



In touch with nature

Everyone living in Switzerland builds up a close bond with nature, say Hans-Peter and Daniel Dreier. The logistics operators do a lot for its conservation.

One reason is the growing desire of customers to reduce their carbon footprint. The new Euro VI Actros helps the company Dreier achieve this goal

SUSTAINABILITY The turquoise-blue water of Lake Lucerne in Central Switzerland glistens in the rays of sunlight that fall gently across the valley. As a few yachts sail serenely, a slight band of clouds in the background envelop the snow-covered mountain peaks. Further down the slopes, dairy cows graze on the alpine pastures between the idyllic small villages.

“Isn’t that brilliant? I must tell my cousin about it,” Daniel Dreier enthuses. The co-owner of the Swiss logistics company of the same name is driving his New Actros along the Lucerne-bound lane of motorway 2. He’s just returned from a trip of about 200 kilometres, which also took across the steep serpentine roads of the Gotthardt route.

At this particular moment, Daniel Dreier’s fascination is not for the picturesque alpine panorama, but for the display behind his steering wheel: “27.4 litres per 100 kilometres – that’s a fantastic figure.”

At the Dreier warehouse in Härkingen, Hans-Peter Dreier awaits his cousin. He’s glad about the low consumption figures too, not only because it’s going to save the company fuel and cut costs. “We’re trying to keep the impact on the environment to a minimum,” stresses the managing director, who runs the family-owned business in the third generation. He shares this ambition with the Swiss state and with the company’s customers. They show a growing interest in CO₂-reduced transportation.

Hans-Peter Dreier is a pragmatist rather than an idealist. In his view, the discussions about climate change and melting glaciers are often too emotionally charged. Nevertheless, he says: “We Swiss and nature live in a very close bond, so we must fight for its conservation.”

For a Swiss logistics company, this attitude is to a certain extent vital for survival. In hardly any other country are the statutory regulations as strict as in the alpine Republic. Between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m., for example, only postal and fresh-food deliveries are allowed. All other transportation is subject to a ban on night-time driving. In addition, vehicles with a gross vehicle weight of more than 3.5 tonnes have to pay the performance-based heavy vehicle fee (LSVA). This fee is calculated on the basis of mileage, the gross vehicle weight and the vehicle emissions. It is charged per every kilometre on all roads in Switzerland, as opposed to the German truck toll, for example, which is only charged on motorways. Environmental protection is sometimes an integral part of public tenders. Awarding the contract for the redevelopment of Zurich Airport which begins this year, for example, was subject to the condition that only trucks with at least Euro V engines must be used.

The company Dreier has definitely been feeling the impact of these measures. The costs for the LSVA charge alone amounts to between 800,000 and 900,000 Swiss francs per month, the equivalent of around 650,000 to 730,000 euros (550,000 to 620,000 pounds). Nevertheless, Hans-Peter Dreier appreciates why the strict stipulations are necessary: “It is right that Switzerland as a highly developed country should make a greater contribution to environmental protection than others.”

This conviction finds its expression in almost all areas of activities of the company Dreier – from paper printed on both sides through to the organisation of the roughly 200 vehicles in the truck fleet. The family-run firm was one of the first Swiss logistics companies to decide in favour of the New Actros with the low-emission Euro VI engine. Now, it has 44 of these vehicles in operation. Even though Euro VI does not become mandatory until the end of 2014, the investment is already paying off, Dreier emphasises. Euro VI vehicles have to pay much less LSVA: whereas a Euro V truck pays the equivalent of just under 0.74 euros per kilometre, a Euro VI vehicle “only” needs to pay 0.66 euros. Working on the assumption of a realistic monthly mileage of 10,000 kilometres, this adds up to a difference of around 750 euros per month per vehicle. For the 44 Euro VI New Actros this means that the company Dreier saves 33,000 euros per month. “From 2016, when the Euro VI trucks fall into an even lower category, this will mean in one go that the early investment in Euro VI has paid off,” says Hans-Peter Dreier.

Dreier also tries to lower CO₂ emissions and costs via fuel consumption. Since 2003, the company has been using FleetBoard in its trucks. The FleetBoard “scores” are now part of the bonus system for the drivers. Two trainers employed by the company itself help to further optimise these figures. In addition, the speed of the trucks is restricted to 84 kilometres per hour – a move which also lowers consumption and thus CO₂ emissions.

“In the beginning, some employees had their problems with these measures. But the scepticism has now vanished. Through FleetBoard the drivers are motivated to achieve results that are as good as possible. And thanks to the maximum set speed of 84, they are much more relaxed after work,” says Dreier. The logistics specialist goes even one step further. “You could say, of course, that transportation is at its most environmentally friendly when it’s not carried out at all,” he remarks. So Dreier tries to simply reduce the volume of traffic caused by the company’s transportation activity. A total of 21 double-decker trailers are now in operation. On two loading areas, ►

Fuel consumption down, CO₂ too

For its transport assignments on behalf of Swiss Post and various retailers, Dreier operates Actros Euro VI tractors with StreamSpace cabs and double-decker trailers, shown here on an Andermatt-bound serpentine road in the canton of Uri



Efficient for environment and profitability

Less consumption and more cargo – a goal that works using Dreier’s Euro VI Actros tractor units with double-decker trailers. They can transport one-and-a-half times more packing units than conventional rigs. In addition, the New Actros saves Dreier up to four per cent in fuel compared to its predecessor

one on top of the other, each level with an interior height of 1.83 metres, up to 50 per cent more RX boxes and even up to 60 per cent more europallets can be transported than when using conventional trailers. “With the double-deckers, we can therefore cover the loading capacity of three conventional vehicles,” the CEO explains.

This form of transportation is particularly suitable for the comparatively light, but high (1.80 metres) rolling containers of the Swiss Post, Dreier’s biggest customer. Its package centre including the rail terminal is located just a few metres away from Dreier’s Härkingen branch. This is no coincidence. The haulage company is one of the first in the “railway country” Switzerland to build on intermodal transport via trucks and rail, internationally as well as nationally. “For us, this has the advantage that we can transport our goods round-the-clock despite the ban on night-time driving,” Dreier stresses. Only Swiss Post packages were initially transported. Now, other firms, including C&A and H&M, also take advantage of the possibility of circumventing the night-time driving ban by using the environmentally friendly combined rail-and-road transport of the Swiss Post.

Around 40 swap bodies are transported six times a week at night by the Swiss Post trains to various parts of the country. Dreier, for example, was able to lower CO₂ emissions on the East-West axis and on the North-South axis by 960 tonnes in 2012. This pays off, as state subsidies are granted for projects that demonstrably reduced CO₂ emissions.

“We do a great deal to keep the environmental impact to a minimum,” says Hans-Peter Dreier, who describes his company as an “eco-logistics specialist”. These measures, of course, were not merely introduced out of idealism, but are also the result of cost calculations. Fewer CO₂ emissions mean lower fuel consumption and thus lower costs. In addition, intermodal transport enables Dreier to shorten transport times and to reduce LSVA payments. This way, the company is able to strengthen its competitiveness. Dreier knows too: “At the end of the day, it is the price that matters most for the customers.”

Green logistics pays off

Dreier CEO Hans-Peter Dreier and his team build business on logistics that is as green as possible. State-of-the-art vehicle technology, FleetBoard and other Mercedes-Benz services support him in this endeavour. Thanks to Euro VI, the company also pays a lower Swiss truck toll charge (LSVA)

Successful overnight service on short distances

Switzerland has a general ban on night-time driving for most trucks. Dreier has become a specialist for the efficient use of swap bodies in intermodal transport, which is yet another contribution by the company towards better environmental protection and fewer CO₂ emissions. The economical trucks with the three-pointed star take on pre- and post-rail transportation



Commitment to the environment will become increasingly important for companies. Swiss Post, for example, has plans to lower CO₂ emissions by a further 15,000 tonnes by the end of 2013. The retailer Coop, another Dreier customer, aims to become CO₂-neutral by the year 2023. “As logistics companies, we obviously have an obligation here,” the managing director emphasises.

Intermodal transport is the prerequisite in order to meet this obligation, he adds. This would be the only way to reduce the environmental impact without jeopardising competitiveness. Why are other countries such as Germany not following this example? Hans-Peter Dreier has to ponder for a moment: perhaps this is due to geographical aspects. Because of the size involved, intermodal transport would undoubtedly be more difficult to implement. “But perhaps,” says the man from Switzerland, who had experienced himself how the glaciers right on his doorstep had slowly receded, “the pain threshold has simply not yet been reached in Germany.” ■

■ **PROFILE DREIER AG**

The logistics company Dreier was founded by Adolf Dreier in 1905. Hans-Peter and Daniel Dreier now run the family-owned business in the third generation. Hans-Peter takes care of the management side, Daniel, as a “man for everything”, is responsible for technical matters. The company has 400 employees, 250 of whom are drivers. In addition to Swiss Post, customers include textile companies such as C&A, H&M and Zalando, large retailers such as Migros, Coop and Lidl, and building materials companies. Dreier has ten locations, including one in Cologne-Hürth. www.dreier.lu

“3 to 5 % less CO₂”

How does the New Actros and related services help lower CO₂ emissions? Daniel Dreier, the “tech-savvy” co-owner of the haulage company Dreier, has some answers

Consumption and CO₂ emissions are reciprocally linear. By how many per cent can both be lowered through the New Actros?

With our Euro VI New Actros we save between three and five per cent in CO₂ and fuel in comparison with the previous Actros.

With the New Actros in a Euro V version you would save even more fuel and lower CO₂ emissions. Why do you nevertheless opt for Euro VI?

The performance-based heavy vehicle fee (LSVA), which is charged for every kilometre driven in Switzerland, is much lower with Euro VI. In addition, the resale value of the truck is higher. And the issue of fine dust is also on the agenda in Switzerland, and Euro VI is better in this field. We also have advantages for tenders with Euro VI.

How do you rate the new in-line six-cylinder engines?

The drivers are very satisfied with their performance. Our impression is that it is easier to drive more efficiently with the new units.

Which output ratings offer the most fuel-efficient and thus also CO₂-saving solution for your operating profiles??

Our observation is that the Actros 1842 with 310 kW, even if we have to drive up to the mountains, has the optimum relationship between output and consumption. For individual applications, such as our double-decker trailers, the 1845 can also be recommended.

Which rear-axle ratios have you chosen?

At the recommendation of the experts from Mercedes-Benz Switzerland, we use the second longest ratio. We have decided not to use maximum overdrive due to the often quite demanding topography in our home country. If you’ve got the wrong ratio, consumption, and with it CO₂ emissions too, can soon rise sharply.

What is your experience with FleetBoard?

The system has been one of the decisive factors for the efficiency improvements that we have achieved. The non-Mercedes-Benz vehicles in our fleet are also fitted with the system. Equally important: we not only use FleetBoard as a controlling tool, but also to support our scheduling, trip planning and maintenance.

How important is driver training?

In our company, two trainers are always busy improving the performance of the drivers. Both have been trained by the Mercedes-Benz driver-trainer responsible for Switzerland. He’s a very good man.

Do you have the new Actros Economy Packs?

Not all of them, but for certain applications, for example, when we operate for Swiss Post. They’re good then.

How do you rate Mercedes PowerShift 3?

We order the automated gearshift system in the variant Fleet. The system helps the drivers to operate in a fuel-saving way and to produce as little CO₂ as possible. We have restricted our trucks to a maximum speed of 84 kilometres per hour to prevent trucks from racing each other, which only costs fuel. In terms of ride comfort and safe driving, Mercedes PowerShift is an improvement. The protection of the powertrain is also an advantage.



“Advantages for tenders”

Daniel Dreier, shown here at Lake Lucerne in Central Switzerland, swears by Euro VI Actros trucks

In the New Actros, requirements-oriented compressed air control and speed-dependent controlled power steering pump are standard-fitted. Other innovative auxiliary equipment is optional. Have you ordered them?

We generally have residual heat utilisation on board, and, depending on the application, we also order the warm-water additional heating – both of which are systems that improve efficiency. Dreier is always interested in fuel-saving and environmentally friendly technology. The automatic tyre pressure control therefore is also an option that we always order.

What role is played by aerodynamics?

You can get things tremendously wrong, so you have to take a really close look here. A sun visor alone, which you don’t really need nowadays, can increase consumption by one to two per cent. Across the board, we have ordered the New Actros with the StreamSpace cab and welcome the small steps that have been taken towards optimised aerodynamics. In the Actros these include the intelligent radiator shutters, the door extensions, the aerodynamic air deflectors, the cab side extenders and the side panelling. The lower overall height is also a good move. We have also optimised here thanks to the lifting device.

Finally: Which are your most important levers for saving fuel and reducing CO₂ emissions?

First, an efficient utilisation of vehicle capacities – a full truck is still the best guarantee for not wasting resources. Second, the use of combined road/rail transport, particularly if the electricity for the tracks is sourced from regenerative energy. Third, the fuel-saving technologies of Mercedes-Benz and the accompanying driver training and services.

Thank you very much for the interview!