

proposition."

But he was undaunted and looked around for an alternative channel for his milk. He found it in clotted cream.

With his wife May, he began experiments in making the rich cream after studying methods used in Cornwall. It was not long before his cream was competing alongside Devonshire cream in Plymouth shops.

"We knew we had hit on something worthwhile when we introduced the cream into high-class Midland shops. It was an immediate success," Mr. Hollins said.

And like the proverbial Jack and the Beanstalk, the business just grew and grew until Fordhall cream was a fast-selling line in shops in many parts of the country. In 1911 the herd increased in size — all his stock have since bred from the original Jersey cows — so did the hope for other cream producers with the increased milk production.

He made further experiments and discovered the milk was ideally suited for manufacturing into cream cheese.

Ambition

Today he readily admits that his first attempts at cheese-making were not very satisfactory, but perseverance plus the ambition to succeed in a highly competitive market paved the way for the superior quality cheeses he now manufactures.

Since those early attempts he has come a long way. His cheeses are now famous in a large number of towns and cities, particularly in the Midlands and North, for their quality and exciting flavours — such as nuts and wine, pineapple, prawn, and mouth-watering ham.

How to sell his cream and cheeses was an early problem he soon overcame. Because they were perishable products they had to be sold quickly while they still retained their quality.

So, like generations of

along piping direct to the separating machine.

Just how successful this system of keeping the herd has been can be measured in figures.

Since it was adopted, the average butterfat yield has been nearly five per cent. And it has been as high as six per cent. from individual cows.

Feeding

Feeding, which can be another costly business, presents no problems. During the summer the herd — they are controlled by electric fencing — feed partly on about 68 acres of meadow pasture and partly on Italian rye grass.

And in the winter no hay or straw is required, for during this period they are fed entirely on kail, lucerne, coxfoot, hardy greens and Italian rye grass sown on about 40 acres of land annually.

But he always maintains a small reserve of silage. "It could be very useful to fill in any gaps which might occur," he says.

In spite of the phenomenal success of the venture so far he is not fully satisfied. He is not content to rest on his laurels and believes the output of the farm can be considerably increased.

To do this he means to build up the strength of the herd to 90, and he is at present enlarging the dairy to cope with the greater production.

In the scrupulously clean

go-ahead dairy is a milk cocktail — milk flavoured with either coffee, strawberry, chocolate or vanilla.

Automation

He even investigated the possibilities of bringing automation into the business, supplying ice-cold milk from automatic vending machines at his market sites.

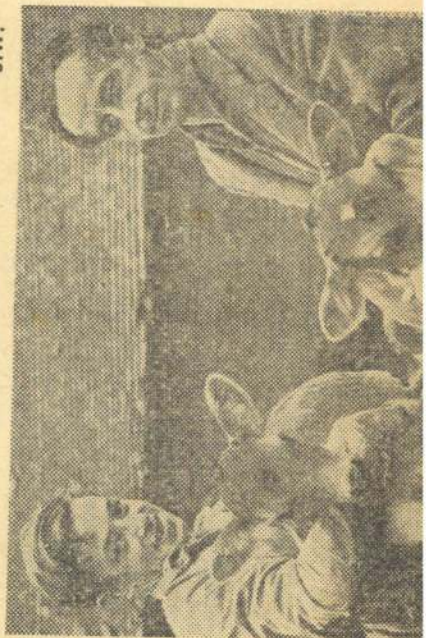
"But I found this was not a really sound proposition in my case and dropped the idea," he told me. He never shelves any reasonable suggestions to improve his business. When someone suggested he should show his customers just how his produce is made, he formed a customers' visiting club.

The idea proved popular and in no time it had a thriving membership of 100. Members pay a small fee and are allowed to spend a day on the farm at the week-end enjoying its amenities which include a swimming pool and a tennis court.

To-day, with success assured, Mr. Hollins can look back with pride on his tremendous achievements.

He still works just as hard as when he was a mixed farmer — sometimes 16 hours a day, seven days a week — but the reward is much greater.

He summed it up like this: "I have proved that this type of farming pays." J.W.



IT NEEDED A 'SKYSCRAPER

To house record honey crop

ONE-HUNDRED-AND-SIXTY-TWO pounds of honey from one colony of bees is the personal record, achieved this season, of Mr. A. A. Holtam, a bee-keeper, of The Orchard, Church-lane, Ashley.

"The biggest take I have ever had," he said as, with justifiable pride, he pointed to the hive housing the hard-working colony which had not only produced this rich harvest for the 'keeper but had, in addition, amassed about 100lb of honey which said Mr. Holtam, he was leaving as the well-deserved winter food supply for this particular colony.

Altogether, Mr. Holtam has extracted a grand total of 525lb. of honey from the four colonies he has run this season for honey production.

Mr. Holtam, the nature of whose daily work has meant that he has had to reside from time to time in different parts of the country, has been keeping bees off and on for some years. On occasions he has had to dispose of his stocks, but, on settling down in a fresh locality, his love for bees has led him to acquire fresh stocks as soon as was practically possible.

SHARED

This interest in bees is also shared by his wife who has given talks about the ways of these fascinating creatures.

Bee-keeping and a love of gardening generally go hand in hand, and so it is at The Orchard, where Mr. and Mrs. Holtam

first prizes for cucumbers, a flowering pot plant (gloxinia) and the best arrangement of flowers. Other awards were for potatoes, shallots, dahlias (2), tinted eggs and white eggs.

Mr. Holtam received his first introduction to bee-keeping at a school apiary in Pembroke-shire, and soon came to recognise the value of bees not only because of the welcome addition they can make to the family menu, but also because of the fine contribution they make to the fertilisation of the many flowers they visit in search of nectar and pollen.

The bees he keeps at Ashley — where he and his family have resided for the past nine years — are of a dark coloured old English strain. Normally, he says, these bees are fairly docile and remain so until starts to remove the surplus honey.

Mr. Holtam, who by the way, is the Managing Director of F.H.M. Contractors, public works contractors, whose main office and depot is at Brook-lane, Newcastle, was able to take 90lb. of honey from his colonies last year, when, owing to the bad season, most bee-keepers had no honey at all!

D.W.A.

"Atomic harvests"

More than 20,000 miniature cereal "fields" — of which about half are grown from seed which has been bombarded by