

*The Farmer and his Stock, From
a Hygienic Standpoint.*

by

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Purposes of keeping Stock.

- From necessity.

For Pleasure

For Profit.

Conditions for fattening stock

Connection between food and disease

Quantity and Quality.

Results from healthy, well bred, well cared
for animals, contrasted with those under
opposite conditions.

Precaution saves loss.

Healthy surroundings -

Selection of a site, Construction and
care.

Germs of disease: Their transmis-
sion and means for its prevention.

Water: Supply, and Source, and
Impurity.

The cause and prevention of disease among domesticated animals is a subject that every man, who keeps and handles stock, should study and have well in hand that he may make the most out of it. Owing to the large number, and frequent occurrence of diseases of which domesticated animals are subject, it is to his interest from a financial as well as a humane standpoint, to have as little sickness and loss, as possible. If there be sickness or loss, there must be a cause for the disease effecting them and as a general thing there is a preventive in some shape, and it is this that every man, who wishes to raise his percentage of profit should study, and know how to apply.

Every farmer is compelled to keep more or less stock. Some keep only what are essential to furnish them with motor power, to move their machines in the care, gathering, and transportation of their crops,

or what is essential to their work. Others keep them for pleasure, as saddle or carriage horses, or to gratify a whim or notion. But the great majority combine the above objects with that of profit, keeping different kinds of animals; such as horses, cattle, hogs, and sheep. Some will keep one kind, some another. Some are simply breeders, others combine the breeding and rearing of stock with that of dairying and feeding, dividing their time among them, generally putting more of it along one line to the neglect of the other.

The main source of profit is from feeding animals and in order that an animal may fatten it is necessary that it be supplied with more food than the system requires so there will be something to store up in the form of meat. Experience has proven that liberal feeding is economical. There are certain conditions which influence fattening and these are warmth, quietude, and rest.

The way in which these act can be readily appreciated; by keeping animals warm, food which would otherwise be expended in keeping the temperature of the body to its normal during our winter months, is stored up in the system.

Freedom from excitement is an important factor. Nervous, irritable animals can not fatten owing to the disturbed condition of the system. Rest for fattening animals is obvious, as the body waste occurring during exercise is just that much turned into other channels than that of fat.

The connection between food and disease, as cause and effect is well known. There is no single factor which exercises so much influence in the production of disease as food. The reason of this is not hard to find: men feed their animals with as little discretion as they feed themselves. They are either over fed with highly nutritious food, leading to diseases of the blood, liver, and bowels.

Or they are underfed with material of bad quality, predisposing the system to disease, or the food given is at irregular intervals, badly prepared or unsuited to the digestive organs of the animal. Now the relation of food to the diseases of the lower animals is one of the causes we can handle.

The conditions of quality covers much of the ground of the food producing causes of diseases. Its mode of growth, care in saving, and preservation, cleanliness, and the inroads of animal and vegetable parasites all have an important bearing on its quality and consequently on the health of the animals fed upon it. The change in the quality of food may not only produce disease, but will aggravate it when existing, or predispose to it should the conditions exist in the animal's system. A food which can be partaken of with impunity by one class of animals sometimes proves detrimental to another, probably due to the physiological arrangement of the body.

The food does not agree with the system. Mixing foods of different degrees of digestibility is not always for the best, for the reason that they may pass into the intestines together. Much of the matter in one food remains unacted upon by the gastric juice.

In order to compare the results from a healthy, well bred, well fed animal to those from a poor bred, unhealthy, poorly cared for animal; we will liken it to a plant under similar conditions: Take for example a stalk of corn. We have seed of but little vitality, it is slow to germinate, the plant has a sickly yellow appearance. If too thick it is slender, and matures very small and does not produce much corn. If it receives but little care the weeds will choke it down and it will die for want of nourishment, sunlight, air, etc; or parasites or insects will take what little vitality it has, and we get very small if any returns where, when we planted it we expected much. On the other hand, by the careful selection of seed, proper planting, and care, not too thick, keep the weeds down,

parasites and insects from it so it can get and keep what nourishment it wants, we get good returns. The above examples abound every where in the vegetable kingdom. In the weeds of the roadside, as well as the plants of the field.

It is not at all unreasonable to claim such results as the above from our domesticated animals. Animals bred from inferior stock, reared on unsufficient food and of a poor quality, with but little care, will be known as scrubs and must be very hardy if not diseased. It is very probable that they will die on our hands bringing us in no return for what little care and pains we have given them. While an animal raised under the opposite conditions possessing good pedigree, provided with good food, and good care will be a strong healthy animal and will pay us amply for his raising and will be one we are proud to possess.

Many of the heavy losses of stock may be prevented or at least lessened if a little precaution or forethought were used. For instance, the heavy losses of

cattle every fall by what is known as, the corn-stalk disease, could be much lessened if a little precaution is used in turning them into the field at first, and when the stalks are wet. If samples were gathered from the different parts of the field and tested by burning, (The disease is probably due to nitrate of potash, and the stalks containing this poisonous material will burn as though they had grains of powder sprinkled through them.) It would surely lessen the loss a considerable degree, but too often they wait untill the loss amounts to several times the value of the feed in the stalks before looking into the matter very closely.

One of the main requisites for good health among our domesticated animals is healthy surroundings, and in order to have this we must not only use fore-thought in the selection of a site for buildings and yards, but must plan and build them with the health of the animals in mind and give them proper care after

they are in use. It is too often the case when selecting a site for our barns and yards that we look more to the convenience for other purposes than for health. They are often put in a low place, so they will be hidden from view, or for convenience in building and consequently they are in a damp poorly drained unhealthy location to start with.

When the plans are formed for their construction, the question of cost, and number of animals that can be crowded into the space are generally the main points thought of. The buildings are built with no contrivance for ventilation, with no arrangement for separation of sick from well or their complete isolation, with no thought of ever being obliged to thoroughly disinfect the whole plant, and finally their care is such that the surroundings are filthy or any thing but what will contribute to health.

In selecting a location we should be as particular in its selection for our stock as we should for ourselves. The

reasons for so doing are various. It is to them we turn for our bread, our clothing and the means whereby we are enabled to build our own shelter. As it depends as to how our animals thrive whether we have a shelter we had better see to it that theirs is the best obtainable in every particular. Again if their surroundings are unhealthy they will contract disease and provide us with unhealthy surroundings.

Our location should be dry and well drained as well as convenient. Our buildings should be well ventilated and lighted. Provisions made for sick animals and for disinfecting all parts. For this purpose it is not necessary to have a loose dry goods box for a feed box and the whole stall for a rack. However I see no reason for an over head rack, it is an unnatural way for a horse to feed. The seed and dust drop into his eyes causing inflammation. The main and forelock catch their share and are never clean while the horse is in the stall.

The stall and yards should be

kept clean, the refuse from the animals should not be allowed to accumulate, for if it is, not only foul smelling and unhealthy gases will escape from it, but it will be an excellent place for lice, and germs of disease to harbor. As the conditions favorable to the growth of germs are the presence of moisture and some nutritive substance. Clean dry surroundings would surely discourage their growth. In the first place every precaution possible should be taken to prevent their appearance. In doing this one can not be too particular as they are carried in almost every conceivable way. Through the air, water, feed, and the animals themselves. For instance the germs producing cholera and swine plague could be carried in our clothing. Enough could be carried on a man's feet to transmit the disease, especially if the hog's system was in the right condition to contract the disease.

I believe that the main reason this disease is always in the country is the careless way in which

animals dying with it are disposed of. When they die they are hauled off in some ravine and there left to decay or wash away. The germs are carried on down the stream by the water or spread over the over the neighborhood by dogs feeding on the dead animals. The law which requires them to be buried is quite often ignored or only partly complied with, burying them so shallow that they are dug up and their remains spread about. They should be disposed of by burning. This will not be so very expensive and will be sure to destroy the germs. In the case of the transmission of Texas Fever in cattle, a man may lose hundreds or thousands of dollars worth of cattle by simply driving his herd across ground travelled by cattle infected with the ticks.

A factor of much importance especially in a dry country like ours, is that of water. In many sections it is not over abundant.

Impure water surely has a high claim as a disease producer. Many of the ills of man are laid to the poor quality of water drunk, and if this be the case with the human subject who generally gets the best of everything, or as near it as his means will permit. How much more true must it be of the dumb brutes, which too often depend for their water supply from stagnant ponds, drained in many instances from barn yards, thus getting the germs and impurities from these as well as from other decaying animal and vegetable matter.

When we look around us and see the unhealthy surroundings, poor quarters, food, water, and care, misfitting harness, the worry from flies of different kinds, and too often the brutish treatment they receive from man himself, we cannot help but wonder at the average farm animal being able to exist, much less, work, or put on fat.

Why not give them a chance?

If not from a humane standpoint it would certainly pay from a financial point of view. A man would soon be repaid not only in dollars and cents but by the pleasure he would derive from being the possessor of fine, slick, well bred animals.