

## V&M FARMS

*Vendor:* Carol Vail & Ed Mehl

*Location:* Watsonville, CA

*Vendor Since:* 2001



V&M Farms, also known as Mehl Berry Farm, is a 100-acre strawberry farm located in the beautiful region of Watsonville, Calif. near the Salinas Valley. Ed Mehl has been running the farm for 32 years, became interested in growing strawberries while he was involved in a separate family business. He is currently the president of the Berry Bowl Co-op, a large strawberry co-op of nine farmers and ships his high quality strawberries all the way to Toronto, Canada. Mehl Berry Farm is present at 21 farmer's markets throughout the season, and there is always anticipation for their strawberries.

Carol Vail has been working for Mehl Berry Farm for 15 years now, and says she really enjoys coming to the Sparks Hometowne Farmer's Market. She looks forward to seeing the familiar faces that return to their stand year after year. The customer loyalty is part of what makes her experience so great. She also says the atmosphere in Sparks is more family oriented than many of the morning markets she attends.

"I think the Sparks Market is very festive," Vail says. "It's a nice thing for families to go to. The nights are pleasant and not too cold. There are a lot of activities for the kids to do."

She also says the people at the Sparks Farmer's Market really appreciate the quality of produce they receive. Mehl Berry Farm mainly grows the Aldion variety of strawberries which have a particularly vibrant color and fantastic flavor, and they keep much longer than other varieties. Since they grow only strawberries, Mehl Berry Farm is very picky about the quality of product they bring to market.

"We have great quality that you can't get anywhere else," Vail says.