



Fresh Market Strawberry Bulletin

April 14, 2016

Warm enough for Blooms

No surprise with the heat over the last week that bloom will be close to reality soon. Plenty of green growth though we have come across some winter flood damage, which is photographed below.



Winter flood damage in a Dayton-area field.
Photo by Peerbolt Crop Management Scout Amy Horn April 7, 2016.

Archived Bulletins:

- [Summer Workshop, 2015 Taste Test Results](#)
- [FSMA Update](#)
- [OSC Annual Meeting Summary](#)
- [Season Extension](#)

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Meet Ann Colonna from The Food Innovation Center



What is The Food Innovation Center? The Food Innovation Center (FIC) Agricultural Experiment Station is located in Portland, OR. The FIC is a resource for client based Product and Process Development, Packaging Engineering and Shelf Life Studies, and Consumer Sensory Testing. The FIC also engages in scholarly research in Agricultural Economics and Marketing. The Agricultural Development and Marketing division of the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) located at the FIC provides Local, National, and International Marketing Access and Development.

Who is Ann Colonna? Ann Colonna is the Sensory Program Manager at the FIC, and she runs the sensory testing laboratory.

Consumer tests on a variety of products are run throughout the year, ranging from local albacore tuna in flexible packaging from a start-up company in Coos Bay to health-nutrition bars for one of the largest food companies in the world. She has developed a diverse data base of over 25,000 panelists that are used for consumer tests. While most of the testing occurs at the FIC, Ann also runs tests off campus at both local venues, such as the Bite-of-Oregon, farmers markets, grocery stores or sporting events and at other cities in cooperation with other programs.

How does The FIC and Ann fit into our goal to further Oregon's fresh strawberry market? The Oregon Strawberry Commission is trialing, evaluating, and tasting promising day neutral and June bearing fresh market varieties the summer of 2017. Having sound information on different varieties will provide growers with more opportunities to choose varieties that fit their farm and market needs. It will also encourage buyers to market those varieties that consumers preferred at the tastings.

Once in-field evaluations for characteristics such as plant vigor, health, and pest and disease resistance have been completed, another component of this project will take into consideration how these promising day neutral and fresh market June bearing varieties are perceived by consumers. Ann will lead the implementation of two taste tests with cooperation from New Seasons. These fresh market taste tests will provide crucial information on consumer preferences and what their purchasing power is in the market place.

How will Colonna's fresh market strawberry taste tests work?

The sensory study will be conducted in two phases:

- 1) June, 2017 there will be four days of consumer preference and acceptability testing of existing commercial cultivars such as “Hood” vs June bearing fresh market varieties; two days at the FIC and two days at area grocery stores and
- 2) four days consumer preference and acceptability testing of “Albion” vs. promising day neutral cultivars in August, 2017, again both at the FIC and grocery stores.

The preference and acceptability testing will be conducted in Portland, Oregon at the FIC as well as at two different New Seasons markets in the Portland Metro Area. Consumers will receive samples consisting of a bowl of fresh strawberries of each cultivar to evaluate for the sensory attributes of Overall Appearance, Color, Aroma, Overall Liking, Flavor, Sweetness, Acidity, Sweet to Tart ratio, Texture and Aftertaste. In the first day of testing at each location, the samples will be labeled with 3-digit random codes, and no information about the products or varietal names will be given. On the second day, product descriptors and other benefits about each cultivar will also be shown to measure the impact that might have on product liking and purchase intent. Consumers will be asked to taste all samples from left to right so they are able to judge the samples side by side in a multiple sample presentation. And the order will be randomized throughout the study. Bench testing of the different varietals will be done ahead of time to determine that each pair is sufficiently different to conduct a preference/acceptability study.

All strawberries will be provided by Unger Farms (where the grower trial will be planted) one day prior to testing. Products will be sorted and served to consumers with an eye for making each sample as identical as possible in size, shape and color. Consumers will receive the berries whole, just as they would see them when purchasing in the marketplace.



Respondents filling out a survey for one of The Food Innovation Center's past consumer taste tests. Photo courtesy of Ann Colonna.

Recent Strawberry Related News:

- Strawberries replace apples on top of Dirty Dozen list. The Packer [article](#). April 12,

2016.

- Oregon State University: finger tip information may save bees. Diane Dietz. The Register Guard [article](#). April 11, 2016.

Upcoming Events:

- **May 3 - OSC Commission Meeting.** 6 pm at McMenamins, 310 NE Evans st., McMinnville, OR. Email Philip Gutt for more information, pnwa@comcast.net

For more information on fresh market production and resources, check out the [OSC website](#).



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