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Obituaries



Josef Martin Sidler

1 April 1930 – 7 January 2016

Joe, as he was known to us, was born on the 1st of April, the eldest of eight children to a farming family in Lauerz, Canton Schwyz. He left school at 14 and had to go to work to help support the family during the war years. Initially he worked on a neighbour's farm until he was old enough to work away from home. He worked in the Calendria factory in Immersee, a book binding establishment. At 21, he had worked long enough to save his passage for the six week boat trip to New Zealand.

Initially he worked on a farm in Taranaki, and then moved around the country working in orchards and farms. In the South Island, he landed a project job on the Roxburgh dam as a surveyor's assistant. Despite his limited education, he excelled at this job and stayed there for some time.

Upon leaving Switzerland, he had promised his mother that he would be back within five years, and true to his word, he returned to Switzerland in 1956. Perhaps he returned to find a "Swiss Miss"? On 3rd September 1957, he married Berta and they left for New Zealand two weeks later. They settled in Mokoia, Taranaki, where Joe worked in the dairy factory. Later, they purchased their own farm on the Rama Road but lived on a farmlet on Fairfield Road. Joe returned to the Mokoia factory and with further studies achieved his Marine tickets to operate boilers. When the factory closed, he worked for Kiwi Dairies at Whareroa on shift.

Joe was very industrious – he raised pigs, calves and sheep, trapped possums, sold firewood and later became a bee keeper. He was also an avid recycler; nothing was thrown away.

Joe and Berta enjoyed participating in Swiss Club activities, particularly jassen. They also appreciated several bus trips away with us. They also enjoyed several trips back to their homeland.

On behalf of the Taranaki Swiss Club and the Swiss Society of New Zealand we extend our deepest sympathy to Berta and family.



Margrit Herren

7 April 1935 – 10 December 1915

Margrit was born in Rüeggisberg, Canton Bern, the youngest of six children. After secondary school Margrit spent one year in the French part of Switzerland to learn the language before completing an apprenticeship as a sales person. She worked in a supermarket until she married Otto in 1960.

They farmed in Riggisberg for eight years before immigrating to New Zealand in 1968 with their son, Hans-Ueli. Margrit and Otto had two further children in New Zealand, Franziska and Christina. All three children live in New Plymouth. After dairy farming on Taikatu Road, Manaia, for several years, they bought a citrus farm in Kerikeri where they stayed for six years. However Hans-Ueli wanted to milk cows so Otto and Margrit decided to come back to Taranaki. In 2000 they retired to New Plymouth.

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



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Q: What are the main income streams of the BEGE?

N+F: Contracting

- Arable land. This includes 8ha potatoes which is considered the main arable crop and is of course part of the crop rotation cycle, together with the obligatory grain, corn, beet, then a green fertilising plant such as mustard or lupin. Where in the past, 90% of income from arable land came from delivery of crop, now it's only 60%.

• Asparagus. The area of this crop has grown from 1ha to 3ha and is seen as a separate branch. As it is harvested between April and June it fits in well with the other activities, and it's fun. It's our "Schaufenster (shop window) crop".

Q: What is the role of the woman in your Betriebsgemeinschaft?

Florian: If a woman (assuming it's the life partner of any of the co-owners) were to actively get involved in our well-oiled team, that would be chaotic and disruptive. We are in good harmony at the moment, and a woman can only play an outside role. This is a major shift from the traditional farm, where the woman played a central role in the labouring and planning of the farm. Where she was the main partner, now we are the partners.

Q: What is the challenge of 2016?

Florian: We are taking on the management of a rather sizeable 49ha extra land from the daughter of a retiring farmer (my sister-in-law). At this point, an acceptance of the contract has been given and we are in the course of working out how the personalities involved will cope with the change, especially from their side, what and how much involvement we will and can need/want from their side, and how our operation can best integrate the land into our workflow. The harmony between the parties is paramount.

Q: What does the future hold?

Florian: as Nocki will be officially retired in 2018, (which means that his share of government payments will cease) it's not that I will suddenly be the owner of a farm double the size of what I started out with. It is planned that the operation will be split into two main branches: the contracting branch and the farming branch. I will continue to own and run the farming branch, and the contracting branch can be sold or split. Nocki will be employed by the contracting branch for as long as he wishes. One of the main advantages of this kind of operation is total flexibility. We are not bound by land or building or people or government obligation. We can, at any time, leave. And that's why it's so good to work like that. We will never want to leave.

Q: What would you be if you weren't farmers?

Nocki: something mechanic, but there was never really a question of that.

Florian: meteorological something.

By Trudi Fill-Weidmann

Sources:

www.bege-spargeln.ch/betrieb.php • www.landwirtschaft.ch • www.vol.be.ch • www.blw.admin.ch/themen/00006/00049/