

Food and drink

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FOOD AND DRINK

Butter production in Switzerland in 1968 dropped by nearly 3000 tons to 37,400, whilst consumption increased by 10 tons to 46,500. The Federal Council has asked a working group to establish guiding lines as regards butter prices, in order to arrive at a reasonable price policy now that the "butter mountain" has been successfully reduced. **Milk** production has gone down, but a further 6% reduction is needed, if price control is not to be introduced by May. **Cheese** consumption has increased, whilst fewer cheeses are consumed. The most modern cheese-making centre was opened at Steinbrunn in the Canton of Thurgau last autumn. The technically very complicated installation allows two men to produce 12 Emmental cheese a day. In 1939, there were 2614 dairies in Switzerland, in 1955 only 2394, and ten years later the number had been further reduced to 2177.

Per head of the population, **meat** consumption went up in 1968 to a new record of 67,908 kg. (including poultry, game and fish). Nearly 80% was home-produced. In 1967, the average citizen ate 5.8kg. of poultry, 175% more than 10 years ago.

The Swiss produced 645 million **eggs** in 1967, 30m. more than the previous year. Imports went down. It is estimated that the Swiss citizen consumes 184 eggs p.a.

The Basle edible-fungus control had to destroy about 1000kg. of poisonous **fungi** in one year, a particularly bad year for fungus growing.

Sugar beet production in 1968 was particularly rich; between 1963 and 1967, 43.6 tons per **hektare** was produced, and in 1968 the yield was 50.2 tons. The two sugar plants at Aarberg and Frauenfeld used 453,000 tons (value 42.5m. francs) and produced 63,000 tons of sugar, 14,000 tons more than the average production for the previous period.

127,000 trucks of **potatoes** were produced in 1968, 4000 fewer than in each of the two previous years. Nevertheless, production per acre has more than doubled since the war.

More than half the home-produced **Lagergemuese** is harvested in the **Suisse Romande**, especially in the Valais (38%). That Canton produces one-third of all Swiss onions.

The Swiss nation is amongst the world's foremost **apple** eating community: average 33 kg. The Valais is the biggest apple producing Canton (562,000 trees), followed by Vaud (341,000). 12 million kg. of **pears** were produced in the Valais last year, twice as much as in 1967. As some million kilos were still in store by December, a special selling campaign was started for the mountain farming population who were able to buy at much reduced prices.

The 1968 **honey** production amounted to 19kg. per hive in the German-speaking part of the country. Only once this century was that quantity surpassed, viz. in 1918 by 0.7 kg.

The Swiss **chocolate** industry employed nearly 6000 people in 1967, and output totalled 128 million lbs of chocolate products. Three years before, production reached only 118m. lbs for a total number of 7063 employees. Thus, output increased by 8%, whilst manpower decreased by 16%.

The latest figures regarding alcohol consumption in Switzerland over the last five years are as follows: annually 121.7 litres **per capita** (1956-60: 112.3) of fermented beverages, 37.1 (34.9) litres of wine, 11.0 (17.3) litres of fruit wine, 73.6 (60.1) litres of beer and 4.46 (3.51) litres of spirits. Champagne exports from France to Switzerland last year totalled 15 bottles per 100 inhabitants. Switzerland is in second place as champagne consumer, behind Belgium, but before Great Britain and U.S.A., though in 6th place with regard to French champagne imports. behind Great Britain, U.S.A., Italy, Belgium and Western Germany.

(Agence Telegraphique Suisse and O.S.E.C.)

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Sir,—I am rather intrigued at the thought of new New Zealanders following too closely Hedy's suggested table etiquette (Helvetia, June 1969) — "what can be eaten with a fork only must not have the assistance of the knife". It would take a great deal of practice and patience to eat our Kiwi meals with only an "upside-down" fork and also to eat all manageable sweets with a fork only.

I have always thought myself an average New Zealander but have yet to eat a dinner in this manner in New Zealand. In fact the custom of eating "one-handed" at table is much more prevalent in Switzerland. Also my "average" New Zealand friends eat their sweets with a spoon and fork, although in a number of New Zealand homes only the spoon is used.

Whether one eats with a knife and fork or fork only is surely a matter for personal preference, except of course at a formal dinner where one should use the cutlery provided.

The only important difference I have found between New Zealand and Swiss table etiquette is in the eating of soup. Whereas in Switzerland the oval spoon is drawn through the soup towards one and is eaten from the end of the spoon, in New Zealand the spoon is pushed through the soup away from one and is then eaten from the side of the round spoon.

Good luck to Hedy, to everyone who makes "Helvetia" such enjoyable reading and all new Swiss Kiwis.

Mrs F. D. Bächler, Auckland.