



FruitSmart®

The Smart Choice... Naturally

Fruit Ingredient Supplier and Processor

Monthly Newsletter

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Please call us for a quote.

Fruit Focus: Strawberries



Strawberry plants are low herbaceous perennials which come from the plant genus *Fragaria*, and from the plant family, *Rosaceae*, also known as the rose family.

Strawberry plants grow runners that arch over and root at the tips. The edible portion of this plant, famously known as a strawberry, is an "accessory fruit" or "false fruit" which is defined as a fruit that develops from a ripened ovary or ovaries but includes a significant portion that is developed from non-ovarian tissue. Technically, this means that the seeds of the strawberry are actually the fruit portion of the plant and the fleshy red part is actually a vegetable. The average strawberry contains 200 seeds. Because of its sweet, unique flavor, the strawberry is one world's most popular berries.

Historically, strawberries were used as an astringent, a mild laxative, a diuretic; a cure for ring worm, acne, and chronic ulcerations; and cosmetically as a teeth whitener and skin conditioner.

The modern strawberry has been said to have been "born of New World parents, in an Old World birthplace". North American Indians introduced strawberries to European explorers, who brought the plants back to Europe and began cultivating them. There, a fertile and vigorous hybrid was born: a cross between *Fragaria chiloensis* and *Fragaria virginiana* named *Fragaria x ananassa*, also known as the pineapple or pine strawberry. *Ananassa* strawberries sailed back to North America on immi-

grant ships and there have been cultivated since the mid-1800's.

Currently, the US is the leading international producer of strawberries for both fresh and frozen markets, with about 25% typically going to frozen. The second leading producer of fresh strawberries is China, who sends only a small amount of strawberries to the frozen market. Spain falls in third place for fresh. Spain is the largest exporter of strawberries, followed secondly by the US. Germany is the largest importer, followed secondly by France.

In the US, California is largest producer of strawberries, followed secondly by Florida. Oregon, Washington, and Michigan are also producing states. The majority of exported US strawberries go to Mexico. Conversely, Mexico is the largest supplier of strawberries imported into the US. 94% of US households claim to consume strawberries.

Healthwise, research has shown that strawberries may offer many benefits. They are rich in vitamin C and are one of the highest ranking fruits in antioxidant and phytonutrient content. They contain a fairly high amount of ellagic acid, which has been shown to inhibit cancer and/or the mutations caused by cancerous elements. They are one of the few fruits that contain a water-soluble B vitamin called pantothenic acid, which is required to sustain life. Strawberries are also rich in cholesterol-reducing fiber pectin.

(Sources: United States Department of Agriculture Foreign Agricultural Service, "Strawberry Situation and Outlook for Selected Countries", *World Horticultural Trade & U. S. Export Opportunities*, March 2006; O'Neill, Ph.D., Kim & Byron Murray, Ph.D. *Power Plants*. Pleasant Grove: Woodland Publishing, 2002; "Strawberry": <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strawberry>. June 27, 2006.)

Strawberry Crop and Market News

A wet spring in California, coupled with a short crop in China, is creating a shortage of strawberries so far this season. Europe has sourced aggressively from China, Chile and Argentina, resulting in a tight market in the U.S. The Strawberry Advisory Board of California shows YTD volume off 10% versus last year, and well below the 2004 figures. It

continues to be difficult for the US to compete in the processed strawberry markets, but the tight supply and higher prices may change the marketplace this year.

(FruitSmart® would like to thank Christine Reker, Director of Marketing and Strategy at Sunrise Growers (CA) for her input for this article.)

Small Order? FruitSmart® Can Help!

FruitSmart® is gearing up to handle your small order requirements. We are working to inventory pails of

a wide range of juice concentrate and purees. Please contact us to discuss your needs.

"Opportunity is missed by most because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work."

- Thomas Alva Edison