

DNA Studies Cause Apprehension

THE Yeoman dairy at Dover, 35 miles northwest of Oklahoma City, is producing dairy calves from beef cows by ova transplantation.

A single cow of superior milk-producing ability reached an age where she could conceive but not deliver calves. By stimulating superovulation and breeding the cow to a highly-rated sire, 10 embryos were formed.

These were translated into carrier cows of beef breeds or lesser quality dairy cows. Three or four calves have been delivered and others are expected. By this rather expensive means, superior blood lines may be multiplied and perpetuated.

Scientists now may have within their grasp the potential for doing somewhat the same thing with human beings, through a developing procedure known as DNA recombinant research.

DNA is the abbreviation for a substance found in living cells, which scientists say contains genetic information concerning the place, purpose and function of the organ-

ism.

A recent report indicates that nearly 300 laboratories in the United States now are conducting DNA research. Most are funded and supervised by the National Institutes of Health.

DNA research has become a hot issue in many places, because of obvious implications which genetic manipulation has in religious, family, political and social contexts.

Controversies have arisen over whether scientists should be dabbling in human evolution at all. Opponents argue that scientists who often deny the existence of God should not be permitted to play God in ways that could affect the physical, mental and spiritual future of the human race.

In an article titled "When Man Becomes God: The Biological Prospect," published in the Dec. 10, 1977, issue of *Saturday Review*, a scientist observes: "We have not respected any region of knowledge as a no-man's land . . . The ironic result is that we may have to take

upon ourselves some godlike prerogatives as we become self-anointed trustees of our own evolution."

A *Business Week* review of a recent book, "The People Shapers" by Vance Packard, says that by tinkering with genes, the cornerstones of life, it would be possible to create fantastic new forms of life, ranging from "better people" to crosses between man and animal to do menial chores for future supermen.

Living but mindless creatures that exist only to be carved up for organ transplants are another possibility noted.

The probability that decision in such matters would be made by federal regulatory bureaus is another major cause of apprehension. Political control already is possibly through fund allocations to scientists and laboratories.

Most people likely would shy away from making such decisions affecting lives of others, but a more critical issue is whether politicians should make the decisions for them.