

British strawberries could be on supermarket shelves nine months of the year using a vertical-growing technique, [The Evening Standard](#) newspaper reports.

The system, which is being pioneered by a fruit-grower in Arundel, West Sussex uses 50% less water and has a 90% lower carbon footprint but has yielded five times higher than normal production methods.

Direct Produce Supplies (DPS) is stacking up 1,000 metric tons (MT) of strawberries and will be supplying leading supermarket Tesco using the method, which should guarantee supplies whatever the weather during the British summer.

The strawberries are produced in vertically stacked beds under fully controlled conditions, with plants watered using a hydroponic feed instead of in the soil, which DPS says helps improve the nutrition value of the fruit.

Chief executive Paul Beynon said: "Vertical farming offers growers a protected environment that requires significantly less land, water and energy to produce excellent quality crops."

"We chose our farm location near Chichester on the south coast because this region gives the highest natural levels of light and heat in the UK and so maximizes the potential."

"We are still at a relatively early stage in vertical growing and in the future, we believe that we can make even further advances in sustainable strawberry production and that other fruit crops could take to the system in a similar way."