

FARM AND HOUSEHOLD.

WINTER CARE OF STRAWBERRIES.—The strawberry, once confined to the limits of the kitchen garden of the frugal and thrifty husbandman, has of late years taken a "new departure," and now is classed among the important field crops of many sections of country.

It is spoken and written about in the same way as cabbage, potatoes, or turnips. Of course the culture of the strawberry is not quite as general as the crops named, but in a wide district of New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia hundreds of acres are exclusively devoted to its culture, and the success or failure has a very marked effect on the year's labor of the farmer in these districts.

Not many years ago a man that was cultivating 10 acres of strawberries would be known and talked of all over the State as a wonder and curiosity, but now hundreds of growers, who have three, four, and five times as many acres devoted to strawberry culture, are hardly known outside of their own township or county. Large fields of strawberries have become so common of late years that they have ceased to be novelties or rather horticultural curiosities.

Much less surprise is expressed now in hearing of or seeing a fifty-acre lot of strawberries that there would have been a score of years ago in hearing of five acres. A much more economical method of cultivation has become general among strawberry growers than was formerly practiced. Kitchen garden methods were carried on in field culture for some time, but they gave way to better methods, by which the labor was substituted to a great extent in place of hand-labor, reducing the expense, and by this means increasing the profits.

Leaving space between the rows of from three to four feet soon became the rule among the more intelligent growers, and this was followed by the system known as clean culture, or what might be called constant culture. This, like many other extreme measures, led to very discouraging results in many instances that came under my observation, amounting to the loss of from one-third to one-half of the crop.

Some growers, not content with the frequent disturbance of the surface—by horse tools, from the time the plants were set out in the spring until late in the fall, would again begin cultivation in the spring, until the plants were in blossom. This, of course, would disturb and displace the surface roots of the plants, on which the fruit was dependent.

The inevitable consequence of such a method of culture would be a small crop of small berries. This, in many cases, brought about a reaction, and a rush for the other extreme, with the cry that "no culture and weeds was a better plan than thorough culture."

Men with habits of close observation soon found that to produce the largest yield of berries, the clean culture was all important the first year, but no cultivation or disturbing of the surface soil between the rows should be given in the spring of the second year, or not until the crop was gathered. Then was the time to make preparation for a crop of fruit for the following year, by a thorough surface disturbance, removing all weeds and grass at the same time.

Strawberry-growers are frequently surprised and disappointed to find in the spring of the second year, when they have an inch or two of the surface. The expansion caused by this surface thawing severs the roots, leaving the stools on the surface without hold or support, and, as a matter of course, such stools will produce little or no fruit. On clay ground even thorough drainage does not always remedy this, especially if the frost or cold water gets in soon after a heavy rain storm, while the ground is wet. One of the important matters then to be attended to by strawberry-growers at this season of the year is to make such preparations as to prevent the possibility of the frequent alternate freezing and thawing.

How To Pick Out a Good Hoss.

BY JOSH HILLINGS.
First—Let the color be a sorrel, a roan, a red, a gray, a white, a black, a blue, a green, a chestnut, a brown, a dapple, a spotted, a cream, a buckskin, or any other good color.

Second—Examine his ears; see that he has got two ears, and point a tin pan close to him, to find out whether his hearing is good. All hesses are dumb, but a deaf and dumb hess are not desirable.

Third—Look well to his eyes; see that he has got a pupil in his eyes, and not too large a one neither; hesses with too large pupils in their eyes are near-sighted, and kant see oats, and have to wear green goggles, and green goggles make a hess look to much like a trakt peddler.

Fourth—Feel on his neck with the inside of your right hand; see that the spinal column is well fattened, and runs the whole length of him from fore to aft—a hess without a good spatil spinal column from fore to aft ain't worth a well-fattened oss.

Fifth—Put yure hand on his breast; see if his harte can beat 70; squeeze his fore legs to see if he iz well muscled; lift up his before feet and see if there iz any frogs in them—frogs keep a hess's feet cool and sweet, just as they do a well or spring of water.

Six—Look well to his shoes; see what number he wears—number 8 iz about right.

Seven—Run yure hand along the dividing ridge of his body, from the top of his withers to the commencement of his tail (or dorsal vertebra), and pinch him up you along to, to see if he knows how to hold his body.

Eighth—Look on his hind legs for sum spavins, kurbs, windgalls, ringbones, skratvins, quitters, thrust, greasehoves, thorough-pins, spring-halt, quarter-cracks; see if he has got a whiri-bone; look for sum pin-hips; hunt for strains in the back tendons, let-downs, and carped hocks.

Nine—Investigate his teeth; see if he ain't 14 years old last May, with teeth filed down, and a six-year old black mark burnt into the top of his withers for a fistula, and look sharp at both shoulders for a swenny.

NOTEWORTHY.—Our Readers will certainly examine the three attractive Announcements by Messrs. ORANGE JUDD & Co. of their valuable Journals. The American Agriculturist has for 20 years past enjoyed a well-deserved and very wide popularity as a practical, instructive, reliable journal, and it grows more beautiful and more valuable every year.

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Advertisement for Allen's Lung Balsam, reiterating its value for lung health.