

ALASKA GROWN

Farmer Profile



Martins: 2012 Farm Family of the Year

KENAI PENINSULA— The Carrol and JoAnne Martin family has been selected as the 2012 Farm Family of the Year. The Martins, owners of Diamond M Ranch Resort, will be honored at the Alaska State Fair on Thursday, Aug. 23.

JoAnne and Carrol Martin met in a Cooperative Extension Service (CES) office in Alamosa, Colo. in 1961. They had many things in common: they were both raised on ranches, were heavily involved in 4-H, and they harbored a desire to move to Alaska. They married in 1962 and moved to Metlakatla, Alaska in 1963.

After returning to sort out their affairs in Colorado, the Martins moved to Juneau, where JoAnne worked as the CES agent. Carrol bought a tug boat and a barge and

transported registered quarter horses, cattle, a mobile home, a stock trailer, 25 tons of hay and a pickup truck to their new home in Juneau.

The Martins always wanted to settle on the Kenai Peninsula and started Diamond M Ranch in 1975. When the Martins retired they added a bed and breakfast to the ranch. It is now a full-blown resort owned by their son Blair and his wife Ronna.

The Martins raise horses and cows and have also had sheep, pigs and goats for 4-H projects. Most of the horses on the ranch are registered quarter horses, and their beef cattle have earned grand champion ribbons at both the Kenai Peninsula State Fair in Ninilchik and the Alaska State Fair Inc. in Palmer.

The Martins are currently expanding their operation by experimenting with personal use and sport fish waste, wood chips and other materials as soil amendments to produce a high quality top soil.

The Martins four children were very involved in 4-H, as

are some of their 10 grandchildren. JoAnne worked as a CES agent for 25 years and Carrol has been a 4-H member for 10 years and volunteered as a leader for 4-H for more than 50 years. Their children have been involved in 4-H at the national level, attending 4-H Congress in Chicago, Ill. and Citizenship Washington Focus in Washington D.C.

For the past 36 years, Carrol has spearheaded a barbeque at the Ninilchik State Fair, donating all the profits to 4-H. This October, Carrol will be inducted into the National 4-H Hall of Fame at the National 4-H Center in Chevy Chase, Md.—only the fourth Alaskan and first Alaskan volunteer leader to be awarded the honor.

Carrol has also been involved in many other organizations, including the Ninilchik State Fair Board, the Alaska Board of Agriculture, the Matanuska Maid Creamery Board, the Soil and Water Conservation District Board, and the local Grange and Farm Bureau. Carrol said that he has always volunteered for these positions. “His whole life is agriculture,” JoAnne said.



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