

## Robert Van Hofwegen

Robert (Bob) Van Hofwegen was born an Iowa native but shortly moved to South Dakota where his parents opened a grocery store. After about 5 years the family headed west and landed in California. Bob was one of nine children in the Hofwegen household. Bob's wife Victoria was born in Austin, Texas. Her father was in the army and later became a carpenter, so they moved to Chino, California. Both Bob and Victoria attend Chino High School. The couple got married in 1953.

After Bob and Victoria got back from their honeymoon, Bob had a notice to report for duty. He spent the next 18 months in the military fighting in Korea. After his return in 1959, they had two children and moved to Laveen, Arizona. Bob rented a facility on 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue, south of Dobson Road, with 60 cows and two surge milking machines. After 3 years he sold the cows and moved back to California.

Four years later, they decided to come back to Arizona. In 1966 they moved to Tolleson, Arizona and rented a dairy with about 80 cows. His herd and family quickly grew. He was up to 200 cows and had 6 kids (4 boys and 2 girls).

Bob soon got tired of renting the dairy. In 1972, Bob purchased 20 acres on Broadway Road in Tolleson. The dairy sold milk to the Arizona Milk Producers, which is now known as the United Dairymen of Arizona. Soon, he switched to Holstein cattle to improve milk production, and increased the herd size to 500 cows.

His oldest son Robert owns the Paloma Dairy in Gila Bend. His four boys help run the dairy. The oldest of Robert's sons, Robert Jr. owns the farming operation. He farms alfalfa, corn silage, barley, and cotton. He says they have "a thousand plus acres". Bob's son, David, leases the old home. He had originally sold the property to developers, but it was never turned into anything. It was empty for two years, then the developers leased it back to David and he now has Jersey cows on it. The third son, Paul, is in charge of the trucks and moving hay. Donald, the fourth son, has his own dairy in Stansfield, Arizona.

Bob Van Hofwegen, the father, retired in 2000. He and his wife were very active in their church. He served on the board of Phoenix Christian High School for 14 years. Bob and Victoria Van Hofwegen have 4 sons and 2 daughters, 24

grandchildren, and 19 great grandchildren. Bob passed away in 2013, but his family continues his legacy and love for agriculture.



Robert (Bob) Vanhofwegen



His family continues to farm (Sunset Farms) and dairy (Paloma Dairy). Above Donald Van Hofwegen (one of Bob's Sons) and his family.



La Paloma Dairy and Sunset Farms near Gila Bend, Arizona



Inside the milking parlor (where they milk the cows)  
at the dairy)