

Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES) Receives Funding For Strawberry Research

Peter Nitzsche, William Hlubik, and Win Cowgill
New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station

A team of faculty and staff from Rutgers NJAES, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture and three cooperating Universities have received a grant funding for a project entitled: “Improved Variety Selection and Sustainability of Strawberries for the Eastern United States”. The project is funded by a grant from the Walmart Foundation and administered by the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, Center for Agricultural and Rural Sustainability. The goal of this project is to expedite the evaluation of strawberry breeding selections by utilizing farmer and consumer input to provide for a more rapid release and commercialization of improved cultivars for eastern U.S. growers and consumers. This project will test larger scale propagation and distribution of advanced selections, with goals of increasing production, improving profitability of local farms, and increasing the availability of high quality fruit.



Rutgers Professor Bill Hlubik teaching master gardeners how to select strawberry tips for propagation from the Earth Center Walmart strawberry research project, East Brunswick, NJ.

This funding has already facilitated an increase in the propagation of advanced strawberry selections from the Rutgers NJAES breeding program and replicated

yield trials have been established at three research sites (Pittstown, NJ, South Brunswick, NJ, NC), and observational trials at 8 conventional and two organic

Table 1. Field performance of NJAES strawberry selections, Pittstown, NJ 2010

Genotype	Marketable yield (lb/A)	Average fruit size (g) ^x	Average °Brix ^y
Chandler	11,372 b ^z	17.1 c	8.4de
NJAES –A	9,719 b	19.2 b	9.4 bc
NJAES – B	12,273 b	20.4 a	9.7 ab
NJAES – C	19,886 a	16.9 c	8.2 e
NJAES – D	6,740 b	17.2 c	10.0 a

^xTwenty representative fruit/plot

^yMean of fruit samples from eight harvest dates

^zMean separation within columns by Fisher’s Protected LSD, P ≤ 0.05



Left to Right- Professor Bill Hlubik, John Hauser -Grower, Jim Gimerese-Grower, Dr. Gojko Jelenkovick, Rutgers Strawberry Breeder examine strawberry selections at Rutgers Farm 3 research trials, June 2013, East Brunswick, NJ

made in February by the Walmart Foundation to the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture's Center for Agricultural and Rural Sustainability Arkansas (CARS). The competitive grants program, administered by CARS, attracted 56 proposals from agricultural research and extension personnel at land-grant public universities in 29 states. For more

farms. Two of these selections are also being custom propagated through an agreement with Nourse Farms a commercial nursery in Massachusetts. To test for consumer preference, blinded taste evaluations will be conducted in the spring of 2014 to evaluate advanced selections over commercially available varieties. The research program is targeted to release the best selections to commercial growers within the next three to four years.

This grant award is part of a \$3 million donation

information got to the National Strawberry Sustainability Initiative website <http://strawberry.uark.edu> or The Walmart Foundation website www.foundation.walmart.com.

At least two of the NJAES selections have performed very well in the replicated trials and in grower fields. While in some of the replicated trials yields have been somewhat lower than the commercial standard 'Chandler', fruit size, shape, color, and flavor have been much improved (Table 1).

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