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With the ever increasing number of supermarkets, everyone predicted the end of the local corner stores.

In 1970 Switzerland had over 14000 groceries, today there are only 5500 left with a further 2000 expected to close shop over the next few years. Although the eventual demise of all small grocery stores was predicted 25 years ago, they are not only still here, but suddenly they are making a slow but steady comeback. The recent recession has also accelerated the demand from unemployed people who are prepared to run these shops which demand long hours of work for relatively small returns.

Some shoppers are getting tired of the super-supermarkets, their impersonal service, their long waiting queues at the exits and their absence of specialities. Gradually some people are returning to the old grocery stores for their shopping. They are looking again for a personal contact, for individual attention, for a little chat with the neighbours who you meet in the store and,



*Delivery of fresh produces in the "old days" where the products were kept literally on ice inside the van by means of the then famous ice bars at the time where refrigerated trucks were still unknown.*

for many elderly people, for the free delivery at home which they were missing at the supermarkets.

Mobile shops are becoming more popular too. People appreciate it again

to be able to shop right outside their apartments and houses rather than having to take the car to go to the faraway supermarket. So there still seems to be some future for the small grocery stores in Switzerland.



*The new look delivery van. Impossible to miss the "Cheese Doctor", Gilbert Buffat, when he comes around with his three-wheeler cart.*



*Taking time to live means to stop at one of the new modern looking grocery stores where the owner occasionally treats his customers with an "apéro".*

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The authorities of the canton of Zug are very happy with the arrangement as it costs them less to send the rubbish to Winterthur than to dispose of it in their own canton. A somewhat funny side to the story is that under the new Swiss law, Value Added Tax (VAT) must be paid on this transaction. How much Added Value can you put onto a heap of rubbish?

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