Mules are a rarity

(Continued from Page 46)

while mating a stallion and jennet produces a hinny.

The standard crossing is, of course, with the jack and mare. The hinny is not deliberately bred in this country.

The hinny partakes more of the nature of the horse in form and disposition than the jennet. It has a neater head, heavier head and mane, and a larger foot than the mule.

However, authorities seem to agree that the hinny does not have the strength or the endurance of the mule. The hinny has a whinny similar to a horse's; a mule brays like a jack. Both the mule and the hinny can be of either sex.

It is commonly believed that the mule, being a hybrid, is sterile. However, a number of cases of female mules that produced progeny are on record, well authenticated.

In one instance, checked by the Texas Experiment Station, a female mule produced to the cover of a stallion, and later produced to the cover of a jack. One of the colts was therefore three-fourths ass and one-fourth horse and the other three-fourths horse and one-fourth ass.

A St. Martinsville, Louisiana, mule mare by the name of Lou dropped a colt on November 13, 1947. This was vertified by a verterinarian.

There is no evidence of offspring sired by a male mule.

Numerous tests have been made in comparing horses and mules in pulling contests. Under pressure with ships, it seems likely that mules will pull as much in proportion to their weight as horses; but where whips or goads are not allowed, horses pull more. In other words, mules always work with some mental reservation.

The truth of the expression "A mule will do the work of six horses" is borne out when it comes to endurance under adverse conditions, especially in hot weather. No draft animal, so far developed, has the endurance of the mule under all kinds of working conditions.

Farmers believe that a team of mules can outwork two teams of horses on a hot day. It seems that a mule's hide is tougher, harder, and less sensitive, making the mule more capable of resisting sun and rain.

A mule will not only eat a coarser food but will thrive under conditions which would kill a horse. He will find enough to eat where any other animal, save a goat, would starve to death. Straw, pine boards, the bark of trees, grain sacks, pieces of old leather, and old felt hats go down the hatch when the mule is hungry.

Out of the Civil War comes a story of a team of mules that ate a government wagon. On the other hand, a mule can go for long intervals without food.

A mule will not injure himself in a runaway or by charging into a fence. A horse will knock himself out, but a mule never. He has too much common sense for that and doesn't get excited. Mule colts are easier to raise than horse colts for that reason.

Since mules do not reproduce, farmers rarely own all mules. If they prefer mules, they keep a good brood mare or two to supply mule colts.

It is true that mules sometimes balk under heavy loads. Tradition says it is because they are stubborn and perverse; those who know the mule say he's too smart to do more than he has to. In fact, there is much evidence to support the claim that a mule is smarter than a horse. Even his detractors notice that he rarely gets himself into a jam, and always has a sharp eye open for his best interests, not always true of a horse.

The mule also outlives the horse. The average life of a work horse is 15 years; of mules, 18 years.

The mule costs less to shoe and is more sure footed than the horse. He will hold a shoe longer than a horse because his hoof is more deeply cupped and is tougher. The mule suffers less from disease.

The horse has a number of advantages over the mule. He comes to maturity more quickly and can be put to hard labor sooner. Larger and stronger horses can probably pull heavier loads. Rarely do you hear of a mule weighing over 2,000 pounds; many draft horses wiegh up to 2,600 pounds. Horses are easer to handle, less temperamental, less likely to kick.

The mule is vanishing, but he will not die, only fade away.

Nebraska

(Continued from Page 48)

recommends for Winter management of Nebraska Unis.

Nebraska Units which house pigs of different ages are divided into sections which allow for the animals' varying size. Both Kurtz and Zimmerman, for example, have varying pen sizes. The first section of pens at the Zimmerman farm measures 6½ feet wide and 28 feet long. All other pens down the line are 28 feet long also, but width increase by two feet for each of the next three section of pens. That arrangement makes the final pens about twice as wide as the area in which the feeder pigs get started.

The pigs move from one section of pens to another as the end pens are emptied at marketing time. Groups of pigs are never mixed. An alley along the front of the building allows for easy movement of the pigs. Narrow alleyways are preferred. Kurtz' alleyway measures 20 inches in width, while Zimmerman's is two feet across.

Eugene Eberly, New Holland R2, has an extra alleyway in his unit. It's at the rear of the building and for his own use so that he has better access to feeders that are located in that part of the building. Feeders are supplied from bins, with each bin servicing only a particular section of pens. This allows for more diversity in feeding programs, as well as addition of medicine for only some groups, explains Zimmerman. Another modification Eberly has with his Nebraska Unit is an arrangement of fibreglass panels, rather than curtains.

An improvemment on the unit might be the addition of a separate pen for sick animals, say some Nebraska users. Scours has been a problem with at least one of the operations contacted by **Lancaster Farming.**

The best-liked feature of the latest and hottest thing in hog housing is the fact that the structure is efficient and very conservative on energy demand. The complete independence of fans had one enthusiastic farmer exclaim "If the power goes off [illegible] won't die — there's not much mechanics involved."

Zimmerman notes that the only regular need for electricity in his building is for lighting and operation of the feed augers. "The main advantage is the fact that there are no fans," he exclaimed.

Heat for the floor during cold weather is provided by an oil-fired water heater, instead of a furnace. To make it work, all Zimmerman had to do was add an expansion tank and circulators. Other equipment in his service room includes a high-pressure washer for the building (as well as farm machinery) and a device which meters medication into the water supply. As with the feeding system, each group of pens has its own water network to make it possible to medicate just certain pens, rather than none or all.

Zimmerman prefers a slatted floor and pit to other alternatives and of the choices in that regard – he picked ready-made reinforced concrete slats. They come in 10 by 4 foot sections which are simply layed into position above the pit. "I really prefer these concrete slats," the Ephrata area swine producer commented, explaining that the rounded corners prevent feet injuries. Each individual slat is six inches wide and the spacing in between is an inch in width.

Manure from Zimmerman's hog operation will be pumped out every three to four months.

With a capacity to feed 1000 head at a time, Zimmerman can send 3000 pigs to market annually. Kurtz's operation is slightly larger with 325 hogs going to market per month (3900 per year).

Speaking of his experiences with his Nebraska Unit, which was put into use last September, Kurtz says: "I feel it is the answer to the average farmer around here." But he also realizes each farmer will have to decide for himself what his preferences are. All he can say is that it works for him – "it works real well," he concluded.