



Albert Nyhof imports Fleckvieh embryos from Germany to cross breed with his Holsteins.

He's Using Fleckvieh Cattle To Improve Holstein Herd

With 30 percent of today's Holstein bloodlines originating from just two bulls, it's no wonder that Holstein herds are having problems with everything from fertility to feet. Albert Nyhof thinks Fleckvieh bloodlines from Germany might reinvigorate the breed so the Manitoba dairyman has been importing the dual-purpose dairy/beef breed embryos and cross breeding with his Holsteins.

"Fertility is now a problem in the Holstein breed," says Nyhof. "High producers are likely to get mastitis, too. The Fleckvieh breed has very high fertility and a very low somatic cell count. They breed back easily, and the calves are stronger than Holstein calves."

Nyhof is working with Bavarian Fleckvieh Genetics to introduce the breed into Canada and the U.S. for both dairy and beef operations. Unlike North American Holsteins, which have been bred exclusively for milk production, the Fleckvieh was bred for both meat and milk. "They produce as much as 24,200 pounds (11,000 liters) of milk on a 305-day lactation with protein levels as high as 3.8 percent on some farms in Germany," notes Nyhof.

The Fleckvieh is an offshoot of the Simmental beef breed that developed in Switzer-

land. Both are dual use animals in Europe, but while Simmental breeders specialized in beef traits and meat production, Fleckvieh breeders selected more for milk.

"The breeders wanted an animal that wouldn't lose a lot of meat during production," says Nyhof. "That's why they reproduce so well."

He also likes the breed for its ability to handle high-energy rations. He hopes that characteristic will aid his Holsteins, already the fifth highest producing herd in the province. Nyhof milks his 130 to 140 cows three times each day and averages 26,325 lbs. of milk (13,000 kilos) of milk in 305 days.

Introducing Fleckvieh bloodlines into North America will do more than just improve dairy herds in the U.S. and Canada. It is also seen as an insurance policy for Fleckvieh breeders in Europe, says Nyhof.

"Germany is sending it best bloodlines to spread its genetics and protect against the effects of a foot and mouth disease outbreak," he explains.

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"Pooch-Powered" Wagon

One way to carry around all the stuff that you pick up at farm shows is to have your dog haul it for you, say Gordon Myers and wife Lora, who we spotted at a recent farm show.

Their dog was pulling a homemade covered wagon equipped with a specially-designed harness. Gordon used a leash to guide her. The 3 1/2-ft. long wagon has a compartment under the seat that holds a water cooler for the dog. A hose runs from the cooler to a tap on one side of the wagon, making it easy to fill a bowl. A small wooden barrel attached to the wagon next to the tap adds to the covered wagon effect.

"We take it often to parades, festivals and auctions as well as farm shows. It draws a lot of attention wherever we go," says Gordon. "Sometimes we take one of our grand children along for a ride on the wagon. Once in a



Gordon Myers' dog pulled this homemade covered wagon at a recent farm show.

while someone will tell us that it's mean to make our dog pull the wagon. However, the wagon isn't very heavy and it rides on four large rubber tires so the dog doesn't have to work too hard."

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She Loves Her "Farmall Mailbox"

As a surprise birthday present, Ashley Applegate, Flemingsburg, Ky, made his mother a "tractor mailbox" out of the front end of a 1953 Farmall M tractor. The mailbox mounts ahead of the grille.

"It's definitely one of a kind and makes it super easy to give people directions to our farm," says Applegate, who operates a local welding shop.

The tractor front end is held in place by a length of steel pipe welded on between the tires and anchored in cement buried underground. A piece of sheet metal bolted to the back side is painted black to make it look like a radiator.

"We get a lot of compliments on it," says Applegate. "I already had the tractor and planned to restore it. I wanted to rebuild the engine but after I unbolted the tractor I discovered that the front end was worn out. Apparently, the tractor had been used to do a lot of loader work which caused the bushings to wear out."

"At that point I decided not to restore the tractor. The front end was still sitting there on a stand and one day I just decided it would make a neat mailbox. My mom had just had a 911 address change so I made it her birth-



As a surprise birthday present, Applegate made this "tractor mailbox" for his mother out of the front end of a 1953 Farmall M tractor.

day present."

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Combines In A Bottle

The late Don Paterson's family and close friends have some very unique mementos of this creative and well-loved man who passed away in January, 2002. His "combines in bottles" will keep his memory alive for many years.

Instead of ships, Paterson made 35 different combines of various makes and models, putting them together inside clear glass olive oil bottles. They caught on fast and Paterson filled orders from people as far away as Ontario and Illinois, at a price of \$150 each.

Each of the intricate combine models took 10 to 14 days to complete. He started by studying photos, illustrations or commercially made-to-scale toy models as a guide for his own smaller versions. Then he would insert a basic wooden frame into the bottle, gluing it to the bottom. Next, Paterson would glue as many as 63 pre-painted parts onto the frame to complete the combine. He made the parts by carving them out of mahogany wood with a razor knife.

Patterson said he preferred mahogany because it could be cut finely without chipping or splintering. After painting them, he used a tool he created for the job of attaching the parts to the chassis. The tool consisted of a sturdy wire attached to a paintbrush handle, in place of the bristles. By using two of these tools together Paterson could do very precise work inside the narrow-neck bottles.



Don Paterson assembled combines inside clear glass olive oil bottles.



Head of wheat is positioned as though it's about to enter combine pickup.

He obtained tiny decals to identify the makes and models of combines and in the nose of some bottles, he included a head of wheat positioned as though it was about to enter the combine pick-up.

"I don't know anyone else who does this, either now or in the past, so they're pretty rare and valuable, at least to us," says son Jim.

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