

California Giant Berry Farms said that the start to its peak season of the strawberry harvest is going as planned and expects a good size and condition of the fruit for the season.

“Our season started off strong, with healthy plants from the get-go,” said J.T. Tipton, district manager at California Giant Berry Farms, in a company statement. “Despite not receiving as much rain as typically desired in the winter, our plants have otherwise seen optimal growing conditions — which translates into the high-quality, sizable, and flavorful fruit California Giant is known for.”

Strawberry production is currently in the Santa Maria, Watsonville, and Salinas, California growing regions, with the company’s Oxnard program adding supplemental volume going through mid-May.

Peak volumes of conventional and organic strawberries from Santa Maria—pending any unforeseen, extreme weather events—are slated to arrive in time for Mother’s Day, with the Watsonville and Salinas growing ramping up to deliver peak volumes in late-May, ideal for Memorial Day celebrations.

“We’ve seen strong demand across the board,” said Nick Chappell, director of sales at [California Giant Berry Farms](#). “We are on the cusp of delivering a significant supply for our partners during a time of increased retail demand. The fruit that will be arriving for National Strawberry Month, Mother’s Day and Memorial Day has outstanding quality.”

Demand for strawberries has been surging, according to data from IRI/Freshlook, with retail dollar sales of strawberries up 14.9% from one year ago. “We see this increase in demand in part due to consumers seeking to make health-conscious choices, and the health benefits of strawberries—especially their high vitamin C content— act as a major draw,” says Chappell.

To support the expected influx of strawberries, California Giant will employ a consumer engagement sweepstakes to build brand awareness, drive purchase intent for fresh berries and “share the smiles and health benefits that berries deliver”.

Increased acreage of late spring and early summer strawberry production and fair weather should contribute to an earlier start to California’s peak season of strawberries, the California Strawberry Commission had said previously the peak harvest [would start in some regions as early as mid-March](#).