

Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Ask Laura Newsletter Column
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Q: Do you have production and marketing information for growing organic strawberries along the Central Coast?

A: Yes we do! A new resource from the University of California's Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) is full of considerations and information related to organic strawberry management and performance. The Organic Strawberry Production Manual has research-based information on economic and marketing considerations, varietal performance, crop management, disease and pest management, harvest and postharvest considerations, organic certification issues, and sustainability indicators. Like many of UC ANR's publications, the manual includes many beautiful color photographs, tables, and illustrations to help explain the science associated with organic strawberry production and management. In looking at the publication's contents in more detail, you will find:

- Size and growth the growth of the organic strawberry industry
- Sample production costs and returns
- Cultivar selection and pest management
- Management of nutrients, cover crops, and weeds
- Erosion and sediment management
- Soil, foliar, and fruit disease management
- Field handling, temperature management, and transportation to market
- Conversion to organic production and steps to organic certification

This 148-page manual was developed by UC Cooperative Extension farm advisors, specialists, and researchers, as well as UC, USDA, and private industry scientists and researchers. It is available for purchase at many UC Cooperative Extension offices. You may also purchase it from our online publications department at:
<http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu/Items/3531.aspx>.

Another resource that may help with your information needs is the Cost and Return Study Project website, which is accessible through the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at UC Davis. There you will find detailed economic studies of organic (and conventional) strawberry production in the state. The website's link is:
<http://coststudies.ucdavis.edu/current.php>.

In addition to these two resources, your local UC Cooperative Extension farm advisors are here to help you with other questions you might have.