



## THE DONATI FAMILY

Clifford Donati, father of Richard (Dick) Donati, was born in San Luis Obispo in 1911, was the son of a local dairy farmer and was the second born of a family of seven children. He started milking cows at an early age and continued working in the family business until sometime in the mid-thirties. Dry land farming was beginning to transition into irrigated agriculture and Clifford, along with his father, began leveling land for hire in the Santa Maria Valley with a Caterpillar and a small scraper. In about 1938 his dad bought the 160 acre section of land which is bordered today by Donovan, Railroad, Alvin and Blosser roads and after having a well drilled, the Donati family became one of the many pioneer families in the Valley who gave up their milk buckets and took up their plow shares.

Clifford was farming a couple of hundred acres of his own land and managing several hundred more acres when he died in 1980. Son Dick was working for him at the time and did his best to carry on the work his father had started. Dick continued managing a growing number of acres between Santa Maria and Guadalupe and by the late 80s had become a minority owner in the company he was managing. The partner decided he wanted to retire a few years later and in 1995 Dick found himself in a position to buy out his partner and start a new company.

That company, Rancho Guadalupe, today grows a wide range of commodities on about 2700 acres. Along with co-owner Jim Wesner and under the capable guidance of General Manager AJ Cisney, the Company is developing a strategic plan to carry its Mission Statement- which vows to take care of its land and to provide a safe working environment for its workers while producing quality vegetables - well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.