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Ruedi Dudli



1928 - 2005

Rudolf August Dudli was born 22nd February 1928 to Emil and Lydia Dudli, farmers in Oberburen, Switzerland. When he was seven years old, and the eldest of four children, tragedy struck with the death of his mother. Ruedi's father remarried two years later, and eleven more children were born to the family.

When his father was 'called up' during the war, life was tough for Ruedi - all the work and responsibility rested on him. He had to grow up fast, and this made a man out of him. Ruedi was well liked in the community, especially by the older folk, and he became involved in many committees, as well as shooting and playing in the brass band.

In 1951, while serving as Corporal in the Swiss Army, Ruedi met his sweetheart, Margrit. She was quick to recognise the good qualities in the man, and in 1952 they married. They started life together on a little farmlet in Oberburen and were blessed with four children.

The travel bug bit Ruedi and Margrit and in 1962 the family emigrated to New Zealand. On their arrival they took on a wages farming job in Midhirst, Taranaki. From there they progressed to 50/50 sharemilking at Kapuni and in 1965 bought their dairy farm on Eltham Road, Awatuna. Life as new emigrants was challenging and not always plain sailing. Ruedi and Margrit valued the friendship and support given to them by locals, especially long-term neighbours Dave and Barbara Anderson.

Ruedi and Margrit quickly became involved in the Taranaki Swiss Club, and Ruedi later became club president. He was one of the many club members involved in the planning and building of the Taranaki Swiss Clubrooms in Kaponga. He was an enthusiastic member of the club's singing group, and many enjoyed

the magical music he played on his alphorn. For many years Ruedi served as the Karabiner Riflemaster and he organised the importing of Karabiner rifles from Switzerland.

During this time the group established their own shooting range on the Stratford-Opunake Road. He served a five-year term as president of the Swiss Society of New Zealand, helping to compile the Helvetia magazine. One of the greatest joys Ruedi got from his involvement with the New Zealand Swiss community was the many good friends he and Margrit made nationwide.

Ruedi was also active in his local community. He was a practising Catholic and a valued member of the St Patricks Church choir. He was vice-chairperson of the Awatuna Dairy Company during the chaotic time of Dairy Board amalgamations.

When Ruedi retired from full-time dairy farming he was able to devote more time to his passion of butchery. He became very well known for the specialty Swiss meats he produced, especially his salami. Over the years his best cobber Charlie Schuler, and many others, enjoyed the combination of great conversation and coffee schnaps in Ruedi's butchery shed.

Ruedi was a man with strong family values. He followed the progress of his four children and eleven grandchildren with great interest and pride.

After a short illness he passed away peacefully but suddenly at home, in the early hours of 10th December 2005. He will be sadly missed by Margrit, his wife of 53 years, his children and grandchildren both in New Zealand and in Switzerland.

The Taranaki Swiss Club and the Swiss Society of New Zealand extend their deepest sympathy to Margrit and family.