

Business Principles Applied to Horse Breeding*

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If prices count for anything, the horse is king to-day. Despite steam, electricity, the motor, and other forms of mechanical traction, horses are more difficult to procure and higher priced than ever before. At this Show, we knew of several who are on the look out for good pairs of horses and more especially the heavy ones and so far we have heard of no offers. The speaker himself, has been making inquiries for a pair of heavy geldings and even the offer of a liberal price has brought no response. There are horses for sale, but they are not the kind the market wants. In desperation, a man may buy what he does not want, but he will not pay the figure he would have, could he have obtained what he was seeking for. Now, why this condition of affairs? Why can't buyers in the country, at the market, or at this fair get what they want? They have the cash and they want the goods. Why can't the farmer produce the goods and get the money? Are farmers applying, as well as they might, business principles to horse raising?

BUSINESS PRINCIPLES IN DAIRYING

This is the day when breeders of dairy cattle are endeavoring to apply the same business methods to their employment as the men behind the counter do to their vocation. These dairymen say you should weigh the milk and the feed and ascertain the other items of expense and so know what you are doing. By applying such business methods, men are making money out of dairying. The same principles should be applied to horse breeding.

To many farmers, in breeding horses, consider solely their own ideals. They are not studying what the market will pay the price for. As a result, they are not making the money they might out of horse breeding. The market will pay to-day anywhere from \$400 to \$700 or even more for a good pair of draft geldings or mares weighing 1,500 pounds or over. For ordinary chunks, weighing 200 or 300 pounds less than this, the price will be little more than half of the above figures. There are far more of the latter class of horses offered for sale than the former and this is why the farmer is not realizing as much from horse breeding as he should.

GOOD STALLIONS NOT APPRECIATED

Why this condition of affairs? Barring some of the more forward counties of Ontario and other parts of Canada, stallions calculated to get the "rent paying" sort of stock are not sufficiently appreciated. Farmers say they are too heavy for their work. They want a general purpose horse, a horse weighing about 1,800 pounds that will get "all-round horses." Stallions of this class are usually either under-sized draft stallions, or gross Standard-bred or Thoroughbred, or Hackney stallions. And all too frequently they are grade or cross-bred stallions. None of these sorts are likely to be prepotent. And what is the result? Perhaps a useful horse—perhaps not. But in any case, if the owner wants to sell, and he usually does at some time, the price is low and no money is made from this part of the farm operations. It says every time to study the market and to breed to that class of stallions best calculated to get what the markets will pay for.

In the application of business principles to dairying, nothing has been more clearly demonstrated than the indispensableness of the special dairy breeds. The dairyman who seeks to make money out of milk or butter or cream by dependence on general purpose sires, fails. So with the horse business. There is not to-day a prepotent general purpose breed of horses. There

are stallions, some of them pure bred more of their grades or scrubs, that in weight and other particulars may fill the general purpose bill, but experience has taught that when these are used as sires, they will fail to get anything like a large per cent. of commercial stock.

A HINDRANCE TO PROGRESS

We believe that nothing has stood so much in the way of horse improvement in Canada as this general purpose ideal. A general purpose horse, if you can get him, is a very valuable animal, but when, with the breeds at present available, you try to breed this sort of a horse, you court failure nine times out of 10. Those countries of the world where buyers are to-day going to secure high-class horses are invariably

could not be affected. As a buyer of horses in Scotland and other parts of the world, I have found that the great horse breeders of the world are equally jealous of their high class mares. You can buy poor, or even ordinary mares in these countries at reasonable prices, but when it comes to a high class mare, that has proved herself, the price is multiplied many times.

GOOD MARES NOT RETAINED

In Canada it has, unfortunately for our horse business, transpired that farmers have parted with their mares almost as readily as with their geldings. This has not invariably been the case, for our successful horse breeders have been careful to retain their good brood mares. In this connection, the feature that has most impressed the judges of heavy horses at this Show is the strength of the filly and mare classes. We have seen shows at Toronto and elsewhere where the stallions were almost, if not quite as good, as one would see anywhere in the world, but it has been most unfortunate that the female classes have been decidedly inferior, both in quality and numbers. Canada can never hope to become a great horse breeding country unless this condition of affairs improves, i.e., unless farmers refuse to sell their high class mares (except at most tempting prices) and unless importers get more encouragement to bring out mares as well as stallions.

DOES HORSE RAISING PAY

And does this horse raising business pay? Yes, if you raise the kind of horse the market wants. We estimate that it costs us from \$100 to \$125, counting in risk and everything, to raise a draft colt up to two years of age. After that date, he can be broken to harness and will pay for himself until he reaches the market age. A few years ago this market age was five, six or seven years. But at present horses are so scarce that four year olds and even three year olds, if up to size, will sell at from \$400 to \$500 a pair and, if of extra quality, considerably higher.

This is certainly a splendid return and shows that horse raising can, even under ordinary conditions, be made just as profitable as any other line of farm business. The real horseman, who understands the business and likes horses, can make, under present conditions, more money in horse raising than in perhaps any other line of farming. The average farmer, if he applies business principles to this industry, can add some hundreds of dollars every year to the income from his farm.

Milk Records—Examples of Value

Geo. H. Barr, Chief, Dairy Division, Ottawa

How are we to know our best cows? There is not a dairyman anywhere who can tell his best cows without first weighing his milk and using the Babcock test. At the Woodstock Fair a few years ago, there was a cow which had picked out for first place in the dairy competition. She was what we call a full milker. The pail was always full to the running over, but a lot of it was froth, which did not weigh out. As a result this cow was away down in the competition. We cannot tell by sight alone. The scales only are accurate.

I cannot see why young men at least are not getting in for the keeping of records. The time required to keep records is as nothing at all. One minute a cow per day is sufficient. One young man whom I know of has increased the average production of his herd from 5,000 pounds to over 11,000 pounds of milk a year; another from 4,500 pounds to 9,000 pounds. Both of these men started when in their teens to keep records.

I believe that our present tariff system costs the average farmer at least \$300 a year.—E. C. Drury, Crown Hill, Ont.

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countries where special purpose horses are bred. Consider the Clydesdale of Scotland, the Thoroughbred of England, the Percheron of France, the Standardbred of America. No general purpose ideal controlled the makers of these breeds. They have bred along special purpose lines and to-day they are reaping their harvest.

Business principles applied to dairying have directed more than ever before the attention of breeders to the importance of their females. Perhaps, in all lines of stock raising, the tendency has been to over-estimate the importance of the male. Those men who to-day have high class dairy herds that are making money for them have weeded out the poor and have most carefully retained their best females. Even high prices would not tempt them to part with this class of their stock without which improvement

*Extract from an address given at the recent Eastern Ontario Live Stock Show, Ottawa.