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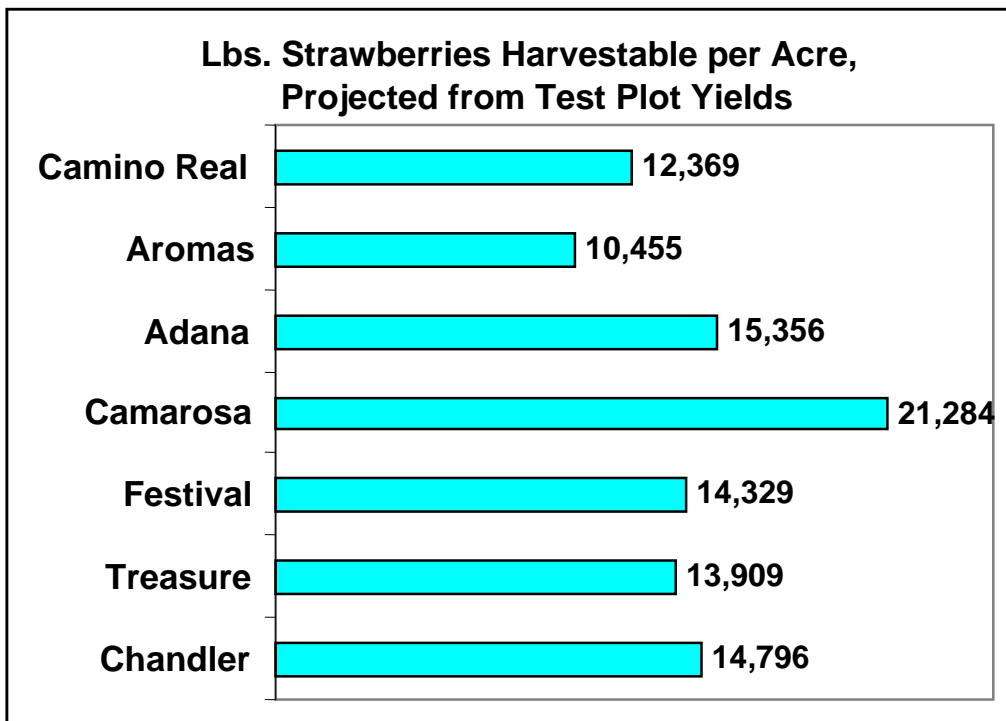


SMALL FARM STRAWBERRY VARIETY TRIAL Stockton, California 2006

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This year's experimental test plot evaluated seven replicated varieties for potential use by small farms in direct market channels. Varieties were chosen for their fresh market and frozen market potential. The plot was established in a commercial field, bed fumigated with Vapam and drip irrigated. The plants were donated by Bob Whittaker of Bonita Nursery/Bonseeds. Similar trials were established in Merced and Fresno counties using the same plant source so that data could be collected in three different climatic locations of the Central Valley for direct market farmers. Plants were transplanted in the Stockton area on August 13, 2005. Results are from 14 harvests beginning on April 28 and ending on June 14. Data was collected from 10 plants in the middle of each plot, replicated four times. We collected only the fruit suitable for fresh market and freezer sales. Unfortunately for the growers and our research results this season, we had one of the wettest years in recent history and much of the crop was lost due to botrytis and other soft rots. There were also many cloudy days that prevented the fruit from ripening normally.

The results show that under these wet, cloudy conditions the Camarosa variety produced the most marketable fruit. The trial needs to be repeated in a year, when the weather is more normal for the Stockton area. The two varieties from Florida, Treasure and Festival, were much more vigorous and produced many more flowers during the fall season. Their production in the spring was limited by the unusually wet and cloudy conditions. Flavor was not evaluated due to the unusual growing conditions. Most regular buyers of strawberries commented that the fruit was lacking flavor and low in sugar in the spring of 2006.



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