

Advocate Colt Shows for Oregon

In the following article specialists of the Oregon Agricultural College point out the value, both to farmers and townspeople, of annual Spring colt shows and advise their adoption in Oregon.

Steps in holding such a show are clearly discussed.

Special to Farm Magazine.

IN view of the exceptionally great interest in horses and the prospect for a strong demand at good prices for horses of desirable type, no better time could be found to establish the annual Spring colt shows, so popular and helpful in the Eastern States, as a regular Oregon event. This plan of fostering the good-horse propaganda has so many advantages that it is not possible more than to name some of them with the hope that this will start owners and others to thinking on the subject, which will doubtless result in definite action.

Of course the main thing to be gained by colt shows is the improvement of horses. This improvement will be brought about by implanting in horsemen higher ideals of the general and the special purpose horses, by acquainting them with the characteristics of colts that grow into horses of desirable types, by instructing them in methods designed to secure better horses, and by creating a strong public sentiment in favor of really good horses.

Public Untrained.

Undoubtedly one of the greatest hindrances to the development of pure-bred and high-grade horses is lack of general appreciation of good horses, due in a large measure to the fact that the public is untrained in the observation and use of the best types. The practice of annual colt shows would go far toward correcting the fault and do much to educate the public to an understanding and appreciation of the noblest of farm animals. All of these things would tend to create among farmers and horsemen a strong incentive to produce the best types, which can be done by keeping good brood mares and breeding them to sires of high quality and breeding, shunning those of inferior and mixed types.

It has been found that the colt show is also an important factor in strengthening and directing social and business activities. It is an effective means of bringing farmers from different parts of the community together, when they may confer on subjects of mutual interest, especially those related to the horse business. It brings large bodies of the rural population into town, where firmer relations are established between the farmers and the business men of the town, and it fosters the principle of patronizing home industries, both by farmers and merchants.

Primary Interest to Owners.

And the families of the visitors and of the residents of the town come to know each other better, greatly to the advantage of both classes. Even the young people mingle freely, and especially in smaller towns learn to value each other before the power to do so is weakened by prejudice.

While it has been proved that colt shows are of great value to the people generally, it remains true that they are of primary and greatest interest to stallion owners and farmers; therefore the duty of organizing and carrying on the work in connection with them rightly belongs to these two classes of citizens.

Perhaps the most difficult step is the first one—creating an interest in and a demand for the colt show. Those who are interested may do this by calling a meeting of their own people and talking over the situation fully. A temporary chairman may be appointed and committees selected to attend to the various phases of the work. These committees should canvass the situation thoroughly among the horse owners and the business men.

As the inventory of possible material for the show progresses and as the committees learn just what material will be available, classes may be established and conditions for entry and awards agreed upon. Then the work of publicity should begin to get the attention and support of the business men and public generally.

Value of Advertising.

In this campaign one of the most potent forces will be the newspapers. Newspaper men stand unflinchingly by public enterprises of this kind and help them along both editorially and by many and frequent announcements in their news columns. Nor should the advertising columns of

the local papers be overlooked in promoting this enterprise and others of like kind, since they not only yield a fine profit on the investment, but they also lend a business-like air to the affair that goes far to convince the public of the responsibility and standing of the management. By these means and by semi-public meetings the public is made acquainted with the aim and character of the colt show, and public interest is aroused.

The success with which this preliminary work has been accomplished will depend more largely upon the character of the general manager than upon any other one thing. Unless this manager is both enterprising and resourceful the work will suffer in all stages. He must have executive ability, and in order to insure harmony in carrying out the various plans adopted it is generally advisable to let him select his own assistants. Under such management as may thus be provided not only will the show succeed in all its departments but it will become so popular that it will be in demand through the succeeding years.

Suitable Prizes.

Having established the classes to be entered, the committee can then go to the business men and stallion owners and solicit suitable prizes. Since it is desirable to interest as many horse growers as possible in the show, the number and suitability of prizes are of more importance than their actual value. It is suggested in this connection by Carl N. Kennedy, O. A. C. horse specialist, that the prize list should provide for so wide a range of classes that every colt in the community could be shown. Great care will be required to arrange the lists so that each class will be filled and still not overcrowded.

The aim should be to have every prize won by actual competition, none going by default. Professor Kennedy recommends three or more prizes for each class, with ribbons for two lower positions. Announcements to this effect will encourage all colt owners to try for some recognition, and the act of awarding the large number of recognitions will help allay the disappointment of those who fail to get first place.

That stallion owners offer special prizes, such as free breeding service for colts, is also recommended by Professor Kennedy. This costs the stallion owners less than cash, but is really worth more to the breeders. An extra special prize is often successfully offered by a stallion owner for the best four colts sired by his stallion.

Sweepstakes Undesirable.

Sweepstakes prizes for colts of any breed are not advised since it often arouses unprofitable discussion as to the relative merits of the different standard breeds. In general, it is thought best to keep the breeds and the sexes strictly separate, and to keep the pure-breds and grades distinct. It is unwise to cause an inferior pure-bred to go into competition with the superior grade, since awarding the prize to the grade may serve to give a wrong impression of the value of pure-breds. On the other hand, if the pure-bred wins, the victory is taken as a matter of course and does no real good to the cause of better horses.

When the day for holding the show arrives, everything needs to be in shape for the exercises of the day. The competitors should be called together some time before the show is to start and fully instructed by the executive as to the purposes and methods of the various features of the show, and given some instructions in preparing for future shows. This may be followed by an educational talk by the judge.

Start With Parade.

The actual show may be started off by a street parade of the animals to be exhibited. The colts should be handled carefully so as to avoid mishaps and display them to the best advantage. Judging should be started right after dinner so that all animals will have been inspected and placed before 4 o'clock.

Prizes should be awarded promptly so that owners may get away for their homes in good season. The show may be closed with a parade of the winners. Or, if thought best, an evening meeting and banquet may be held, farmers and town people getting together and listening to talks from leading citizens, possibly electing officers for the following year.

The services of a good judge are an absolute necessity in order to do

(Continued on Page 14.)



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