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News from the Embassy

Photo Lightscapes - in Dunedin

Photo Lightscapes is a collaboration between photographers from Switzerland, Vietnam, Australia and New Zealand.

They were invited to participate by Swiss photographer, Charles Weber, after attending one of his workshops on the creative use of artificial light in landscape photography.

The exhibition has already been held in Wellington, and will open in Dunedin on April 16.

The exhibition will now be officially opened by the Ambassador, H.E. Mrs Sylvie Matteucci on Friday, 15 April 2005 (not 9 April as stated previously) and will open to the public the following day.

Each photographer is exhibiting eight photographs. All works are for sale at \$750.00.

The exhibition has been supported by the Arts Council of Switzerland, the Embassy of Switzerland in Wellington, the Australian High Commission in Wellington, the Westpac St James Theatre and the Otago Museum.

For more information please contact Louise Beale at the Embassy of Switzerland.

Swiss glacier to get heat shield

Swiss technicians are to use insulation foam to wrap up a glacier that has been shrinking under the summer sun. Tourists ski down the ice field during winter. Carlo Danioth, in charge of the slopes at the Andermatt resort in central Switzerland, said the Gurschen glacier was to be partially covered with 3000m² of PVC foam from the beginning of May. Confirming a report in the weekly Sonntags Zeitung newspaper, Danioth said the aim was to halt the melting of the glacier, a phenomenon that has been attributed to global climate warming.

"If the trial is a success, we'll wrap the other part of the glacier too," he said, adding that the ice field was receding by about five metres a year.

A study published last year by Zurich University estimated that the country's glaciers have lost about a fifth of their surface area over the past fifteen years.

The study, using satellite data, also found that the rate of ice-loss was accelerating.

Simmental Cattle

Simmental cattle were first introduced to NZ in 1972 from England, where they had been bred from German stock. The previous year semen had been brought into New Zealand from Simmental sires in England and Scotland under the auspices of the newly formed Simmental Society of New Zealand. The semen was used to breed up from local breeds, but the introduction of the purebreds from England shortened the route to a clear Simmental bloodline in this country. An additional 12 females were brought in from France in 1973, and 36 heifers from Germany the following year. It was the peak here of the exotic cattle boom.

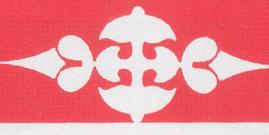
Simmentals are a Swiss breed (deriving their name from the Simm Valley), big animals with good milk and high butterfat production. This indicates a dual-purpose past in the high valleys of their native habitat, where the ancestors are said to go back 1000 years. They have spread to Germany and Austria where they are known as "Fleckvieh", and to France where they are called "Pie Rouge." But the real proliferation of Simmentals has occurred round the world over recent years, and the present total is claimed as 50 million.

In New Zealand, the Simmentals have been used for crossbred beef and the breed has benefited from a promotional project, borrowed from Australia, under which "Simbeef" is promoted as the product of animals with at least 25% Simmental blood. In Europe there are some Simmental dairy herds, and there has been an introduction of blood to some dairy herds here.

The Simmental seems to have quickly earned a permanent place in the New Zealand livestock farming system. It is estimated there are more than 5,000 purebred and 40,000 crossbred Simmentals in commercial herds in New Zealand. The animal is large, red and white in colour, and yields a high proportion of red meat.

Source : Bateman New Zealand Encyclopedia (1987).

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