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The Changing Strawberry Cultivar Situation in North America

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Introductory Remarks

Ten years ago, at the American Society for Horticultural Science meeting in Boston, the American Pomological Society sponsored the first of a series of workshops on the current cultivar situations with respect to the major fruit crops grown in North America. These workshops, which took place over a period of several years, were successful with each one ultimately being published in Fruit Varieties Journal. It was decided it would be appropriate for APS to revive the cultivar workshop series and that the logical crop with which to do this would be strawberry. This crop started the series and is the one which has undergone the most changes with respect to cultivars. Moreover, it is anticipated that there will be more changes in the next decade. The reasons for the changes and anticipated changes include (1) the increasing unavailability of chemicals for pest control and thus the increasing need for greater levels of pest resistance; (2) the desire for improved fruit qualities; (3) the increasing use of day-neutral cultivars; (4) the increasing use of annual planting systems; (5) the high cost of hand harvest and the potential of machine harvest for processing berries; (6) the increasing influence of the private sector in sponsoring breeding programs and (7) the expansion of production regions. With reference to the last, it is worth noting that we are now considering six general regions, rather than the four considered in 1978.

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