



Fresh Market Strawberry Bulletin

February 4, 2016

Nursery plants are mostly dug. Generally the weather and bodies get antsy at this point in the year. Use those breaks in the weather to get field work done as before we know it those plants will be pushing.

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Harvest CROO Strawberry Harvester. From The Snack [article](#). December, 2015.

Let's talk Harvester Tech

A recent [strawberry harvester article](#) sparked some interest in revisiting harvester technology. Shake your head if you will, but labor concerns will likely not be going away. So let's discuss this recent robotic harvester technology being developed.

[Harvest CROO Robotics](#)

"Our goal is to pick 95% of the fruit off of any plant." This using their Pitzer Picking Wheel (see video below) as the initial concept with 360 degree rotating robotic picking heads. The goal is to decrease the amount of movement required to complete the picking action. The current harvester model has 16 picking wheels. Each wheel has multiple claws to pick the berries and place them in the packing section of the harvester. The berries are inspected before packing. Imaging for pests/diseases, weighing packed berries, cameras used to identify the ideal berry for harvest as well as those cameras using triangulation to guide the claw to gently pick the berry are all being perfected as part of this system. The idea is to create a harvester that doesn't require the grower to change their planting layout.

Harvest CROO team tested the prototype this past fall in Santa Maria, California, with a

California Giant Berry Farms grower. Positive response so far has increased investor interest as the team shows this technology to other strawberry growers. One machine is projected to pick and pack eight acres in a 20 hour day which they consider comparable to human labor. Future prototypes are in the works with the goal of picking a plant in under 8 seconds and transferring the technology to other row crops.

Of course this machine has a long way to go to perfect picking but the reality of such a harvester is becoming brighter each year. Cost and logistics are a whole different concern...



Pitzer Wheel in Action. From AndNowUKnow [YouTube video](#). August 7, 2015.

Further Harvester Technology articles:

- [Agrobot Strawberry Harvester.](#)
- [Harvest CROO Publish a Patent for its Robotic Harvesting Picking Wheel video.](#)

Upcoming events:

- **February 18** - OSC Annual Grower Meeting. NWREC. 15210 NE Miley Road, Aurora, OR 97002. Beginning at 9am. Email Philip Gutt for more information and to reserve your spot for lunch, berries@oregon-berries.com
- **February 24, 2016** – Oregon Strawberry Commission Meeting. Committee meetings start at 10:00am, Regular meeting noon, McMenamins Restaurant - 310 NE Evans St, McMinnville. Contact: berries@oregon-berries.com

In the next OSC Bulletin:

Nursery plant updates.

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

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This bulletin edited and sent by [Peerbolt Crop Management](#). For questions or inquires about signing up, contact the office: 503-289-7287 or pcm@peerbolt.com

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