How now brown cow - you're giving eggs!

By JO ANN STEVENSON **Times Staff Writer**

Times sure are changing down on the farm. Everybody knows that cows have calves and give milk, but on one farm in Mississauga, cows give embryos (or fertilized eggs). Auld Croft Farms Ltd. on Hurontario Street (near

401) is more like a service industry for cattlemen than a farm. On this farm, pure-bred cows reproduce themselves without ever giving birth.

To the casual eye, the industry appears much like a regular dairy farm. There are cows and calves roaming in nearby pastures and inside the barn the black and white Holstein cows mill about in their stalls to the beat of the rock music that keeps them contented.

The appearance of clinically clean floors and masked and uniformed staff may provide the first clue that this is no ordinary farm.

Two services are performed at Auld Croft, owned by Gordon Leliever. "Calls from all over the world come in to us regularly now for our transfer to embryo service," said Leliever. "There are too many small carcasses of beef both here and abroad.'

The service offered is to improve the breed of cattle and therefore the yield of either meat or dairy products for cattlemen home or abroad.

IT TAKES THREE TO MAKE ONE For example, a prize cow owned by Leliever gives over 30,000 pounds of milk a year with four per cent butterfat.

To improve the yield of other cows, embryo from this prize cow, fertilized with semen from a distributor of high-quality breeder, is transferred into a cow that

simply carries the pregnancy to term. The pregnant cow has no genetic influence on the offspring. Thus it is possible for lower class cows to bear pure-bred offspring.

A team, consisting of a veterinarian and an embryologist, is invited to countries like Argentina and the Panama to teach the method carried out in Mississauga.

The breeds native to these countries are low in their

production of butterfat and milk. Canada holds the world record for liquid protein, in the black and white Holstein Friesian cow. These cattle carry the genes that increase butterfat content that is desirable in other countries.

The second facet of the industry is to provide the domestic market with improved quality stock. "Farmers here need incentive to stay in agriculture. There is a real danger they may cease to contribute to this essential industry," said Leliever. "One of the main problems they have is that the consumer doesn't realize how difficult it is to provide the quality they demand.

At Auld Croft, the farmer can choose his top cow and have her impregnated artificially with the semen of his choice. Then the embryo will be transferred to a Hols-tein of commercial grade at Auld Croft and the package. Holstein and embryo will be returned to the farmer for a fee of \$800:

The farmer receives a guaranteed pure-bred calf and the Holstein as well. This allows a farmer to upgrade the quality of his

stock quickly, and less expensively than purchasing the pure bred calf from a breeder. 'The industry is still building,' said Leliever.

takes time to retrieve the initial investment.



Gordon Leliever owns Auld Croft Farms Limited, where the cows don't give milk, they give chromosomes. The service provided results in upgrading of cattle quality in many countries including Canada. All embryo are monitored closely by government officials from the Health of Animals Department.



This prize Holstein gives over 30,000 pounds of four per cent butterfat per year. Since this is a desirable quality in a cow, her embryo are sent to many waiting dairy farms. Here, visitors from Costa Rica and the Panama learn the technique from the Mississauga Farm.

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