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Your 4-H Stock Horse



Agricultural Extension Service
University of Arizona, Tucson

Circular 255

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COVER PICTURE: That's 4-H club member Marion Naegle and her mare on the cover. The color photo was taken on the Buster Naegle ranch near Winkelman.

4-H Stock Horse Project Requirements

1st Year — Foals

1. Selecting a foal (quarter horse conformation)
2. Breaking the foal to halter
3. Feeding the foal
4. Grooming the foal
5. Care of the feet

2nd Year — Yearlings

1. Feeding and handling
2. Grooming and care of the colt
3. Learning the points of a colt
4. Judging of colts and horses
5. Starting to break to saddle
6. Learning about equipment

3rd Year — 2-Year-Olds

1. Breaking to saddle (Continuation)
2. Judging — determining the age
3. Anatomy and physiology of the horse
4. Learning how to shoe
5. Competing in a novice reining class

4th Year — 3-Year-Olds

1. Competing in an advanced reining class
2. Entering a novice cutting class
3. Continuation of 3, 4 (above)

In addition, 4-H members already having stock horse projects, can review the above requirements and schedule requirements that they have not yet learned. Work these out with your leader.

The stock horse leaders, 4-H agents and other interested persons might set up competitive classes for older horses — classes such as conformation, reining, cutting, etc.

*University of Arizona
College of Agriculture
Agricultural Extension Service
Chas. U. Pickrell, Director*

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Your 4-H Stock Horse

By Albert M. Lane
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The stock horse can be a profitable and enjoyable project for you as a 4-H member.

The number of light horses for work and pleasure is increasing every year. The light horse or stock horse is still an essential animal on Arizona ranches. Even off the ranch, many more people enjoy riding the stock horse for pleasure.

More and more 4-H boys and girls are becoming interested in the raising of horses. You can gain a working knowledge, based on experience, of how to produce good horses for work and pleasure. You can learn the desirable character-

istics, conformation, and qualities of a good stock horse.

After you have made your selection you learn to feed, care for, and train the young horse. And if you work daily with your horse, you realize the trust he puts in you and his willingness to obey your command and thus give you many hours of enjoyment.

Just as with other 4-H projects, the colt or horse gives you an opportunity to compete in local and regional fairs, an important part of any 4-H activity. Remember, it is the care and training of your stock horse that makes him a valuable animal.

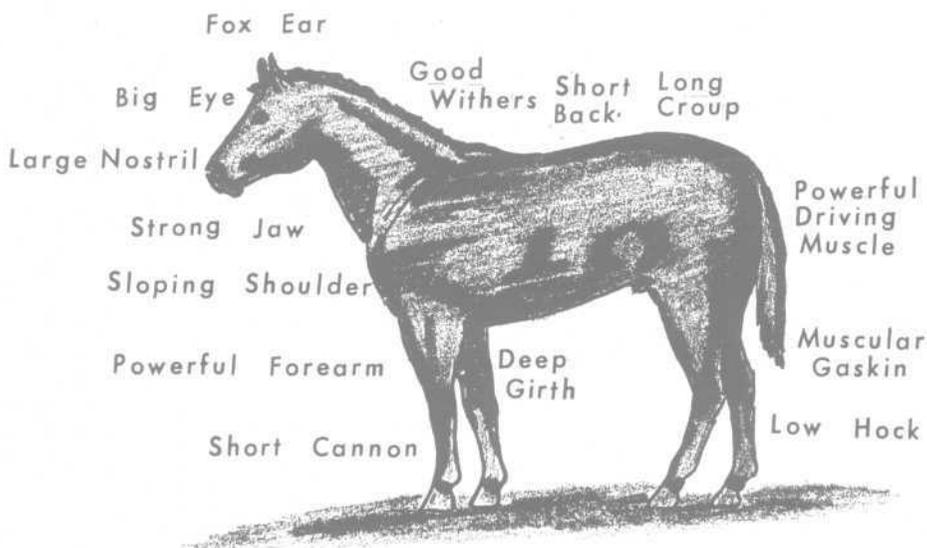
Select Your Horse Carefully

The purpose of this circular is to help the young horseman learn some of the basic fundamentals of handling, feeding, training and caring for young foals, colts, and horses. Usually horses are kept for a number of years. Therefore, you will want to select the kind of horse that will grow into a valu-

able animal worthy of the years of care and training you will give it.

When selecting an individual foal or colt, choose one that approaches the ideal of the breed. Look for a sound, alert, healthy horse of the correct conformation. Choose also a horse with a quiet, gentle disposition, one that will respond

GOOD STOCK HORSE TYPE



readily to your training and will be the easiest to handle.

In selecting a young foal, take a look at both parents. Normally, select medium sized stock, as these animals fill a variety of requirements better than very large or exceedingly small horses.

You may desire a certain color for a particular use. However, selecting for color limits the number of horses from which to select. Color, then, should be one of the less important characteristics to select for.

Balance

Select a foal with pleasing appearance and be sure the various parts of his body seem to be in proportion to the rest of his body. This gives the horse balance.

Head and Neck

The head is clean and strong jawed and well carried. The eyes

are bright, large and wide apart with a broad forehead. The ears are small, sharp and pointed. The neck should be trim and refined, medium length yet muscular. It should be carried alertly but rather low.

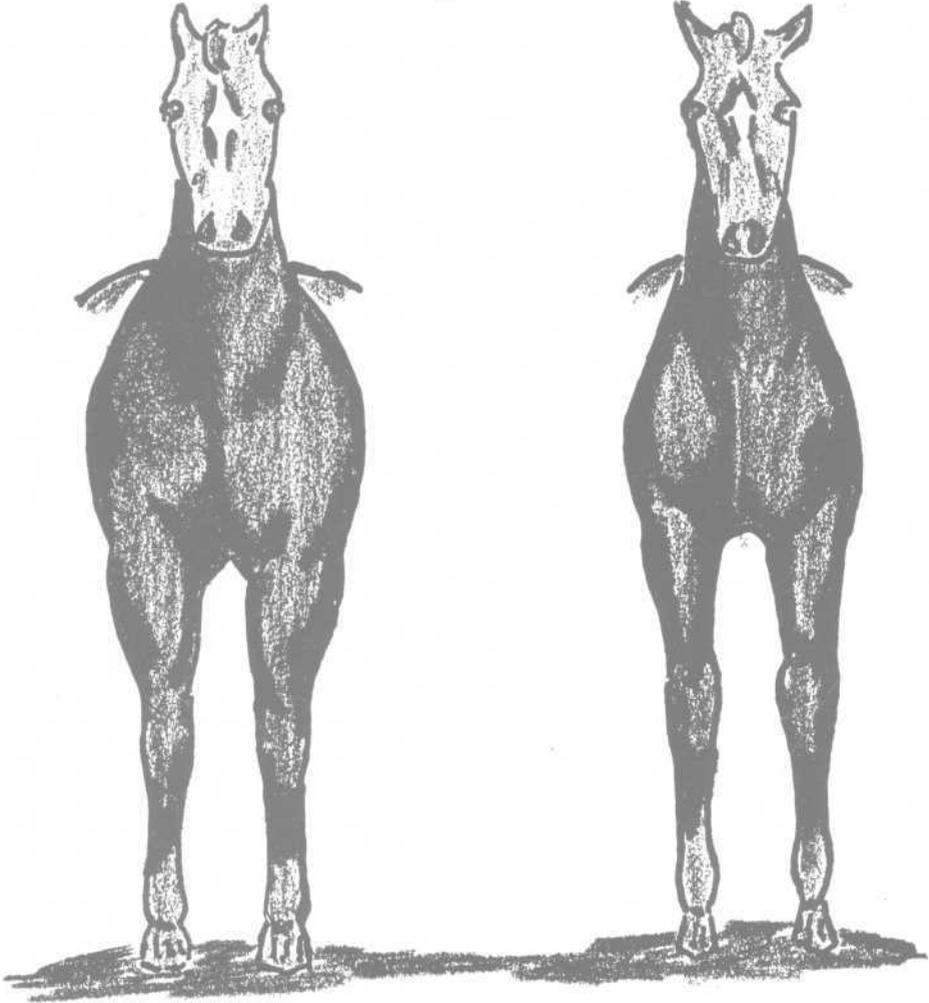
Feet and Legs

Feet should be smooth, deep, and fairly large and the legs should be clean-boned with long pasterns, a straight short cannon bone, large, deep, clean hocks, broad smooth knees. The foot should be well rounded and roomy with a deep open heel. The legs should be straight and well set.

Body

The body is deep and full and the ribs well sprung. It should be well muscled, fairly short in the back, and long and smoothly turned over the croup. A long underline is formed by a long sloping shoulder and a long croup.

FORE QUARTERS



Good Stock Horse Type

Powerful forearm tapering to knee

Short cannon

Wide chest with "V" between legs

Strong pastern

Undesirable Type

Weak forearm

Long cannon

Flat chest between legs

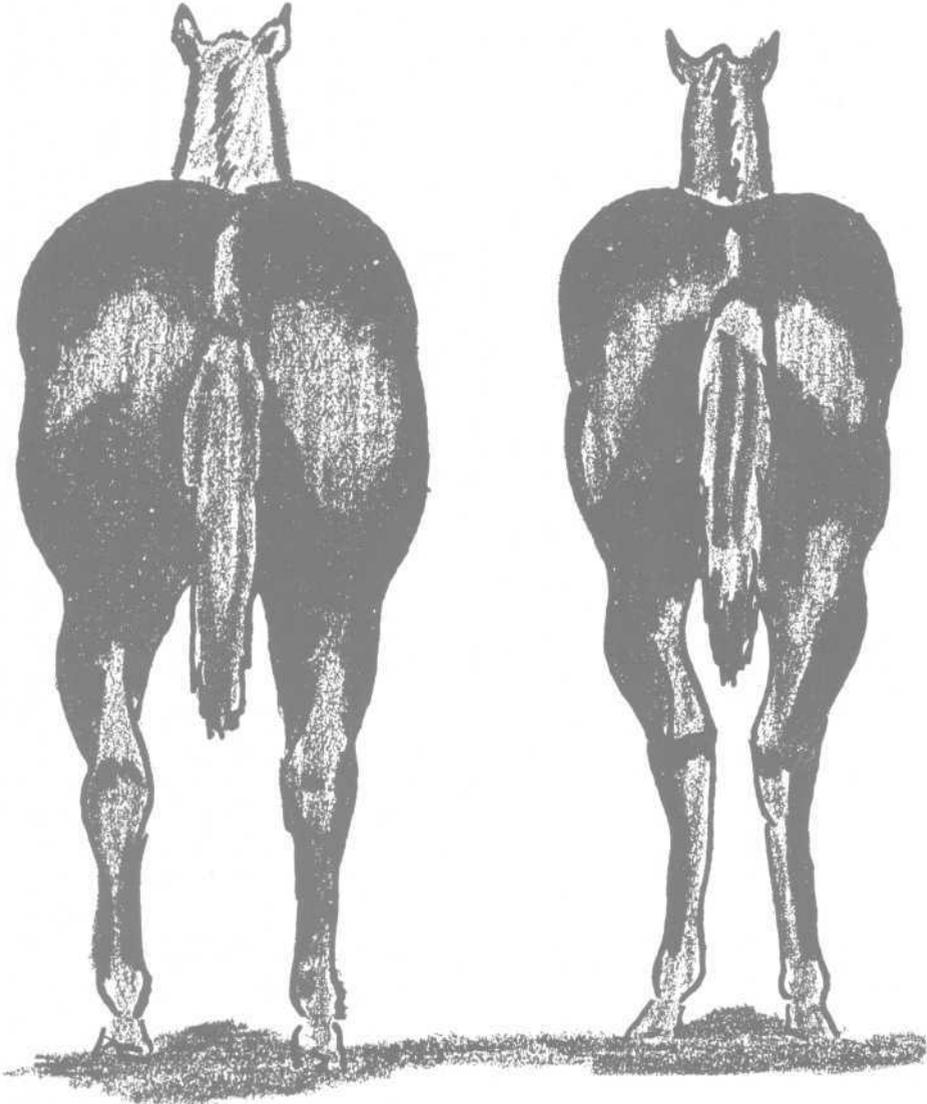
Weak pastern

Fore Quarters

The quarters are full and deep and wide with ample muscling. The chest is broad with a "V" formed below the chest by the inside muscles. A good stock horse

has a well muscled forearm. The shoulder is long, muscular and smooth with sloping withers. The slope of the shoulder with a medium high but sharp withers gives an easier riding horse.

REAR QUARTERS



Good Stock Horse Type

- Well-rounded quarter
- Gaskin muscled, inside and out
- Short cannon
- Wide through stifle
- Low, wide hock

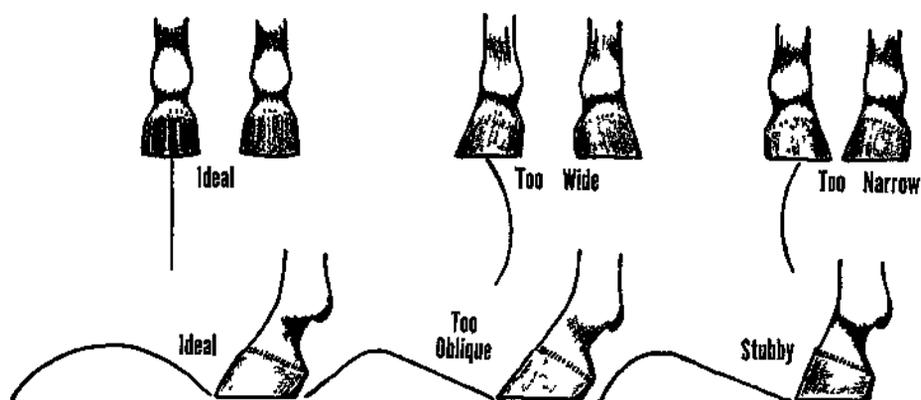
Rear Quarters

The rear quarters should have great driving power, being broad, deep and strong. Well muscled

Undesirable Type

- Pear-shaped quarters
- No muscle inside gaskin
- Long cannon
- Lack of width through stifle
- Cow hocks

quarters show fullness in the thigh, stifle, gaskin and down to the hock. The view from the rear shows great width and extends evenly



Fore leg defects and their effect on the action.

from the top of the thigh to the bottom of the stifle and gaskin.

Action

The stock horse must show great bursts of speed. He must be able to stop quickly with ease and balance. When moving forward his feet should move on line, without toeing in or paddling. He picks his feet up cleanly without stumbling.

Avoid the short-legged, pudgy

type foal. Do not confuse a beefy, sluggish colt for a strong muscled colt that is clean limbed and agile.

A quiet disposition is vital in a stock horse. The calm but alert, easy-to-handle foal will respond much better to your training than will the high spirited, ill tempered colt. This quiet, alert disposition is looked for both in the show ring and in the working stock horse.

Determine the Age of a Horse

A horse has six upper and lower incisors. A foal has four of his temporary incisor teeth within a few weeks, and all within one year. The temporary teeth are smaller, whiter and smoother than permanent teeth.

Between 30 and 36 months, the center pair of temporary teeth are shed and the larger, permanent ones come in. At about 3½ years the second pair of permanent incisors come in and are up by four

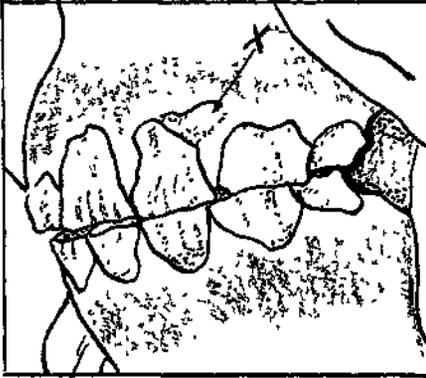
years. The third or corner pair come in between 4½ and 5 years. Then the horse has "a full mouth."

From that time you can determine age by wear and shape of the teeth. Teeth surfaces of a five-year-old horse have concave surfaces called cups. These grow smooth as the horse grows older. At 8 years of age all lower teeth are worn level or smooth.

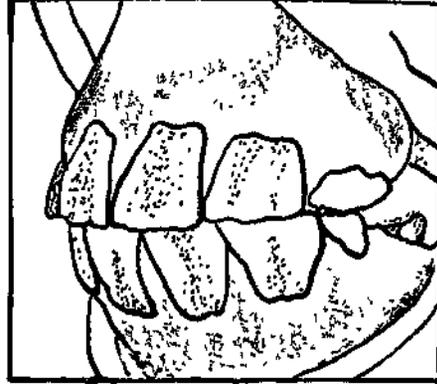
The upper teeth are less accu-

rate indicators of age but usually they are smooth at about 11 years. From then on both upper and lower

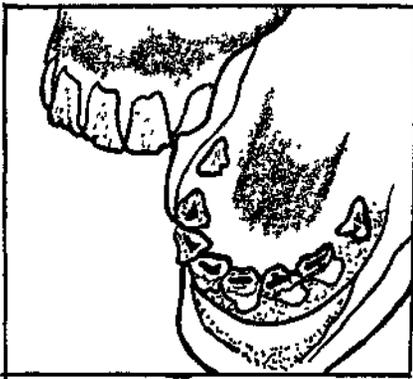
teeth protrude at a greater angle, becoming more triangular in shape and darker in color.



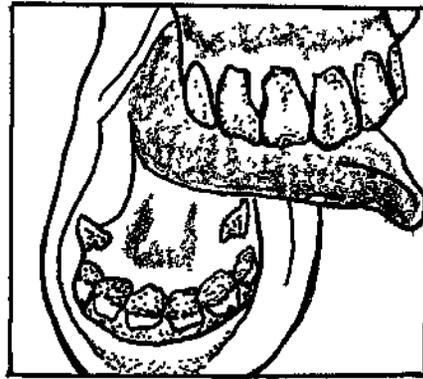
A — The teeth between 2½ and 3 years of age. The middle pair are temporary incisors, above and below, replaced by permanent teeth at this age. A permanent tooth is making its appearance at x.



B — A 4-year-old mouth. The two middle pairs of incisors, above and below, are permanent. The outside pair are temporary teeth. The latter are small in size and white in appearance.

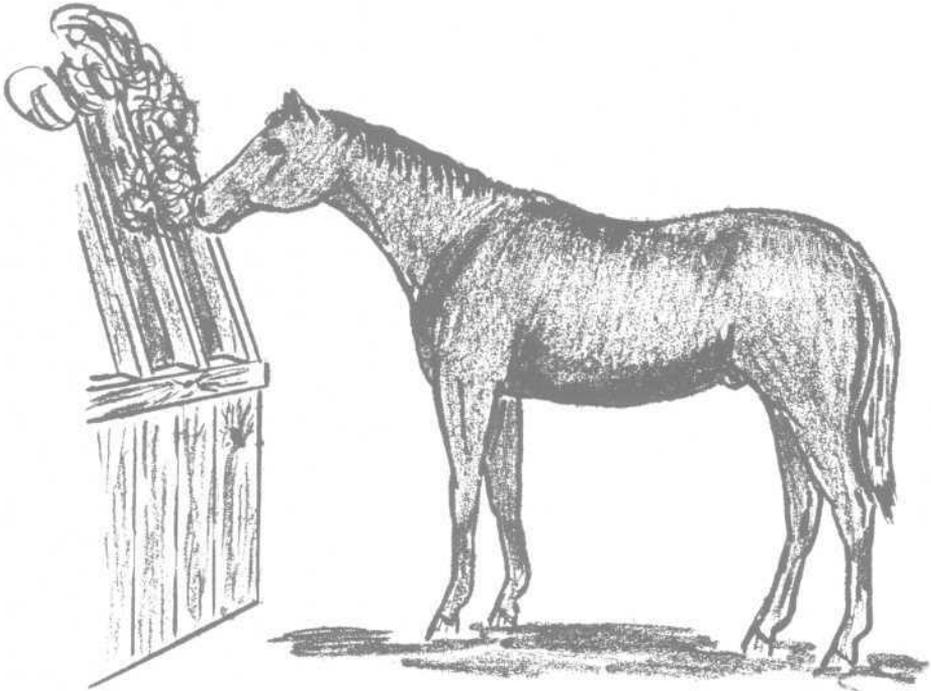


C — Between 5 and 6 years the horse has a full mouth. All the incisor teeth are permanent but the corner incisors have not yet come into wear. Notice the well defined cups.



D — An 8-year-old mouth. The cups are worn out of all the lower teeth.

Learn These Feeding Practices



An old adage among horsemen is that "The feed and care you give a foal the first year make the horse." This is a good rule to follow, for you will want to use your horse for many years.

Feed your horse to develop proper size, soundness, and good health. Because the major expense in keeping a horse is represented by feed, that item should be carefully watched.

Rations

A ration — feeding during a 24-hour period — should have proper amounts of nutrients and bulky enough for safety and palatability.

Feed horses according to their needs, which vary with age, type, size, work and season. A variety of good quality feeds should be fed regularly.

Young horses need a greater proportion of protein than mature horses. They also need more mineral. Young horses do well on oats and legume hay (alfalfa and clover). Older horses are able to handle such feeds as corn and barley better than young horses. Feed should be free of dustiness and moldiness.

Horses doing heavy work or being ridden every day need more grain and less hay. As the work decreases, decrease the amount of grain and increase the amount of hay. Idle horses can be maintained on good hay and straw.

Good legume hay is an excellent source of protein, vitamins and calcium. For this reason alfalfa is excellent for young colts. If your source of hay is grain hay, it is better for the colt to supply part

of the hay as alfalfa rather than all grain hay. Remember, too, that there are many different qualities of hay. Even in alfalfa the maturity of the alfalfa, how and when it is harvested and the amount of fertilizer used on the land all affect hay quality.

Some grain should be fed to foals. The standard grain is oats. It is rich in protein and minerals and is a safe feed. Corn and barley can also be used in limited quantities even for a colt.

Bran is very valuable in the ration for horses. It is rich in minerals and protein. Feed bran as a regular part of a ration. It adds

some bulkiness to the grain ration and will cause a greedy horse to take more time in chewing his feed.

Salt and good clean water should be available at all times. Though these may not be considered strictly feeds they are as important to the health of your horse as any of the feed stuffs. Following are some grain rations to be fed with different types of hay. Here are some basic rules to follow for the amount to feed. For horses at light work $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of grain and $\frac{1}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of hay daily per 100 lbs. of live weight. For medium work, 1 lb. of grain and 1 to $1\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of hay daily.

Suggested Grain Rations

(With mixed alfalfa and grass hay)

Foals, Yearlings, and Brood Mares Nursing Foals		Mature Horses and Older Colts at Light Work	
ground barley or grain sorghum	3 parts	oats	4 parts
oats	2 "	bran	1 "
bran	2 "	grass hay	
corn, ground grain sorghum	3 "	corn	2 "
ground barley	2 "	barley	2 "
bran	1 "	bran	1 "
protein supplement	1 "	mixed alfalfa hay and barley straw	
oats	3 "	oats	3 "
bran or protein supplement	1 "	barley	2 "
		*mixed alfalfa and grass hay	

**Horses are allowed all the hay they will eat. The amount of grain should be fed at the rate given on page 11.*

Feeding from Birth

A foal will begin to eat a little grain from his mother's feed box when he is a few weeks old. Foals nursing idle mares do not need grain until weaning time, especially on a good pasture. If you want to push the foal, give him a separate feed box and feed extra grain.

After Weaning

After weaning (at five to seven months) feed grain to foals at the rate of 1 lb. to every 100 lbs. live weight and all the good hay they will eat. You may use less grain if you are not pushing the foal for early maturity especially when using high quality alfalfa hay.

A foal gets from 50 percent to 55 percent of his weight his first year. A foal can gain 1 lb. of weight with about half as much feed as is required the second year so it is economical to feed the foal well the first year. As for the yearlings, it is better to allow them to graze if possible. This is cheaper and is better for their health. The ration for a yearling is almost the same as for a foal but slightly less protein is required.

At Two Years

At two years the well fed foal will be within two to three inches of his mature height and 75 percent of his weight. If he is idle he can be fed more hay and less grain. However, if you are training and working him hard as a two-year-old, then feed him much the same as you would a yearling.

Some of you may have range or pasture to raise your horses on. Then you are faced with a little

different condition than feeding them in an enclosed area. An irrigated pasture or a good growing range is a good place to raise a colt. However, you must realize that there will be several months out of the year when there is not really an adequate feed supply for your horse. After frost or when the grass has died the essential nutrients tend to decrease each month. By mid-winter there is usually a lack of sufficient protein, phosphorus, and vitamin A for normal growth, particularly on range land that has no irrigation.

Give Supplement

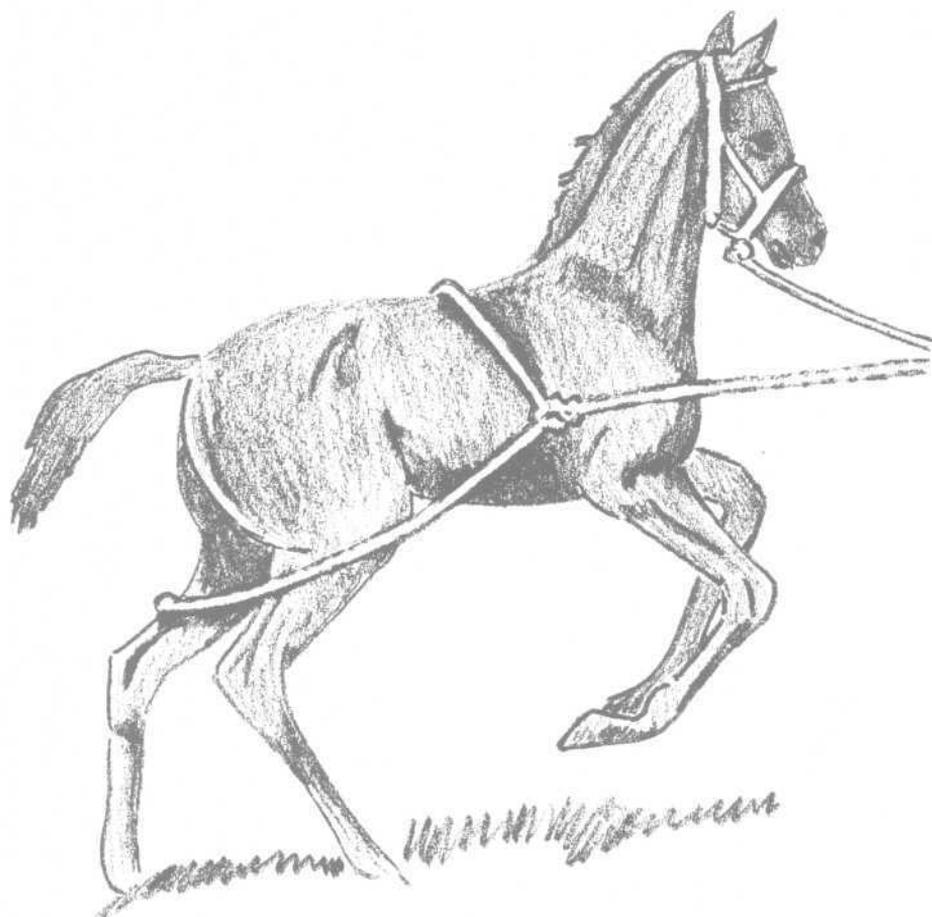
To offset this then you must give a supplement that will supply these necessary nutrients. This can be supplied to a great extent by cottonseed cake or commercially prepared pellets. However, with the colts they still should be getting some grain during the first winter to keep them growing normally.

Use Good Hay

Good hay also can be used to offset poor range feed and is more commonly used. The important point to remember is don't expect too much from range feed alone. Otherwise, your horse will not attain his full growth.

One thing your horse should have is plenty of exercise. A horse is a natural athlete and does well with exercise. It keeps him healthy and prevents him from getting lazy. Range raised horses are seldom lazy. They are responsive and willing to go. If your horse is stabled up a good portion of the time, be sure that he gets plenty of regular exercise.

Now Train Your Colt



It requires careful handling and skilful training to develop a horse for stock work and pleasure. In training strive for a gentle horse with a mouth responsive to riding signals. It requires less time and effort to start this training at an early age. Above all do not bruise the bars and tongue of a horse. In starting to train the colt be gentle and never choke the colt down.

Beside training your horse to lead well, teach him to allow his

feet to be picked up and to be unafraid of things moving about or touching his body. While growing up he gradually accustoms himself to handling. To do these things he should have no outside disturbances during his early training lessons. It is better to have him in a pen by himself away from any other horses so that his attention is on the lesson. Frequent brushing and hand rubbing tells him that he has nothing to fear during the lessons.

Leading

A foal should be gentled and taught to lead when only a few months old. A hackamore is usually used in starting the training of a young horse. A little feed such as oats or some sweet feed prior to and during the time of the first lessons helps to gentle the colt and teach him that you will not harm him. Brush or wipe him often; but never use a curry comb or stiff brush.

After you get the hackamore on your colt pull him quietly first to one side and then the other. As he responds reward him with patting and rubbing or a little sweet feed. Many trainers use a non-slip loop that is slipped over the hind quarters to make him lead promptly. The important thing is to work with him gently about a half-hour lesson each day for several successive days.

Yielding His Feet

After he has been taught to lead and gentled down after several half-hour lessons he is next taught to yield his feet. Work quietly with him, picking up the front feet first. Do it many times with him and if he resists, put the foot down, pat him, quiet him down and do it all over again. First lift up one foot, then the other foot.

Hind Leg Next

Next, train him to yield his hind leg as if he were going to have his hoof trimmed and shod. Patience and time are necessary. As soon as the foal starts to struggle, let the foot down and pet him. In a few minutes pick up the foot again and repeat this process until he no longer objects to yielding his hind feet. This can sometimes be

accomplished in a couple of lessons. With other colts it may take many lessons but it is important that he learns these lessons.

Saddling

Next work on getting the colt over his fear of movements and activity about him. Tie him up and rub him with a soft sack. Then flip the sack over and about his body and legs. The same thing can be done with a soft cotton rope by drawing the rope back and forth over the body to accustom the colt to the rope.

Now the Saddle

As a yearling, in addition to his lessons with the rope and the sack he is ready to be taught the feel of a saddle. First, review his previous lessons with him so that he is quiet and gentle and understands that no harm will befall him. Slide the blanket on and off several times until he is used to it. Then slip the saddle on and cinch it moderately tight with a single cinch. Lead him around the corral at a walk while he gets accustomed to the feel of the saddle on the back. During this leading session turn him either way and lead him close to you. Now as the lessons progress, gradually tighten the cinch and continue to lead him. It would be well to saddle and unsaddle him several times to get him accustomed to the saddle before you ever try to ride.

Some trainers after leading the colt with an empty saddle like to tie up the bridle reins and turn the yearling loose to trot and canter until accustomed to the feel and squeak of the saddle and the swinging of the stirrups. If he should happen to buck which is only rarely then catch the yearling

and lead him at a walk before you turn him loose again with the reins tied up.

Riding

The next step is to mount the horse. Be sure first that he has satisfactorily passed all his other lessons. Now mount by turning the left stirrup for your foot. Hold the reins and a lock of mane in your left hand. With your right hand on the pommel place your knee tightly against his shoulder and then raise your weight smoothly. Swing your right foot over and into the stirrup quickly, lightly, and smoothly. If you have handled him well, the chances are he will not buck. If he should buck, try to stay in the saddle. A horse that throws a rider usually is more difficult to train from then on. Because the colt is well trained to lead and handle often it is better to have someone lead the colt for a while with the rider on his back until he gets used to the new experience. Other times you may walk him the first time he is mounted without any additional assistance.

This first lesson which is held in a corral should be done with but little guidance from you until the colt learns to relax and walk well. Then turn and have him travel the other way.

Take It Easy

Start your horse by squeezing your legs gradually. At first you may have to tap him with your heel but with patience he will learn to start on pressure. A horse will learn faster with two short 20-minute lessons than one long lesson a day. Remember he is just a youngster and tires easily. As

his lessons progress gradually start training him to trot and later on to canter a little.

Neck-reining

To teach neck-reining you probably will use two hands at first, one to pull with and one to bear on his neck. This is called "leading and bearing rein." By working with him in the corral you can anticipate his turns and use the reins as a signal. As you ride up to a barrier and you know he is going to have to turn, then use your reins to indicate to him that the rein is the signal to turn.

Train at Slow Work

A horse learns best at slow work, a walk or a trot, so the initial lessons should be at those gaits. Except to train him to break from a walk into a canter his other lessons should be done at the slower gaits.

Usually his training to this point is with a hackamore. However, at this stage a bridle may be placed under the hackamore until he gets used to it. Then add reins and use the two together until you can finally use the bridle alone.

Backing Up

Horses used for stock work should back well. Start this training from the ground. Stand in front of your horse and push back on the reins, tap him with the quirt or reins on the breast and legs. Be patient and repeat often. Then mount, squeeze your legs as you would to start him, cause him to pick up his foot, pull back lightly, making him move his foot to the rear instead of the front. These short lessons will soon train him to back up.

Show Your Horse



Have your horse in good condition but not overly fat. His hair coat should be short, slick and with a good sheen. Plenty of brushing is needed to keep the hair clean, and insure an even coating of natural oil, essential to good grooming.

Sometimes it is necessary to wash light colored horses. Wash several days before the show, then keep the hair clean by brushing. Bed him in a clean well-bedded stall.

A comb may be used to loosen dirt on the mane, tail and below the knees. Pick foreign material

from the tail and keep the hairs separated. On the stock horse the tail is usually pulled so that it falls just below the hocks.

It will help the appearance of your horse if his legs are booted — trimmed with clippers from the hoof head to below the knee. If you trim, do it two or three weeks before the show so that the hair has time to regain the original color.

Be sure and exercise your horse regularly, at least three 30-minute periods a week. Use these exercise periods for training periods and he will show better. Afterward brush and rub dry with a wool rag until the hair is in place.

When entering a show ring turn your horse to the right from you, while you stay on the outside of the ring. Teach him to walk and trot as straight as possible. He should be led straight away and straight back to the judge. Be courteous to the judge and public when they ask questions. Ask permission to lead your horse through a crowd of people, thus warning them to be on the alert.

Also train your horse to load into a trailer. Lead him into the trailer, allow him to eat a little grain. Repeat the procedure until he loads easily.

Take Care of the Feet

Hoofs should be trimmed level so that your horse stands normally and does not develop bad leg posture. Level hoofs also allow the frog to have proper contact with

the ground and perform its shock absorbing function. (See the drawings on page 16.)

The hoof is leveled by carefully rasping the bottom of the hoof

The Parts of the Hoof

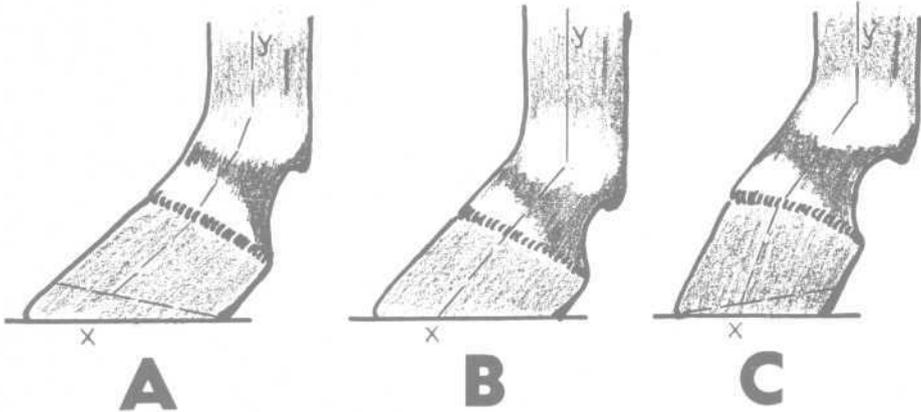
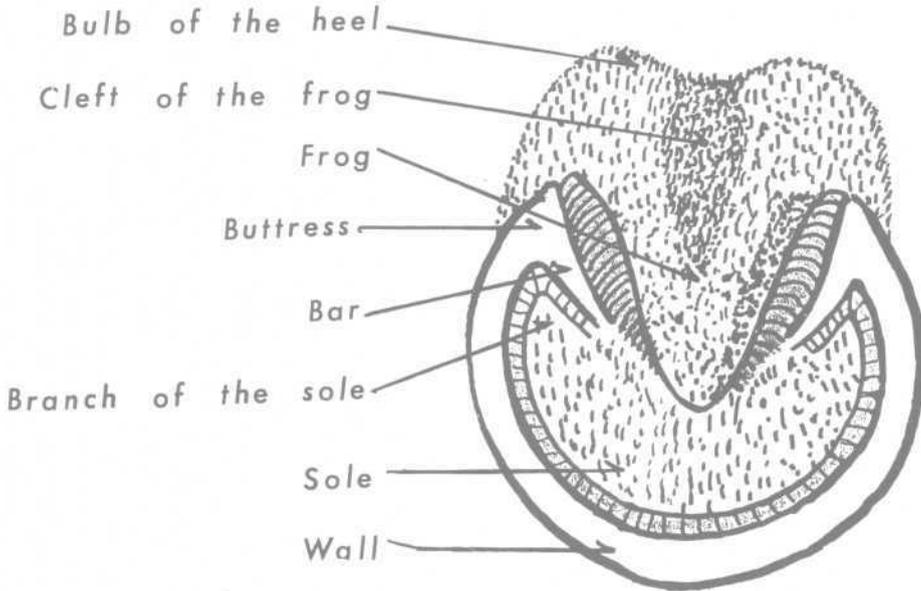


Figure A — Untrimmed hoof with excess of horn at the toe which breaks the foot axis (x to y) backward. Horizontal dotted line shows how hoof should be trimmed to correct the foot posture.

Figure B — Properly trimmed hoof with normal

straight foot axis (x to y)

Figure C — Untrimmed hoof with excess of horn at the heel. This breaks the foot axis (x to y) forward. Horizontal dotted line shows how trimming will restore correct posture.

wall. (See picture at left.) This shows the normal posture as well as incorrect posture due to excess growth of the hoof. The hoof can be too long either in the toe or heel.

When trimming, little if any of the horny sole should be removed. The frog should not be cut unless too much growth is very evident. Then only when an experienced horseman will cut down the overgrown part. Never scoop out the frog or sole of the foot. Much foot trouble can be eliminated by cleaning and inspecting the feet every

day. Remove all mud and manure from around the bars and frog of the foot.

It is desirable to learn to shoe your horse. The best way is to observe the methods of a trained horseman. Perhaps after you have observed the steps carefully and are quite familiar with the procedure, he will work with you as you shoe your own horse. Be sure you have learned the proper techniques first. Only then should you try your hand at shoeing with the supervision of an expert.

Learn About Horse Breeding

If your project is a mare, when she becomes three to four years of age and you would like to breed her, here are some things you will need to know.

Too many mares fail to produce foals because their owners follow a set pattern of breeding on the ninth day after previous foaling and then every 21 days thereafter. Actually these are only average figures. She may come into heat anywhere from five to fifteen days after she foals and even her 21-day interval may be irregular. Don't make the mistake of believing that because your mare would not take the stallion again 21 days after she was first bred that she is with foal. Likely she will be, but not necessarily so.

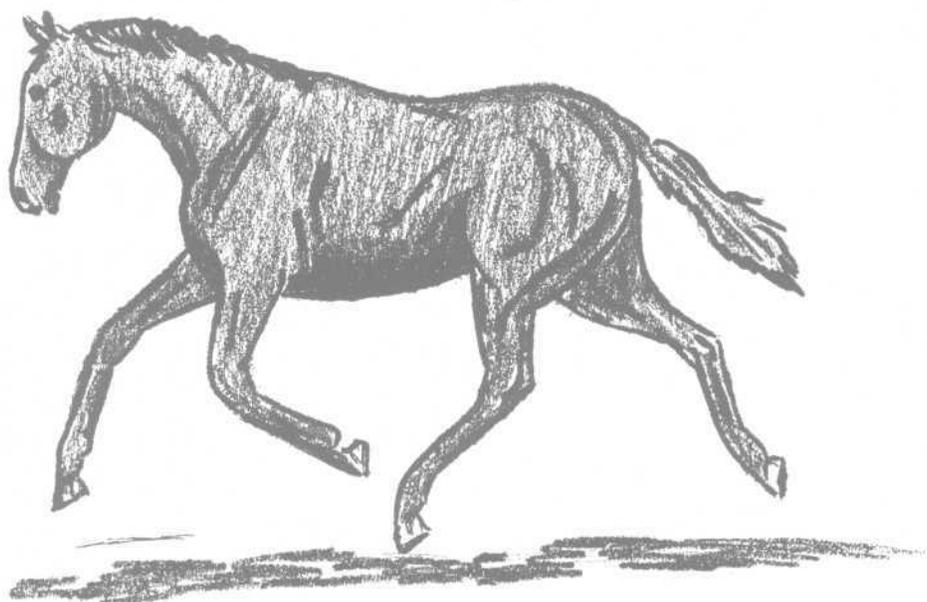
The period of pregnancy varies with different seasons and with the condition of the mare. It is usually said to be 11 months. By

breeding during the second heat period after the mare foals it will keep her on a cycle of a colt every 12 months.

It would be well to make some arrangement with the breeder that you get your foal from originally to have a chance to breed back to one of his stallions when that mare becomes three years of age. It will also give you an opportunity to have the advice and help of a well qualified breeder in helping to advise you during this breeding period.

There are certain signs that will help to determine if your mare is pregnant after she has been bred. The first and the one universally used is the failing of the mare to have her normal heat period. Another way is an examination by a skilled veterinarian. He will be able to advise you as to the pregnancy of the mare.

Learn to Judge Horses



In order to judge horses properly, you must know the desirable and undesirable characteristics and conformation of horses. You will need to study every point and its relation to other points and be able to recognize immediately good and bad features in a horse. There must be an ideal or standard in your mind which serves as a measuring stick. An eye quick to observe accurately, a good memory, reasoning power, and the ability to name and locate the various parts of the horse are necessary when judging.

What to Consider

Consider these points when choosing a horse:

- Temperament
- Conformation
- Action
- Soundness
- Age
- Size

Desirable characteristics to look for in horses are:

- Back and loin — short, strong, heavily muscled.
- Chest and flank — deep, wide, and full.
- Middle — deep and roomy.
- Rib — long and well sprung.
- Legs — set squarely under the corners; straight and strong; cannons flat and short.
- Joints — large, deep and strong, clean and neat.
- Action — —straight, free.
- Head — pleasing, broad and full, eye full and bright.
- Disposition — kind and controllable.

Some common faults are:

- Weak constitution — narrow chest, long shallow body, light shallow flank, long weak coupling and loins.

Poor action — straight shoulders; straight, short pasterns; crooked legs and feet; short stubby gait; winging, paddling and interfering.

Weak underpinning — shallow, flat, shelly feet; light, weak cannons; crooked and weak hocks.

Unsoundness — spavin, poor eyesight, heaves, ringbone, curb splints close to knee, sidebones, fistula.

Bad temperament — balking, kicking, rearing, backing, shying, halter pulling or hanging back.

How to Weigh The Good Points Against the Bad

Learn to look for and recognize all these conditions in horses, then weigh the good points against the bad points.

When judging, follow an orderly system — one that will enable you to see everything there is to be seen about the horse. First, get a good view of the horse from a short distance. This will help you to decide on its conformation,

width, height, type, balance, etc. Observing the horse from a distance allows you to recognize features of the horse which cannot be obtained any other way.

Close inspection of the horse is then made from in front, from behind, and from the side. Inspect the horse for soundness, type and quality of legs and feet, quality and substance of bone. With your hand, feel the hoofheads, pasterns and cannons. Sidebones, ring bone, and splints may thus be located.

Have someone walk and then trot the horse directly away and back toward you. While the horse is moving, observe his stride. The stride should be free and straight.

After taking all these points into consideration, weigh the good and the bad points and make your decision. When two horses are being compared, give most consideration to the more important points. For example, lameness in a horse is far more serious than a steep croup. Probably the most important quality in horses is soundness. A lame horse should be placed down.

Judging horses is much like judging people. There are many characteristics and qualities to consider. Do not be afraid of learning too much about judging.

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