



# Yours Picking FOR THE

**Rogers Farm welcomes visitors  
with U-pick strawberries.**

Story and photos by KAYLA LOKEINSKY

**W**hile walking through the fields of strawberries at Rogers Farm, the air is filled with their sweetness. Rows and rows of berries line the ground, as pickers bend over each plant, searching for the reddest, most perfect strawberry. At Rogers, there's no need for grocery carts or roaming the store aisles; all you need is a bucket.

Rogers Farm, a U-pick strawberry farm tucked away on 1,000 acres of farmland between Gainesville and LaCrosse, welcomes visitors to grab a bucket and pick their own produce. Between mid-March and mid-May, the strawberries are plentiful at Rogers Farm, and they're yours for the picking.

The process is simple: once you arrive at Rogers Farm, you can pick up your bucket and take it out to the strawberry field. Then, walk down the rows and fill your buckets to the brim. The berries are just \$1.50 per pound, making them less expensive than strawberries you'd buy at the store.

By cutting out the middle man, Rogers Farm makes sure there's nothing between you and your strawberries.

According to Earline Rogers, the wife of Rogers Farm owner Larry Rogers, the strawberries you pick fresh are much better than the ones that are sold in stores.

"You can pick them red out here," Earline said. "When you go to the grocery store, they pick them green, then they're shipped for like four or five days, so they're a week old when you get them. Plus, they were picked green. It makes a difference in the taste. That's the reason berries don't taste good in the grocery store. That's the difference."

With the Rogers' strawberries, you can definitely taste the difference. They're red all the way to the core and packed with that sweet strawberry flavor. No nonsense, no artificial preservatives, just strawberries.

## **A Family Business**

Three generations of Rogers have worked on the family farm. They have been selling produce at their main location on the corner of SR 121 and NW 156 Ave for over 35 years.

Larry Rogers bought the land back in 1970. Farming is in his blood, and Larry is a fourth-generation farmer.

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— LARRY ROGERS, owner



Rogers Farm owner Larry Rogers (right) poses with his wife Earline Rogers and his son Greg Rogers in their U-pick strawberry field. Three generations of Rogers have worked on the farm.

daddy farmed, hell I reckon it went back to my great-granddaddy,” Larry said.

Larry works on the farm along with his wife Earline, who helps run the farm’s store and takes care of ordering products, and his son Greg, who grows fall peas.

According to Larry, Rogers Farm started growing strawberries in about 1980, and ever since they have continued to add more produce to their family business.

“After that then we started with a few peas and it just kept growing, and now we got probably 400 to 500 acres of peas, 200 to 300 acres of butter beans, it varies from year to year,” Larry said.

Larry had toyed around with the idea of growing blueberries, another popular U-pick fruit, but Earline nipped the idea in the bud.

“Larry wanted to put in blueberries and I said, ‘If you do you can have that counter,’” Earline said while pointing to the sales counter she sometimes works behind. “He said, ‘Why?’ and I said blueberries are in when peas are in to. I said we are loaded that time of year with peas.”

### Bursting With Berries

The Rogers seem to be doing just fine by offering U-pick strawberries. According to Larry, on any given Saturday during strawberry season you can find up to 500 people out in the fields picking berries.

Earline says that one of her favorite things about the U-pick farm is being able to interact with all the people who come out to go strawberry picking.

Some visitors can be seen walking away with two or three buckets full of fresh, ripe strawberries. Being able to walk among the rows and rows or beautiful, non-GMO berries and handpick the ones you want is just as fun as getting to eat the berries when you’re done.

However, if you don’t want to pick your own strawberries, Rogers Farm sells them by the carton or the pallet, fresh and ready to be baked into a cake, turned into jam or eaten right from the box.



Rogers Farm has U-pick or we-pick strawberries available starting in mid-March. Visitors can grab a bucket and pick their own berries, or pick up a pallet or carton that’s already been picked.

## Fresh Fruits and Veggies

Rogers Farm is so much more than your regular U-pick strawberry farm. They also sell nearly 20 other types of fresh fruits and vegetables, including some that are hard to come by in North-Central Florida.

Besides strawberries, Rogers Farm also grows and sells tomatoes, cabbage, green onions, okra, eggplant, green peppers, watermelons, cantaloupes and peanuts. Starting in April, green beans, roman bush beans, pickling cucumbers and yellow squash are available.

Then starting June 1, it's time for corn, peas and beans. Rogers farm has a wide variety of these vegetables. They have white acre, black eye, pinkeye, purple hull, white butter and zipper cream peas; cranberry, green butter, ford hook and speckled butter beans; silver queen and bi-colored corn.

Their outdoor store, located right on the farm property, also sells a variety of locally-made honey, jelly and jams.

Besides offering fresh, delicious produce, Rogers Farm also hosts its annual Octoberfest, a family-friendly fall event that is packed with visitors each year.

From October 1 to October 30, Rogers Farm turns into a Fall wonderland. The Rogers Farm Octoberfest main attraction is a 12-acre corn maze with a theme and maps to help you along your journey. Other activities include hay rides, a petting zoo, pony rides, duck races, a spook trail and more.

According to Earline, at the last Octoberfest the Rogers had over 5,200 kids come on field trips.

It's these community events and interactive atmosphere that makes Rogers Farm a great family-friendly destination. Located less than 40 minutes from the heart of downtown Lake City, it's the perfect place to go and get the best strawberries in the area.

For more information on Rogers Farm, or to place an order, call (386) 462-2406 or visit [www.rogersfarmfl.com](http://www.rogersfarmfl.com).



## Roger's Farm

### Seasonal Fruits & Vegetables

Strawberries, all types of peas, butter beans, corn, tomatoes, squash, string beans, cabbage, onions, cucumbers, okra, eggplant, green peppers, watermelons, cantaloupes, cranberry beans, pickles, peanuts



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