



Fresh Market Strawberry Bulletin

February 18, 2016

Warming with rain. The recent heat units have helped plants wake up to the realization that a new season is near. Take the morning off to attend the OSC annual meeting for updates on how commission dollars are making a difference. Details in the meeting section below.

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Low Tunnels. From USDA-ARS Strawberry Season Extension Using Low Tunnels [article](#). 2013.

Season Extension Discussion

The season isn't even upon us and we are already talking about extending it? Sure! Extending the season can give you an advantage on early (or late) market demands. Here we weight some options on extending either early or later than the norm using tunnels.

Low Tunnels:

It can be as simple as laying agricultural fabric over multiple rows without forms. However, typically plastic, but sometimes agricultural fabric, is set over individual planted rows and supported by metal forms. Material edges are weighted down to enclose the structure. Much research has found additional benefits to tunnels including: decreased runner production, fewer weeds, reduced water use for frost protection, increased storage life and decreased fruit rot. Some drawbacks include regulating heat during very

warm temperatures, wind damage, and possible increased disease potential in poor ventilated conditions. Tunnels with frost protection misters also tend to further extend the season.

High Tunnels:

Similar to low tunnels except these are larger covered hoops encompassing multiple rows within a single tunnel. They are also somewhat more permanent than low tunnels though the structure can be disassembled to be moved to another location. Additional benefits to high tunnels than those discussed above would be easier labor/machinery access inside the hoops. High tunnels have similar drawbacks to low tunnels though high tunnel frames have better chance at surviving wind damage if they are reinforced.

Keep in mind that you will likely have to alter your management practices for plants under tunnels. Irrigation, fertilizer, pest/disease management, and pollination all need to be evaluated on a regular basis for successful tunnel production. So if you are looking for a competitive edge over the bulk of the strawberry season and feel confident in growing fresh berries adding this additional element to your production system might be worth putting some thought into. Further logistics and cost estimate information can be found in the article section below.



High tunnel strawberry production system. Photo by Lora Liegel. June, 2015.

Further Harvester Technology articles:

- [Methods of Extending the Strawberry Season in Europe](#). Jim Hancock and David Simpson. 1995.
- [Research Aims to Extend Growing Season in Mid-Atlantic Region](#). USDA-ARS. Sharon Durham. October, 2012.
- [USDA-ARS Tunnel Cost Estimate](#). Kim Lewers. From Strawberry Production Season Extension Using Tunnels. 2013.
- [2011 Cost Estimates of Producing Strawberries in a High Tunnel in Western Washington](#). WSU Fact sheet FS093E. 2011.

Upcoming events:

- **February 18** - OSC Annual Grower Meeting. NWREC. 15210 NE Miley Road, Aurora, OR 97002. Beginning at 9am. [Agenda](#). For more information email 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:

Summer workshop fresh taste test results.

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

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