



INNOVATION

## Fresh strawberries every season is now a reality

ERIN SPEEDY  
25 AUGUST 2022 12:00PM



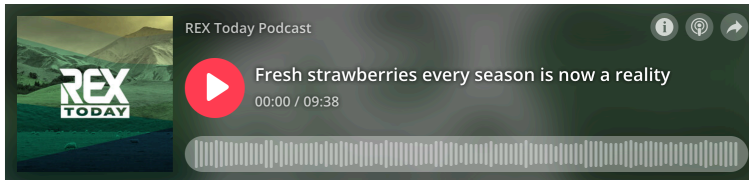
Enjoying sweet, fresh summer strawberries all year round sounds like a luxury, but it's now a reality thanks to a vertical farming operation in Foxton.

26 Seasons released its first crop of locally grown, pesticide-free strawberries to select retailers, despite being one of the wettest winters on record.

It was a New Zealand first and one of very few companies across the world that could produce the tricky-to-grow fruit across all seasons.

Grant Leach, 26 Seasons CEO told [REX Today](#) the berry was just as delicious as the freshest in-season strawberries too.

"The operation in Foxton is the second generation of a large research project to create proof that we can actually create strawberries year-round to a taste and texture profile that is as good as the best in-season strawberries," Leach said.



The 1,350 square metre industrial site in Foxton was capable of producing one million punnets of spray-free strawberries annually.

It was a full hydroponic system, with no soil in a Nutrient Full Technology system. It used a high-tech lighting system in vertically stacked beds.

"We can make the off-season in-season, all year long. As well as supplying locally grown produce outside of traditional growing seasons, vertical farming is a viable solution to the growing issue of food security."

The controlled indoor environment removed external factors like weather, seasonality, pests and disease and mimicked perfect strawberry growing conditions 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.



### RELATED ARTICLES.

**New Zealand Young Farmers launches new Club in Te Anau**  
30 AUGUST 2022

**Winston Peters calls He Waka Eke Noa 'woke, virtue signalling'**  
28 AUGUST 2022

**Automation and robots: the future to growing produce across the world**  
27 AUGUST 2022

**'The price of whitebait is going to be horrific'**  
27 AUGUST 2022