

U.S. strawberry consumption has doubled over the past two decades thanks in part to greater availability and positive consumer perception, the California Strawberry Commission reported. 

"We have seen time and time again that people and kids respond to surveys saying that strawberries are their favorite fruit," communications director Carolyn O'Donnell told [www.freshfruitportal.com](http://www.freshfruitportal.com).

"Certainly there is nutrition research that continues to demonstrate that strawberries are good for health, in particular for cardiovascular health and brain health. They have also demonstrated qualities that may help prevent certain types of cancer."

Increased acreage and an extended harvest season has also encouraged U.S. consumption, O'Donnell added.

"Growers and university researchers that we work with here in California have been able to produce varieties that allow strawberries to be grown all year round in California," she said.

"In the winter you're going to see production coming from the southern part of the state and in the spring and summer, you're going to see production coming more out of the north."

"Day neutral" or "short day" varieties that require less sunlight allow for production during a longer period. Such varieties, alongside increased crop acreage this year, make California the nation's top strawberry producer. The commission reports that California now accounts for almost 90% of U.S. fresh strawberries.

Right now the state is in the peak of its production.

"Right now we're having between six and a half and seven and a half million trays of strawberries per week for the past five weeks. We're a little bit earlier than usual and it's always weather related," O'Donnell said.

"We have more production this time of year compared to the last two years but we also have more acreage this year too, so this is not unexpected. We also had some winter weather that was a little challenging for the southern districts earlier in the year."

California produces around 1.7 billion pounds of strawberries a year, 793 million of which come from the Watsonville/Salinas area where the commission is located.

May is National Strawberry Month.



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