

# *In Memoriam*

**SIEGFRIED (SIEG) GEORG HERMANN MEYER**

**28 February 1950 – 10 August 2023**



Sieg, as known by all his friends and colleagues, was born on 28 February 1950 in Lichtenburg as the youngest of five children of Georg and Bertha Meyer. His primary school years were spent at Kroondal in the Northwest Province. He matriculated in 1967 at the Afrikaans Hoër Seunskool in Pretoria. He obtained his BVSc at Onderstepoort in 1973 and also a BVSc (Hons) in Veterinary Public Health from UP in 1992. After his 2 years of compulsory military training, he joined the Government Service where he spent almost his entire career of 41 years in the Veterinary Public Health Division of the Veterinary Services of the National Department of Agriculture.

Soon after qualification, he married Veronika and thereafter experienced the joy and pride of two daughters Elmarie and Heidemarie, born in the 1980s, who gave him the additional joy of two grandchildren to enrich the last 11 years of his life.

Sieg Meyer left many monuments still standing strong in Veterinary Public Health in South Africa. He will especially be remembered for setting new horizons and national standards for meat inspection, abattoir hygiene, hazard assessment at critical control points in abattoir operational procedures and the training of veterinary health inspectors and meat inspectors. A major achievement during his career was his intense involvement and eventual (almost solo attempt) to successfully negotiate in Parliament for the acceptance and final adoption of the Meat Safety Act – still successfully in operation today.

He also played a major role in setting hygiene standards for culling and slaughtering of game for export to Europe which he successfully negotiated with the European Union. Primary animal health care was also a passion for Sieg which he practised and advocated the principles thereof long before the slogan of the “One Health” concept hit the veterinary billboards. It was especially during his missions in poor and developing communities in South Africa that he demonstrated his passion to promote primary animal health care and the application of public health principles of which he urged the inhabitants to follow suite.

During his 41 years in Government service, he progressed through the ranks to eventually become deputy director of veterinary services with veterinary public health as his primary responsibility. During this time he was commissioned to several missions abroad to negotiate veterinary protocols for the export of meat and meat products from South Africa. Many of them were tough assignments but he succeeded in almost all the assigned missions to negotiate a favourable outcome.

The SAVA also had the privilege to have Siegfried Meyer on the Federal Council. He also served with distinction as chairman of the VPH group of the SAVA.

In 2011, Siegfried unfortunately experienced a severe attack of pneumonia resulting in a failing heart condition forcing him to retire in 2014. For him, the blow was not so much his fading health condition, but that it resulted in him not being able to remain active on their family farm at Buffelshoek which gave him immense pleasure to visit and just to be busy – his favourite “playground” as he lovingly called it.

We will truly miss Siegfried Meyer for so many nice characteristics; his intense love and care for his family; doing his good things quietly in the background; his monumental work for establishing VPH standards in South Africa and setting a new dimension to primary animal health care and one health perspectives.

Yet for me, I will always remember Siegfried for his overwhelming way of greeting you every time he sees you - as if you are a lost friend he has not seen for days, months or years – even if you have spoken to him a day ago.

To Veronika, Elmarie and Heidemarie and the grandchildren Luca and Kiara, we thank you for the wonderful privilege to have shared Siegfried Meyer with you.

*Gideon Brückner*