



S T A T E O F C O N N E C T I C U T

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Connecticut Grown Strawberries: A Sweet Sign of Summer

HARTFORD— Nothing tastes quite as sweet as the first native strawberry of the season. Fortunately for Connecticut residents, local berries are now becoming abundant at farms and farmers' markets throughout the state.

Strawberry season in Connecticut begins in early June and continues through early July, often wrapping up around Independence Day. While the season is short in duration, it is long on flavor. Many consider Connecticut Grown strawberries to be one of the best arguments for eating locally and seasonally.

According to Connecticut Agriculture Commissioner Steven Reviczky, this year's crop has good size, juiciness, and flavor, thanks to cooperation from Mother Nature.

"We are seeing some beautiful berries this season," Commissioner Reviczky said. "I just bought my first quart and nearly ate them all in one sitting. They were so delicious it was hard to stop. In fact, the only reason I didn't eat them all was because I knew how disappointed my wife would be if I didn't save her any!"

Strawberries are one of the first produce crops to appear at farmers' markets, which have begun opening up around the state over the past few weeks. The Connecticut Department of Agriculture is working with 123 certified farmers' markets this year, all of which sell Connecticut

Grown produce. Many also sell meat, seafood, dairy and cheese, honey, maple, and other items grown and raised in the state. The vast majority of markets run weekly and will continue through October.

Pick-your-own farms are another terrific option for obtaining those beloved berries and various other crops. Consumers can pick as much or as little as they need, selecting the sizes and shapes that suit their tastes. Berry picking is particularly enjoyable and accessible for children, as the low-growing plants and bright fruit make it easy for young eyes and hands to find and harvest, while parents and grandparents enjoy the fresh air and exercise that is part of this family-oriented activity.

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture has published two brochures to help consumers locate Connecticut Grown strawberries and other crops. *Connecticut Farmers' Markets 2011* and *2011 Connecticut Pick-Your-Own Farms* are available in print at the department's office, located at 165 Capitol Avenue in Hartford, and at University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension Centers and USDA Farm Service Agency offices throughout the state.

Both brochures can be downloaded from the Publications page of the Department of Agriculture's website, www.CTGrown.gov, which also contains many other listings and information pertaining to Connecticut agriculture.

CONNECTICUT GROWN - The Local Flavor

www.CTGrown.gov www.ct.gov/doag

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