



**News Release**

For Immediate Release

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## **The 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Santa Maria Valley Strawberry Festival sets record season**

**SANTA MARIA** – New attractions and great weather contributed to record attendance and revenue numbers for the 2016 Santa Maria Valley Strawberry Festival in nearly all categories, Santa Maria Fairpark officials announced today.

Total attendance for the festival grew by nearly 9 percent, with more than 70,000 in attendance for the first time ever. Along with total attendance numbers, paid attendance grew by more than 14 percent, and gate receipts were up nearly 10 percent. Food and beverage revenues were up as well, as were carnival ride revenues.

“Increases in revenues naturally follow from increases in attendance, and we were blessed with some really fantastic weather this year. More than anything else, the great weather really helped us out,” said Fairpark CEO Richard Persons.

The record-breaking achievement was the result of some strategic changes by Fairpark officials for the 2016 Strawberry Festival. Adjustments included placing a greater emphasis on the iconic berries themselves, with more strawberry food offerings. There was also increased publicity about the efforts of strawberry growers and the California Women for Agriculture to taste test berry varieties at the festival. The addition of a country/western tribute band to the entertainment lineup, as well as greater visibility for the animals at the festival—which included the addition of a camel ride—were also cited as tweaks to the highly successful event for 2016. Festival organizers also modified marketing and publicity efforts, placing more emphasis on social media to reach young adults and families with children.

Festival goers are encouraged to enter their colorful, artsy, cute, or just plain fun festival pictures into the annual photo contests at the Santa Barbara County Fair via the Fairpark's website at <http://www.santamariafairpark.com/p/getinvolved/339>. All contest entries for the Fair close on May 13th.

Event organizers are already hard at work making plans for the 2017 Santa Maria Valley Strawberry Festival, tentatively scheduled for April 28th through 30th.

Organizers also announced that they are in discussions with the owners of the Midway of Fun, the carnival provider for the Strawberry Festival, regarding a similar event which might occur in October.

For more information, visit [www.santamariafairpark.com](http://www.santamariafairpark.com) or Like us on [Facebook](#).

### **About the Santa Maria Fairpark**

The Santa Maria Fairpark serves as the hub for major events and community activities on California's Central Coast. The state-owned facility hosts the annual Santa Maria Valley Strawberry Festival, which attracts more than 70,000 people; and is home to its headlining event the Santa Barbara County Fair, which is attended by more than 140,000 people.