

WEANING TIME

Four months is sufficient time to let the foals suck. Some advocate a longer run than this with the dam, but I have found that time long enough. When the mares are taken away great care should be exercised in the management of the foal, of the feeding especially, so as not to give it a set back. A colt that looses the foal flesh at weaning time, as a good many of them do, never develops into as good a horse as one that is fed liberally after the dam's milk is withdrawn, and kept thrifty and growing vigorously without a check. Feed them liberally, and on a feed that will build up bone and tissue. I do not know whether you can get skim milk on very many farms in Saskatchewan for feeding to the foal after weaning, but in my own practice I have found milk the best of all foods for building up frame and muscle in the animal and feed it invariably to my foals. Skim milk gives the colt the nutrients it stands most in need of, and, fed with a little grain, oats or bran, it brings the foal along in the best possible condition.

It is unnecessary for me to say very much about feeding and management after the colt is weaned. By giving our colts plenty of food and exercise in the yard in the winter with good pasturage in summer we have found no further difficulties to speak of in developing them into first-class draft horses, providing, of course, the breeding in the first place was right.

Action in Shires

Canadian horsemen note with approval the increasing attention being paid to action by breeders and judges of Shire horses in England. Action and quality have been the two characteristics which have entrenched the Clydesdale so firmly in the estimation of discriminating horsemen on this side of the water, while the relatively short, upright pasterns, with corresponding formation of shoulders, and resulting clumsiness of action, have seriously retarded the popularity of the Shire, notwithstanding his usually greater scale. It would appear that the discerning Old Country breeders of this heaviest of draft-horse stock have concluded to develop the desired length and obliquity of pastern calculated to permit of free, elastic action, and some of the recent shipments of Shires to Canada have borne marked evidence of progress in this direction. This was particularly noticeable at the Chambers' sale, in St. Thomas, a year or two ago, while illustrations of winners at the English shows, as seen in the accompanying photographs, plainly indicate development in regard to length and slope of pastern and the obliquity of shoulder, which is the anatomical counterpart, as, for instance, the champion mare at the recent London (Eng.) Shire Show. In this connection we note the comment of the *Live-stock Journal* on the exhibits at the show in question: "Without doubt, there is more razor-like shape of the bone below the knees and hocks, a silkier touch to the hair or feather, a bigger and better-shaped foot, and less uprightness of joint, are to be seen in the winners of this week than there was even a few years ago."

In another column of the same journal, a writer, discussing the subject of action in heavy-draft horses, correctly insists that it should be free, elastic or springy, regular, comparatively light, and last, but not least, sufficiently wide so that the feet are kept well clear of one another when the horse is moving. Though the style in which a cart horse moves must to some extent depend upon its general type, particularly as regards size and weight, yet, however heavy the type, a certain springiness of gait is always desirable, and the feet should be put down as lightly as possible in order to minimize concussion and wear.

"When the action of a cart horse is very clumsy or stumpy, and lacks elasticity, the feet being planked down on the ground very heavily, and striking it with great force at every stride, the limbs are subjected to a great deal of jarring, and suffer much from the injurious effects of concussion, which causes them to wear out comparatively quickly, and often brings about unsoundness of foot. Consequently," he goes on to say, "draft horses that have poor and clumsy action do not last long at street or road work, owing to their legs and feet giving out so soon, as the result of the great amount of jar they have to sustain. In order that the action may be springy, light and free, it is necessary that the shoulder blades and pasterns should be nicely sloped."

"The position of these parts has, indeed, a most important bearing upon style of action in cart horses. The more obliquely the shoulder and the pastern are placed, the lighter and more springy is the gait, whilst very upright shoulders and short, straight pasterns are always associated with cramped, clumsy and more or less stiff action, which is short of stride, and altogether lacking in elasticity. It is useless to expect a cart horse to be a good mover and speedy walker unless its shoulders are well placed and the pasterns possessed of a fair degree of slope."

"The action must, of course, be good all round and, as regards the hind action, it is important that this should be as powerful as possible. The hind

legs are the propellers, and the amount of propulsion a cart horse is able to exert with them governs its powers of draft. Cart horses should use their hocks well, and the hind feet should be brought well forward under the body at each stride. Powerful action behind is largely dependent upon the thighs and gaskins being very muscular, and the hock joints broad and strong. Similarly, it is essential to vigorous action in front that the forearms and shoulders should be well clothed with thick muscles. The hind action should be perfectly true. Any tendency to twist the hock and foot outwards at the end of the stride is a serious fault."

"In walking, the draft horse should pick up its feet well, so as to clear the ground properly, the pasterns in front and behind being nicely fixed, and when one watches the animal moving while standing behind it, the shoes and the soles ought to become fully visible when the feet are lifted off the ground. That shows that they are being well picked up, and that the action is vigorous. In the show-ring, particular stress is usually laid upon Shire horses flexing the pasterns well and lifting their feet high, and this certainly makes the action look all the better and more taking; but, for ordinary working purposes there is no object in this feature being carried to excess in the draft horse, and, provided the ground is well cleared, nothing further need be insisted upon in this respect." However, the writer proceeds, the fact that flash action may be a little more emphasized in the show-ring is not to be deprecated from a utility viewpoint, "because the perfection of action attained in show specimens is never reached in the ordinary cart-horse stock, as bred by the farmer for working purposes. It must be borne in mind that, on his being bred to mares of average class, the fine action of a high-class Shire stallion which has gained honors at shows becomes considerably toned down in transmission to his progeny. Scottish breeders, in looking over Clydesdales horses, and particularly stallions, usually make it a practice to have them trotted, so that they may see how the animal they are inspecting moves at this pace, they holding, that the manner in which a cart horse trots affords the best criterion of its walking action."

Teaching a Colt to Back

From the way some horses act when they are asked to back a load, one is forced to the conclusion that their early education in this respect has been neglected. As a matter of fact, a colt is left frequently to find out about backing up, from the horse he is working with, or learns from being yanked back a time or two, by the driver. There is a chance that the load may be in a tight place when the first lesson is taken. The other horse may be a fool and the driver not much better, so that the colt runs a long chance of being developed into a backer of the kind, such circumstance and examples as these, are likely to develop.

The colt should be taught to move backward at the word, before he is hitched with another horse, much less put to a load. Take him out alone in single harness, or the lesson can be given as well on the barn floor. Stand squarely behind him, and draw back firmly but gently on the reins, at the same time ordering him to "back." Unless he is pretty stubborn, he will step back, clumsily very likely, but still he comes. Always reward a colt, for prompt obedience, and exercise patience if he does not obey at the word. Keep right at it, till he will walk backwards when ordered to do so.

It is surprising sometimes how quickly a colt finds out what is wanted of him, and does it, providing the trainer, or "breaker" as he is more commonly called, does not get out of patience or loose his head, and by hard shouting and much slashing around of the whip, jerking on the reins, pulling, standing in front and trying to kick the colt in the direction he is desired to go, and by a noisy expression of himself in the swear language, so work upon the colt's nervous system, that nothing may be taught save perhaps a few vices.

Teach the colt first of all, to back when the word is given. If he is a little slow to learn, face him up a

slope where it will be easier for him to move down than up, draw gently on the lines, give the word and as soon as he moves towards you, let him know that he has done the thing desired.

Colts have a way of responding to appreciation, of "gobbling" up rewards for conduct that is very nearly human. It is by taking advantage of this characteristic, that they may be taught most readily.

* * *

There is some interesting information to be secured from a reference to the entries that have been made into the Argentine Equine Stud Book, which was established about a year ago. It appears that there have been fifteen different breeds registered or recorded in this general Stud Book. It is unnecessary to give the number of each of the different breeds recorded, but the total is 9,494. This aggregate is made up of three—those imported 1,273, Argentine bred 1,384, and entered in the preliminary register 6,831.

Taking the leading breeds represented in the imported section their proportion is as follows:—Percheron, 25.17 per cent.; Shire, 20.64 per cent.; Clydesdale, 20.32 per cent.; Hackney, 19.38 per cent.; Yorkshire Coach, 3.12 per cent.; and Suffolk Punch, 1.56 per cent. Taking the same breeds as recorded in that section of Argentine bred, the respective percentages of the total is as follows, but the order in which they come is somewhat varied from the first section, the Hackney taking precedence with 45.01 per cent. Then comes the Clydesdale with 26.22 per cent. of the total; the Percheron follows with 13.99 per cent., the Shire with 9.10 per cent.; the Yorkshire Coach Horse follows with 0.57 per cent. of the total; and last of all comes the Suffolk with 0.14 per cent.—British Exchange.

Action, Hair and Feather

A great alteration for the better has taken place in the movement of the Shire horse. There is manifest a desire to breed faster horses, and at the trot there are fewer animals that go wide at the hocks. Close hock action must be cultivated, for only by getting the hocks well below them can horses make the full use of their tractive powers.

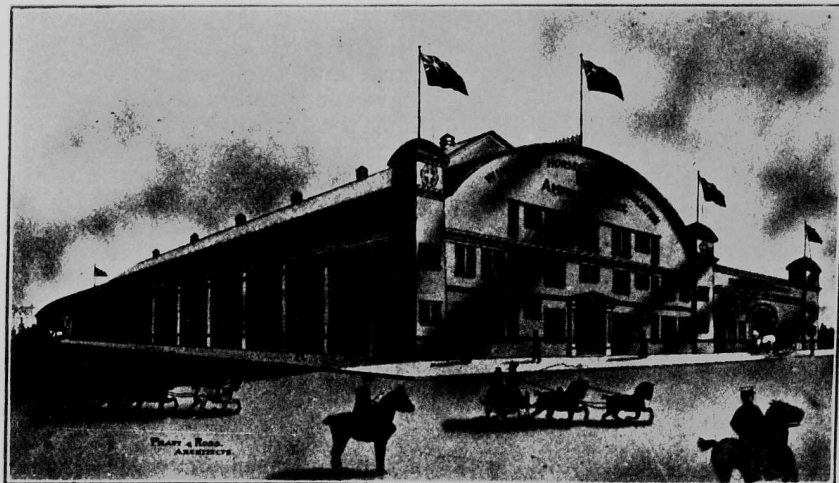
Is not the hair craze being a little overdone? It may be a characteristic of the Shire, but the breeder has still to show a solid reason, beyond the æsthetic pleasure of the eye, why a horse or filly, that is as full of hair as a bear, is better than a good, clean-legged animal that has a reasonable amount of hirsute adornment.

If a foreign trade for Shires is to be cultivated to any extent, the demand for hairy heels and knees and hocks capped with it, will have to be greatly modified. Can any breeder say that, in farm practice, very feathery horses are an advantage? It used to be considered that hair, Samson-like, denoted strength, and indicated the quality of bone, but we do not believe that nowadays.—*Farmer and Stock-breeder, England.*

Essential Points of a Horse Stable

Paul M. Bredt, Regina, discussing the feed and care of farm horses, at a meeting held in connection with the Saskatchewan Horse Show, emphasized some of the essential points of a properly constructed horse stable. The most important thing, he believed, was fresh air. Horse stables should be constructed so there may be abundance of fresh air in them at all times. It was more essential to the well being of the horses that the stable should be well ventilated, even though it might be cool, than to poorly ventilated and warm. Pure air, not warmth, should be the first consideration.

Light was another essential to the healthfulness of the animals. It was impossible, the speaker believed, to have too much sunlight in the stable; but it was possible to have the windows so arranged that the horses were effected by the brilliant sunshine pouring in. Windows should never be placed



NEW HORSE SHOW ARENA AND RIDING ACADEMY BEING BUILT TO ACCOMMODATE THE WINNIPEG HORSE SHOW.

Too many stallions flabby. A month, or feeding season opens, a vigorous exercise every about in a yard by himself on him and have a usually until the season make the mistake, too, on too many females. Our country to be used during the season, but is not very high. In some bred to more than are hired for service in the fee is paid by the time of service, the heir stallion to a certain stem is a good one, and based upon it, could be used in most sections of

AL MARES
ment, or management at the time of conversion in the practice of have found always that were more thrifty, and the dams had been were carrying the foals, mean heavy hauling, but such work as rearing. In winter, hauling to town and such like, many sort of seeding, ng time I like to work lay possible. A week lue to arrive, I reduce they are receiving. I ver feed oats alone to eding bran along with feed for mares than a oats to one-third bran. foaling time induces a he colt is able to con- ity at this time, in- have found that best ere is less loss and less re the dams are light, milkers. For a week with a flush mare, I hand. The foal should uring the first week or ive disorders may fol- es as well afterwards.

THE FOAL
oals, which we in On- with, is inflammatory ne, you have trouble disease is caused by a through the navel. ich is, by all means, a g to cure it, I have avel cord in a weak en the string is cut and four times before the i, once or twice after- cally all this trouble. a and this matter at- straightened up and the mare and colt out favorable, they need is cold and wet, they at night. The foal s milk until it reaches two months. About ing the colt into the ouble stall beside the ge, before it is strong ly on the halter, may e stall without any that age will never . At the same time hich is important for the foal to be eating

ing the mare right up er foaling she should now that on a good to let the mares run e discussing the best d, in my experience, ined where the mare ling period. Raising a mare's system with- erform work as well. colt too, a colt that e raised on a working cover the value of the g the suckling period.