

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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DOMINION.

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American side than in Canada. Even with us, at some of our local exhibitions, the agricultural exhibits are hardly more than an excuse for holding a fair. That these should receive Government assistance for promoting the cause of agriculture is absurd. Does not this suggest that the best step to encourage the purely agricultural fair would be to offer it a good grant, withholding aid from those fairs which allow horse-racing, side-shows and things of that kind? Apportionment of the grant among the former only would increase the amount per fair, and, in time, their success would induce most of the others to follow suit. There is no doubt that the public taste can be cultivated in one direction or the other, and that if racing were cut out entirely, the fairgoers would less insistently demand it. "The Farmer's Advocate" is anxious to see only purely agricultural shows, believing that these do by far the most good and set the people's minds in the right direction, but we do not believe in making laws to be winked at, as the habitual violation of any one law begets a laxness of the public morale, and a contempt for law in general. For this reason we desire to see nothing in the amended Agriculture and Arts Act which is at all ambiguous, and nothing that will not be reasonably sure of enforcement. On the whole, we incline to favor financial encouragement, rather than compulsion, especially since the grant affords such an excellent instrument for encouraging the purely agricultural fair.

It may be mentioned here that any amendment will not affect the law forbidding betting, book-making or gambling, which will remain strictly illegal, and against which we should like to see the arm of the law directed with all its force.

Our Literary Society is booming. Every subscriber is eligible to take part in the debates. Get your neighbors to subscribe, if they don't already, so they too can enter into these very interesting and helpful discussions.

Select Prices for Select Hogs.

Has anybody heard yet of any discrimination made to the hog-raisers in favor of selects? It seems to be about time for some indication of action on the part of the packers to see that the old order of things is altered. They should attend to this in pursuit of a policy of intelligent self-interest; but if they do not, farmers may force the packers' hands by dropping out of the hog business. We would be sorry to see this, for we are persuaded there is money in hogs, and we would deplore the necessity of any policy that savored of cutting off our noses to spite our faces. But something must be done. It is a manifest injustice to pay the same price for barrel-pork hogs as for Wiltshires. Farmers have it in their power to compel a change. We may not do it by organized effort, but it will be done almost as effectively by producers losing confidence in the business when the next inevitable slump in prices comes, and then where will the packers be? The hand of the farmer is strengthening, and not too soon. It is time the producer of wealth was coming to his own.

HORSES.

The Farmer's Horse.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

The question of what style or breed, or mixture of breeds, of horses for the farmer to raise, sell and use, has been for some time past, and will be, I am afraid, for many years, one of the most difficult problems confronting the farmers of Canada. It is only a decade or two since the farm work in the western end of the Annapolis Valley (N. S.) was principally done with oxen, and as the farms, for the most part, are small, and the farmers rather conservative, anything in the shape of a horse that would pull the family to town in a reasonable length of time was considered all that was necessary. As a result, speaking generally, the horses in this section are about as nondescript a lot as can be found in Canada, and for that reason, among many others, I am glad that you have raised this discussion. The present letter will be mainly my own opinion, however, modified by discussion with some of our best farmers in this county. Let us take up your questions in order:

1. Admitting that the market demands, to a certain extent, horses that are unfitted for farm work, such as saddle horses, roadsters, trotters, etc., I would consider that these were better left to what we may call professional breeders, or men who have sufficiently large breeding establishments to warrant the necessity of keeping mares mainly for breeding purposes. The average farmer must, of necessity, work his brood mares for the greater part of the year, and no wise man would attempt, from choice, to do his farm work with mares which would produce first-class carriage horses, saddlers or hunters, and in this age there is little profit in any product of other than first-class merit. For this reason, then, unless the market will allow of a call for such horses as farmers can produce from mares of a type that will do the farm work most comfortably and profitably, he would better be in some other work than horse-breeding.

2. The breed of horses to top the general run of mares is a tough proposition. No one type of stallion will do it. It would be rank folly to breed a Clyde to one of our little nondescript, 900-pound scrubs, or a Standard-bred to a big-boned draft-grade mare. If, however, we take as the general run of mares to be blocky, low-set, strong constituted individuals, of from 1,100 to 1,300 lbs. I consider the lighter-weight Clyde would give the best results for a useful farm horse.

3. There are a lot of horses wanted of from 1,000 to 1,100 lbs., quick movers and tough, hardy fellows for all sorts of purposes, as light delivery in small towns, professional men's family drivers, etc. For these light horses, perhaps grades of the Standard-bred or Hackney would fill the bill.

4. From what I know and can learn of the Clydesdale, I would select this breed, or well-bred grades of it, to bring the surest and best average returns.

5. As the horse for the farmer to produce, both for his own use and for the market, if he have blocky mares of good substance, I would advocate the Clydesdale as the best obtainable breed at present. The general run of farmers are calling for a horse of from 1,200 to 1,400 lbs., not too high up in the air, and with an average speed in light wagon of 7 or 8 miles per hour. Possibly Clydesdale grades are as near as we can get. Personally, because he is shorter-legged and more blocky, I prefer the Belgian; but from the commercial point of view, the Clyde will probably take the lead.

6. I am pretty sure that in the next ten years

the heavy horse and the stylish driver will increase, while the nondescript scrub will fade.

7 and 8. I would say emphatically NO, do not introduce new breeds, but, on the contrary, weed out some more of the useless types, and, considering all things, let us stick to the Clyde with its grades for the farmer.

R. J. MESSENGER.

What Class of Horses Should Our Farmers be Encouraged to Breed?

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

The questions contained in your recent article upon this subject certainly call for the serious consideration of every farmer who has at heart, not only the welfare of his own boys, but, as well, the best interests of the horse-breeding industry of this country.

At the outset, I make bold to say that, if we desire to direct the interest of our boys toward the desirable features of farm life and the favorable conditions surrounding our farm homes, rather than to the enticements of the race-track, we cannot impress the fact too strongly that the breeding of light horses, as a business, is one which too often forebodes disaster to the farmer's boy. I have no doubt that almost every community in our Province can furnish examples which show that the light-horse business, which requires an animal to prove itself before what we might call handsome prices are realized, too often attracts our boys off the farm onto the public highway, with the result that the farm loses its attractive features, and some other line of life is sought for a livelihood. This result, along with the fact that our light breeds of horses are not suitable for the performance of farm work, should cause us to realize that, as a business, this is not a suitable one in which to engage.

It is a noticeable fact that altogether too large a percentage of our farmers have, in the keeping of horses, but the one end in view—that of performing the labor of the farm. On the other hand, in order to make the best returns in our business, our aim should be, not only that our work horses should do the work of the farm, but as well yield us an annual profit. If we look at the matter from this point of view, there can be no disputing the fact that the breeding of heavy horses is a surer means of profit than is light-horse breeding. They come into the market at an early age; the market for this class of animals is more extensive, and they are not so apt to become valueless through injury or unsoundness, for a good heavy horse, although he may not be altogether sound, will always command a marketable price. When we consider the fact that (apart from the light breeds of horses) the great percentage of brood mares in our Province have at least two, three or more crosses of the Clydesdale and Shire in their breeding, the question of first importance is, to what breed of sires should these be mated, in order to secure the most satisfactory results.

In the first place, I can see no good results which will follow the introduction of further breeds of heavy horses into our country. I know of no feature which either the Percheron or Belgian breeds possess which would cause us to abandon the Clydesdale or Shire, and fill their place with either of these; and, further, it would certainly be trampling under foot every sound principle of breeding to encourage the crossing of either the Percheron or Belgian sire upon the present mares of our country. The same disastrous results which follow the crossing of Shorthorns and Hereford or Polled Angus, and continue to breed from the cross-bred females, would follow the introduction of such a course. The fact, therefore, cannot be too strongly impressed that if farmers are desirous of encouraging either the Percheron or Belgian breeds, they must get the females also, but never destroy the present breeding qualities of our mares by mixing in their veins the blood of either of these breeds.

To sum up, then, the principal aim of farmers should be to breed a type of horse which will not only be serviceable on the farm, but will also command a ready and profitable price in the market. Considering the standard and breeding of our mares, there is certainly no other class of sires will give the same satisfactory results as the Clydesdales and Shires, as our mares are, to a considerable degree, of this breeding. We know it is a settled principle in stock-breeding that "like begets like," and the longer we breed in one continuous strain, with the infusion of fresh blood of the same kind, the more uniform will that transmission be; whereas, on the other hand, by indiscriminate mixing of all the breeds, the law of reversion or atavism will assert itself to such a degree that our animals would very soon fall back to the species of the original scrub. This result has so plainly manifested itself in many sections of the Province among our milk cows, where dairymen, without any respect to these settled principles of breeding, have gone to work and mixed up all the dairy and some of the beef breeds, with the single idea of obtaining the best milk cow, as to be a standing monument