

SUCCESS STORIES

## Positive steps for dealing with unexpected loss

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Type of farming activity	region dominated by dairy cattle
Mental health issue and affecting factors	Tragic deaths in a short period of time caused great and worrying concern amongst farming families of the village for the men, the families and the farms.

### What is your story?

In the last 3 years, many farmers (9 men aged 50-65) died very suddenly. Most of them due heart attacks. One person had a pre-existing illness, one had cancer, another had a farm accident with the hay crane. In three cases the children were very young (between 8 and 15 years). A serious and worrying fear and concern for the men developed. Therefore, the idea for a joint petition for health, strength and confidence for the farm families was born.

The initial joint event organized was to open mind, heart and soul for the future.

It was a very unusual response..

Possibly due to this unusual approach and handling of the situation the power of the event was even bigger.

After the events in quick succession, at first on the one hand, helplessness and fear arose. On the other hand, this stressful situation made the extraordinary joint action possible and definite..

However, the sense of helplessness and fear did not disappear, completely of course, but there was great empowerment and windows of optimism and confidence in looking forward.

### Handling the situation

When all the tragic events happened, a group of extremely concerned and worried wives and young families decided to respond to the situation and to create change.

They were in fear that these incredible series of deaths could continue, and they wanted to act and to do something, about it.

A Deacon got involved in the issues and concerns, in response together with the concerned group a prayer walk was planned and undertaken..

This petition prayer walk had three stations:

Health, Strength and Confidence.

Health, so that everyone stays healthy or becomes healthy again

Strength, especially for the women and their children, so that they can cope with the difficult time and of course also manage the work (farming continues for all families).

Confidence, for everyone to realize that things are getting better again and can move on.

Small guardian angels were provided and blessed.

Everyone who was present at the petition was given a small guardian angel.

In the petition accompanied by music, among other things, the story of the magic bank was shared:

Each of us has a "magic bank". We just don't see it, because the bank is TIME!

Every morning when we wake up, we are given 86400 seconds of life for the day, and when we go to sleep in the evening, the rest of the time is not credited to us. What we did not experience that day is lost, lost forever. Yesterday is gone.

In the supplication process and subsequently, among other things, the awareness of time was sharpened: for the past, for the present, for the future.

This was about what has happened unchangeably and what is in our hands to shape.

The reference was made to agriculture, where in many cases hamster wheels have been created, which initially cause stress in the farm and family, in the partnership, in the marriage and between generations, and in the end can lead to psychological problems.

Quality of life was addressed. Not in the sense of today's "work-life balance", which entails considerable aberrations, but in the sense of awareness in daily life and work on the farms and in social interaction with each other.

The prayer walk took place in November 2022 and had direct positive effects in the area of awareness and perception. Time is still too short for long-term statements.

It was a great, unusual and strengthening community experience.

### Conclusion and tips

It is important, despite all the drama and tragedy - perhaps even especially then - to realize the pressure, the worry, the fear and having to come to terms with it and to look forward to shaping it.

#### Tips to other farmers

Please be open minded and please speak about your worries, no matter how critical you consider them to be.

Talk to others about their feelings and to take a step forward together hand in hand

There is strength in cooperation. It can not alone be seen in joint action of daily farming work but also in joint action dealing with tremendous social challenges.

This joint action of women and the remaining families of the village and the region is untypical and at the same time and possibly because of its very special character it was the very powerful starting point to share feelings and overcome the situation.

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