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## Wohlen Meisterschwanden by Ron Smith

The sign on the WM bus at Farwagen - Meisterschwanden station amused me, at least you know why there is no driver!

### Dietiker AG Furniture. Stein-am-Rhein (SH)

In addition to the Migros industries there is also a number of rail served distribution depots from which lorries distribute to shops. One of the largest of these is at Neuendorf (between Olten and Solothurn) which supplies non-food goods. It is this centre which is trialling the "Kombirail" system of rail-road semi trailer. Ten units are based here.

A new rail served distribution centre opened at Landquart in 1993 to serve Graubünden. In its first year of operation this reduced truck journeys by 6000 in the St. Gallen-Rhein Valley corridor.

Interestingly Migros is quite pragmatic in its views on rail transport; stating that there are no financial incentives to change over to rail but there are environmental considerations and a logistical advantage - night travel. Lorries are not

allowed to travel at night in Switzerland. The laws governing vehicle weight (currently 28 tonnes maximum) and hours of operation are constantly being challenged by the road lobby and would, of course, be under threat should EU membership become a reality in the foreseeable future.

Besides its commitment to rail transport the Migros organisation is remarkable in its strong environmental, social and ethical stance on many issues. It is innovative in the use of recyclable materials, using energy saving methods and in promoting organic and sustainable agricultural practises.

Much of the information contained here is gleaned from the Migros annual report for 1995 and other publications produced by the Co-operative.