

## Act now to reserve your **Berry Alert** subscription for 2012!

By E. Barclay Poling, Professor Emeritus, NC State University, Manager, StrawberryDoc, LLC

Some people retire, and they just sort of “drop everything” related to their former work. Others may take on a sideline or two. In my case, despite having retired from NC State in December 2010, it looks like an extension berry alert service (berry-mg), that I started 12 years ago (2000) as a small fruit crop specialist, has tracked me down. I am now going forward with a new grower subscription service called the Strawberry Plasticulture E-Advisor. The response from that initial e-blast has resulted in 45 subscription reservations from growers in NC-SC-VA, as well as some important feedback from strawberry growers in other states (where I initially did not think I would be to offer the alerts because of time constraints).

One grower from Delaware wrote:

“I’m happy you have found a way to continue with berry-mg... I use your alerts religiously in my day to day planning for our berry crop...they were VERY important to me. Please reconsider not including DE in your service. We do not have real good support here...”

Another grower from Kentucky wrote:

“I am certainly aware of the concern you have in keeping the excellent quality you provide with the advisories...Growers outside of your area have had to make decisions based on their particular conditions..., and make our own conclusions as to what to do. I would love to be able to receive...the emails, with the understanding that any additional communication or work on your part would not be an option, or be considered with an additional consultant’s fee...We certainly used the data and were very appreciative of your hard work and efforts.”

I really do understand these critical concerns of growers in other states and regions, **so I have decided to offer subscriptions to growers in other states (outside NC-SC-VA)**, but all subscribers will be required to sign an agreement form that states (in part) that the information provided by StrawberryDoc, LLC can only be used as a supplement to their decision making, and this service agreement form will be sent out in a Welcome Packet, as well as instructions for payment by check. The Welcome Packet will contain a pre-addressed envelope for sending your check. Alternatively, subscribers can pay online through the website (www.strawberrydoc.net) with a debit or credit card. The website will take online payments starting Monday January 23rd. The Welcome Packets are going out in the mail to new subscribers January 18th.

**NCSA members get a discount:** The Strawberry Plasticulture E-Advisor will cost NCSA grower-members \$120 each for an annual subscription (\$10/month). The cost will be \$149 for non-members.

**Act soon to get the weather scholarship:** The first 135 subscribers to the Strawberry Plasticulture E-Advisor will also get 3 months worth of daily E-Weather Strawberry Canopy Forecasts from SkyBit, and these will start February 15 and go through May 15, 2012. The Strawberry Canopy forecasts are issued twice each day (early morning and late afternoon), and they will also come with SkyBit’s Combo Forecast. As of January 12, 2012, there are 90 scholarships left. These 135 scholarships were made possible through the financial support of five of the industry’s plant and plug suppliers, who each contributed \$2,500.<sup>1</sup> Frankly, as I said at the Expo last fall, I was not willing to go forward with doing these advisories in 2012, unless each grower was subscribed to the E-Weather Strawberry Canopy Forecasts from SkyBit. SkyBit’s E-Weather Strawberry Canopy Forecasts are tuned to produce the best possible strawberry minimum and maximum canopy temperature forecasts to give growers the information they need for frost and heat damage protection. It has taken them 10 years to develop this product!

**\*\*\*By acting quickly, you will have a better chance of securing one of the remaining SkyBit Weather Scholarships\*\*\***

I regret that I cannot offer more than 135 of these scholarships in total. As of today (1/11/12) I only have 90 scholarships left! All you need to do RIGHT NOW is send me an email.

Send the email to: [barclay@strawberrydoc.net](mailto:barclay@strawberrydoc.net)

In your email say: “I WISH TO RESERVE A SUBSCRIPTION.” Please also provide your name and mailing address in your email requesting a subscription, so I can mail you the welcome packet.

Upon receipt of your email, I will confirm to you by return email that I have received your request for a subscription at \$120 per year, and you will also be issued a SkyBit Weather Scholarship number. This weather scholarship is worth \$195. After the remaining 90 scholarships are gone, the subscription cost for NCSA members will go from \$120 per subscription to \$211. And, the subscription price for growers who are *not* members of NCSA will increase to \$240.

<sup>1</sup> It has been possible to go forward with the berry alerts in 2012 due to the generosity of these five plant and plug suppliers (in alphabetical order):

- **Aarons Creek Farms, Inc.**, Gregg Gordon and Greg Williamson, Buffalo Jct., VA;
- **Balamore Farm, Ltd.**, Joe Cooper, Great Village, Nova Scotia, Canada;
- **Cottle Strawberry Nursery, Inc.**, Ron/Sonny Cottle, Faison, NC;
- **G&W Nursery**, Donna and Jim Goodson, Damascus, AR/Mitchell Wrenn, Zebulon, NC
- **Westech Agriculture Ltd.**, Nora and Raymond Dorgan, Alberton, PEI, Canada.