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A SWISS firm has created a self-contained generator based on a 1600 cc Ford engine, which has been modified to operate on the gas given off by manure. It drives a 24 kW generator which in turn produces electricity.

Different aggregates are used with this engine so as to be able to recuperate the heat given off, which has proved to be sufficient to heat private dwellings.

The plant, which is of great interest to owners of farms or sewage works, has been in operation on an experimental basis in Switzerland for some time now and is claimed to have given its users complete satisfaction.

Cheeses pleases

EXPORTS of Swiss cheese are increasing, according to preliminary figures for the period 1980/81 issued by the Swiss Cheese Union. A better balanced

situation on the international cheese market enabled the Union to market larger quantities of Swiss hard cheeses, in spite of a few price increases. Exports increased by 2.9 per cent to total 50,350 tons. They comprised mainly Emmental (41,760 tons), Gruyère (5,795 tons) and Sbrinz (2,795 tons). Export prices also rose during the period.

Swiss medicines sales rise

EXPORTS of Swiss medicines set a new record in 1980 with a total of Sfr. 3.769 billion. They come fourth in the exports league, following non-electrical machines, electrical appliances, objects in precious metal and jewellery. This is the third year running that exports of medicines exceed those of watches.

BUSINESS in the Swiss foodstuffs industry grew satisfactorily in 1980, according to a recent report.

Thanks to the good economic situation prevailing in Switzerland, all branches were able to increase their sales on the home market. With but few exceptions, exports also developed well. In spite of the rise in costs, the profitability of most firms evolved favourably.

The trend towards mergers continued, as a result of the ever keener competition prevailing on the market. From the statistics drawn up by the Conference of the Swiss Foodstuffs Industry, it can be seen that the number of factories in different parts of Swit-

zerland dropped from 190 to 182.

Thus there are now only 77 small concerns with fewer than 50 employees compared with 83 the previous year. The total number of workers in the branch amounted to about 24,500.

The economic importance of the Swiss foodstuffs industry is shown by the fact that total turnover amounted to Sfr. 4.2 billion, while salaries totalled Sfr. 770 million.

In addition, the foodstuffs industry made an important contribution to the maintenance of Swiss agriculture by once again processing very large quantities of home grown agricultural produce such as wheat, milk, sugar, vegetables, fruit and potatoes.

Waste not, want not . .

In fact medicines accounted for 91.3 per cent (1979: 77.9 per cent) of the positive balance of the Swiss chemical industry. In other words, of every Sfr. 10 worth of positive balance recorded by the chemical industry, Sfr. 9 was accounted for by medicines.

Exports of Swiss medicines represented only 39.8 per cent of the exports of chemical products, while imports of medicines worked out at 13.8 per cent of the total imports of the chemical industry.

Jacks away

AN inventor from Vevey has come up with an ingenious system to do away with the conventional car jack.

The new system consists of a pair or a set of four jacks mounted permanently on the vehicle, and operated either by a switch incorporated in the dashboard or by turning a key in a lock concealed in the bodywork.

For a sports car, two jacks are

all that are needed while for a small van four jacks will be required. This system is ideally suited for private cars as well as caravans and heavy trucks.

Prospecting for petrol

THE Swiss company IEDC (International Energy Development Corporation) has signed a draft agreement with Hydro-Congo to develop a joint programme of prospecting for petrol in the Congo. The draft agreement covers prospecting activities in an area of 580 square miles off the coast of the Congo.

IEDC was set up in 1979 with a view to taking part in the overall development of energy sources, especially in the developing countries. So far, the company has signed prospecting agreements with the Sudan, Angola, Oman, Turkey and Australia, and has been chosen by the World Bank as consultant for the problems of energy development in Bangladesh.

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