

North Carolina Growers and Consumers are Berry Excited for Strawberry Season.



Since fall, NCDA&CS Regional Agronomists have been working with strawberry growers in the fields assisting with tissue samples, soil samples and nematode samples, while also advising growers on pests and diseases, water management and cold weather protection and more with the goal of making lots of sweet, red berries for us find at our local U-Pick farm, farm store, or grocery store right now. It's strawberry season y'all.

Soil sampling analysis determines pH and nutrient levels available for the plant to bring in through the roots. An agronomist can then provide site-specific lime and fertilizer recommendations for the strawberry plants.

Plant tissue sampling reveals how much of the nutrients are being taken up by the plant roots, which allows growers to identify nutrient imbalances and address them before they become a problem. For many strawberry growers tissue sampling is done regularly throughout the growing season, especially during flowering and fruit development. Fertility management in strawberries is built upon a strong foundation of informed decision making where too much and too little are equal problems to avoid. It's a fine balancing act.

Specific nutrients are needed for the yield to be bountiful, and others are needed for the development of the color and sweetness, to make them berry beautiful and berry-licious.

Nutrient solution analysis can measure the chemical properties of solutions so growers can be certain that their fertility 'recipes' are coming out as planned.

Nematode samples are taken to ensure the number of detrimental, root eating parasites remain low or provide management recommendations on how to lower population numbers should they be too high. *If the nematodes aren't eating roots, then maybe we can eat the fruits.*

NCDA&CS Agronomic Services has been a partner with farmers for over 85 years and every strawberry season is every bit as exciting as the last.

Now that you have a greater understanding of what it takes to grow a strawberry, go out and enjoy the sweet success of a proper growing season, and support your local farmers.