. Their district is up by the Belgian boundary, and while a century or so ago they were a noted draft breed, strongly built, docile and hardy, they have been diminished in vigor and powers of endurance by crossing with the Belgian cart horses in the effort to increase their size. When Napoleon made his famous raid into Russia in 1812, sacked Moscow and was forced to retreat with the loss of practically his entire army, the Ardenne horses, that comprised a large portion of his cavalry mounts, covered themselves with glory by their wonderful staying powers, vigor and ability to endure hardships and lack of fodder that practically wiped out the horses of the retreating army. But the Ardennes have degenerated in vigor since then.

The Bretons are cart horses. A typical Breton horse is rather lighter in the body and longer in the legs than a typical Percheron. In color they are usually grey and in height from 15.2 to 16.2 hands. Like the others, this breed is of mixed descent. They have been crossed with the Percheron and the thor-

oughbred. Their chief use is for cartage purposes, for this work they are as useful as any breed in the world.

Then there are the horses of Normandy. Norman horses formerly were a distinct and very important breed. But nowadays little trace of the original war horses that came out of this quarter of Europe remains. They have been crossed with outside blood of various kinds for the past two hundred years, with Danish horses, Mecklenburg cart horses, English thoroughbreds, Norfolk trotters, Arabs, and half-bred English stock. Originally the Normans were very hardy and serviceable. Now much of their hardiness has been lost by the careless methods employed in developing the modern type of the breed. Exactly what a modern Norman horse is would be a little difficult to describe. There are at least four distinct types, the Norman cart horses which are the product chiefly of the Percheron cross; the Anglo-Normans, the result of English crossings, used chiefly for army remounts; the coach horses which are very dissimilar in type and descent, and the trotters, a hardy enduring Norman strain, the product of Anglo-Norman crossings.

Such are the drafters of the French. In this country we know the value of the draft horses of France best by the number and excellence of the Percheron importations which have been made during the past twenty-five or fifty years. We have the Normans to some extent, too, on this continent, but they will never become popularized as the horses of Perche have. In the Norman there is too much dissimilarity in type. The French have not been any wiser in their breeding operations perhaps, than the English or Scotch. They have not kept their various breeds so distinctly pure. In the case of the Normans, the Ardennes and to some extent the Boulonnais, they have injured the type, usefulness and value of these breeds by their freedom in crossing them with others. But in the case of the Percherons they have managed not only to improve wonderfully and well upon the stock they started with, but they have maintained, too, the valuable characteristics that belonged to the breed while it was a coacher, the ability to move rapidly under a heavy haul, have combined that quality with the substance and weight required in a modern draft horse and have given the horse using world one of its most valuable drafters.

Winnipeg.

IOWA-CANADIAN.

STOCK

Discussions on Live-Stock subjects welcomed.

A new record in live-stock was made at the Union Yards, Chicago, on November 16th, when a total of 49,128 cattle were marketed in one day comparing with the previous banner run of 44,445, on September 28, 1903.

An American View on the Milking Shorthorn

A very true and reasonable article on the milking Shorthorn is contributed to the Wisconsin Farmer by A. J. Meyer, who disposes of the question as to whether there is such a strain by remarking, "We have the cows, why waste words?" At the same time, he admits that the repeated attacks on the general-purpose Shorthorn are not without justification, or at least without cause, and the cause he finds in the disappointing character of Shorthorn cattle in not a few herds advertised as dual-purpose. He refers to the advertisement of one breeder he knows who offers "young bulls from heavy-milking dams," and remarks that some of the heavy-milking dams in this herd give milk enough to raise a calf in good shape, but not one would pay for its feed by the milk-pail route. Another advertises dual-purpose Shorthorns on the strength of one heavy-milking dam he owned long years ago. Another breeder once owned a fine herd of milking Shorthorns, but got the pedigree craze, and, by a process of substitution and elimination, he brought his herd, in ten years, to the point where it contains one lone individual that might be rated as dual-purpose, the others being barely able to raise their calves, yet he was so proud of his work that he boasted of having the finest bred herd of Shorthorns in the State.

"Little has been done," he says, "to counteract these practices. Much needs to be done. What we need is active co-operation among the breeders of milking Shorthorns, to the end that proper and uniform standards of performance be established, authentic milk and butter records be officially determined, and reasonable encouragement to the breed be offered at agricultural fairs." In the fixing of performance standards, he advises moderation, combining in fair degree the qualities of beef and milking ability.

"In arriving at official milk and butter records, the breeder of milking Shorthorns can do no better than to emulate the example of the various dairy organizations that have provided for weekly, monthly and yearly tests by qualified and impartial officials at an entirely reasonable cost. These records should be collected and published

in such a form as to make them readily accessible to the general public in some manner similar to the Advanced Registry system of the Holstein-Friesian Association of America. The direct benefits to be derived from such a system of making public officially-endorsed milk and butter records are too evident to require discussion. The man who breeds 'pedigrees,' and the other fellow who propagates young stock 'from heavy-milking dams,' will have 'to put up or shut up.' Then will speculation, guesswork and wilful deception cease. The day of the milkless milking Shorthorn will dawn, wherein values will be decreed and records conferred upon a basis of officially-guaranteed utility.

"Until the breeders of milking Shorthorns awaken to the necessity of uniform co-operation in some such manner as I have indicated, it is hardly reasonable to expect the agricultural fairs to offer much in the way of encouragement. What little effort has been expended by the fair associations heretofore in attempting to bring out representative exhibits, has been, as a rule, so badly misdirected as to disgust, rather than encourage, the would-be exhibitor. Yet, it is the indifference of the latter that is mainly responsible for any shortcomings in this direction. With the dual-purpose Shorthorn industry in its present condition, each man acting as a separate unit, establishing his own standards, and doing absolutely nothing towards the advancement of the industry as a whole, how can we expect any board of fair managers to offer us the encouragement they would like to?"

"As I see it, the road to completest success, and greatest service to the public, so far as concerns the breeders of milking Shorthorns, lies by the way, first, of national and local organization standards of excellence; third, by the determination of official milk and butter records; and fourth, by the establishment of an advanced registry for cows that attain to the required standard. The cause is a good one; success is sure. Let us stand shoulder to shoulder in a national crusade for the cow that more than any other has stamped its influence upon American agriculture—the milking Shorthorn."

Cattle Prices Expected to be High

Those in touch with live-stock conditions in the United States are freely predicting greatly enhanced prices for beef cattle during the next few months. Nine and ten cent cattle are forecasted. If things in the country are shaping themselves as these experts maintain there is no manner of doubt but that the year 1909 will witness higher beef prices than have been seen for years. Deliveries of live-stock at the great market centers this fall have not been exceeded in years. The country is more than cleaning up. It is getting rid of its stock altogether too freely. High priced feed is, in the main, responsible for the heavy liquidations. But there is every indication in the situation, as viewed at present, to show that those who have nerve enough to make present high priced grain into meat will not lose anything by the venture. Unless all signs fail, America next summer will find herself shorter in meat than she was last. So will the countries that depend on this continent largely for their supply. Recurrence of the agitations in the old land for the breaking up of the meat trust may be expected. This is not a low price meat era, at least, not for those meat producers who are situated where they can dispose of their stock at prices fixed by the world's situation. It will be interesting to note in the event of advancing meat values, what increase over the ordinary prevailing prices, the cattle growers of Western Canada will gain. It seems sometimes to us as if no kind of abnormality in demand or supply could ever make much change in the price quoted to the western trade. Ours is the least fluctuating live-stock market in the world.

Live-stock are not likely to be scarce during the next year or so on this continent alone. European advices indicate that beefing stock is none too plentiful in most continental cattle producing countries. In Great Britain the condition of the domestic supply indicates higher prices. In France public opinion is beginning to be moved by the continuous advance, which has been in progress for some time, in the price of meat. The rise resulting from the diminution in the number of cattle brought to the slaughterhouses and also to the ports of shipment was quite natural. The decrease amounts to 33.27 per cent. at the great Parisian cattle market of La Villette as compared with the two months August to September of 1906, and 27 per cent. when compared with that of 1907. All signs point to higher values. We are passing through a second year of unusually high priced grains. Advancing grain prices affects the live-stock