

The Farmer's Horse.

Editor CANADIAN LIVE STOCK AND FARM JOURNAL:

I would like to offer a few observations upon this question, as it is one of wide and vital interest. There are various opinions held by those competent to form them, and it is only after hearing such criticised and discussed that the right may be evolved.

The first thing to do to raise the type of horse I refer to is to choose a suitable sire. A great many farmers in choosing a stallion to breed their mares to, look more at the fee they have to pay for a foal than at the horse and his pedigree. This mistake is all the more grievous because of the fact that we may get a very well proportioned and stylish horse of very poor breeding. But simply because his service fee may be had for \$8 or \$10, many farmers will breed from him, and the consequence is strongly reflected in the very poor class of horses throughout this country, for such a stallion will be sure to throw a retrograde colt in nine cases out of ten. Now this class of farmers is a great detriment to the enterprising breeder who brings in a good horse with good breeding, and for which he has to pay a high price, and therefore he cannot afford to breed mares for the small paltry fee that you can get a scrub for, and for this reason a great many farmers will patronize the breeder of scrubs because they can get a colt for perhaps \$15 or \$20 cheaper than they would have to pay for a first-class horse. Now the result of this patronage is that we find a lot of poor horses on the road every season, and it will so continue just so long as those short-seeing farmers will patronize them.

I wish more particularly however, to call the attention of our farmers to the matter of raising a horse that will sell at any time his owner wishes to sell him, let the times be good or bad. Now this is a very hard year to sell, but we find that in looking at market reports that if the right style of horse is offered for the market, he commands a quick and ready sale at very good prices.

The general purpose horse that is usually exhibited at our fairs, I do not think fills the requirements at all. It is only a misnomer, the horses entering being too heavy and clumsy. Those that are generally shown at fairs as a "general purpose horse," are mongrel Clydes, and are, I think, the poorest class of horses that we have. The requirements that I think a general purpose horse should have are: He should have a good deal of blood and be able to move along at the rate of 10 or 12 or even 15 miles an hour if necessary. He must be stylish, standing 16 hands or over, but not much under, and weighing on an average of 1200 pounds; he should stand erect on his fore-legs and be as near perfect in symmetry and form as possible; he should be proud, elegant, and dignified in his manner, sound in bone and not liable to blemishes of any kind, and be very firm of flesh. As to color, bay is the favorite and I think preferable, though black or brown are good colors. This is the class of horse that I would term "the farmer's horse," and would do the work on any farm much better and be much nicer to attend and drive, than the big heavy breeds of horses that should never be put beyond a walk; and whenever such a horse as I have in my eye is offered for sale it will sell quickly at prices highly remunerative to the seller.

But I hear some one say: It is impossible to raise that class of horses. Well as to that, many of the principal breeders have done it, and are doing so at present, and why cannot we do the same?

Now in the first place look about for a sire that will come up to the standard I mentioned beforehand, coupled with an indisputable pedigree, for if he has or cannot furnish a *bona fide* one it is better to keep your mares from breeding at all.

The horse that I would recommend to cross on our general class of mares would be a highly-bred trotting stallion, not necessarily standard bred, for often times there are horses that are not eligible to be registered, and are much better bred than many that are standard, though if a standard horse can be got use him, but be sure that he is strongly bred in speed lines. No one could be mistaken in using a horse of any one of the Hambletonians, Mambrinos, Wilkes, or American Star families, with a strong influx of thorough-bred blood in his veins. A great many object to thorough-bred blood being in a trotting horse, and many are of the other opinion, among them being Senator Stanford, from whose breeding stables came Sunol, the fastest three-year-old on record. And again the great progenitor of trotters, Kyslyk's Hambletonian, had a large amount of thorough-bred blood in his veins as will be found in looking at his pedigree. I do not approve of breeding every class of mares to this style of horse. For instance, if you have a very large mare of a cold-blooded nature, by all means breed her to a Clyde, but there are a great many mares of moderate size that are bred to great heavy horses, and the result is that the mare does not afford sufficient nourishment for the fetus or for the colt after it is foaled, and consequently we have a great many flabby loosely-made horses.

The more well-bred blood that flows through a mare's veins the better, and the offspring will show it much quicker than colts from mares not so well bred, but if the use of a good sire is continued it will make itself known, and if our farmers had started using this class of a horse 10 years ago, we would have a much finer class of horses throughout the country, and therefore a much better demand, as buyers would know where to come for the horse they wanted.

In conclusion let me say that such a horse as I have described is not near so liable to blemishes and diseases as the big, heavy, Clydes, Shires, or Percherons. And once more I would say that the farmer who crosses his mares with anything but a pure-bred sire of undoubted pedigree of any class of horses whatever, after reading what has been said on this subject of scrubs, deserves to be a loser by his folly and stinginess.

But let us young men who intend to be breeders of stock breed nothing but the best, and follow in the footsteps of progression, and not retrogression, and "scrub stock," will soon become a thing of the past.

Yours truly,

J. R. A. McALPINE.

Questions and Answers.

If there is any subject bearing upon this or any other department of our JOURNAL, upon which you desire information, write us and we shall be pleased to intrust your query to competent persons and publish the answer thereto in our earliest issue, and if an immediate answer is required, such will be gladly given if a postage stamp is enclosed. Write the queries on paper detached from all matters of business, sign your full name and address as a guarantee of good faith, and write only on one side of the sheet. We request the assistance of our readers in making this a useful and interesting feature, and we shall always be pleased to hear from any, either desiring information or obliging enough to give it for others upon any topic within our field.

HEREFORD AND ABERDEEN-ANGUS REGISTRATION—George Davey, Westbourne, Ont.: To whom should I apply for registration of pure-bred (1) Hereford and (2) Aberdeen-Angus Polled cattle? [1) Apply to C. R. Thomas, Independence, Mo., Secretary of the American Hereford Association. (2) Apply to Thomas McFarlane, Iowa City, Ia., Secretary American Aberdeen-Angus Association.—Ed.]

HOLSTEIN FRIESIAN HERD BOOKS—N.Y.Z., Halifax, N.S.: (1.) Kindly give full address of secretary of American Branch Association of the North Holland Herd Book. (2.) Also full address of secretary of the Holstein Friesian Association of America. [1.) The most complete address we can obtain is Fred H. Beach, New York City, U.S.A. (2.) Thomas B. Wales, Iowa City, Iowa, U.S.A.—Ed.]

Veterinary.

Does it Pay to Pasture Working Horses?

By DR. GRENDSIDE, Guelph, Ont.

The almost universal practice amongst the farmers of this province of grazing their working horses would appear to give an answer, emphatically in the affirmative, to the above query. We purpose discussing the *pros* and *cons* of this practice, and endeavor to arrive at a conclusion concerning it.

It is doubtless apparently a great saving of trouble to be able to slip the harness off working horses and allow them to go to the pasture field with or without a feed of oats. There is no bother feeding them hay, or bedding them down, and very little cleaning out to be done. So far this is very desirable, but the bother of catching them in the morning somewhat detracts from this advantage. These, however, are minor matters when compared to the condition in which horses can be kept, and the expense of keeping, in making a comparison of dry feeding in the stable, and grass feeding in the field.

We have no carefully carried out experiments to submit as evidence in proof of our position. Our convictions on the subject are simply the result of observation. One thing we do not hesitate to assert as being correct, and that is, a horse cannot be kept in good working condition when fed on grass, even although he may receive a good grain ration. Some

nourishment is undoubtedly received from grain, when fed with grass, but the laxative effect of the grass is such, that the grain appears to be hurried so rapidly through the bowels, that nothing like full benefit is derived from it. Explain it how we may, experience shows that when a horse receives a large bulk of his food that is of a moist or succulent character, it lessens his life and energy and ability to perform work. If a full amount of work is insisted on under these circumstances, an undue loss of flesh will be the result.

By good condition we mean such vigor of the system that will enable a horse to perform a maximum amount of work without overtaxing his strength. Where there is a marked loss of flesh going on, when the animal is in a state of health, it either indicates poor condition or overwork. If this state arises from deficient work, good feeding and regular work will soon rectify matters; but if a horse loses flesh on reasonable work he must be improperly fed. This we find to be the case in almost all instances where a horse is grass fed and regularly worked, for he is not in condition to stand it. The lack of condition for slow work is sufficiently apparent, but it is even more marked in the case of horses used on the roads. Possibly the direct cost of feeding is greater in the stable, when hay and oats are supplied in proper quantities, but when we come to consider the amount of pasture land it requires to sustain a horse, the loss of manure—for it is practically lost—and the marked loss of condition, it is very questionable economy.

There is no doubt that a run at grass is often a beneficial change, and it in some cases exercises a desirable alterative effect, but to receive full benefit from it, the animal should not be worked, but allowed complete leisure. A week or two is usually sufficient for all the benefit to be derived from a change. With such an object in view, the month of June is about the only one in this country that is suitable to turn a horse out. During this month the grass is usually plentiful and succulent, and a horse's life is not rendered miserable from the irritation caused by flies. From the first of July onwards the advantage of a run at grass is questionable. There is some excuse for allowing horses to take a run at pasture during periods in which they have little or no work for several days, for the exercise they get in this way is of considerable value in keeping their legs in order, etc., but to work horses all day and turn them on to a grass ration at night is decidedly bad management, and not far removed from cruelty, for an animal so treated is unfit for steady hard work, especially under a scorching sun. There is very little excuse for the many jaded, ill-conditioned, sore-shouldered looking specimens of horse flesh to be seen in the country, especially about the time they have to go through the trying ordeal of drawing self-binders; and it is this practice of grazing work horses that is almost altogether accountable for it.

With brood mares that are not called upon to work, and growing colts, there is no doubt running at pasture is the most favorable treatment possible for them. If the pasture is good they receive all the nourishment necessary, and have the advantage of gentle and regular exercise. This, to a growing colt is indispensable in order that he may get perfect control of his legs, and have the various tissues that go to make up these severely taxed members during the working period of his life, strengthened and developed.

Mr. Wm. Paterson, of Birtle, Man., writes: "Glad to see the JOURNAL doing so well, the cuts and printing are all very distinct and the different articles are splendidly written and very much to the point on all subjects interesting to the farmer. The majority of notes in the JOURNAL are very useful to the Manitoba farmer."