

# Strawberry Farmers Case Study

Problems Identified -

Before we actually started working with 2-3 of these 'Strawberry farmers' 2 years ago, we identified few problems they were facing, and decided to act on just a few of them, such as 'direct market access'.

The first year, we were just testing the market, understanding the limitations in selling and identifying possible solutions. Idea was to give farmers better rates.

After giving a quick try at B2C market, we quickly shifted our focus on B2B, understanding and solving issues from both sides of the supply chain.

Last year, the strawberries we sold were 70% of all strawberries which were sold as 'organic' in the market, organic farmers had to sell the rest of the strawberries (about 90% of the total harvest) in the open market as regular strawberries (means farmers got less money and buyer did not care whether those were organic). Mahabaleshwar grows 80-85% of Indian's strawberries, with market size approx \$100 million a year.

[\(https://www.financialexpress.com/market/commodities/shorter-strawberry-season-expected-this-year-in-maharashtra/168539/\)](https://www.financialexpress.com/market/commodities/shorter-strawberry-season-expected-this-year-in-maharashtra/168539/)



*(Photo: Organic strawberries - harvest of 2018 from Muskan Farm, Mahabaleshwar, MH, India)*

**Impact:** Farmers could earn (15-40%) more, they got timely payment and they could save some quality time looking for reliable buyers! Our next target is to not only increase the farmer base to create greater impact but also to help them reduce their input cost, as they spend a lot of money buying hybrid variety plants every year. 20-30 years back, this was not the case because most farmers were using indigenous variety, which did not require any pest management and they could preserve it to be used the following year, keeping the input costs down. There is no indigenous variety left in the area, so with the help of our partners, we are working on sourcing it for them.

[This season \(starts in December 2019\), we plan to go even bigger](#) as more farmers want to join (15-20 of them), and with the help of our certifying partner, we are getting all of those certified (earlier they were govt. Certified, which is been considered inferior compared to third party certification). The strawberries this time will not only be certified, but also be sold with a traceability code on the box with the entire data of the trade will be backed on blockchain!



*(Photo: Our last month's strategy meeting with strawberry farmers, MahaOrganic and GreenCert - Mahabaleshwar, MH, India)*