

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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IN THE DOMINION.

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HORSES.

Risks in plenty attend the breeding of horses, but, with present and prospective prices of good drafters, the business figures out a good average profit, just the same.

It is cruelty to animals to drive a horse which is used to having all four feet shod with one or more shoes off. Shoeing causes the feet to become more tender, and they are not able to resist the pounding on the road or hard ground, without bruising the soles, causing lameness.

During the whole of this spring's work we have fed our farm horses from five to eight pounds of alfalfa hay a day, and we never had them in as fine tone and health. We believe every farmer would find it to his advantage to mix his horse hay with at least 33 per cent. of alfalfa. Why not try the growing of alfalfa and timothy together.—[Hoard's Dairyman.

Axle grease is much cheaper than horse flesh, and is also a great saving upon the wear and tear of the wagons. Once a year is not enough to grease the wagon, although some farm wagons are expected to run easily all summer from a solitary spring application. Keep the wheels revolving on a thoroughly-oiled axle, and ease the load on the horse.

Few people, even though they are accustomed to hitching horses every day, follow the right system in the operation. The first portion of the work should be the fastening of the lines in the bit, and if a team is being hitched, the coupling together of the horses, followed by buckling the lines together and placing them convenient to the driver's seat. The breast straps holding the neck-yoke should be fastened next, after which pass to the holdbacks, and lastly the traces. The same is true of unhitching, only the various operations should be performed in directly opposite order; the traces should be unfastened first, next the holdbacks, after which the breast straps, and lastly, fasten and put up the lines. A little precaution taken in these operations will avert many accidents.

The Horse to Have.

The poet Burns had his ideas of horse flesh, which he thus expresses in addressing his auld mare Maggie:

The sma' droop-rumpl't hunter cattle,
Might aiblins waur't thee for a brattle;
But sax Scotch mile thou try't their mettle,
An' gar't them wbaizle;
Nae whip nor spur, but just a wattle
O' saugh or hazel.

Thou never braing't, an' fecht, an' fiskit,
But thy auld tail thou wad hae whiskit,
An' spread abreed they weel-fill'd brisket,
Wi' pith an' pow'r,
Till spritty knowes wad rair't an' risket,
An' slypet owre.

In cart or car thou never reestit;
The steyest brae thou wad nae fac't it;
Thou never lap, and sten't, and breastit.
Then stood to blaw;
But just thy step a wee thing hastit,
Thou snoov't awa'.

Light Horses vs. Drafters.

"He used to have a good farm, but he went in for race-horses, and—" It is hardly considered necessary to finish that sentence. The significant "and" suggests it all. Farm neglected, growing up to weeds, most of the feed and pastures devoted to the support of unsalable colts, machinery rusting, debts accumulating, credit shrinking or cut off, proprietor on the road, on the speed-ring or at the races, keeping fast company, and too often dropping into habitual dissipation—it all stands out a distressing picture, familiar to the residents of many a district.

Without moralizing overmuch, it may be merely remarked that any side-line which takes a man away from his farm work much of the time, holding out the elusive hope of big speculative profits, instead of the fair earnings of solid, painstaking effort, reduces greatly his chances of success at straight farming, and when a farm ceases to be operated at a profit, it soon comes to be run at an annually increasing loss.

How different the case where heavy horses are bred! These fit in with the scheme of agricultural work, the colts soon becoming useful on the farm, while the brood mares are always ready to take their place in harness, except for a week or ten days after foaling. When the young horses are broken and ready to turn off at four or five years of age, they will have earned a considerable proportion of their keep, and the owner need not make records for them or frequent the race tracks to get in touch with buyers. Driven into market with a substantial load of produce, their appearance commends and advertises them. Heavy colts, too, are less liable to injure themselves by mischievous antics than those of hot blood, and are, on the whole, probably less prone to unsoundness. Taking everything into consideration, the case for draft-horse breeding on the farm is a strong one, with no visible probability of becoming unprofitable for years to come.

Motor trucks are all very well, but we notice they make poor headway in snow. So far, the development of mechanical traction, greatly swelling the aggregate of commerce, has seemed rather to increase than to diminish the demand for heavy horses. At all events, there are a great many in use in all our principal cities, and checks from long bank accounts are readily drawn for high-class geldings to replenish the stables.

It is strange what some breeders will do for the sake of saving a little time at service, or for a few dollars on service fees. A horseman called at this office a few days ago and informed us that, in spite of all that has been said against the practice of cross-breeding and the use of the inferior sire, many in his particular district still use the scrub, and cases are not infrequent this year where mares with three crosses of Clydesdale blood, whose filly colts, if they were bred to a pure-bred Clydesdale horse, would register, have been bred to grade stallions, or registered stallions of another breed. There are in this district some good registered stallions, but not enough, and there are still too many scrubs. This particular stallion-owner is firmly of the opinion that the Government should place further restrictions upon the scrub stallion, and encourage the universal use of pure-breds. It is a mistake which cannot be excused to cross-breed animals whose progeny, provided a pure-bred of their own breed were used, would register. Pedigree adds considerably to the selling price of any horse, and we haven't too many of the right class of pedigreed stock in Canada today.

LIVE STOCK.

In-breeding and Prepotency.

It is generally thought that an in-bred sire is always prepotent in a great degree, and one most desirable. "In case of horses," says T. B. G., in *The Farmer and Stock-breeder*, "the writer has known many instances where such a sire has been so; in fact, some of the best sires ever known amongst Shires have been in-bred, and in Thoroughbreds, also, the great stallion Wisdom, for example. But, on the other hand, in-bred bulls have been, in many cases, dismal failures, and their produce not worth rearing. This, of course, applies to the present day. In the days of Belindae it was different. There are many people who maintain that it is impossible to breed stock up to a definite standard and maintain that standard, without in-breeding. That was no doubt true sixty or seventy years ago when the field of selection was extremely limited, but it cannot apply now, when selection is practically unlimited. Having once fixed a certain standard of type by a system of in-breeding, it must be a case of careful selection and skillful mating to keep up that standard, but there is no necessity, nowadays, for selecting and mating only closely-related cattle. There is a wide range, and plenty of animals can be found in other herds, either unrelated, or, at any rate, very distantly related, that will answer the purpose for which they are required. Then, again, it is sometimes argued that in-breeding can be indulged in with impunity, provided the most careful selection is made in the mating of the animals; that is to say, by breeding only from those that show signs of the most robust constitutions, and that have no defects of any kind.

That theory may be all very well for a time, but what a constant weeding out there must be; so much so, that a herd bred on these lines can never increase, but must sooner or later dwindle away. In a very inbred herd the time is bound to come when, from sterility, weakness and other causes, the animals fit to breed from become fewer every year, and the wastage greater. In-breeding is just useful nowadays to establish some special feature, but whether that special feature is worth the sacrifice is another matter. Breeders often wish to bring out some special feature in their stock, and, by a few years of in-breeding and careful mating, they establish that feature, and when once established it is not necessarily lost by the judicious employment of fresh blood. On the other hand, the special feature often becomes more prominent. By a certain amount of in-breeding, it is thus possible to improve certain points in our stock; but, on the other hand, it is more likely to bring out undesirable characteristics, such as want of bone and size, sterility and delicacy of constitution. On the whole, therefore, in pedigree herds, it is best to guard against any system of in-breeding as far as possible, but in the breeding of commercial stock there can never be any justification for it whatever. The ideal of the producer of good store stock should be to produce animals with size, quality, hair and constitution, that will live where others will starve, and that will turn the food given to them to best account. This sort of stock will never be raised by a careless system of in-breeding, and so long as the sires used possess the characteristics which the breeder wishes to bring out in his stock, it matters not so much what their pedigrees are from a commercial point of view, so that they are unrelated, or very nearly so, to the previous sires used; and that brings up one little point, which is, the importance of breeders of commercial stock studying the pedigrees of the sires they use, otherwise they may inadvertently purchase a fresh sire which may be so closely related to the previous one as to do an infinite amount of harm if used too freely."

A Kicking Cow Case.

Sheriff Sym, of Perth, Scotland, recently issued judgment in a case of considerable interest to Old Country live-stock salesmen, farmers and dealers attending live-stock marts. The action was at the instance of Robert Henderson, Hillyland, Perth (Lord Dean of Guild of the city), against Alexander Macdonald, farmer, Glenlyon, and was for repayment of the price of a milk cow purchased by the "pursuer" from the "defender" at Macdonald and Fraser's auction mart at Aberfeldy, on 14th December last. The cow proved to be a "kicker," and the pursuer rejected it. Defender refused to take it back, and the cow was sold for whom it might concern. The ground of rejection was that, in accordance with established custom and uses of trade, if a cow sold as a milk cow turned out to be a kicker, the buyer was entitled to reject it, notwithstanding the usual conditions hung up in the mart. On consideration, his lordship's view was that there was no error; that the custom which was proved to be consistent with the law that the buyer must take the subject with all the defects which reason-