The United States is the world’s largest producer of strawberries. They are grown in every state in the United States and almost every country in the world. Americans consume about eight pounds of strawberries per person per year, with about 75% being fresh strawberries and the remainder being frozen.

Did you know?
- On average, there are 200 seeds in a strawberry, which is the only fruit with seeds on the outside.
- In medieval times, strawberries were served at important functions as they were thought to bring peace and prosperity.
- Strawberries are the first fruit to ripen in the spring in Pennsylvania. They do not continue to ripen after they are harvested.

Selection
Strawberries should have a bright red color, natural shine and fresh-looking cap (Calyx). They should be evenly shaped and firm, but not rock-hard. Avoid strawberries that are wrinkled, soft, spotted with mold, or have more than just a touch of green or white around the caps.

Handling
Check strawberries for any sign of mold growth. Discard berries with mold and any adjacent berries to prevent further mold contamination.

Do not wash strawberries until they are ready for use or they will become mushy and develop mold quickly. Wash berries under cold, running water. Do not remove the caps prior to washing as doing so can result in a loss of juice and increase the amount of water absorbed, which may dilute the flavor of the strawberries.

Seal, date, and refrigerate cut berries immediately and use by the next day.

Storage
Ideal storage temperature for strawberries is 32°F with a relative humidity of 95%. Under those conditions, strawberries are acceptable for up to 2 weeks. Strawberries stored at general refrigeration temperatures below 41°F will have a shelf life of approximately 3 days. Strawberries may be held in dry storage for up to 24 hours. Strawberries may be stored with any refrigerated produce since they are not ethylene producers or ethylene–sensitive.

Nutrition
Strawberries are an excellent source of vitamin C. Vitamin C is important in the body’s healing process and may play a role in guarding against heart disease and cancer. Vitamin C also helps the body absorb iron.

Harvest Season
According to the PA Preferred Seasonal Calendar, strawberries are in season in Pennsylvania in May and June.
Recipe | Strawberry Salad with Grapes, Feta, and Walnuts
Makes: 4 servings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredients</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Directions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baby lettuce or spring mix</td>
<td>5 ounces</td>
<td>1. Place all salad ingredients into a large bowl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sliced strawberries</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
<td>2. Toss gently with the desired amount of balsamic vinaigrette dressing and serve immediately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red grapes</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crumbled feta cheese</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toasted walnut pieces*</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balsamic vinaigrette dressing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*To toast walnuts, place them on a rimmed baking sheet and bake at 350 degrees for 8–10 minutes or until fragrant.

Source: Flavor the Moments

While strawberries are delicious on their own, they can be enjoyed in many different ways:
- Add sliced strawberries to salads.
- Use strawberries as a topping on desserts such as angel food cake.
- Make a parfait with yogurt, strawberries, and granola.
- Use strawberries in smoothies.
- Top pancakes or waffles with strawberries.
- Add sliced strawberries to cereal.

Check out the PA Harvest of the Month website (www.paharvestofthemonth.org) for sources, additional resources, and recipes.

Developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Penn State University (Project PA).
This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organization imply endorsement by the U.S. Government. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.