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Green County Wisconsin Master Cheesemakers - The Best of the Best. This highest concentration of Master Cheesemakers outside of Europe is found right here in Green County, Wisconsin - long the centre of attention among the nation's cheesemakers. That tradition continues today with nine cheesemakers from the county attaining the prestigious designation of Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker since the programme's inception more than a decade ago.

The Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker programme certification was established by Wisconsin in 1994 and is the only programme of its kind outside of Europe. The programme is administered through the Centre for Dairy Research and the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board.

Source : Green County Visitor's Guide

Green County Cheese Days are held in September ... join the festivities at a fun family weekend celebrating cheesemaking and Swiss heritage in Monroe, Wisconsin. Learn to yodel, savour a cheese sandwich and a local brew, Experience the Swiss Colony Cheese Days Parade, Groove to the tunes at Berghoff and Blues, Milk a cow, Polka in the street, Find a treasure at the arts and crafts fair, Discover Swiss folk art and culture, Run the Cheese Days Chase, Observe the Old World art of historic cheesemaking, Sample Wisconsin's Biggest Cheese Fondue!!! All this at the Green County Cheese Days!!!

Located in the rolling hills of Green County is New Glarus, "America's Little Switzerland". New Glarus is surrounded by farms and woodlands like Glarus, Switzerland, homeland of New Glarus' first settlers. They proudly maintain their Swiss heritage and invite you to share their traditions. New Glarus is especially well known for cherishing the Swiss tradition of fine food and drink. Much of the architecture is Swiss chalet-style: a wonderful example of this is the New Glarus Hotel, which was built by Swiss immigrants in 1853, and has long been a landmark known for its fine Swiss cuisine, atmosphere and entertainment. Shopping in New Glarus is a unique experience. Nowhere else will you find such a fascinating mix of items, ranging from Swiss imported goods such as cuckoo clocks and alpine clothing to locally produced fine art and specialty foods such as cheese and sausages. As the Swiss are renowned for their love of music and celebration, several of their annual festivals celebrate Swiss holidays or stories, including Heidi Festival in late June, Volksfest in early August (as a tribute to the traditions brought by Swiss settlers in 1845, New Glarus residents celebrate Swiss Independence Day - the birth of the Swiss nation on 1 August, 1291. The official sponsor of Volksfest is the Maennerchor New Glarus which was established in 1928 to preserve traditional Swiss music), and Wilhelm Tell Festival. These events display traditional Swiss culture, including folk costumes and traditional music and yodelling. You can also visit the Swiss Historical Village museum which offers a heartwarming glimpse of pioneer life in New Glarus and America's heartland.

So, on your next trip to Switzerland, plan a stop-over in New Glarus, Wisconsin, to see "America's Little Switzerland". You'll be sure to enjoy it!!!



Simmental Cattle

Simmental cattle were first introduced to New Zealand 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 - 2nd edition.

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