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California Strawberry Commission Provides Update on Strawberry Farming Research and Innovation

Strawberry Research Production Meeting Spotlights Key Developments in Sustainable Farming Practices

SANTA MARIA, Calif. – May 13, 2024 – California strawberry growers and industry members gathered in early May for the California Strawberry Commission’s (CSC) Production Research meeting held in Santa Maria, Calif. to hear from strawberry industry experts regarding key advancements in strawberry production. The meeting covered a broad range of topics that included regulatory updates from the Santa Barbara County Agricultural Commissioner, Jose Chang, as well as highlights of relevant research in the areas of strawberry disease diagnostics, disease-resistant cultivars, integrated pest management, weed science and production automation.

“Through partnerships with the Cal Poly Strawberry Center and the University of California, Davis, the CSC’s research and automation program is putting industry assessment dollars to work to generate knowledge and create solutions and products the industry needs to address both short- and long-term issues,” said Bill Turechek, Vice President of Research, CSC. “We’re striving to provide resources to manage soilborne diseases, continuing to innovate in the area of integrated pest management and water conservation, and bring new disease- and insect-resistant cultivars to our growers to assure an economically and environmentally sustainable California strawberry industry.”

More than 80 industry members, including growers, pest control advisors (PCAs), industry representatives and agricultural researchers, attended. Turechek welcomed attendees and shared an update on the current state of the California strawberry industry, which produces 90% of strawberries grown in the United States. As the fourth most valuable crop in California, nearly 220 million trays were harvested in 2023.

Key areas of production research shared during the meeting included:

- An update on strawberry disease diagnostics from the Cal Poly Strawberry Center
- Strategies to optimize irrigation management
- Progress toward the development of disease-resistant cultivars from the University of California, Davis (UC Davis)
- Background and strategies for combatting pests like Lygus and Spotted Wing Drosophila
- Industry automation program updates, including the strawberry decapper, lygus bug vac, UVC application for powdery mildew and two-spotted spider mite management, and the hoop house arch remover

During the event, Turechek also shared updates on the current research underway in pathology and entomology and the top research priorities for 2025.

Recordings of the sessions will be available on [CalStrawberry.org](https://www.calstrawberry.org) for industry members who were not able to attend live.

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About California Strawberry Commission

The California Strawberry Commission is more than 400 strawberry farmers, shippers and processors, all working together to advance strawberry farming for the future of our land and people. Commission programs create opportunities for success through groundbreaking programs focused on workforce training, strawberry production research and nutrition research. Through science-based information and education, it delivers the good news about sustainable farming practices that benefit the health of people, farms and communities.