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Let the flu come

Milestone for Novartis: the conglomerate inaugurated a globally unique production facility for vaccines in Marburg (Hessen) on Tuesday. When working at full capacity, it aims at producing vaccines for roughly 40 million people per year.

Novartis benefited in Marburg from roughly ten years of preparation work that the recently taken over Behring had accomplished. The latter built the world's first industrial production facility for a flu vaccine with cell cultures.

The new production process is a significant innovation, for flu viruses have been multiplied on chicken eggs for 50 years. The advantages of the new method are clear: long preparation times to collect fertilized eggs the hens have been sitting on are now a thing of the past.

Previously millions of special chicken eggs had to be ordered as much as up to a year ahead of time for the annual flu vaccine, so they could be used at exactly the right time. From the beginning of next year, production will be on a large industrial scale. In June this year the cell culture flu vaccine was approved for the European market. Novartis Behring means to launch it on the market during the flu season 2007/2008 already.

The facility will be able to produce 40 million units of vaccine per year. Novartis Behring invested approximately EUR 60 million (over CHF 100 million). 150 new jobs will have been created by the time the three production lines are finally installed.

Due to higher mobility, the danger of a pandemic has a tendency to increase. Timely precautions are therefore a must now.

An average of roughly 800 million euros has to be spent on a product these days before it's ready for the market, Merkel calculates. Moreover, such a process takes around a decade. Therefore it is paramount that a company can count on such investments to pay off.

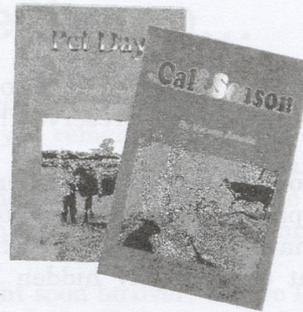
Basler Zeitung

Spruch für die Silvesternacht

*Man soll das Jahr nicht mit Programmen
beladen wie ein krankes Pferd.
Wenn man es allzu sehr beschwert,
bricht es zu guter Letzt zusammen.*

*Je üppiger die Pläne blühen,
umso verwickelter wird die Tat.
Man nimmt sich vor, sich zu bemühen,
und schliesslich hat man den Salat.*

*Es nützt nicht viel, sich rotzuschämen.
Es nützt nichts, und es schadet bloss,
sich tausend Dinge vorzunehmen.
Lasst das Programm, und bessert euch drauflos!
Erich Kästner*



Calf Season & Pet Day

By Yvonne Arnold

Yvonne Arnold and her family are members of the Taranaki Swiss Club. Yvonne made the books for her own children. Visitors liked the books about their farm life, too, and encouraged her to publish them – and so she did!

Each of the 14 pages has a full-colour photo with a few lines of text in clear, simple language – just right for little readers here and primary school children in Switzerland who learn English at school.

A great idea for a very special Christmas present from New Zealand, for children in Switzerland - and children here, too, of course.

The booklets are quite thin, A5 format, so they fit into a C5 envelope (and can be posted to Switzerland as a letter for only \$3!)

The booklets are available for \$10 each from Yvonne Arnold, 77 McKenna Rd, Kakaramea, RD 2 Patea, Tel 06-273 6007, peyv.arnold@clear.net.nz *tb*



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