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The Value of Pedigree in a Stallion

Dr. H. G. Reed, V. S., Hutton Co., Ont.

Many farmers throughout the country maintain that it makes no difference in the breeding qualities of a stallion whether he be a registered animal or a grade. They claim that, given a good conformation with the type of the breed from which he sprung, that it makes no difference at all as to what kind of animals his ancestors may have been. While this argument holds perfectly true so far as the usefulness of an animal is concerned for ordinary work purposes, it is very far from the truth as applied to the breeding horse.

No buyer of horses for ordinary utility purposes cares a fig about the ancestry of the horse he buys. Provided he gets the type he is looking for in the horse he buys, that is all he cares. But when it comes to buying a stallion for breeding purposes, then he is at once interested not only in the type and conformation of the horse himself, but also as to what kind of animals his ancestors were.

THE LAW OF REVERSION.

The buyer has been taught by experience that the great natural law called the "law of reversion" is acting strongly in all our breeding operations. This law teaches that the progeny of an animal is going to be more or less strongly affected for good or evil by the qualities of his ancestors. In all breeding there is a tendency for the progeny to "hark back" for several generations and resemble some ancestor more or less remote to a greater extent than either the immediate sire or dam. It has passed into a proverb among breeders that "you cannot depend on a half-breed to breed true to type," and this rule holds in a corresponding degree to three-quarters bred or other grades.

It is one thing to have the desired type in a breeding animal but quite another thing to be assured that the type has been sufficiently established through a long line of ancestors to make him propent and assure him the power to transmit that type to his progeny with uniformity. Any observant breeder cannot have failed to notice instances in proof of this. It is no unusual thing to find grade stallions of good conformation and typical appearance, but where these animals are put in the stud they fail to produce many foals as good as themselves because they have close up behind them in their ancestry more or less mongrel or other undesirable blood, which will most surely break out in a greater or lesser degree in their progeny.

HIGH CLASS STALLIONS.

The man who is ambitious to become a breeder of high class horses must always select first a really high class stallion and then satisfy himself that behind that good individuality there is a good pedigree extending back at least for five generations; if more, all the better, and letter still, providing he traces to some illustrious ancestor, thus assuring himself that there is no undesirable characteristic for many generations in the ancestry of the animal to which his progeny could revert.

The pedigree of a horse is the only way in which we can satisfy ourselves on this point and is conse-

quently of the greatest importance in selecting a sire that will be likely to give us good results. The day of the grade stallion is drawing rapidly to a close. The handwriting is on the wall. The agricultural press has done much towards this end as well as the teaching of prominent breeders. The death knell of grade stallions has been sounded and it cannot come too soon.

Test Seed Corn for Vitality

T. G. Raynor, B. S. A. Seed Branch, Ottawa.

The corn crop is becoming a more valuable one each year to the farmers of our country. How important it is that the seed should give satisfaction! There is great danger this year that many will meet with disappointment owing to the low vitality of much of the corn which will be used for seed. Last year the vitality of corn was exceptionally strong, and few failed, although in the Kingston district, owing, I believe, to a blunder made by a dealer in letting his seed corn heat in the bin after he got it, some inconvenience was experienced, as several corn fields had to be re-sown; fortunately the season was long enough that it became far enough advanced for the silo.

There are so many simple ways of testing seed corn that no one is excusable for not doing it. Added to the simple methods is the fact that the Seed Branch Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, undertakes this work in a wholesale way free of charge, and the seed is carried there free by the mails.

The least danger is experienced in securing seed corn on the ear. But even in this case it should be tested, as too much moisture may have remained in the cob and have kept the kernel so moist that hard freezing weather would affect the germ.

SOME METHODS FOR TESTING.

The soil test outside in a sheltered place is the most reliable. Take 50 or 100 seeds representative of the bulk lot, or from several ears, as the case may be, and plant them under favorable conditions for growth. Another method is to place the kernels between dampened folds of blotting paper or flannel between two plates, the one inverted over the other, and set in a warm place. The soil method in a box inside may be tried. The seeds may either be planted in the soil or they may be placed on cotton with a fold of it over as well as under and between the soil, which must be kept quite moist.

Very many farmers are making such tests every year and find that it pays them. There are hundreds of others who never think of this until they are ready to plant, and so the corn is planted and the chance is taken.

As mentioned before, the vitality of the seed corn last year was good everywhere, but this year the reverse is true. Fortunately there is a lot of old seed corn in the country, and if properly kept it is all right for planting this year.

Mixing spraying materials by guess is a common practice. For accurate and economical results, the mixing must be done by definite proportions. The exact strength should be known and accurately measured each time materials are to be mixed.

The Culture of Corn as a Grain Crop

Frank Sutor, Kent Co., Ont.

In order to grow a good crop of corn, or, in fact, any crop, it is necessary to have well drained land. The drainage pays every time. My land is a sandy loam, some fields being clay loam, with clay subsoil. For corn I plow mostly in the spring, as the soil runs together during winter and spring and therefore an opener and warmer seed bed is secured from the spring plowing.

I practice a four-year rotation, two years in corn and one year oats and barley seeded down to clover for one year. The clover sod is prepared for corn by applying from 12 to 15 loads of good barnyard manure plowed under in the spring.

As soon as possible after the land is plowed it is rolled and then disced, going angling across the field and giving it two strokes in the same place. It is then harrowed thoroughly, sometimes harrowing it each way. The disc is run down the furrows in order to fill them and get the land as level as possible. I always harrow the land just before planting, and if too rough to see the marker track, the land is rolled. I use a horse planter, which plants two rows 46 inches apart each way and drops three or four kernels in each hill. We always test our corn and plant nothing but seed of good vitality.

HARROWING AFTER PLANTING.

In about six days after planting, I harrow the corn twice in a place with a slant tooth smoothing harrow, driving the horses between the rows so that they do not tread on the young corn plants that are coming through. If this part of the work is properly done and the weather is favorable, it is one of the best cultivations that the corn crop receives. The harrows at this time destroy the young weeds in and around the hills, opens up the soil, admits air and heat, and thus hastens growth. Then in a few days we go on with the cultivator. I use a single cultivator for the first time, as it gets closer to the plant than is possible with the large two-horse machine. After this, I cultivate as often as possible, continuing to cultivate until the ears are formed.

I go through the crop with the hoe once and remove any weeds, extra stalks, or suckers, as these latter are an injury as well as are the weeds. One can do a great deal of good by going through the corn by hand if one uses judgment and removes barren stalks and smut.

140 BUSHELS PER ACRE.

The Early Learning is my favorite variety. Last year I planted it on the 25th of May. The corn all matured, and although it was a poor season, I had 140 bushels of ears to the acre. Corn from this crop took first prize in the county competition and also first prize in the Field Crops Competition for the Province at the Guelph Winter Fair.

It might be well for me to explain that in my four-year rotation of crops, the reason that I grow two crops of corn in succession is that the land would be too rich otherwise to grow small grain, as the crop would all lodge. For the third crop, I just break down the old corn stubs, disc it and drill in the oats and barley, a mixture of equal quantities, two bushels to the acre, and seed it down to clover.