

# Fresh Forward introduces new June-bearing strawberry variety

by Philip Lieten of Fragaria Holland

On 6 September, at the Dutch Strawberry Field Day in St. Oedenrode, The Netherlands, Fresh Forward launched its new strawberry variety Jive.

For over 450 visitors, who were mainly strawberry growers, breeder Bert Meulenbroek and his team highlighted the advantages of the new June-bearer, and there were freshly picked fruits of the new variety on display.

Previous varieties introduced from Fresh Forward's breeding programme include Sonata, Figaro, Salsa and Rumba. All of these names are synonymous with music and dance, a tradition which has been maintained by the Dutch breeding programme for several years.

Jive has been tested under selection number FF-1003 in The Netherlands over the past three years. Based on these experiences it is believed that this late short-day variety is well suited for summer production using cold-stored waiting bed plants. Growing strawberries in warm weather conditions is a challenge, especially with 60-day plants, and in the last decade heat waves have been experienced in central Europe.



Strawberry breeder Bert Meulenbroek introduces new strawberry variety Jive.

In these conditions cold-stored plants start flowering before developing sufficient leaf canopy to support their berries. As a result Elsanta and Sonata strawberries can lose size and firmness. Jive is distinct from Elsanta and Sonata because of its greater resistance to heat stress. This late variety loves warm weather and bears fruits of consistent size, enabling growers to produce a profitable crop.

## Plant type

Jive has a beneficial plant habit - it develops a substantial canopy before the plant starts to flower. The long inflorescences and well-displayed fruit ensure an easy harvest and high picking speed. The variety has a simple inflorescence structure (five to seven berries per truss) which is conducive to good fruit size. Waiting-bed plants produce, on average, seven to eight trusses which are very well spread out during the harvest season. Therefore Jive has a longer production period than both Elsanta and Sonata. It commences seven to ten days later and the yields for Jive are up to 30 per cent higher than for Elsanta.

## Fruit quality

A characteristic of Jive, like Sonata, is its good fruit set and



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uniform fruit shape. It maintains its size during the entire harvest period and consistently produces a high percentage of Class 1 grade-out. Primary fruit tends to be elongated with a somewhat broad and flattened nose, but most of the berries are conical and uniform. Jive bears attractive fruits with an orange-red internal and external colour, and the taste in the early season is slightly sweet and improves through the picking season.



Freshly picked Jive strawberries.



The team from Fresh Forward celebrates the launch of Jive.

Mature fruits maintain a marketable vibrant red colour for a long period making it possible to delay harvest, if necessary, to suit the demands of the market. The fruits are also fairly resistant to rain.

### Pest and disease susceptibility

Jive is a robust variety and is not as susceptible to powdery mildew as Elsanta, which is a big advantage for summer production. However, it does not like wet soils and its susceptibility to crown rot is similar to that of Elsanta. ◆

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