

Allan and Mary Helen Simpson

receive Agricultural Award of Merit



(photo M. Ulczak)

Left to right are Agricultural Award of Merit recipients, Dr. Allan Simpson and Mary Helen Simpson, along with Denis Pommainville, reeve of Nation Township. Pommainville presented the Simpsons with a certificate on behalf of the United Counties of Prescott and Russell, at the recent Soil and Crop Improvement Association banquet in St-Bernardin.

March 23, 2002

ST-BERNARDIN – Long-time Stardale dairy farmers, Dr. Allan and Mary Helen Simpson, were presented with the Eastern Valley Soil and Crop Improvement Association Award of Merit last Saturday evening, for more than a quarter-century of involvement in agriculture and rural life.

At the annual dinner of the EVSCIA, (Prescott County branch), held March 23 at the St-Bernardin Community Centre, county president Thomas Hearle read the citation, then presented the couple with an Award of Merit plaque, followed by the large, wooden plaque which bears the names of all previous winners.

Christa Hearle, wife of the EVSCIA county president, presented a bouquet of roses to Mary Helen Simpson.

Several previous

award-winners were on hand including Cecil and Maureen Cass, Hervé Castonguay, Gaston Levac and their spouses.

The recognition didn't stop there. The Hon. Don Boudria presented the couple with a certificate from Prime Minister Jean Chrétien as well as one from Boudria's own office.

Provincial MPP Jean-Marc Lalonde brought a congratulatory scroll from Premier Mike Harris and a further certificate bearing his own signature.

Representing county warden Michel Lalonde, Nation Township reeve, Denis Pommainville, presented the Simpsons with another certificate of honour – this one on behalf of Prescott-Russell United Counties.

A seventh citation was presented by Scott Allen on behalf of the Dairy

Producers of Prescott County, for "25 years' commitment in advancing the interests of dairy producers".

Speaking for the provincial board of directors of the Soil and Crop Improvement Association, Cecil Cass commended Allan and Mary Helen on their achievement, and encouraged farmers to both complete, and register their environmental farm management plans.

Home to celebrate their parents' award were the Simpsons' daughters, Christy and Sally, along with son John and his wife.

After some persuasion during dinner, Christy Simpson spoke a few words on behalf of all the younger Simpsons.

Recalling that her parents had cited "spending more time with

their children" as one reason for moving back to the farm, Christy spoke of the life lessons she, her brother and sister learned as a result of working alongside their parents; for example, the value of hard work.

With a few jokes about running after heifers at 5 a.m. and the early start time of morning chores, Christy reflected on the importance of growing up on a farm surrounded by extended family and a caring community. In closing, all three thanked their parents for making the decision to move to the farm.

"This award is like an Oscar"

Expressing thanks for the award, Allan Simpson told the audience, "this award is like an Oscar for family farming, presented by those who work in the business and live in the community."