

THE HORSE INDUSTRY IN KANSAS.

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OUTLINE.

- (1) The past history of the horse.
- (2) Improvement of the horse.
 - (a) By breeding.
 - (b) By feeding.
- (3) Change of type of horse from time to time for adaptation to different needs.
 - (a) Change in the mode of farming.
 - (b) For pleasure driving and sporting.
- (4) Light and heavy horse breeding as an occupation.
 - (a) Value of the conformation of light horses.
 - (b) Value of style and action in light horses.
 - (c) Value of weight in draft horses.
 - (d) Value of the conformation of draft horses.
- (5) Diminishing of the demand for cheap horses.
 - (a) They are replaced by automobiles and electricity.
- (6) Folly of changing the line of breeding.
- (7) Methods for further improvement of the horse.
 - (a) By better care and feed.
 - (b) By better judgement in selection.
 - (c) By breeding laws.
- (8) Conclusion.

The horse stands at the head of a noble tribe of quadrupeds, which naturalists term solepedes, or single hoofed, from having but one apparent toe, covered by a single integument of horn, although beneath the skin on each side are protuberances which may be regarded as rudimental toes.

According to the view of modern geologists there is but one genus of the tribe, namely, equus, which comprehends six species according to Professor Low, of Edinburgh.

EQUUS ASINUS - The ass.

EQUUS ZEBRA - The zebra.

EQUUS QUAGGA - The quagga.

EQUUS BURCHELLII - The striped quagga.

EQUUS HEMIONUS - The dzigithai.

EQUUS CABALLUS - The common horse.

Nature has not formed this powerful creature to shun the control of man, but has linked him by his natural wants and instincts to our society. It is only when under human guidance that his most useful faculties are exercised and his full maturity of strength and form attained.

The horse is distinguished from all other equine genus by the superior expansion of the chest, the large developement of his muscles, the greater strength and lateral distance of his limbs, the elevation of his withers, the long flowing hairs of his mane and tail and his loud and sonorous voice.

At the age of two years he is able to propogate his race and at the age of five to seven has attained full maturity. The male, as is the same of other animals, is stronger and more courageous than the female. He is more difficult of subjugation

but not less attached and generous.

When deprived of his virile powers he approaches more to the character of the female.

The horse is found over nearly the whole of the old continent from the sixty-fifth degree of Northern latitude to the islands of Asia on the South. He did not exist in New Holland, nor in the islands of the South Sea, nor in America, until carried to these countries by European voyagers. He is yet found in a state of liberty in the vast wilds of Tartary, extending through the South of Siberia and to the deserts to the North West of China. As he is presented to us in a state of Nature in these countries he is inferior in beauty and nobleness of form to the domesticated races. His head is large, thick, and very convex about the eyes. His ears are long, habitually carried backward and low. The limbs are long but stout ; the muscles thick and garnished with bristles, and long hairs grow beneath the jaws and under part of the neck. The mane is thick and bushy; the hair of the body is long and shaggy and sometimes frizzled. It is usually brownish dun, approaching to a muddy cream color, but never black. These horses are gregarious; they are often observed in large numbers together; but for most parts they are found in little bands under guidance of a stallion. Their senses of sight and smell are acute. They are vigilant in a high degree, stationing sentinels to guard the troop from surprise. They shun the presence of man, and when alarmed, set off at a speed, and are quickly lost in the distance.

They are hunted by the people of the desert for their skin and flesh and are sometimes captured alive, chiefly in Winter

when the snows arrest their progress, and allow them to be driven in hollows and ravines. In the neighborhood of Pallas Maëotis, or Sea of Asaph, are wild horses, which Pallas supposed to be descendants of Russian horses employed at the siege of Asaph in 1697, and turned adrift for want of forage. Older travelers speak of wild horses in the deserts of Africa; but no modern traveler has verified the statements.

The horse industry was begun in Kansas by the introduction of the mustang which originated from the Mexican pony being introduced by the Spaniards in Mexico about 1577. These ponies when taken young can be domesticated and make very good general purpose horses.

These mustangs are generally blue, dun or roan in color, with a characteristic dark streak down the center of the back.

These animals are supposed by many to be very vicious and uncontrollable, but this is a wrong impression, as they are quite gentle when a man has once won their confidence.

These horses have been bred up by mating with superior stallions until now their progeny with the horses which have been shipped in from the East constitute the average Kansas horse. The mustang blood gives these horses mettle and muscle which gives them great endurance.

There has been great improvement effected in the horse industry by breeding and feeding. If a person is following horse breeding as an occupation, the first thing he should look to is to get the type of animal he wants and have it recorded in a stud book.

The great advantage of a pedigree is to ascertain what we are breeding from; that is, to know something of the ancestry of

an animal. Every sound purebred animal should be duly recorded in a stud book of the breed represented. Breeders should see that colts and fillies are recorded at the ages indicated by the rules of the various pedigree registering association, as higher fees are charged after horses have reached a certain age.

Members of the different associations are charged less for registering than outsiders, therefore, it is advisable that every breeder of purebred horses that are eligible to registry should become a member of the association publishing a stud book from the breed which he handles.

A great deal may be said on the subject of breeding purebred horses. It is true that it costs more to start in the breeding business with purebred horses,; but a person soon realizes a greater profit from purebred horses by the greater price which they command on the market.

It is natural when a person is handling fine horses that they will take better care of them than they will of "scrubs;" for this reason alone he should handle nothing but the best as his interest is with the better class of horses.

In breeding we should first know the ancestry of the mare or stallion, and see that there is no unsoundness enters into the line of breeding. The subject of unsoundness cannot be too greatly emphasized, especially in horse breeding. The horse we are breeding from may appear perfectly sound in all respects, but some ancestor may have been affected by some unsoundness which may be transmitted through two or three generations without being made prominent. This is known as avatism.

Another advantage of registering is cited here. If we have a pedigree of an animal we may trace out any unsoundness which might occur in an animal. Another advantage is that we have a record of the breeders and this should stand for a great deal.

In the selection of breeding stock, we should always select the best possible to attain and discard all unsound animals as breeders. In selecting breeding stock we should retain the type and conformation which best suits and sell the undesirable horses where they may be used for different purposes than breeding.

Unsoundness which may be transmissible directly or by predisposition such as moon blindness, spavin, navicular disease, ring-bones, stringhalt, curbs, etc. should be carefully avoided in selecting breeding stock. Too many farmers think because a mare is lame, unsound, blind or too old to work, she may be used for breeding purposes. This may be all right if a mare is lame from accident, but predisposed lameness should be avoided in selecting breeding mares.

Many persons commit the great error many times of selecting for breeding purposes an animal to breed from just because it is of good type and conformation, without any knowledge of his ancestry. The horse may be a cross between two distinct breeds, and under these conditions we have not the least idea what the progeny will be.

Feeding should not be neglected in raising horses any more than we should neglect to feed beef cattle. A horse should not be fed as we feed steers in fattening them for market, but should be kept in a healthy condition. A horse should have plenty of

roughness, but not more than he will eat and relish. He should have plenty of grain when he is working hard to maintain his flesh and healthy condition, but should not be overfed with grain ration because of lack of time to eat roughness, as concentrated foods, if fed too extensively, tend to burn up the tissues. The best directions for feeding a horse is good sound judgement as to the needs of the animal.

In Kansas the time has been when it was hardly practicable to use purebred draft horses, as the mode of farming was so crude that it was impossible to spend much time for the improvement of the horse: the time has come, however, and is now here, when with the many conveniences which the farmer enjoys he can also spend a considerable part of his time with his horses. This being the case he is breeding the heavy type or purebred draft horse to a small extent, but the horse industry should be given a great deal more attention than it has at present.

For farm work and with the extensive farming which the average Kansas farmer practices, he should use a heavy horse, as weight and endurance are needed in the cultivation of such large areas. In this way we can eliminate the old plugs from the public view, which would be a blessing to lovers of fine horses. Another great advantage where a farmer is engaged in wheat raising, is that he only spends about three months of the year with this work, and the rest of his time could be devoted to breeding and handling purebred draft horses, as there is always a demand for them. By breeding mares so that they may foal in early Spring or late Fall they may be worked when most needed.

The same facts may be stated about trotting horses, or the saddle horse, as to their improvement. The time has been when most any type of horse would answer the purpose of the riding or driving horse, but the time has come when more pride is taken in driving or riding fine horses. This class of horses, however, should be handled and bred only by a person who can devote all his time to the breeding industry. This class should not be handled by the farmer for breeding purposes as they are not adapted for farm work. Every farmer, however, should own a good span of drivers for the pleasure which he derives from driving a good team. Another advantage of owning a good span of driving horses is that it will dispense with driving our already overworked farm horses to town or various other places, when necessity demands it.

If a person wants to breed horses as an occupation and devote most of his time to it, he should not try to farm very extensively. The only practical way is to farm enough land to raise the required amount of feed to supply the horses and devote the rest of the time to his horses, if a person would be a breeder.

The value of conformation of the draft horse cannot be too strongly emphasized. He should be large and well muscled, with plenty of action. The Percheron horse is well adapted to Kansas conditions. There are a great many points in favor of the Percheron horse. He is of a gentle disposition and gets his name from the district of La Perche in France, which is now the chief draft horse breeding and handling center in that country. The breed originally derived its size and weight from the ancient black horse breed of Flanders and its style and quality from sires of the Oriental breeds, notably from the grey Arab stallions, Godolphin and Gallipoli.

In the early days the breed was used for coach and bus work and was of suitable type and conformation for that purpose. More recently, weight and larger bone have been developed by the use of heavy draft stallions of France. Grey was originally the color of the breed, but recently black has become as common and popular, although it is not so surely transmitted as the characteristic grey.

The modern percheron stands sixteen hands high and over, weighs from seventeen hundred to twenty two hundred pounds, and is white, grey or black in color. He has an intelligent head of a type peculiar to the breed; rather small ears and eyes; short strongly muscled neck; strong well laid shoulders and chest; a plump rotund body; strong back, heavy quarters, and somewhat drooping croup. He is usually low down and blocky, on short clean legs devoid of feather, and has well shaped, sound hoofs. These features are well in favor of adopting the percheron for Kansas conditions.

The percheron has good action and stands straight, with a beautiful form. The value of conformation may be shown from the way the shoulders lay back, and the strong muscular back and thighs, which gives the percheron horse a very powerful appearance.

The weight of the percheron is another point in his favor, as weight is an essential feature in the draft horse. It has been estimated that the weight of a draft horse is worth twenty five cents per pound after he has reached the weight of fourteen hundred pounds.

Where the blood of this breed predominates in a district no other breed should be used. Continued breeding in a right line is highly advisable and will result in the production of practically purebred horses of great usefulness and value.

In breeding light horses for Kansas conditions, we should first look to conformation, as style and action are usually coupled with this quality. Weight is not of as much importance with the light horse, as it is with the draft horse. The typical roadster should stand from 15.1 to 15.3 hands high, and weigh from 950 to 1150 pounds. His purpose is to draw a light buggy on the road at a fairly rapid rate of speed for a considerable length of time. He should be graceful in form, action sprightly, pleasing, straight and smooth at all gaits, his disposition good and his legs and feet sound. Because of the abundance of good roads the race horse is well adapted to Kansas conditions.

Standard bred horses are generally the type of horse to keep on the farm for driving purposes, and always have a warm place in the heart of the farmer.

The demand for cheap horses is rapidly diminishing since the introduction of electric cars and automobiles. The cheaper class of horses and mules were originally used on the stage coach, street cars, and other rough work. Since electricity has been used as a source of locomotion and wars are less frequent, the cheaper class of horses are rapidly losing precedence and a better class of horses are looked to as the horse for all purposes. It does not cost any more to keep a good horse, nor as much, if proper attention is given to either, as a cheap horse requires more care to keep him in a presentable appearance and he never brings so good a price, while a better class always demands a high price.

Further improvement of the horse may be brought about by better care and feed. A horse should receive plenty of attention

in the way of care and feed, as he is a domestic animal and should not be made to rustle for himself when his time is taken up with work. There is too much general neglect in the way of caring for and feeding the average horse. He should be fed regularly and his feed should consist of the right proportion of digestible constituents for bone, muscle and mettle. A horse wants clean feed as well as a man and should have just as good care. A horse should not be overfed, but should be kept in a good healthy growing condition from birth to maturity.

Selection of breeding stock is a great problem in the process of breeding up the horse. It is hard to make the right selection when we are selecting an animal from which we wish to propagate our breeding stock. A perfect animal has never been found, and we will have to be satisfied with the nearest specimen we can find to the breed type which we wish to propagate. Too much care cannot be taken in selecting breeding stock, and we should never break the line of breeding when once started as our efforts will then all be in vain.

A great improvement could be effected by adopting such breeding laws in Kansas as have been adopted in Wisconsin. The breeding laws of Wisconsin provide that every person, firm, or company standing or breeding a stallion for profit or gain in such State shall cause the name, description and pedigree of such stallion to be enrolled by the Department of Horse Breeding of the College of Agriculture, University of Wisconsin, and procure a certificate of such enrollment from said department, which shall thereupon be presented to and recorded by the Register of Deeds of the County in which said stallion is used for public service. In order to obtain such certificate, the owner of such stallion

shall make oath before a Notary Public that such stallion is to the best of his knowledge free from hereditary, transmissible, or contagious disease; or unsound in any way. The officers of the Department of Horse Breeding shall make such examination and whose duty it shall be to pass upon the merit of each pedigree.

The owner of such stallion shall keep posted in a conspicuous place the license certificate of such stallion, with such laws as this Kansas would soon realize a great transformation and improvement in the horse industry, and there would be no trouble in securing the desired type of horse which we wish to use as a breed type.

From what has just been said, it should be seen that the formation of horse-breeding associations in townships and counties throughout the State would do much to advance the progress of the industry. Such associations should be formed of breeders who possess the same class or breed of horses, and who will pledge themselves by every legitimate means to further the interests of the association and of the breed handled.

Kansas is an ideal State for horse breeding, and were such associations formed in each horse breeding center throughout the State, and were each of them to preach and practice the same sound doctrine of breeding, the use of the "scrub", grade, crossbred and unsound stallions would soon be a thing of the past, while better mares would be used for breeding purposes, with the inevitable result of general improvement in the quality of our horses and the profits to be reaped from the business .