REMEMBERING

Joseph Groenendijk

November 30, 1925 - March 19, 2017

Joseph (Joe) Antonius Groenendijk was born November 30, 1925 in Noorden, The Netherlands and passed away peacefully on March 19, 2017 in Duncan, BC at 91 years of age. Joe was the ninth of fifteen children born to Cornelis and Catharina (Pieterse) Groenendijk.

His youth was not easy growing up in the depression and then enduring the occupation of the The Netherlands in World War II. During the war, out of hunger, he got a job on a dairy farm. He found he liked the work and desired to make dairy farming his life long career. After the war, he went to Wageningen University to become an Agricultural Engineer. His studies were interrupted when he was drafted into the Dutch Army and sent to fight in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia).

Upon his return to The Netherlands, as he was completing his studies, a letter arrived from the Sisters of St. Ann's offering to sponsor him to come to Canada. Realizing he would not be able to own a farm in his homeland and being upset with his army experience, Joe immigrated to Canada in 1952 to work on the Sisters of St. Ann's Convent Farm (now Providence Farm). The following year his fiance, Johanna (Joanne) VanVliet followed him to Canada. They were married on August 22, 1953 at St. Ann's Church and the following day they moved to Chemainus and Joe started working at the sawmill.

In 1958 they purchased the property on Mt. Sicker Road and pioneered it into a dairy farm. In 1993, Joe moved to a smaller dairy farm in Glenora and continued milking cows until he was 76 years old. He then shifted his energies to his vegetable garden and rhubarb patch. Joe valued his independence and lived alone on his farm until last November.

The family would like to thank the many people who would visit Joe for a cup of coffee. He very much appreciated all your visits. Two people we would like to especially thank are Albert Scholtens who helped Joe tremendously in his last years and made it possible for him to live on his own as long as he did. Also Nick deLange, his closest friend of 65 years and bridge partner. Thank you Nick for

visiting Joe everyday in the hospital.

Joe was a passionate supporter of agriculture in general and the dairy industry in particular. He was actively involved in many industry organizations: Cowichan Agricultural Society, BC Federation of Agriculture, Independent Dairyman's Association of BC, Dairy Farmers of Canada and was instrumental in founding the Agricultural Farm Labour Pool and managing the Cowichan Cedar Milking Hauling Co-op.

He is preceded by his wife, Joanne in 2008, his parents and most of his siblings. Joe is survived by his son Chris, daughter-in-law Henrietta and grandchildren Cameron (Samantha), Megan, Douglas and Danielle Groenendijk. Brother Vincent (Olga) Groenendijk, sisters Agnes (Kees) VanVliet, Elly Donders and Mieke (Roy) Farrar, numerous nieces and nephews, especially Marijke Klarenbeek, several brothers and sisters in laws, including a special brother-in-law Gerard VanVliet.

The family would like to thank the medical staff at Cowichan District Hospital and the Lodge on 4th for the kind and compassionate care of Joe in the last months of his earthly life.

A Celebration of Joe's life will be held on Saturday, April 15, 2017 in the fellowship hall of the Duncan Christian Reformed Church (930 Trunk Road) at 11am. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Joe's memory to Duncan Christian School (495 Beech Avenue, Duncan, BC, V9L 3J8).