

A fresh market strawberry bulletin from the OSC. [Forward this email to a friend](#)

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Fresh Market Strawberry Bulletin September 1, 2016

Fall is in the Air

With the turning weather comes another flush of Day Neutral fruit. Double check that plants are getting enough water as even those plants that are getting regular irrigation are lacking. This is particularly the case for those plants under hoop houses.

Did you take our [brief fresh market strawberry survey](#) last week? If not, please take a moment to do so. If you are involved in the fresh market strawberry industry in any way, your input is greatly appreciated. Go here for a [quick overview](#) of the work we've been doing to boost fresh market strawberries in Oregon.



Grower Spotlight: Amanda Stevens, Zorn Farms

This week, we talked to Amanda Stevens, the farm manager at Zorn Farms in St. Paul, Oregon. Stevens has seven acres of fresh market organic strawberries and has been growing them for three years.

How have things been going during this later summer season?

We stopped harvesting strawberries on the 10th of August. Our plants are still producing, but not enough to really justify selling for fresh market. We will probably start harvesting again in September.

What varieties did you grow this season? Were you pleased with your choices?

I grew Albion and Sweet Ann. Albion was the probably my best variety this year. They were a firmer berry, and they kept their flavor throughout the season better than the Sweet Ann did. I chose Sweet Ann because a nursery technician told me that they would do well for organic production, and overall, I've been pleased with them. I personally like their flavor better than the Albion. I'd say Sweet Ann is slightly more susceptible to disease.

How have you been dealing with pests this season? Have there been any particularly difficult pests or diseases?

I haven't had any particular pest problems this season. We continually fertilize. We have a drip fertigation system that works really well.

How did you begin growing fresh market strawberries?

We were actually asked to grow them. A farmer was getting out of the business, so we filled that hole in the market.

How has your fresh market strawberry operation changed since you started?

When I started three years ago, we had two acres. Now we have seven acres and will be replacing some this Fall. We might also remove one acre, which is partially for the ease of how we're planting them, and partially because of the market.

What was the expansion of your strawberry operation like?

It was doable. There was quite a bit of initial leg work, but it was well worth it. We had to ramp up deliveries and marketing, find new customers, and find an outlet for fresh market berries. It was especially worth it to find a processor for strawberries that weren't high enough quality to be sold as fresh market. This season, the processor ended up buying about 10,000 pounds to make jam, so I didn't have to throw them away. He's actually still taking some.

I have heard some growers express concern about having to purchase a cooling system that you need for fresh market strawberries. What is your setup for cooling/storing the strawberries at Zorn?

We have a cooler, and that's where the strawberries stay overnight after they've been picked. I really like how both the Albions and Sweet Anns do well in there. We deliver them to New Seasons Markets the next morning. We also sell to two distribution companies, and they have

their own coolers. They pick them up at the farm after we pick, so we aren't responsible for having to keep them cool.

Do you have any advice for growers who are thinking about adding fresh market strawberries to their offerings?

Do your research with all the outlets you have. You need to find enough customers and the right kind of customers. It's key to find a processor who can take the strawberries that weren't nice enough for fresh market.

Are you interested in giving field reports sharing some details about your fresh market strawberry operation? Contact [Jo Peterson](#) at 503-504-2977.

Strawberry-related News

- [Hepatitis A Outbreak Linked to Strawberry Smoothies](#) (Food Safety News, 8/30)
- [Minnesota Cracks Down On Neonic Pesticides, Promising Aid To Bees](#) (NPR, 8/31)
- [USDA raises farm income estimates for 2016](#) (USAgNet, 8/31)

Upcoming Events

Sept 29- Oregon Strawberry Commission meeting: 6 pm at McMenamins Hotel Oregon in McMinnville.

Past issues

- 08/24/2016 - [Survey: Fresh Market Strawberry Projects](#)
- 08/18/2016 - [OSC Bulletin 08-18-16: Buyer Updates](#)
- 08/04/2016 - [OSC Bulletin 08-04-16: Nursery updates](#)
- [Older issues](#)

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