

Cherry Industry People of the Year 'honored'

BY FORREST KARBOWSKI
Record-Eagle Staff Writer

CEDAR— Glenn and Judy Lacross of Lacross Farms have been named 2004 Cherry Industry People of the Year.

The couple has been farming cherries since 1972 when they bought a farm of their own, and their life has been cherries ever since.

"I guess when you love the land as much as we do, you have to find something to do with it," Glenn said. "You've either got to plant cherry trees or plant houses, and we chose to plant cherry trees."

Glen, who used to work in real estate, said cherry farming is more rewarding because of the hands-on aspect. According to Judy, he can be known to load trucks full of cherries until midnight, go to sleep, and load more cherries at two in the morning.

"It's a very intense harvest," Glenn said.

Judy was a secondary school teacher before entering full time into the cherry business. During harvest, she works at the receiving station, where she keeps contact with the many growers their farm services before sending the cherries to be processed.

Judy said she and Glen are both honored to be chosen as this year's Cherry Industry People.

"It's very humbling," Judy said. "We knew there are a lot of other deserving people who could have been selected."

Along with their farm work, the Lacrosses have contributed much to the cherry industry. Glenn said he is always searching for innovative ways to use the fruit, which has led him to such products as Ray Pleva's Meats, which mixes



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Glenn and Judy Lacross bought a cherry farm in 1972 and have contributed to the cherry industry ever since.

cherries into meat products as a natural preservative.

Another product Glenn emphasizes is cherry concentrate, which has anti-inflammatory properties. He said concentrate can be more effective than aspirin for relieving pain and arthritis, and is currently being researched as a possible treatment for cancer.

Judy is heavily involved in the Cherry Festival heading the cherry industry booth, which gives out information and recipes to educate festival-goers about the fruit. She is also Director of Cherry Promotion, making sure that cherries are emphasized in every facet of the festival, and is involved in the Cherry

Connection.

The couple said that this year's festival is particularly exciting.

"Our crop is going to be a little later, so we can participate in it," Glenn said. "A lot of times we just have to jump into the harvest and forget about the festival."

Out of the over 30 years he has been farming, Glenn said that this year the festi-

val and the industry have the best connection.

"I remember when we were younger farmers, the festival seemed to almost be another country, but today it's a real strong relationship," he said.

The couple will be honored at an Industry Day celebration on July 6 at the Northwest Michigan Horticulture Station.

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