

# DOZENS OF PRODUCTS

## Big business on Salop farm

TUCKED away behind a clump of trees down a short unpaved lane a mile or so out of Market Drayton, Fordhall Farm, with its charming 16th century timbered farmhouse, gives no hint that it is much different from dozens of farms dotted about the Shropshire countryside.

But Fordhall Farm is different. For here is the centre of a highly-specialised rural industry providing dozens of products—from the milk of the Jersey cow—ranging from delicately flavoured cheeses to lemon flavoured yoghurt.

And it is an industry which has been streamlined to big business in just over two years.

The man behind this enterprising Salop venture is a 42-year-old dairy farmer Arthur Hollins whose family have been farmers at Fordhall for a century.

In 1949, he was a mixed farmer, working round the clock and receiving little in return for his labours on the land.

But he saw there was a potential market for high-class dairy products and started to specialise in a small way.

### Jerseys

He got rid of his Short-horn herd of cows and introduced a herd of Jerseys onto his 150 acres. And then he had his first set-back.

"I found that for commercial purposes selling milk produced by the herd was not a really good

So he approached a large Liverpool grocer, specialising in high-quality foods, and managed to talk them into allowing him to show his dairy produce.

His produce went down so well with Liverpool housewives that the store asked him to remain there. He agreed and his wife is now responsible for running the Liverpool end of the business and visits the store twice weekly to give demonstrations and hand out recipes.

His herd of Jersey cows now numbers around the 70 mark—about three-quarters of them from pedigree stock—but he has no accommodation difficulties to face. They are kept out on the pastures all the year round. And they like it better that way, he says.

At first he tried only half the herd outside during the winter.

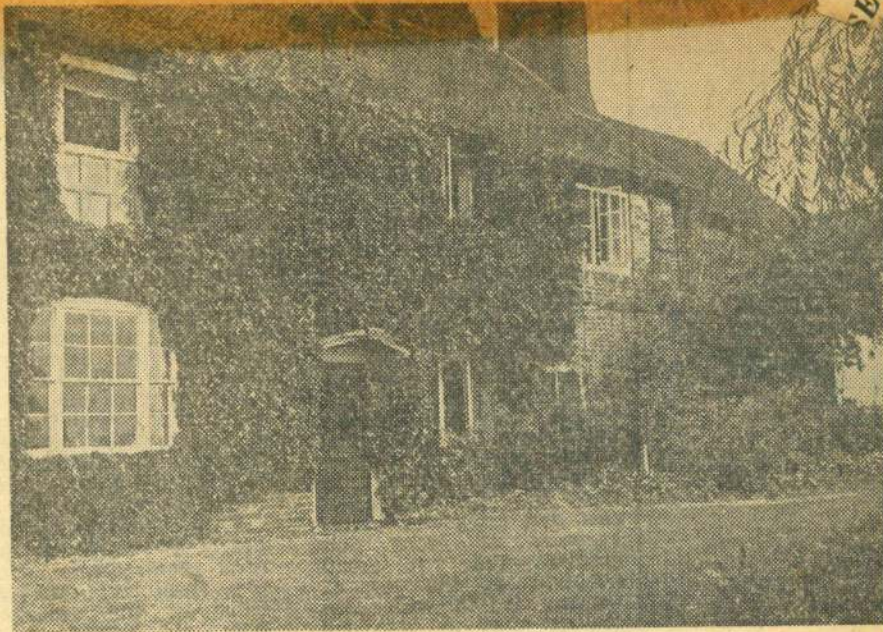
"But I found they gave the same average yield and in fact they were healthier and went to the spring grass better than those kept inside," he said.

And keeping his stock outside winter and summer has enabled him to cope with the increased milk production without involving himself in more expense for farm buildings.

"We have now turned the shippin into a modern milking parlour," he explained.

This system of keeping stock has also another important advantage as far as keeping down expense is concerned. It reduces the cost of labour by half, for instead of employing two or three hands to look after the herd he now employs only one.

His present stockman, Stan Worth, milks the total herd in two sections using a battery of six machines. The milk flows



The Elizabethan farmhouse at Fordhall Farm.

## Jerseys supply it all

packing department, where three girls pack the dairy produce in neat plastic containers and waxed cardboard cartons, he has recently installed a large deep-freeze unit.

This ensures that the produce is maintained at the peak of quality from the time it is packed until it reaches the customer.

"Although it is emptied every day I have found the unit invaluable for the brief period I keep the produce in it," said Mr. Hollins.

Mr. Hollins, a slight man who thinks big, is always on the look out for that new dairy product which will have customer appeal.

As well as his cream and cheese lines, he now does a flourishing and ever-increasing trade in milk and butter.

A new product from his



Mrs. Holtam looks up at the "skyscraper" hi colony of bees which stored 262lb. of honey.