

# Stand-ins to Star at Berry Fest

By Sharon Hill

Star County Reporter

**LASALLE** - They've come by the thousands from California to be dipped in chocolate and bathed in ice cream.

More than 4,500 litres of strawberries from California will once again stand in as stunt doubles for their Canadian cousins at LaSalle's Strawberry Festival this weekend.

Thanks to last week's cool weather, local strawberries are still white. Even the embarrassment of shipping in Yankee berries hasn't turned them red.

It's an old script. Since the festival began five years ago, organizers have had trouble getting ripe strawberries for the event.

But Don Hearn Jr. who ordered the strawberries, said having the second best berries next to LaSalle's own won't make much difference. The California berries are bigger and harder and only the contestants in the berry-eating contest will likely notice.

Hearn, who's entering the Sunday contest for the first time, said it's a fun event to watch.

"I've seen somebody shove the whole pint in their mouth at once."

The confessed strawberry-lover said it's hard not to eat lots of berries when they're served in muffins, pies, sundaes, and pancakes.

The fun starts Friday at 6 p.m. at the Front Road Park on Highway 18.

Saturday's Festivities start at 5 a.m. with a fishing derby. A parade is scheduled for 10 a.m. along Highway 18.

Sunday's schedule begins at 7:45 a.m. with a fun run, or at 9 a.m. with a \$3 pancake breakfast at the Sandwich West Friendship Centre on Hazel Street.

