



# British Columbia Strawberry Growers Association

*Strawberry News Summer/Fall 2016*

## Growers Notes *by Carolyn Teasdale BCAGRI*

Our strawberry season arrived early this year with a concentrated spring crop. Growers with both June-bearing and day-neutral fields were faced with the challenge of picking all of their ripening fruit at once in May.

### June bearing strawberries

June-bearing strawberries entered bloom in mid-April this year. Puget Reliance harvest began by the second week of May, with peak June-bearing harvest in the last week of May and the first week of June. Strawberry fruit quality was affected by heavy rains in late May. Harvest ended by the third week of June in most fields, and fields were renovated in mid - late June.

### Day-neutral strawberries

Albion fields started to bloom in early April. The flowering period coincided with the relatively warm, dry month of weather in April, which encouraged rapid fruit development. Harvest began around the middle of May in second year plantings. Overall, the day neutral fruit quality was good for the first picks, with relatively little fruit rot, despite some strange misshapen berries. New day-neutral plantings began to ripen in late June in the central valley. Second year day-neutral fields resumed flowering and fruiting in early to mid-July.

### Pest issues

In terms of insect, mite and disease issues, many were tied to the unusual weather pattern this year. The warm spring weather led to early season spider

mite issues in some June-bearing fields. Lygus nymphs hatched in late April and were active in many June-bearing fields in early May, and in day-neutral fields in late May and again in August. Powdery mildew leaf infections first showed up in early May, and levels increased through May and June. Thrips became a problem in day-neutral fields in June. The wet weather in June and July led to unusually high slug damage in some day-neutral fields. On the plus side, the change to cooler temperatures likely helped to keep spider mite levels from increasing. SWD larvae were found in the ripe berries in some fields in July, but became more of an issue in August.

### Verticillium Wilt Surveillance

Dr. Siva Sabaratnam and co-op student Raymond Robinson (University of Victoria) from the BC Ministry of Agriculture conducted a survey this season on *Verticillium* wilt in strawberries. They visited twenty strawberry farms in the Fraser Valley, Greater Vancouver and Capital Districts to assess the prevalence and distribution of *Verticillium* wilt and other root rot pathogens and to assess the differences in production systems and strawberry cultivars in relation to the incidence and severity of *Verticillium* wilt. *Verticillium* wilt was found on 25% of the farms surveyed. In addition to *Verticillium*, other crown and root rot pathogens, such as *Rhizoctonia*, *Fusarium*, *Cylindrocarpon* and *Phytophthora* (in a few fields) were found to be more prevalent than *Verticillium*.

Thank you to all of the growers who participated in this research!

**2016 Fresh Levies**  
*are due **October 31, 2016**, in the office of the*  
**BC Strawberry Growers Association** *(use the reporting sheet on the*  
*back page of this newsletter to submit your report & levies)*



**#265-32160 South Fraser Way**  
**Abbotsford, BC V2T 1W5**

The head of a leading Queensland-based strawberry company says a recent move into substrate-based production has exceeded expectations in terms of quality.

Piñata Farms ventured into substrate production over the winter and is now picking its first strawberries grown using the method in Wamuran on the Sunshine Coast.

“The eating quality is superb and the berries have a vibrant colour with a natural sheen. Because they’re growing under polytunnels, they’ve stayed warm throughout winter and that’s resulted in brighter, cleaner fruit,” said managing director Gavin Scurr.

He said the main variety grown with substrate on the operation was Albion, while U.S. developed varieties Portola and San Andreas were being trialed.

“As the substrate harvest progresses, all indications are for a positive outcome. We’re hoping to keep producing substrate fruit at Wamuran for several months yet,” Scurr said.

“By then, harvesting will have begun at Stanthorpe, leading to peak production in November. There should be a plentiful supply of Piñata strawberries right through until Christmas.”

Scurr said he expected the field-grown harvest at Wamuran to end by early October, depending on the weather. “Once the temperature reaches 30 degrees, it starts to get challenging as it’s too hot for the fruit.”

Scurr said it had been a tough season for Queensland strawberry producers with yields down about 20% on a per plant basis across the industry.

“That’s due to an unseasonably warm autumn which

delayed planting for many growers and resulted in plants being less robust than usual,” he said

However, early substrate results at Wamuran had buoyed hopes for a good start to summer production, he said.

“Wamuran’s climate means we can produce field-grown and substrate strawberries progressively from now on, with the aim being to extend the season as late as possible to fill a supply window in October and November.

“At Stanthorpe, both field and polytunnel crops produce at the same time, so we’ll aim to produce fruit earlier there, so there’s not a drop in the total yield between the farms.”

Piñata Farms has also selected three new European-bred varieties for commercial trials following Scurr’s recent visit to some of Europe’s leading strawberry breeders. Depending on the outcome of the trials, they will be commercially produced in 2020. “We’ve selected two winter varieties to grow at Wamuran. Both have a better yield while maintaining flavour. The variety we’ve selected for summer production has been specifically chosen to fill a supply window in the April-May period.”

Scurr said varietal selection was key in Piñata Farms’ quest to produce strawberries outside the traditional Queensland strawberry season.

“The industry would produce three times as much fruit in September than in October. We’re trying to plug gaps at both ends of the supply period by looking at varieties and matching them to growing methods and growing regions.



### 2016 Board of Directors

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Carolyn Teasdale, Berry Specialist, Ministry of Agriculture appointee

## Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD) update for Strawberries

September 9, 2016

**Prepared by:** Tracy Hueppelsheuser, British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture

**Data Collected by:** E.S. Cropconsult Ltd.

**Cooperators:** B.C. Blueberry Council, B.C. Raspberry Industry Development Council, B.C. Strawberry Growers Association, and all cooperating berry growers.

Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD) is a constant threat to BC berries, including strawberries. While strawberries appear to be less impacted by this pest, it is important to be diligent with the SWD management strategies and protect ripening fruit.

All fields with ripe fruit are susceptible to SWD damage. SWD females lay their eggs in ripe and ripening berries. The larvae that feed inside berry fruit are a serious harvest contaminant. Fruit will be downgraded and could be rejected by buyers if it contains SWD larvae.

Area-wide trapping for Spotted Wing Drosophila is underway in wild hosts and strawberry fields now.

**SWD flies are active and are being caught in traps.** See Figure 1 on next page for data.

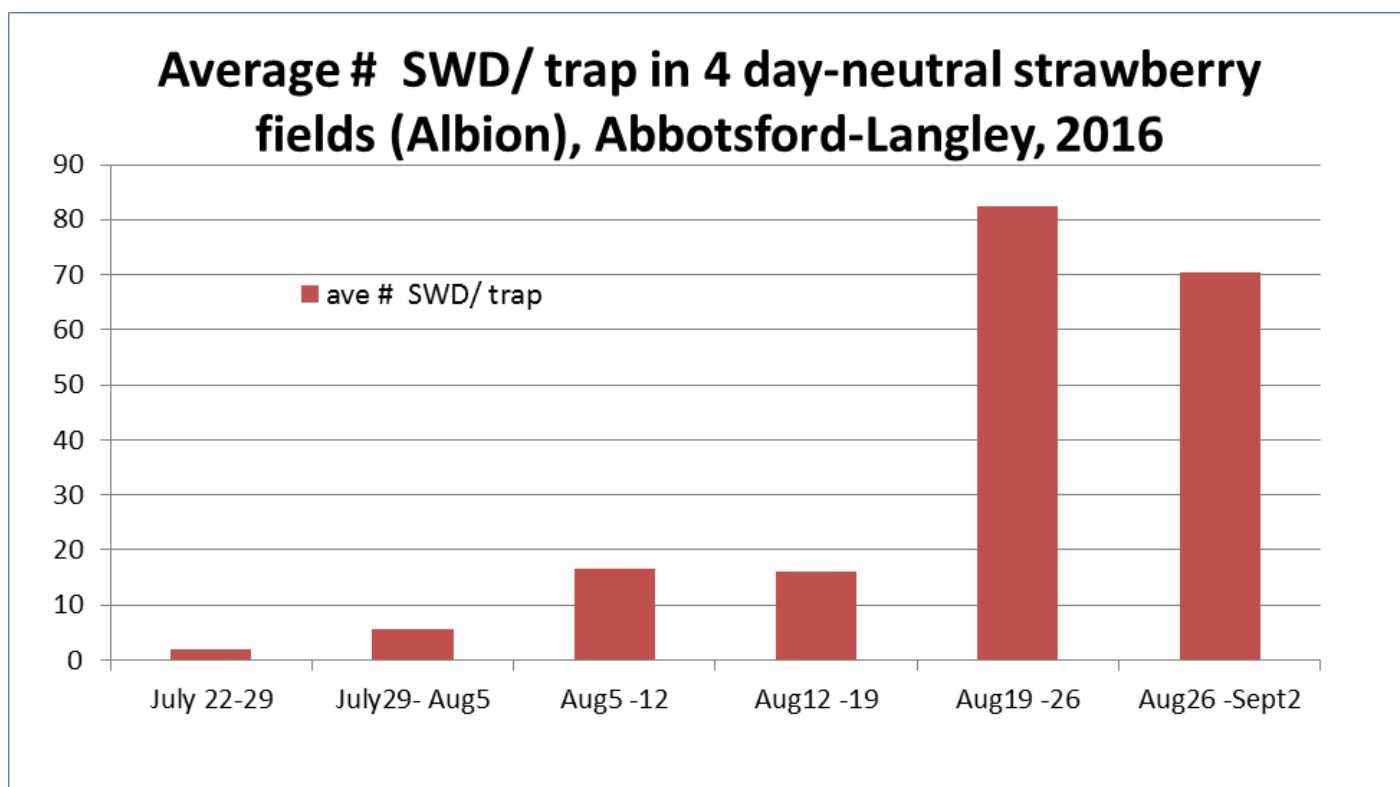
### Recommendations:

**Sanitation:** Where practical, remove, deep bury, or otherwise destroy cull fruit to prevent additional SWD feeding and breeding sites. Keep equipment and processing areas free of old fruit. Good plant care will enable easier passage of equipment between rows, keep humidity lower, and increase airflow, all of which will help limit SWD.

**Harvest:** Shorten picking interval where possible: pick early, pick clean and pick often. Do not leave overripe hanging fruit.

**Incorporate SWD insecticides** into strawberry insect management program (14 days re-treatment interval for strawberries)

**Figure 1. Summer and Fall SWD trapping for Strawberry:**



In our 4 strawberry survey fields, SWD trap catches were low compared to other berry crops, but started to increase in mid to late August. These trends were similar in past years.

From mid-September onwards as temperature cools, SWD will become less interested in ripening fruit as they prepare for overwintering.

Traps will be removed from fields in late September

Predicted SWD population events and activity are based on Oregon State University [Online phenology and Degree-day model](#). Use the model to find predictions specific to your area.

For a summary of most of the trap catches in British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest, see <http://www.berriesnw.com/SFU.htm>

See [Spotted Wing Drosophila Fruit Fly - Pest Alert](#) for more information on this pest



## ***Frozen Fruit Smoothie Bars*** by... Angela @ Canned Time

### **Ingredients:**

#### **Crust:**

2 cups of ground Ginger Snap Cookies  
1 cup of chopped Hazel Nuts  
1/2 cup of melted Butter  
Pinch of Sea Salt

#### **Filling:**

2 cups frozen strawberries  
2 frozen bananas  
1 can chilled Coconut Milk  
3 tbsps. Ground Flax  
2 tbsps. Vanilla Protein Powder  
1/3 cup Honey  
1 tsp. Cinnamon  
1 tsp. Ground Ginger  
2 tbsps. Arrow Roots or Cornstarch  
Sweetened Flaked Coconut/ fresh strawberries for topping



### **Instructions:**

Makes 9 large squares.

1. Mix the crust ingredients and scoop them out into a non stick 9x6 pan.
2. Press the crust down to cover the bottom of your pan.
3. Freeze the crust while you make the filling.
4. For the Smoothie filling, blend all ingredients in a blender and chill in the freezer for about 15 minutes.
5. Remove the crust from the freezer and pour the Smoothie blend on top of the frozen crust. Cover and freeze until completely set, about 1 hours. Sprinkle shredded coconut over the top and freeze again before cutting into squares. Wrap squares in plastic wrap and store in the freezer.

## **Cornell's new giant strawberry "full of flavor"**

Cornell University's newest strawberry variety is big enough to fill the palm of your hand, according to its breeder. Topping out at more than 50 grams, 'Archer' is the latest creation from Cornell University berry breeder Courtney Weber.

"'Archer' is an extraordinarily high-flavored berry," says Weber, Associate Professor in the Horticulture Section of the School of Integrative Plant Science. "It has an intense aroma, so when you bite into it you get a strong strawberry smell. And it's very sweet, so you get a strong strawberry flavor that really makes an impact."

Weber says the combination of large fruit and strong flavor hits the sweet spot for local growers who sell in farmers' markets, have U-pick operations, and/or roadside stands.

'Archer' ripens in June and holds its large size through multiple harvests for two to three weeks.



In addition, 'Archer' is cold-hardy, making it suitable for growing in diverse climates throughout New York as well as in places like Michigan and Minnesota and along the Mid-Atlantic from Maryland into the Northeast.

Sporting a durable root system, 'Archer' is tolerant to root rots and other common diseases, Weber notes. 'Archer' has been licensed to Krohne Plant Farms in Hartford, MI, through the Center for Technology Licensing at Cornell University, and plants can be obtained for spring 2017 planting.

# BC WATER SUSTAINABILITY ACT

Ground Water Users are required to  
Licence Water Supply Wells in 2016

[www.env.gov.bc.ca/wsd/plan\\_protect\\_sustain/groundwater/wells/application/well\\_registration\\_form.pdf](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wsd/plan_protect_sustain/groundwater/wells/application/well_registration_form.pdf)

## GROUNDWATER WELLS REQUIRE A LICENCE

- ◇ Since February 29, 2016, groundwater use is being regulated by the Provincial Government.
- ◇ New and existing users will need to apply for a licence to extract and use groundwater.

## WHAT DO GROUNDWATER USERS NEED TO DO TO COMPLY?

- ◇ Existing groundwater users will need to submit a licence application which includes the name and description of aquifer, well details and construction report, purpose and quantity of groundwater use.
- ◇ New users may need to assess the impact of the proposed extraction and use on other groundwater users and the environment.
- ◇ In support of long-term aquifer sustainability, users may also need to equip their wells to continuously monitor pumping rates and water levels, and regularly collect and analyze water quality/chemistry.

## WHY APPLY FOR A LICENCE EARLY?

- ◇ Save by applying in the first year (until March 2017) and avoid licence application fees for each well registered.
- ◇ Apply within the first 3 years, and your priority date will be based on historic / demonstrated first use.
- ◇ First-in-Time, First-in-Right (FITFIR). Senior licences' will have precedence over junior licences' during time of water scarcity.



## Stay Connected

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Share your Strawberry moments with the Association, or if you have something to share for the newsletter send it to: [info@bcstrawberries.com](mailto:info@bcstrawberries.com)

## *Benefits of Membership.....*

The BC Strawberry Growers Association is very active in promoting BC's strawberry industry, making sure that it remains vibrant. This is done through numerous programs that are funded through levies producers pay on their strawberry production. Fresh levies are remitted directly to the Association, on Farm Gate sales, while processed levies are remitted by the processor to the BC Vegetable Commission who forwards these funds to the Association. Here is some of what the Association does and why growers can benefit by belonging.

### **The Association....**

- ◊Negotiates the annual processing price processors pay for strawberries purchased from growers.
- ◊Collects levies from fresh strawberry producers at the rate of \$0.005 cents per pound.
- ◊**Manages the Strawberry Industry Development Trust Fund** which support eligible industry activities. These include projects involving research, grower education, promotion and market development.
- ◊*Participates in the National setting of priorities for the approval of new pesticides.*
- ◊Organizes a **"Fresh BC Strawberries"** promotion campaign generating fantastic support from the media. Radio interviews, on-site TV coverage, newspaper pictures & stories, with features on Food & Wine programs, and Blogs. These along with Social Media splashes all help to assist in bringing public awareness of the local strawberry industry throughout BC.
- ◊Works closely with the berry breeders and other scientists testing new cultivars to identify varieties that are adapted to BC's climate and environment. *Funds projects* to develop innovative production techniques for new and standard varieties using your levy dollars.
- ◊Direct access to the Ministry of Agriculture, Berry Industry Specialist who supplies us with the most current information regarding Pests and other matters related to Strawberries - *See Growers Notes - in our Newsletter*



- ◊Provides this current and critical information to growers on invasive pests like Spotted Wing Drosophila
- ◊Is available to growers if there are production problems or other concerns, with the assistance of our plant breeder and multiple researchers.

**... all made possible because growers pay levies on their processed and fresh strawberry production. We encourage you to please join the BC Strawberry Growers Association, pay your levy on strawberry production and help the BC strawberry industry thrive and remain vibrant.**

September 16, 2016

Dear Grower:

**Re: Notice for Levies on Fresh Strawberries**

**It is our understanding that you are in the business of growing fresh strawberries.**

**All processed strawberry producers pay a levy that is collected by processors, who then forward the levies to the BC Vegetable Marketing Commission. The Vegetable Marketing Commission then sends a cheque to the BC Strawberry Growers Association and all other British Columbian strawberry growers submit their dues on fresh BC strawberry sales directly to the Association office.**

**If you produce a minimum of one acre or more of strawberries then dues are the same rate for both fresh and processed strawberries. The rate is \$0.005 cents per pound on all strawberries produced on your farm (owned and leased land) and sold as fresh during the 2016 season as Wholesale Sales, Farm Gate Sales, or at Farmer's Markets.**

**Growers of less than one acre of strawberries, are invited to become a member for a fee of \$100 per year towards the viability of the BC Strawberry industry!**

Company/Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone/Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Total pounds 2016 BC Strawberries produced/sold: \_\_\_\_\_

Levy (Total Pounds x \$0.005): \_\_\_\_\_

+ 5% GST on Levy: \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Levy including GST:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE FORWARD YOUR CHEQUE BY October 31, 2016 payable to:**

**BC Strawberry Growers Association at**

**#265-32160 South Fraser Way, Abbotsford, BC V2T 1W5**

Thank You