

Bob Underwood always thinking of ways to promote cherries

By **KIMBERLY WARREN**
Record-Eagle staff writer

If there's one thing Bob Underwood knows, it's cherries. From 1970-1994, Underwood ran a farm market on his cherry farm that sold cherry juice concentrate — a popular pick among visitors, because it helped to ease pain in their joints. Today, Underwood works to bring those health benefits to consumers in a more easy-to-use manner than juice.

"I got interested in doing the dietary supplements because of what we have known for years as benefits of cherries," he said. "I wanted to get an easier and better way to take cherries."

Underwood Fruit researched

"We've come a long way, starting with nothing."

Bob Underwood

and developed a pill — Cherry Rich — that packed the punch of four cherries in each pill. Five pills a day, and the daily serving required is met.

"If you're going to take the cherries for the benefits for joint inflammation, for arthritis and gout, you have to take them every day so your bloodstream acquires enough of it so it does you any good," he said. "Even though cherry juice concentrate is a new product, it's not the handiest thing to do every day."

If taken daily, tart cherry juice has been proven to help

reduce the pain and inflammation caused by arthritis. Also, the dark hues in the skin of the cherries contain anthocyanins, which act as antioxidants and work to prevent cancer and cardiovascular disease.

To get these benefits in Underwood's pills, five must be taken. In fact, Underwood said, that is the only complaint he has received

about Cherry Rich.

"The suggestion I have gotten is that five capsules every day is too many pills," he said.

"We're in the process of devel-

oping a new product that will be one gel capsule a day."

Underwood said he hopes the new pill will be ready for distribution in the next few months.

"First juice was too much, then five capsules a day was too much," he said. "Now, one capsule will equal 20 cherries and priced less — hopefully — than the present one is."

This new pill, Underwood said, is one step closer to helping him reach his goal.

"My goal was to try and be able to take the cherry and get it in a form that people can take on a daily basis," he said. "We've come a long way, starting with nothing."

As he continues to take steps toward his goal, Underwood said he wants "to continue science and research for all the benefits in that darn little red thing."

National distribution is at the top of Underwood's list of things to do, also.

"People in Texas and California have arthritis just like in Michigan," he said. "I want to get (the pill) good enough and strong enough to get the interest of major companies to get national distribution of the product."

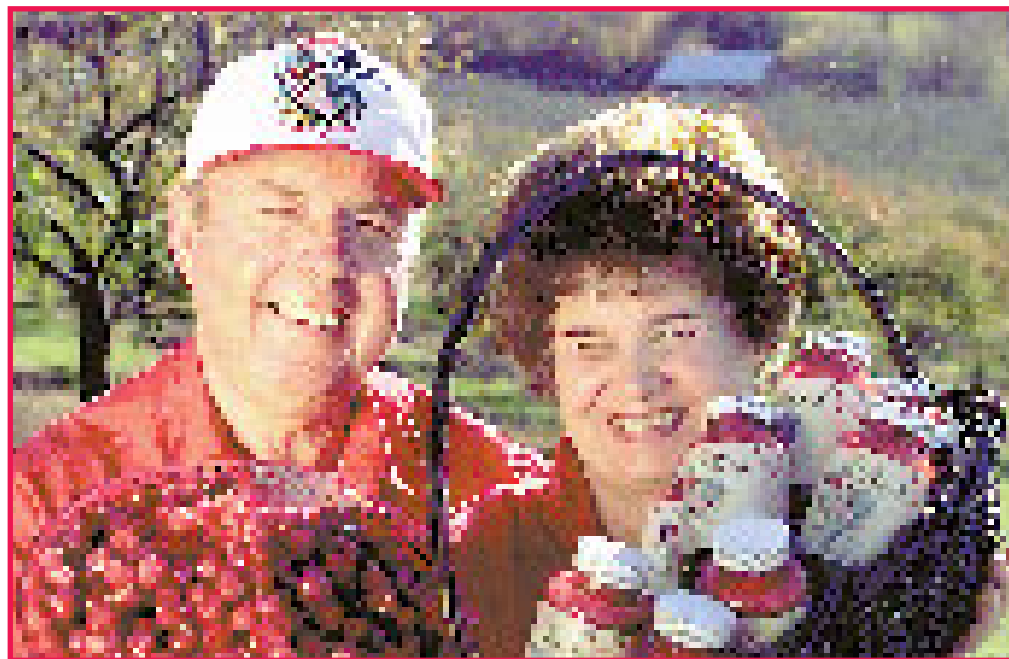
Underwood said there are also companies in other countries interested in his products.

Another check mark on Underwood's list is to work on developing and expanding his product line.

"Soon we'll be having a new cherry (snack) bar," he said. "We're holding on it right now because we're going to have a new process for less amount of cherry material in one bar, but still getting the serving of 20 cherries per bar."

Underwood said he hopes to see the bar on the market in a few months.

"I think that anything we can do to maintain our health naturally with less side effects will be popular," he said. "Over the next years, you'll see continued efforts to learn about natural ways to keep things healthy."



Bob and Janet Underwood have been in the cherry business since 1970.

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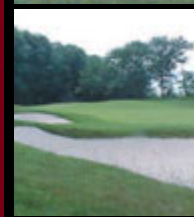
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