

SUCCESS STORIES

## Coping with loss: lifelong learning

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Type of farming activity	Dairy farm (9 dairy cows with own breeding)
Mental health issue and affecting factors	Due to a tragic accident 18 years ago, the father died in the barn when a bull pushed him to the ground. The farmer's son was 12 years old at the time of the tragic incident. He had to watch everything from a close range because he was in the stable with his father at the time.

### What is your story?

Being the eldest of the three children, the farmer was stuck in his role as farm successor by the tragic event of his father's death in the barn. In the last 18 years since then, the daily burden and responsibility became more and more stressful and pressurized.

Until a few years ago, the farmer's mother was still fully involved as a workforce. However, she was less and less able to help due to physical limitations and illness.

The consequence with the farmer was - "only I always have to do everything - alone, on my own".

The situation on the farm became increasingly worse. It also turned out that the farmer beat his younger brother although he helped him on the farm.

When the farmer was 28 years old, a cooperation was founded with his mother. Until then, the farm had belonged solely to the mother. The siblings were paid off and everything was legalized.

Due to the payments to the two siblings over 2 years, the situation within the family also became increasingly tense.

Helplessness, loneliness arose more and more.

Communication between the siblings was getting bigger and bigger, and the cooperation with the mother was not the best idea.

It was not a full transfer over. It was linked to the financial needs of the older generation as well.

Due to the constant burden of daily work and the fact that his mother is physically weak and his siblings are building their own lives, the farmer feels left alone not only within the farm work, but personally, and socially.

### Handling the situation

When the announcements came from the farmer to his family - "you'll see" - and they were uttered more and more often by him, the sister became very worried.

She sought advice from the Agricultural Family Counselling Service. Due to the many verbal and physical injuries, a conversation could only be held with the mother and the sister.

The sister sought additional help from a communication coach with an agricultural background.

Due to the sudden and unexpected death of the mother and the emotional circumstance, the participants were able to have an intensive conversation with the coach.

It was recognized as a way to deal with the new situation of the family - the three siblings and the farm. It became possible to look at the possibilities to change the farm.

At the moment, awareness of the situation on the farm for all family members involved directly or indirectly is there.

At the same time solution is not clear at all.

Everything is still open, as the situation threatens to escalate again due to the death of the mother. However, it is now possible to accept help from outside and this was expressly desired by all involved.

### Conclusion and tips

Often, access through women in agriculture for advice and assistance seems easier than to farmers.

In this case the sister became aware of what was going on, and she raised her voice and looked for help.

For the farmer himself it probably would have been impossible to overlook the situation.

#### Tips to other farmers

It is important to stay in touch with each other.

Of course, there are sometimes different opinions, even arguments fights between siblings.

At the same time these siblings and close family members usually know the person, the farmer quite well, and they could see if there are developments personally or socially which could possibly require help and support.

It is a need, not only to look for farm workers to help out on the farm but also to strive for a good living together, a culture of support.

Pre-designated situations bring a lot of pressure to the persons involved.

To be a foreseen successor and not able to find other opportunities in education or employment just to see more of the world - is sometimes a big burden.

In this case the burden was too much for the farmer, but awareness of the situation is given, a good basis to work on now - though not free of conflict, but at least goal oriented.

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