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MUSIC FESTIVAL IN INTERLAKEN

Recently Interlaken staged one of the world's largest Brass Band Music Festivals. 460 groups with around 24,000 participants turned up for the 30th Swiss Music Festival. As the picture shows, public transport was stretched to the limit to move these bands, with their large instruments, around to the various venues.

MAD COW DISEASE

Although a long way behind England, Switzerland is nevertheless also affected by the mad cow disease as it has registered sufficient cases to worry the population and adjoining countries such as Germany and Austria who have restricted import of Swiss beef as a matter of precaution.

But what is worrying the Swiss even more is that people are starting to worry about its cheese as well. Germany,

Italy, Denmark and, rather surprisingly England, are requesting assurances from Swiss cheese exporters that their cheeses and other milk products are guaranteed to come from unaffected cows. Although no such absolute guarantee can be given, no proof has yet been established that milk can carry the virus of the Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

It must certainly be a very worrying time for all Swiss farmers.



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RADIO GENEVA

The English speaking community in the greater Geneva area now has another media outlet. World Radio Geneva has gone on the air last June. The new radio station has three main aims:

- to help integrate the national and international communities in the area.
- to provide quality information (particularly on economics and finance).
- to provide a resource for visiting tourists and business visitors.

Market research found that out of a resident population of 815,000 in the Léman area (including neighbouring France), 310,000 can speak English and 110,000 use the language on a daily basis. Some two million business visitors and tourists a year are also potential listeners.

As for programme content, 45% of respondents expressed a desire for French and Swiss local news and information on events taking place in the Lake Geneva area, together with music. Foreign nationals in particular want more general information about what is happening around Switzerland.

THE SWISS DRINK LESS

The consumption of alcohol is going down steadily in Switzerland. As far as beer is concerned, the Swiss drank 2.4 litres less beer per person than the year before. Consumption of spirits and wine has dropped as well. The reason is mainly that people have less money available to spend on alcohol.

A "sobering" thought though: Just on eight percent of the population accounted for half of the total amount of alcohol consumed in Switzerland and around 3000 people die each year of alcohol related illnesses or accidents.

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