

In Memoriam

Daniel Michael Casale

Daniel "Dan" Michael Casale Sr., Denair, Calif., 84, passed away peacefully at his home due to health complications on October 10, 2023.

He was born in Springfield, N.J., on December 15, 1938, the youngest of four children born to the late Rocco and Angela Casale. In 1952, he and his family moved to a 200-acre farm in Bartley, N.J., where they milked 35 cows and raised wheat, oats and corn. He joined 4-H and began showing Brown Swiss cattle. He graduated from Roxbury High School in 1956 and then returned home to work on the family farm. Dan began dating his future bride, Lois Wolfe, in 1958 and married her in 1960 in Hackettstown, N.J.

In 1967, the Casales moved to Waterford, Calif., where Dan worked with his older brother, Sal, breeding dairy cattle. He then worked for Carnation Genetics handling bulls. In 1970, Dan became the dairy herdsman for Harvey Matson, from whom the Casales eventually purchased their custom farming business. For more than 10 years, Casale Farms raised crops on hundreds of acres for many local dairy farms. Dan was a co-founder of RX Seeds, which successfully merchandised seeds in the 1990s.

In 1971, Dan and Lois purchased 24 acres in Denair, Calif. In 1978, their eldest daughter, Karen, joined the family dairy business, operating Ranora Jerseys, a Registered Jersey herd, with her parents. Over the expanse of 35 years, the family bred more than 100 Excellent cows and won many production awards. They also enjoyed success in the show ring, winning the Best Three Females class and the Premier Breeder banner at the California State Fair and Reserve Supreme Champion at World Dairy Expo. On the fairgrounds, Dan was also known for his all-female crew and frequent wins of the herdsman award for cleanliness and barn exhibit.

Dan was a member of the American Jersey Cattle Association and is a past president of the Central Valley and California Jersey Cattle Associations and Stanislaus DHIA. He served on boards for the local water conservation district and the Denair Farm and Family Festival. Dan was named Senior Breeder by the California Jersey Cattle Association in 1992.

He was a 4-H leader and coached Little League and the church basketball

team. He was a member of the Waterford Community Baptist Church for more than 50 years and was baptized in the Tuolumne River in 2018.

In later years, Dan loved collecting and restoring antique tractors with his son, Dan Jr. He was a member of WHEAT and the Early Day Gas Engine and Tractor Association. He was a fan favorite in local parades, driving his red 1950 Farmall M tractor embellished with American flags and other red, white, and blue patriotic decorations.

In addition to his wife of 64 years, Lois, daughter Karen, and son Dan (Dawn), he is survived by two other daughters, Dona (Jason) and Mary (Matthew); nine grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by siblings, Sal, Betty and Anthony Casale.

Memorials may be made to the American Junior Jersey Cattle Association or the Waterford Community Bible Church.

Mary Elizabeth Vander Veen

Mary Elizabeth (Hintz) Vander Veen, Sharon, Wis., 95, passed away on December 2, 2023, in the care of hospice at Golden Years, Lake Geneva, Wis., due to complications from a fall.

She was born on September 17, 1928, in Lake Bluff, Ill., the daughter of the late Cyrus and Edith (Walkinshaw) Hintz. She grew up in Northbrook and Marengo, Ill., and graduated from Marengo High School in 1946.

Offspring of a strong, sensible farm girl from Iowa and a tough World War II Marine, Mary had relentless determination and was always dreaming of the next big challenge. Born at the beginning of the Great Depression and raised on a chicken farm, she endured the hardships of the times. Beyond developing a lifelong distaste for chicken, she learned hard work and perseverance from her father and an appreciation for lifelong education and learning from her mother.

Mary married Edward Vander Veen in the Presbyterian Church in Marengo on October 2, 1948, and operated Vandell Farms with their family. The Vander Veens began farming on rented properties with two horses, a handful of Registered Jerseys, and no money. They moved many times until 1959 when they purchased a run-down farm in Sharon. She went to work immediately to transform the fixer-upper into her dream and worked alongside Ed on the farm. She treasured watching her family, cows, crops and garden grow.

Over the decades, the farm prospered and grew.

Today, the 93-cow herd at Vandell Farms Inc. is enrolled on REAP and has a 2022 lactation average of 23,547 lbs. milk, 1,090 lbs. fat and 861 lbs. protein. The herd average JPI stands at +58.

Mary enjoyed adventures, especially traveling. She and Ed traveled extensively in the U.S. and abroad to Europe, Australia and New Zealand. She was a natural talent for anything she touched and was generous with her talents. She frequently donated homemade items, gave sewing lessons and taught English as a second language at the library.

Her most valuable gift was time. She was a volunteer dynamo, finding time for blood drives, community fundraisers, the library board, the cemetery board and the Parent Teacher Association. She was a 4-H club and clothing leader, an avid dairy promoter, and volunteered with the Walworth County Fair, among others.

Mary's greatest passion was the Wisconsin Association for Home and Community Education (HCE) (formerly the University of Wisconsin Extension Homemakers). Though she put her dream of becoming an extension home economist on hold when she and Ed became busy with the farm, Mary served the HCE for more than 75 years in nearly every local, state and national leadership role up to her passing.

Never one for sentimental words, Mary showed her love and appreciation through cooking and her culinary delights were renowned. Whether feeding the family for the holidays or a burley construction crew on the farm, her meals were always effortless perfection and her cinnamon rolls bar none.

In addition to her husband, Ed, she is survived by children Scott (Vivian) Vander Veen of Clinton, Lee Ann Weber of New Mexico, Mark Vander Veen of Springdale, Ark., and Bruce (Laura) Vander Veen of Sharon; six grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; a sister, Ruth Ann (Hintz) Beyers; and many nieces, nephews, cousins, other relatives, and friends.

She was preceded in death by her mother and father-in-law, Henry and Olive (Jurgens) Vander Veen; a brother, Donald Hitz; brothers-in-law Robert Vander Veen and Wayne Byers; a sister-in-law, Gladys (Potter) Hintz; and a niece and nephew.

Memorials may be made to Sharon Fire and Rescue or a favorite charity of your choice.