

**OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,  
FOOD AND FORESTRY**

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**Significant Women in Oklahoma Agriculture:**

**Tiete Lycklama**

BROKEN BOW – Storms have been known to beat down a crop, yet not destroy it.

Tiete Lycklama of Broken Bow, a lifelong partner of agriculture, has faced some heart-wrenching storms through her 65 years of life.

Lycklama, a native of the Netherlands, was only 12 years old only when the first tragedy struck.

Not long after returning home from Sunday evening church service in the nearby village of Lollum, Jan Van Der Meulen turned in for the night. The 40-year-old dairy farmer planned to milk the next morning and bale hay later on in the day.

However, during the night, Jan passed away, suffering a heart attack.

“He was a Godly man. I looked up on him. After Daddy passed away, that changed my childhood,” Tiete said, one of five children. “I was one of the oldest, I needed to be my Mom’s right hand.”

Lycklama’s story is a combination of not only contributions to agriculture, but of faith and perseverance.

### **Never quit**

Thirty five years ago this year, Tiete, husband Tsjerk, and their three children, daughters Teatske and Nynke and son Steve, came to the United States with a small amount of money to back their dream of operating their own business on a rundown dairy farm in east Texas. There were struggles along the way, such as making payments following horrible crops, but their dream progressed. They established a successful dairy in Mount Vernon, Texas and then moved to and began a dairy in Mount Pleasant, Texas. Later, they moved to Valliant, Okla. where they operated a beef cattle and row-crop farm. The next move was to Arizona where the Lycklamas had a cattle ranch and irrigated Alfalfa hay fields. In 2006 the family sold that ranch and moved to back to Oklahoma. Today, Tiete and Tsjerk operate LTF Tree Farm, more than 3,500 acres of intensively managed loblolly pine. They also have a cattle operation, T & T Cattle, on their ranch in southeastern Oklahoma’s McCurtain County.

“Tiete has worn many hats in many different roles to have successful ag businesses in different regions, leaving family and friends in Holland,” son-in-law Daniel Lewia said. “Her never-quit attitude and desire to make the right decisions on their land has helped them to become successful ag producers.”

Plus, Tiete is active in helping others.

For example, she has been “very supportive” of Log A Load for Kids, an annual campaign which began when loggers and others in the forest products community donated the value of a load of logs to their local Children’s Miracle Network hospital.

“She has also contributed to the Forest Heritage Center in Broken Bow, both financially and by participating in events over the past decade,” Lewia said.

However, just as there were storms in her childhood and challenges in her early adulthood, there has been adversity more recently.

Five years ago, the unthinkable storm pounded their lives on Sunday in late February. Son Steve, 32 years old at the time, and Tiete’s grandsons Devin, 8, and Dalton, 6, were boating on the Little River near Idabel. Tiete said they struck an object in the water. The boat tipped. On that day, all three drowned.

“Life hasn’t been easy and I know a lot of people go through a lot,” Tiete said, “but God has been faithful and we thank God that we’re going to see them again.”

### **Exploring opportunities**

Both in life and agriculture, opportunity has been a key word for the Lycklamas.

In the Netherlands, Tsjerk had a dairy with his brother, “a big farm.” However, there was no room for expansion. So, the decision was made to move to Texas and start a dairy.

“The little that we had was from when the home sold,” she said. “That was almost nothing when you are buying a little dairy that was so run down. We bought the cows too, but they were not in good health. The man we bought it from was a nice man. We bought the dairy for real little money with real little payments. It was a start and the people, the neighbors were wonderful, always helping. He (Tsjerk) built it up and then when we went to Mount Pleasant we had 400 cows or more.”

Later, they moved to Valliant and ranched there and raised some crops.

When they moved to Arizona, they had Alfalfa hay, selling to different dairies in New Mexico. Then it was back to Oklahoma where they have remained.

“Ag has created opportunities for Tiete,” Lewia, their son-in-law, said. “Opportunities to work hard and reap the rewards of that hard work, and to teach her family the value of hard work and determination. Opportunities to learn about new ag options besides dairy farming. They had to learn about their new ventures and how to best run those businesses. She has also done a wonderful job of educating her family and others about what ag really means to everyone.”

Tiete, also an acclaimed watercolor and oil artist, stays very busy. She was asked what the next opportunity in her life might bring.

“I want my grandchildren to go on with and enjoy it,” said Tiete, who has five grandchildren, all boys. “I’ve really prayed that one or two of the boys can take it over some day, but then again, we need to say every day, ‘God, what is your will?’”

That approach helps her weather the days of blue skies as well as those of storms that may beat you down, but not destroy you.

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**Editor’s note:** This is part of a continuing series of stories on Significant Women in Oklahoma Agriculture. The project is a collaborative program between the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food & Forestry and Oklahoma State University to

recognize and honor the impact of countless women across all 77 counties of the state, from all aspects and areas of the agricultural industry. The honorees were nominated by their peers and selected by a committee of 14 industry professionals.



Photo caption: Tiete Lycklama of Broken Bow has been recognized as part of the Significant Women in Oklahoma Agriculture series.