

SWISSMETAL Media release

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The new extrusion press in Dornach takes over the lion's share of series production

The extrusion press introduced in January 2008 has now taken over the lion's share of series production at the Dornach site. In addition to the presses decommissioned in Reconvilier on the 1st November 2007, it has now been possible to decommission two of the four previous presses operating in Dornach, which were partially very aged. The work of these presses has now been taken over in its entirety by the new extrusion press.

To date, the transfer of products to the new extrusion press has been subject to the normal challenges, as well as some which were unexpected although solveable. At times, these led to an undersupply of pressed material. The high level of electronification of modern production machinery proved to be a particular challenge, whilst the data communication between the main press controller and the necessary support equipment did not always run without fault either.

In parallel to the acceptance of partial series production, the coming weeks will also see further inspections and optimisation of the machinery and programme sequences taking place. In light of these factors and despite the acceptance of series production, final system acceptance by Swissmetal has not yet been issued as per the mutual agreement with the manufacturers. In order to ensure that the remaining period to complete series production acceptance remains as brief as possible, Swissmetal is operating the new extrusion press in a 3-shift, round-the-clock operation for seven days of the week. The requisite approvals from the Canton of Solothurn have been received.

Overall, the transfer of the complete Swiss production to the new extrusion press and the respective decommissioning of four old machines, combined with the personnel cutbacks which were communicated to staff in November 2007, has proven to be a huge challenge test for the Dornach site. After all, such activities only take place every twenty to thirty years. Although the transfer could have run more smoothly, the new extrusion press does represent a multi-generational technological jump forward, which will lead to the Swiss site attaining new dimensions in product and production quality, efficiency and innovative force once the transfer is complete. Today, Swissmetal estimates that the new extrusion press will achieve final acceptance in summer 2008 and that it will take over series production to the full extent planned thereafter.

Swissmetal produces and sells worldwide high-quality special products made of copper and copper alloys which are mainly used in the electronics, telecommunications, air travel, petroleum, automobile, stationery and watch/clock industries and in the architectural sector. In financial year 2006, Swissmetal achieved turnover of CHF 357.6 million. As at end of March 2008, the company had 690 full time-employees. Swissmetal, with its registered office in Dornach (Switzerland) is quoted on the SWX Swiss Exchange as UMS Schweizerische Metallwerke Holding AG.

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