



U.S. House passes Watermelon Month Resolution

In April 2008, the U.S. House of Representatives, through the leadership of Congressmen Adam Putnam (FL) and Dennis Cardoza (CA), successfully presented H. Res. 578, which designates the month of July as “National Watermelon Month”. Fifty-five (55) legislators from numerous states through our watermelon states (and some not watermelon producing states) co-sponsored the bill.

“This was a long process, but well worth the effort considering the advantages and opportunities that now exist for our industry”, said Bob Morrissey, Executive Director of the Nwa and originator of both bills. “Congress had to be sold on the merits of this designation, and came through after a long effort and a lot of hard work and discussions. Now it is up to our entire industry, the NWA, our chapters, the NWPB and every company to capitalize on the opportunities that now exist. To do nothing would be like walking away from a wonderful opportunity. The time is right; the advantages are evident; we should ALL participate to make a difference for the industry.”

This proclamation follows a very similar resolution passed last July by the U.S. Senate, sponsored by Senators Saxby Chambliss (GA) and Johnny Isakson (GA).

A Presidential Proclamation has been written, and is under consideration by the White House staff. Our expectation is that President Bush will sign the proclamation and designate the month of July as National Watermelon month following both passed resolutions from Congress. We will communicate this signing once it is finalized.

110th CONGRESS

H. RES. 578

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that there should be established a National Watermelon Month.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. PUTNAM (for himself, Mr. CARDOZA, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. BOYD of Florida, Mr. BUCHANAN, and Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that there should be established a National Watermelon Month.

Whereas watermelon production constitutes an important sector of the agricultural industry of the United States; Whereas, according to the January 2006 statistics compiled by the National Agricultural Statistics Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, the United States produces 4,200,000,000 pounds of watermelon annually;

Watermelon Photo Library

Just picture this for a moment Fields of beautiful watermelon vines with the dew running off of the green leaves of the plants; Watermelons glistening in the morning sunshine; Row after row of watermelon plants and fruit ready for the harvest; Crews harvesting the fruit of our labors; Crews packing watermelon for market.

Those are all pictures of the day-to-day activities and labors of our industry across North and Central America. We have those images committed to memory. They are the indication of what we do.

Would you help us to build an actual library of those images on the NWA web site? The NWA can use those images in The Vineline, presentations and many other areas in the future that will share those images and remembrances of our industry, and our livelihoods.



You can email your photo images mail a copy of your photos to the NWA, and help us to build a beautiful library that will represent our industry, and include your business in the process. Thank you for your help.

CHEP USA and SAKATA SEED Programs for 2008

The NWA has negotiated two unique incentive programs with CHP USA and Sakata America that can provide thousands in revenue to help us expand member services and programs in the future.

CHEP USA is finalizing their NWA customer list, and will pay the NWA an incentive based on pallet utilizations by its members through the 2008 season. As our members use CHP pallets for their business needs, that helps us to reach the established goal levels, which



Craig Kelly, National Sales Manager of CHP USA, presents a \$10,000 incentive check to the NWA at the national convention.

in turn will provide incentives that will build as the season evolves.

Once the program and its participants (current CHP customers) are finalized, we will communicate with

CHEP continued on page 23

Whereas watermelon is grown in 49 States, is purchased and consumed in all 50 States, and is exported to Canada;

Whereas evidence indicates that eating 2.5 to 5 cups of fruits and vegetables daily as part of a healthy diet will improve health and protect against diseases such as cancer, high blood pressure, stroke, and heart disease;

Whereas proper diet and nutrition are important factors in preventing diseases such as childhood obesity and diabetes;

Whereas watermelon has no fat or cholesterol and is an excellent source of the vitamins A, B6, and C, fiber, and potassium, which are vital to good health and disease prevention;

Whereas watermelon is also an excellent source of lycopene;

Whereas lycopene, an antioxidant found only in a few

red plant foods, has been shown to reduce the risk of certain cancers;

Whereas watermelon is a heart-healthy food that has qualified for the heart-check mark from the American Heart Association;

Whereas watermelon has been a nutritious summer favorite from generation to generation;

Whereas it is important to educate citizens of the United States regarding the health benefits of watermelon and other fruits and vegetables; and

Whereas July would be an appropriate month to establish as National Watermelon Month: Now, therefore, be it Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that there should be established a National Watermelon Month to recognize the health benefits of watermelon and the importance of watermelon to the agriculture industry of the United States.

the
vineline



National Watermelon Association, Inc.
104 East Reynolds Street, Suite 212
Plant City, Florida 33563
813.754.7575 fax 813.754.1118
www.nationalwatermelonassociation.com

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Executive Director
Bob Morrissey

Editor
Amanda Dixon

Layout & Design
Derek Reusser
www.rubberneckerdesign.com

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Fax: (863) 675-6052
Mobile: (863) 673-2188
WATS FL: 1-800-722-2761
E-mail:choward@alicopw.com

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DHS ISSUES RULE REGARDING NO-MATCH LETTERS

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) released a Supplemental Proposed Rulemaking for the No-Match Rule previously issued on August 15, 2007. This rulemaking addresses three issues cited in a decision of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California enjoining the August 2007 No-Match Rule. This Supplemental Proposed Rulemaking provides a more detailed analysis of how DHS developed the No-Match policy and will help responsible employers ensure that they are not employing unauthorized workers.

“We are serious about immigration enforcement. The No-Match Rule is an important tool for cracking down on illegal hiring practices while providing honest employers with the guidance they need,” said Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff. “This supplement specifically addresses the three grounds on which the district court based its injunction. We have also filed an appeal and are pursuing these two paths simultaneously to get a resolution as quickly as possible.”

The rule does not create new legal obligations for businesses. It simply outlines clear steps an employer may take in response to receiving a letter from the Social Security Administration indicating that an employee’s name does not match the social security number on file. If the business follows the guidance in the No-Match Rule, comprising various actions to rectify the no-match within 90 days of receiving the letter, they will have a safe harbor from the no-match letter being used against them in an enforcement action.

Please stay posted to the NWA web site for up to date information about this rule and the upcoming No Match letters.

Country of Origin Labeling -- Mandatory in Fall 2008

Country of origin labeling of fresh produce – also known as COOL – has been discussed for many years throughout the produce industry. Surveys indicate that more than 50% of produce commodities offered for sale in retail grocery stores today are labeled with country of origin on packaging or PLU stickers. And, many retailers provide country of origin information through in-store signage. But, beginning in the fall of 2008, all fresh produce sold in retail stores in the United States is likely to come under a mandatory COOL rule.

United Fresh produce Association has prepared a white paper to help industry members understand the facts about COOL and what may be necessary to comply with the law.

There are currently many uncertainties in what specific provisions of law may go into effect, and many uncertainties in how the U.S. Department of Agriculture may interpret the law in future regulations. This makes it very difficult for industry members throughout the supply chain to prepare for COOL. Because of this uncertainty, we believe it is critical that all supply chain partners work together to understand the facts and begin steps toward compliance that reduce total supply chain cost and potential for market disruption. We must all begin to adapt to new COOL laws. Working together with supply chain partners will help both retailers and produce suppliers minimize the potential regulatory and cost burden of the new law.

This White Paper represents the facts as of early spring 2008. We will continue to publish updates to this document as details change, and post the very latest information for our members on our website. I also want to point out that while country of origin labeling for produce is part of a larger labeling law for meat and other products, this White Paper deals only with the specific implications for produce. Please monitor the Nwa website for updates as we move closer to the fall implementation of the COOL program.

Get the News as it happens



Would you like to get news that could affect your business and our industry quicker than you have been in the past? You can get up to date information from your website, www.nationalwatermelonassociation.com, and we also have another answer for you.

Last summer, the NWA began to publish a quarterly newsletter, “Off The Vine”, which is emailed to all of our NWA members that have provided us with an email address. The first two issues are posted on the NWA’s web site on the home page for your review.

Each issue includes numerous topics of interest that affect our industry including legislative activities in Washington, research initiatives and other important news items.

If you would like to receive the quarterly issues beginning this May, please send your email address to Bob Morrissey in the NWA office at nwa@tampabay.rr.com.

How Do You Get Your Industry News?

Are you aware of new member services from the NWA?

Insurance programs (personal and group plans) Employment Practices coverage

What is the latest news on watermelon research programs?

Would you like to help to advance key legislation by periodically contacting your legislators in Washington? (farm bill, immigration, etc.)

How can you get the latest news WEEKLY and quarterly?

The NWA has developed a quarterly newsletter called the “Off The Vine Bulletin” that is emailed to all members with an email address. The newsletter is full of key information and updates that are important to our industry. If you have NOT received an issue yet, please call or email us so that we can include you on future issues.

Another way of keeping up to date is to regularly log on to the NWA web site and see what is going on, and possibly where you may be able to help. Your web site is full of key information and program updates from the NWA that can benefit you and your business. Please log on to www.nationalwatermelonassociation.com and take advantage of your web site, the NWA’s numerous member services and stay informed.

*The National Watermelon Association, Inc.
Representing the interests of the Watermelon Industry throughout North and Central America.*

reviewed for what records are being requested, and remain mindful that criminal prosecution for immigration law violations may result if seized records reflect violation of IRCA’s criminal statutes.

BE PREPARED for Labor Audits and Raids

The Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is continuing to conduct audits and raids across the country. This agency has the authority to investigate the possible employment of undocumented workers, or to look for undocumented workers within constitutional parameters (i.e. reasonable search considerations). For more information on the agency’s activities, go to: <http://www.ice.gov/graphics/news/factsheets/EnforcementFS.htm>

The Department of Homeland Security has also begun a similar process across the country.

IF ICE or DHS wanted to come on to a grower’s or packer’s property to conduct a search or check for I-9s on employees, here are the two options that they have:

1. “Routine” Audits (by ICE, DHS or Department of Labor)
 - a. Require the inspecting agency to give three (3) days notice
 - b. Do not require a search warrant
 - c. Employer is required to provide a list of employees and social security numbers for up to three (3) years
 - d. Agency is entitled to examine and copy I-9 forms and copies of any attached documents used to complete the I-9 form.

2. “Raids”
 - a. Require a search warrant
 - b. Do not require advance notice
 - c. Agency entitled to all records and other property covered by the warrant

To prepare for either of these possible events, we recommend the following:

Review your I-9 procedures to verify that proper protocols are being used.

Confirm that documents used to verify employment eligibility upon initial date of hire that may have had expiration dates are being followed up on with renewal documentation.

Review your record retention practices to make sure that you are complying with applicable state and federal laws.

Designate someone from your company (if not yourself) to meet and talk to Department of Labor, Department of Homeland Security and/or ICE personnel. Educate employees to refer I-9 inquiries to you or your company representative.

No management employee should submit to an interview or provide documents to the government before conferring with you or your designated representative. If ICE shows up to a grower’s/packer’s office with a search warrant, the grower/packer should have a protocol already in place to alert senior management and your legal counsel. The warrant should be carefully

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National Report

We have started a new year, new season and a new Queen tour since our last report! We still have several stops on Jenna’s awesome tour to report!

Jenna’s Sponsored to Texas

We traveled to the great state of Texas in January to the Texas Watermelon Convention in Mc Allen, Texas. We were sponsored by the Texas Watermelon Association. We enjoyed a delightful Texas style barbeque at the ranch of NWA’s President Nowell, and Ranell Borders. The weather was chilly for McAllen, but a great time was had by all! Texas President Ward Thomas and his wife had a fun convention for everyone! A good auction, and good crowd and a brand new Texas Queen! We enjoyed being with Wanda and Kelly, and the entire Texas group. Congratulations to Marie Fletcher the 2008 Texas Watermelon Queen! I am sure a great year awaits you! Thank You Texas for sponsoring us!

Georgia Brings Jenna Home

The Georgia Watermelon Association sponsored Jenna back for their annual convention. We certainly enjoyed attending the GWA convention in Cordele January 25, 26. President Mitch Mitchell and wife Janice had a super convention, and a record auction! We enjoyed our time with all the GWA members, Coordinator Julie and Queen Brittanie! We congratulate Hannah Jones from Americus, GA on being selected the Georgia Watermelon Queen! I know you will have a great year!

Mar-Del Sponsors Jenna to Cambridge, Maryland for Convention

We were sponsored to the Mar-Del Watermelon convention by the association. The setting was the beautiful Hyatt in Cambridge, Maryland. There were several queen guests for the convention. Jenna enjoyed visiting with all the association members. Mar-Del President and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Lee Goslee welcomed us warmly. It was great to see Allison and Stephanie again! They had excellent attendance and a great auction. We congratulate Christina Gallant on being selected the 2008 Mar-Del Queen! It was great to see Will and Candice Hales, (2006 National Queen); we appreciate him getting us to and from the airport! Special thanks to the Mar-Del Association for sponsoring us!

The Alabama Watermelon Association Sponsors

We were sponsored to Biloxi, Mississippi for the Alabama convention by the association. It was great to see Cindy and Katie! President Terry Jones and wife Linda had awesome convention! Great food and warm hospitality! Jenna and Catherine (06 Queen) sang for the group I was so pleased to see my 1995 Queen, Mrs. Jennifer Jones Abney, and her husband Clay! We can safely say a good time was had by all! Thanks AWA for sponsoring us to your great convention! We Congratulate Samantha Leigh Dunn on being selected the 2008 Alabama Queen, I am sure an awesome year awaits you!

2008 National Watermelon Queen...Brittanie Faircloth

NWA’s Executive Director, Bob Morrissey will cover our NWA convention in his article in this edition of the Vineline. We appreciate the fine job Jenna did for our Association this past year! I salute each of our State Queens that competed at National convention. You each made your Associations proud! We were blessed to have eight wonderful girls competing. We congratulate the 2008 National Watermelon Queen, Miss Brittanie Faircloth! I look forward to a fantastic year! We congratulate Miss Emily Frey on being selected first runner-up and Miss Christina Loftis on being selected second runner-up. I would like to thank our tour sponsors, and all the other contributors, and those that purchased items for Brittanie. Your contributions and donations are so appreciated!

Brittanie’s Tour Begins in Vincennes, Indiana

A few short days following NWA convention, Queen Brittanie was off to Indiana! We were sponsored to their annual convention in Vincennes. IWA also sponsored Brittanie to the annual Ag Day event held at Vincennes University. This year’s was the busiest one I had ever attended. We enjoyed the company of Kristy Cardinal, her sister Suzanne, her daughter Emily, who filled in for Queen Emily, as she was finishing exams. The event offered a meal for fifty cents; this represents what the producer gets for his commodity. I would like to thank Brad Toney and wife Angie for giving Brittanie a delightful tour of the Amish country, and a delicious Amish style breakfast! Congratulations Brad on being IWA’s new President! We thank outgoing IWA President Dennis Mouzin for the great convention, and warm hospitality! They had a very successful auction and attendance! Brittanie would again like to thank the Association for the Chocolate Lab puppy they purchased for her during the auction. His name is Vinnie. He loves his new home! We would especially like to thank Jerry and Judy Kenworthy for getting Vinnie to Brittanie. Jerry delivered him in his truck from Indiana! Thank you both. Thanks to Midwest Marketing for my watermelon goodies from the auction and to Tim Dunn for delivering them! Thanks to John Nowaskie, Midwest Marketing, and Dennis Mouzin for your auction purchases! IWA thanks for making Brittanie’s first visit to Vincennes so special! Congratulations to Maggie Bailey on being selected the 2008 Illiana Watermelon Queen!

Florida Watermelon Association Sponsors

Our next stop, Orlando, Florida for the FWA convention. What a beautiful setting. Thanks to FWA President Paul Sawyer and wife, Jackie for a delightful convention! It was so good to see everyone! The crowd was amazing! They had an outstanding auction. We enjoyed our time with Tara and Debra. Debra had an outstanding queen competition.

Brittanie thanks Kelly and Jean Marinaro, and Nowell Borders for the items purchased for her at the auction! We congratulate Kaley Jo Harper on being selected the 2008 Florida watermelon Queen. Her first duties were to help deliver the books collected at the convention to the Ronald McDonald house in Orlando. This was Jackie Sawyer’s project, and we salute her for the idea! I am sure they were most appreciative! Congratulations again Kaley! Thanks to Paul and Jackie for your hospitality and to FWA for sponsoring us!

Until next printing, if you are interested in sponsoring the National Watermelon Queen please contact me thru one of the methods below! Have a profitable season!

Eleanor Bullock
NWA Promotion Coordinator
229.273.8638 home/office 229.322.9933 cell 229.271.8111 fax
Email :Eleanor@websign.net



Queen Katie, Past Queen and visiting Queens pose with their '08 Contestants



Ken Mears presents Brittanie with a check for \$2000.00 from Tri-Wall



Alabama President Terry Jones chats with Jenna



Brittanie, Emily and Christina...Congratulations



Thank You Alabama



NWA President, Nowell Borders and wife Ranell congratulate Brittanie



Queen Emily, Brittanie and the '08 IWA Contestants



Tara & Brittanie enjoy the Tail Gate Party!



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Thanks Kelly!



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National Pictures



FWA President Paul & wife Jackie welcome Brittanie!



Congratulations Kaley!



Chris Greene poses with Jenna and Brittanie



Congratulations Hannah!



Jenna enjoys Doug and his family



Mr. and Mrs. Chase Daughtrey



What a group of beautiful girls.



Incoming IWA President Brad, wife Angie, their Princess, treat Marie and Brittanie to breakfast at the Black Buggy!



Thanks to Dennis Mouzin and family!



Congratulations Maggie!



Mar-Del Queen Stephanie and Jenna pose with Jay Rider



Jenna visits with Donald Hales and President of Mar-Del Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy



Jenna enjoys a visit with Will and Candice



Congratulations Christina



Harry and Kelly purchase watermelon goodies for Jenna at the auction



Queen Kelly and Jenna pose with the Texas contestants



Texas President Ward Thomas chat at convention



Congratulations Marie!



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Alabama Report

Greetings everyone from our Alabama Watermelon Association and our Queen Samantha,

Our Alabama Watermelon Association Convention was held February 8th – 10th at the Imperial Palace in Biloxi, MS. Our theme this year was Hawaiian Luau and everyone had a blast! Congratulations to our new 2008 AWA Queen Samantha Leigh Dunn, sponsored by Bill Johnson, Shamrock Seed and Harry Vaughn, Gulf Seed., Inc., First Runner-Up Megan Grantham sponsored by Billy Smith’s Watermelons, and Second Runner-Up Jenna Parish sponsored by Jim Mastropietro of International Paper. Also, congratulations to Devan Sellers sponsored by Jean and Kelly Marinaro of Sunny Fresh on being chosen as our Miss Jubilee. There are so many people to say thank you to and I would like to bring attention to two such deserving young ladies. Thank you Megan Flinn our 2004 AWA Queen and Catherine Odom our 2006 AWA Queen for all the “behind the scene” work you both so tirelessly gave our association to make our convention the huge success that it was.

During our convention this year Cheryl Hicks was named our Second Vice-President. She will be working closely with our AWA President Terry Jones and our First Vice-President Billy Smith. Queen Samantha, everyone in our AWA is looking forward to getting to know you this year. You will have an unforgettable year as queen, just ask Katie!

The NWA Convention was held February 20th – 24th at the beautiful Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach, Alabama. Our 2007 AWA Queen Katie represented our association with great class, simply said. Great job, Katie! You will always be remembered with love and admiration in our AWA family. Congratulations to GWA Queen Brittanie on being named National Watermelon Queen, Illiana Queen Emily on being named First Runner-Up and SCWA Queen Christina on being named Second Runner-Up.

Queen Samantha began her year’s reign by “entertaining” the kindergarten and 4th grade classes at St. Paul’s Catholic School in Leesburg, Florida. She prepared many watermelon recipes, handed out watermelon slices, read books, held seed spitting contests, and had J. Slice competitions! What fun! I wish to extend a heartfelt thank you to Steve Singletary of Bayshore Farms for providing our delicious watermelons on this promotion.

Our AWA sponsored Queen Samantha to attend the annual NWPB Meeting held in Orlando on April 12th. Mark, Gordon, Leslie, Rebekah and Stephanie did an awesome job explaining in detail exactly how to get our message out...EAT MORE WATERMELON! After an intense day of learning we were treated to a wonderful dinner at Ruby Tuesday by the NWPB. Samantha now has the confidence and tools to promote our association for the year ahead.

Our AWA Queen Samantha is anxious to begin promotions so please let us know what we can do for you. Best of luck and warm wishes for a prosperous watermelon season!

Cindy Vaughn
AWA Promotion Coordinator
ncv57@earthlink.net
352-314-5988 h
407-448-3780 c



2007 AWA Queen Katie with our contestants...guess which one is our newly crowned 2008 Queen Samantha? Can you tell that the young ladies were having such fun at our Hawaiian Luau themed convention this year?!!!



Thanks to Bill Johnson of Shamrock Seed and Harry Vaughn of Gulf Seed for sponsoring our incoming AWA Queen Samantha. We are all looking forward to working with Samantha this year.



Our queen contestants this year included Jenna Parish sponsored by Jim Mastropietro of International Paper, Jessica Franklin sponsored by Arnold Mack and Terry Jones of McMelon, our AWA Queen Katie, Samantha Dunn sponsored by Bill Johnson and Harry Vaughn, Devon Sellers sponsored by Jean and Kelly Marinaro of Sunny Fresh and Megan Grantham sponsored by Billy Smith of Billy Smith's



Queen Samantha entertained the kindergarten class at St. Paul's Catholic School with a seed spit contest, coloring contest, juicy watermelon slices, breakfast a go-go, and lots of "queen" pictures.



What a fun filled day Queen Samantha had with the fourth grade class at St. Paul's Catholic School this past April. Check out the young girl to the left on the first row...she won the seed spit contest and immediately put on her "winning prize" T-shirt that was purchased at our NWA Convention in Orange Beach, AL. This is what I call super publicity for our watermelon message...EAT MORE WATERMELON!



Thank you to our NWPB for the training seminar each incoming association queen attends in early April. Mark Arney could not be in a better position than he is in this picture! Thank you to Mark, Gordon, Leslie, Rebekah and Stephanie for once again educating our queens on their responsibilities for their upcoming year.



Queen Samantha had a great time meeting everyone during the NWPB meeting in Orlando.



2008 Alabama Watermelon Queen
Samantha Leigh Dunn



What a year to look forward to for our NWA Queen Brittanie and our AWA Queen Samantha.



Now, this is certainly a "Welcome to Paradise" picture! Our AWA Convention was pleasantly entertained by all the visiting queens. Thank you to Newberry Queen Jessica, TWA Queen Kelly, FWA Queen Tara, NWA Queen Jenna, and Illiana Queen Emily for attending our convention and helping make it the success it was!



Congratulations to Devon Sellers on being chosen as Miss Jubilee during our AWA Convention in Biloxi, MS, this past February. A special thank you to our 2007 AWA Queen Katie for a job well done!



Here we have our 2008 AWA Queen Samantha Dunn. On the left we have our First Runner-Up Megan Grantham and on the right we have our Second Runner-Up Jenna Parish.



WOW! Look at our AWA Beauties! We have Queen Samantha, Queen Katie, Queen Catherine, Queen Megan, Queen Jennifer and past AWA Queen and NWA Queen Jennifer Jones Abney.



Thank you to our fantastic AWA Board Members for your continued support and sponsorship: Cheryl Hicks, Harry Vaughn, Myron Harrison, Bill Johnson, Kelly Marinaro, Queen Samantha, Billy Smith, Terry Jones, Dean Tucker and Arnold Mack. Thanks to each of you!



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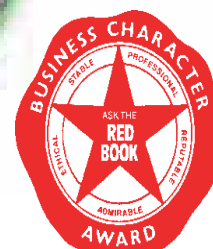
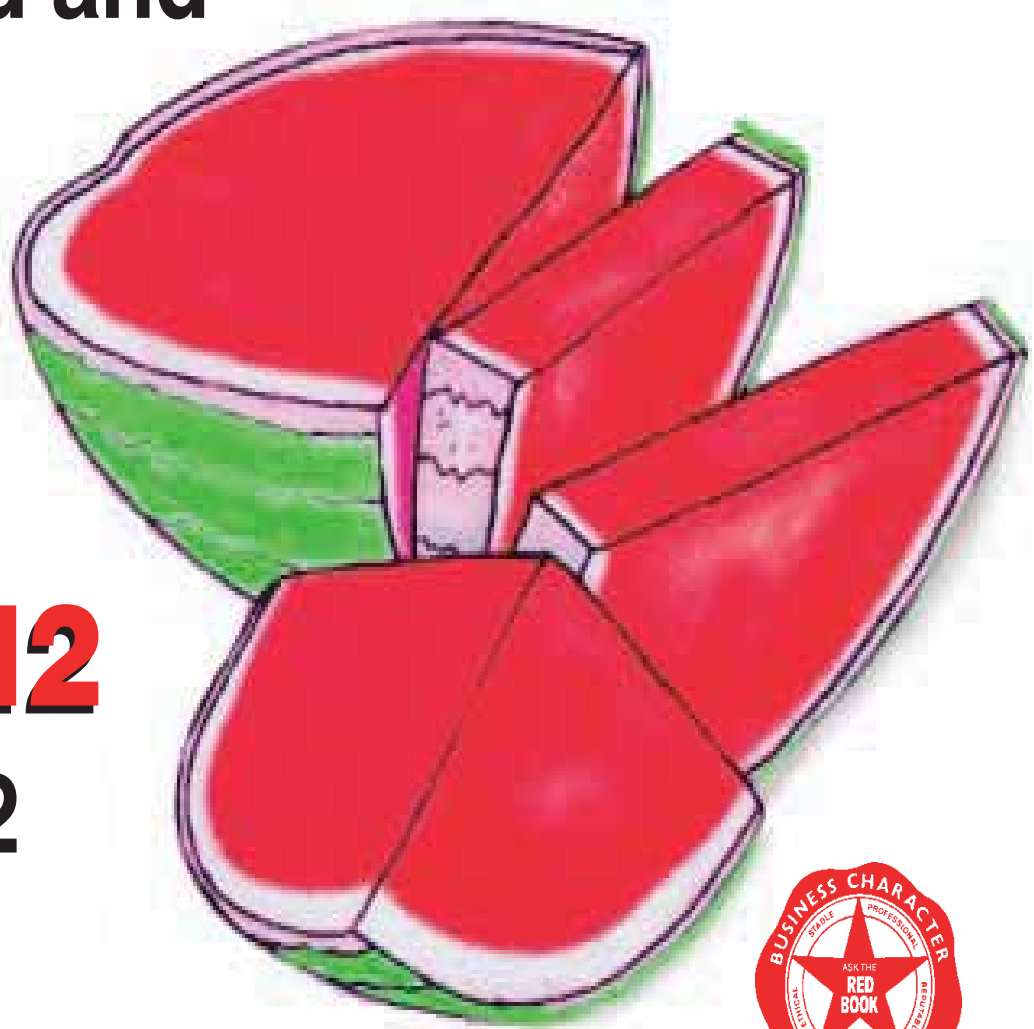
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**Arnold Mack
Chandler Mack
Terry Jones
Jason Turner**



Florida Report

Greetings from the Sunshine State of Florida...

We started our journey on January 25-26. Tara traveled to the Georgia Watermelon Convention held in Cordele, Georgia sponsored by Melon 1 at the Lake Blackshear Resort. Thanks to the Georgia Watermelon Association for your hospitality and Mitch and Julie for a wonderful convention!

On February 1 and 2, Tara and I traveled to the Mar-Del Watermelon Convention held in Cambridge, Maryland at the Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay Resort. This spectacular event was sponsored by Browning and Sons, Arnold Mack, Melon 1, and M.G. Ford.

We were off to our next adventure in my home town, Biloxi, Mississippi. The Alabama Watermelon Convention was held February 8-9 sponsored by Paul Sawyer, Tommy Smith, Nature Choice, and Sunnyfresh.

As Tara approached the end of her reign, she traveled to the Florida State Fair for Watermelon Day on February 17 along with Chef Harry. They handed out watermelons provided by Melon 1. Over 2,000 people attended "WATERMELON DAY" at the state fair. Then it was off to Orange Beach, Alabama for the National Watermelon Convention. Tara represented Florida in an outstanding way. We were all very proud of you at the convention!!! Tara and I would like to thank all of her sponsors for making this a wonderful and memorable year. We would also like to thank Tara's family for sharing her with us this past year.

Wow! If you did not attend this year's 40th Annual Watermelon Convention held at the Grand Cypress Hyatt Resort in Orlando, Florida you missed a good time. A special thanks to our President Paul Sawyer and first lady Jackie for a wonderful convention at Melon Bowl "08". This year convention was dedicated to a good friend, Mr. Alfred Brown who will be truly missed. Congratulations to our new FWA officers President – Paul Sawyer, 1st Vice-President Billy Smith, and 2nd Vice –President Chandler Mack.

After an exciting weekend of competition, Saturday evening ended with a banquet and the crowning of 2008 Florida Watermelon Queen Kaley Harper of Sarasota, Florida. Kaley is the daughter of Van & Tonya Harper of Vincennes, Indiana, who also received along with Karen Vincent of Molino, Florida the "Miss Jubilee" award. She is attending the East West College of Natural Medicine in Sarasota to obtain a master in oriental medicine and baccalaureate in Health Science. She plans on specializing in Women's health. The first runner-up is Miss Shelley Allen of Bascom, Florida and second runner-up is Miss Meagan Marsh of Cross City, Florida. Congrats!

Thanks to the queen contestant sponsors who made this possible for the young ladies to compete and have a memorable weekend. Our sponsors included Arcadia Watermelon Association, Everglades Farm, International Paper, Nature's Choice Produce, Newberry Watermelon Festival, Valentine Ranch, and Wolf Island.

The day after the convention Kaley and I had our first promotion along with Mr. Paul Sawyer and his wife Jackie. We traveled to the Ronald McDonald House in Orlando and dropped off more than 100 books collected from the Book Drive at this year's convention. Thanks to everyone that brought a book for this first annual Book Drive. Kaley, Jackie, and I visited families at the Ronald McDonald House and shared watermelons for them to enjoy. Thanks Melon 1 for those tasty melons!

FWA is proud to announce our new travel website. www.fwatravel.com Wishing everyone a successful watermelon season, until next time...

Debra Harrison
Florida Watermelon Promotions Coordinator
Email: debrathreel@earthlink.net
Home: (863) 494-1163 Cellular: (863) 990-0675



Queen Tara and Lisa Lapide having fun in Cordele, Georgia



2008 FWA Queen Contestant along with 2007 Queen Tara



Thanks John and Rich for all of your good times and laughs



2008 FWA Judges and newly Crowned 2008 Florida Watermelon Queen Kaley Harper



FWA Queen Tara taking time to pose in front of beautiful display



The first "June Smith Memorial Award" being presented to Mrs. Jean Marinaro



Queen Tara and Alabama Queen Katie showing the latest style of hats



Our dearest FWA "has been" Heather, Carrie, Karen Ann, Tara and the newest edition Kaley!



All smiles



President Paul Sawyer and first lady Jackie congratulate Queen Kaley as 2008 Florida Watermelon Queen



Queen Tara & Billy Smith at the Alabama Watermelon Convention



Shelley Allen- First Runner-up, Kaley Harper – Queen, Meagan Marsh – Second Runner-up



A visit with Kelly Marino in Biloxi, Miss.



Florida Watermelon Queen Kaley first promotion along with Jackie at the "Ronald McDonald House" in Orlando, Florida



Thanks Tara for all of your memories & good times this past year



Queen Kaley and Jackie visiting families at the Ronald McDonald House.



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Mark Arney
Executive Director



The Watermelon MarketPlace is Open!

It's here—the new Watermelon MarketPlace.

The National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB) is proud to offer a place where buyers and sellers can easily find and market watermelon industry products and services to help them achieve their business goals.

Why list on the MarketPlace:

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Buyers, including retailers, brokers and industry members will come to the site for business solutions
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It's fast and easy!

Access the link easily at Watermelon.org

As a seller, you can list your products and/or services for retailers, food service buyers, and other companies who want to purchase your products!

Search the MarketPlace for free to shorten research time with relevant options and avenues, find additional suppliers, and find motivated service providers to meet a variety of your needs.

As a buyer, you can search for businesses who can supply products and services to the watermelon industry to suit your business needs.



Who can list on the MarketPlace:

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Bin and merchandising companies

Seed and crop protection suppliers

Label and packaging companies

Other watermelon industry service providers

Like many programs, the MarketPlace is a work in progress and we appreciate your patience. We need YOU to get involved by starting your free listing today and giving us your input about how the site is working—or could work better—for you.

We want the MarketPlace to be an effective tool for the industry and facilitate connections outside of the NWPB's reach. Please contact Jason Hanselman with any comments and feedback at 877-599-9595 or by emailing jhanselman@watermelon.org.

Please note that all listings have review and approval on the NWPB end, so they will not automatically populate the database.

News from the National Watermelon Promotion Board

The NWPB does not promote, endorse or guarantee any product or service listed on the Watermelon MarketPlace.

Nomination Meetings

Industry Affairs has completed the board member nomination meetings for district 1 and district 8 (Importers). The nominating meeting for district 8 was held January 15th in Pompano Beach, Florida in the Sol Group Marketing Co. conference room. The meeting for district 1 was held March 14 in conjunction with the Florida Watermelon Association meeting in Orlando, Florida at the Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress (Regency Hall).

We would like to thank everyone who helped make these meetings a success. The names of those nominated will be forwarded to the United States Secretary of Agriculture so that he can make the appointments. The three year terms of those finally selected are slated to begin January 1, 2009. If you have any questions about the nominations, please contact us.

Online Handler's Report

In 2007 we launched the online handler's report system for filing your assessment report over the Internet. The online handler's report website is a secure site with 128-bit encryption (encryption rate that financial institutions use). The system automatically calculates the assessment and there's a list of the producers that have been reported previously in each companies account.

You can find the link to the online handler's report in the industry section of Watermelon.org. We also have a tutorial video that will help users understand the process of using the online handler's report. That video is also available online. We encourage all handlers to use the system to save time and paperwork.



IR-4 Project

As a board member on the Commodity Liaison Committee (CLC). Mark Arney, Executive Director of the NWPB, recently attended a meeting on the IR-4 Project.

The IR-4 Project was established in 1963 to provide a means for U.S. growers to have specialty crops included on pesticide labels.

Since its inception, nearly 20,000 food-use and ornamental horticulture label clearances have resulted. The CLC serves as a bridge between the IR-4 Project and the growers of specialty crops to make sure that the program continues to focus on significant pest management problems.

The IR-4 Project has been very helpful to watermelon producers over the years. To view a list of those spray applications for watermelon that have been helped by the IR-4 Project please go to this link: <http://ir4.rutgers.edu/>.

Once there, click on "Food Crops Database". Then type "watermelon" in the "Search by Key Word" box and it will provide you with a detailed list.

The IR-4 Project has also recently funded a study with Dr. Dan Egel of Purdue University. This is an efficacy trial for the disease Fusarium wilt of watermelon. The information from these tests will be used to decide which fungicides to place in field trials.

Promoting Watermelon in WIC Program



During a recent trip to Washington, DC Mark Arney and Gordon Hunt met with Gus Schumacher to discuss various strategies for promoting watermelon in the Women, Infants and Children federal program (WIC) under new changes that became effective in February of this year.

WIC now pays over 8 million eligible recipients about \$35 monthly for staples such as juice, eggs, cheese and milk. The new changes will pay for less of those products and will now cover fruits and vegetables. In fact, the WIC program will be providing almost \$500 million in vouchers for produce!

Under the WIC program, people receive vouchers that can be redeemed at over 35,000 retail stores across the country.

Following the meeting with Gus the pair went to the WIC's national headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia, and met with its executive director.

Gus Schumacher has served as the third-highest ranking official in United States Department of Agriculture in the Farm and Foreign Agricultural Service from 1997 to 2001. During this time, he was also President of the USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation. Prior to his appointment, he directed the Department's Foreign Agricultural Service.

New Officers for NWPB

As of our February board meeting in Orange Beach, Alabama, the NWPB has new officers.

President: Paul Wiggins District 6 Producer
Snook, TX

Vice President: Josh Baile District 4 Handler
Dowagiac, MI

Secretary/Treasurer: Greg Leger District 3 Handler
Cordele, GA

Ex-Officio: Brent Harrison District 7 Handler
Nogales, AZ

DVD Presentations Copies Available

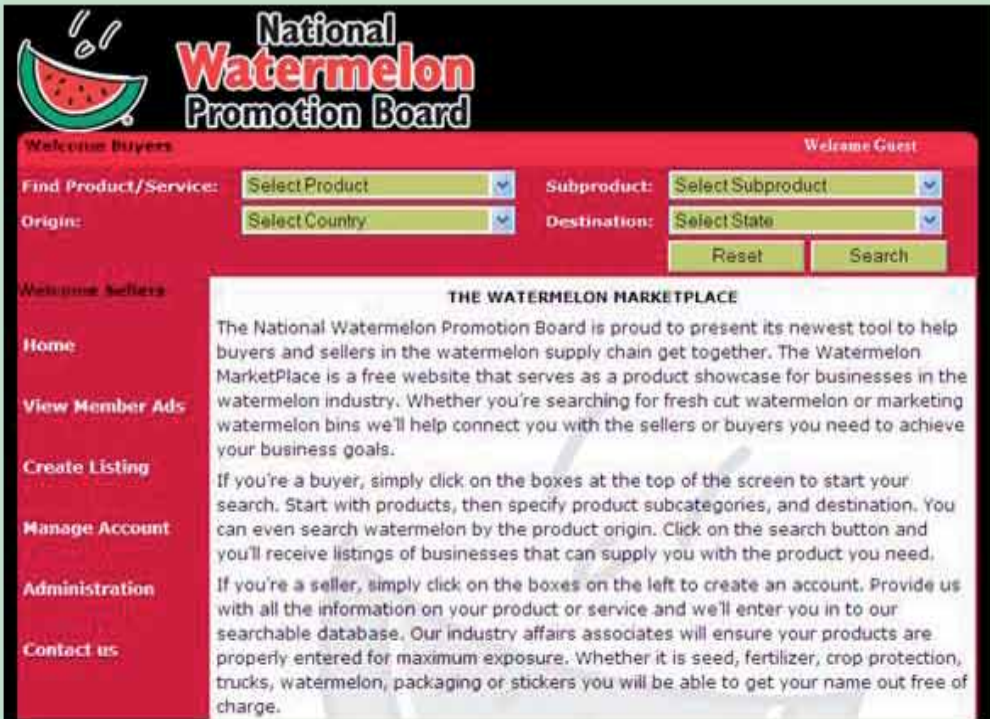
At the recent state and regional watermelon association meetings this winter, the NWPB reviewed its activities, highlights, promotions and programs in a new DVD format.

These DVDs are a new part of our integral promotional and communications programs as they are made completely in-house utilizing our own technological capabilities. The presentations were so well received that we would like to offer copies out to any interested industry member who may not have been present at the association meetings.

If you would like a copy, please contact Stephanie Simek by emailing ssimek@watermelon.org or phone at 877-599-9595.



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Our goal is to be constantly improving the site to provide the best tool for the watermelon industry. Please send comments to Jason Hanselman at jhanselman@watermelon.org or call 877-599-9595.

Please note that all listings require NWPB approval, so they will not automatically populate the database.

The NWPB does not promote, endorse or guarantee any product or service listed on the Watermelon MarketPlace website.

Georgia Report

How times Fly's!

We are ready for our journey into to the 2008 watermelon season, yet not believing that 2007 has come and gone.

GWA started the New Year at our annual convention in Cordele, Georgia at the Retreat at Lake Blackshear in January. Georgia greatly appreciates the participation, attendance, and support that took place to make this convention a record breaking event for our association. Several thank you's go out to our contestant and scholarship sponsors:

Contestant Sponsors:

- Joey Faison – Mobley Greenhouse
- Ricky, Jeannie, Clay and Dennis Tucker – Tucker Farms
- Billy Smith's Watermelons
- Leger and Son
- Craig Mathis – Syngenta Seed
- Dan King
- Borders Melon East

Scholarship Donors included:

- Senator Joseph Carter
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- South Georgia Banking Company
- Planters First Bank
- Tri Wall
- Chris Green
- Mrs. Sue Childers
- Anonymous "Donor" in Memory of Mr. Oren Childers
- "Has Beens" also in Memory of Mr. Oren Childers

Mr. Oren Childers was such a special man to us all and we are so thankful for scholarships that are given in his name year after year.

We are proud to announce our 2008 Watermelon Queen, Ms. Hannah Jones of Americus, Georgia. Hannah has already hit the ground running since the convention. In January, Hannah accompanied the Crisp County Chamber of Commerce to the State Capitol in Atlanta where she was proclaimed on the House and Senate Floor. Later, Hannah joined the Chamber at the Freight Depot in Downtown Atlanta at the Annual Cordele – Crisp County Fish Dry. Hannah let her southern hospitality show when she greeted legislators into the event. Next, Hannah was back in Atlanta for the Annual Agriculture Awareness Day hosted by Governor Sonny Perdue. While at Ag Day, Hannah served watermelon to students and children at the GWA exhibit.

In March, Hannah participated in the Georgia Leadership Gathering which consisted of a crowd of 300 plus with people from all over that had spent the day in the watermelon fields after meeting with United States Senator Saxby Chambliss. The group learned about the Georgia Agriculture Economy and the transplanting process on Monroe Hunt's Farm.

Thank you again to everyone who supported GWA at our Annual Convention. We are looking for a productive year as GWA continues to grow. CONGRADULATIONS to our special Ms. Brittany Faircloth, our new NWA Queen, we know that Brittany will make the entire industry proud!

Sincerely,

Julie Akins Daughtrey
Promotion Coordinator
P.O. Box 2278
Dalton, GA 30722
770-842-3309



Hannah thanks her sponsors, Leger & Son... "Miss Margie" too, for the beautiful watermelon necklace they purchased for her from contestant Tara Nipper at the GWA Auction.



The GWA Board members welcome Hannah to the family.



Hannah's parents, Leila and Tim Jones, are proud of their new "Queenie".



Hannah thinks these judges are the smartest people she knows.



It's official...the "Has-Beens" welcome Brittanie to their group and induct Hannah into the GWA family.



Rep. Johnny Floyd and Speaker Glenn Richardson welcome Hannah and the Cordele-Crisp Chamber to the House of



Senators Joe Carter and George Hooks along with Lt. Governor, Casey Cagle, make it official with a Proclamation



Greeting the crowd at the Cordele-Crisp Chamber Legislative Fish Fry, Hannah meets and greets two of her biggest fans, Buddy and Margie Leger.



Hannah also greets this handsome couple as they join her at the Fish Fry.



Hannah teaches the Leadership Georgia Crowd her tips and techniques on spitting a watermelon seed.



If the hat fits...Hannah's all smiles at Leadership Georgia's "Barn Dance".



Hannah travels to Atlanta for National Agriculture Day.



Governor Sonny Perdue is a good friend to all the hardworking folks in our industry and now he's a fan of our 2008 Georgia Watermelon Queen.



From all over the great state our GWA members traveled north to Dalton to Julie and Chase's wedding.



The rain didn't stop any of the fun for this group as they made it to south Georgia for Julie and Chase's reception in Lenox.



Brittanie and Hannah compare notes after the NWPB's Marketing Seminar in Orlando, Florida.



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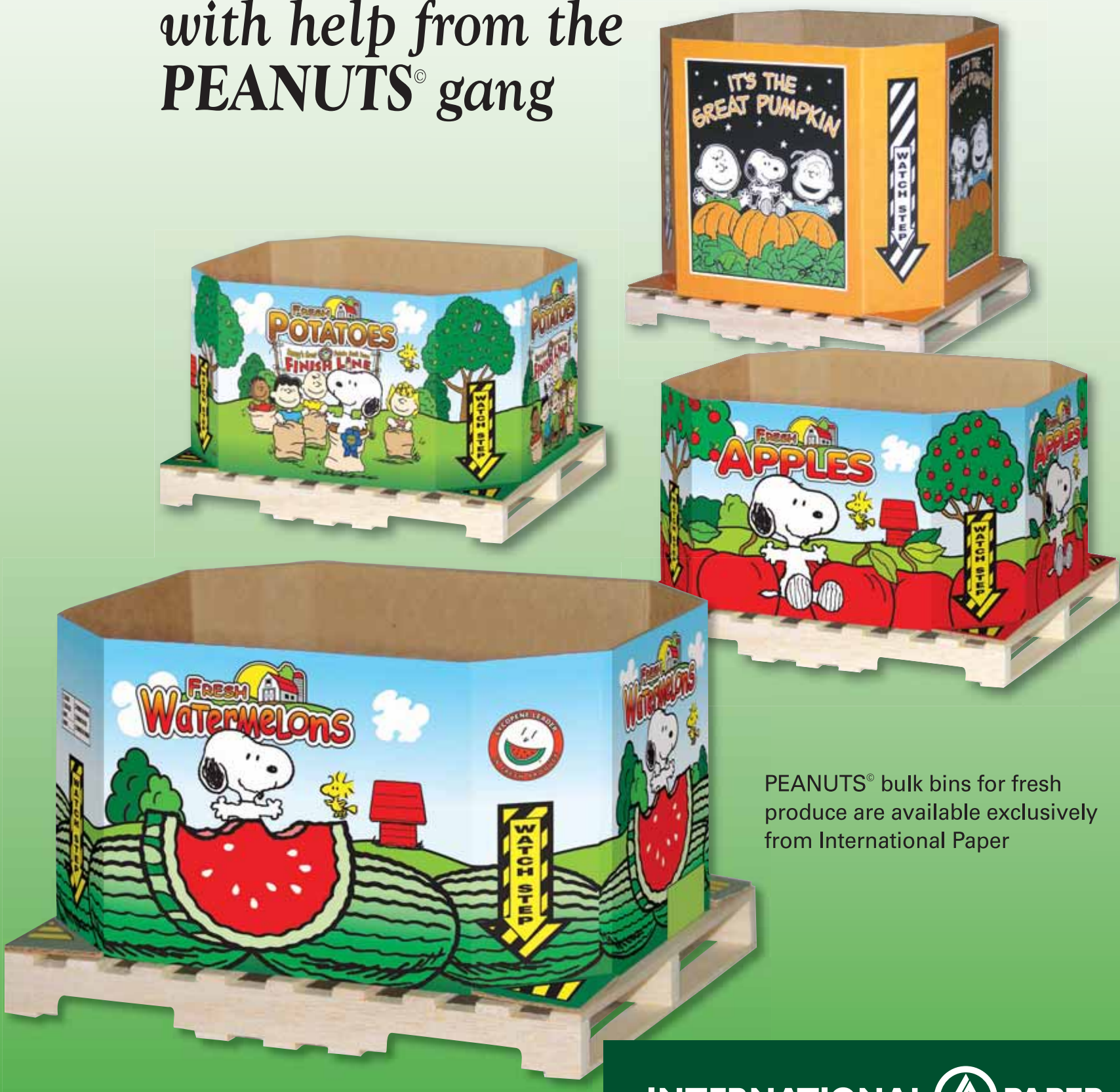
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Illiana Report

The Illiana Watermelon Association would like to congratulate the National Watermelon Association on a FANTASTIC 94th annual convention. Gulf Shores was an amazing area and proved to be a wonderful destination for the convention. Congratulations to 2007 Illiana Watermelon Queen, Emily Frey on receiving the Queen Seed Spit Award and 1st runner-up. We are very proud of her and wish her the best in the future.

The Illiana Watermelon Association held its 19th annual convention in Vincennes, Indiana at the Quality Inn the weekend of March 7 & 8. This year's theme was Watermelon Twist: Rock and Grow. The weekend kicked off with President Dennis Mouzin's reception on Friday night. The party was set in the 50's and Elvis was a special guest. There were 7 lovely young ladies competing for the title of 2008 Illiana Watermelon Queen. The competition began with the queen contestant's Professional Wear. The girls also preformed a choreographed dance to 50's music. The crowd enjoyed the annual seed spit contest poolside.

The convention resumed on Saturday with guest speakers Craig Stokes an attorney with PACA for farmers and Stephanie Semik with NWPB. The queen contestants began early that morning with a personal interview, taped interview and written portion. A buffet lunch was held at noon. The nominating committee gave reports and the election of officers was held. The queen contestants presented their personal speeches and answered an impromptu question. The afternoon was filled with watermelon galore at the annual fundraiser auction. The auction raised \$158,000. Auctioneers John Snider and Chip Sparks of Snider Auction and Appraisals did a fantastic job during the auction.

The annual banquet was held with a large crowd in attendance. The evening began with the queen contestant evening gown competition. A buffet dinner was served. The remainder of the evening consisted of: Introduction of Officers, U.S. Farm Bill update by Bob Morrissey, Memorials, Seed Spit Award presented by Pieter Droegkamp of Abbott & Cobb, Farewell by 2007 Illiana Watermelon Queen Emily Frey and the presentation of the 2008 Illiana Watermelon Queen.

The 2008 Illiana Watermelon Queen is Maggie Bailey of Vincennes, Indiana. Maggie is the 20 year-old daughter of Gina Bailey. Bartlett Signs of Washington, Indiana sponsored Maggie. Maggie attends Indiana State University in Terre Haute, Indiana. She majors in Elementary Education. Maggie received a \$1000 scholarship to the school of choice sponsored by Tri-Wall, \$1375 wardrobe allowance for Nationals sponsored by First American Bank, Knox County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Great Lakes Produce and Kenworthy's; crown, banner, trophy and paid for promotional appearances by the Illiana Watermelon Association. Maggie was awarded a Promotional Wear scholarship of \$375 from Kenworthy's and Great Lakes Produce.

1st runner-up was Laura Maddock of Vincennes, Indiana. Laura is the 19 year-old daughter of Kurt and Cindy Maddock. Dr. Kurt Maddock of Vincennes, Indiana sponsored her. She was awarded a \$500 scholarship by Tri-Wall; banner and trophy by the Illiana Watermelon Association. 2nd runner-up was Jaclyn Fenwick of Vincennes, Indiana. Jaclyn is the 20 year-old daughter of Terry and Tara Fenwick. She was sponsored by Quest Orthopedics of Vincennes, Indiana. She was awarded a \$200 scholarship by Nowaskie Melons; banner and trophy by the Illiana Watermelon Association. Sheena Orames was awarded Miss Jubilee and the Queen Seed Spit Award. She received a \$100 scholarship for Miss Jubilee sponsored by Double T. She was awarded a plaque and \$70 from Pieter Droegkamp of Abbot & Cobb.

The new 2008 Illiana Watermelon Association Board of Directors:

Chairman of the Board- Dennis Mouzin
President- Brad Toney
1st Vice President- Carrie Smith
2nd Vice President- Brad
Promotion's Coordinator- Kristy Cardinal

Thank you to everyone who supported the 2007 Illiana Watermelon Queen Tour and Queen Emily. You support is greatly appreciated. We want to also thank everyone who attended the 2008 Illiana Watermelon Convention and contributed to the success. We look forward to working with everyone this year. If you would like to book Maggie for a promotion or help sponsor an event, please contact me at information below. Thank you.

Sincerely
Kristy Cardinal
Promotion's Coordinator
Illiana Watermelon Association
2408 E Henry Rd
Vincennes, IN. 47591
Melons@vincennes.net
812-882-3570



The queen contestants have a great time at the auction.



Miss KnoxCounty Fair Queen congratulates Maggie.



The girls are ready for the banquet.



Pres. Brad Toney welcomes Maggie to the watermelon family.



The girls are all excited for Maggie and wish her the best.



Maggie and her proud family.



Emily thanks Kemper for her outgoing queen scholarship.



Bob Morrissey congratulates Maggie on a job well done!



Thank you to Mar-Del, Nationals and Texas/Oklahoma for coming and supporting us.



Maggie thanks the judges for selecting her.



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Wabash Valley Growers
Kent Williams

Mar-Del Report

Hello NWA!

Sometimes you think, “It just can’t get any better than this,” and then it does! The Mar-Del Watermelon Assoc. held their 42nd annual convention for the 2nd time at the Hyatt Resort in Cambridge, MD and it was wonderful. What made the event so special were the 280 attendees who came from all over the country. A special thank you to the states and sponsors who sent their queens, we were honored to be joined by the Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, Alabama, and National Watermelon Queens and their coordinators—thank you for making the trip, ladies! Also, we are very grateful to everyone who bought or donated auction items and loads.

Out of the six amazing girls who competed, Christina Gallant, a 22-year-old graduate of the AgriBusiness and Communications programs at the University of Delaware from Smyrna, DE was crowned as our 2008 queen. She is beautiful, intelligent, and wonderful to be around—I can’t wait for you all to meet her! She was selected by our judging panel; Jim Mastropietro of IP, Stephanie Simek of the NWPB, April Brilliant our 1988 Queen, and Mark Issasc of the UD, and YOU. We were proud to introduce a “People’s Choice” vote into our judging which counted for 10% of the girls score. We’re proud to announce we’ve elected Doug Corey as our President and Mark Collins as our Vice President. And of course, the weekend would not have been such a success if it weren’t for our Convention Committee; Jay Rider, Will Hales, Travis Hastings, Kevin Evans, and Dawn Collins—great job, again!

The Mar-Del Watermelon Assoc. was very well represented in Alabama at Nationals this year. We had many members who made the trip to support Queen Stephanie and their journey was well worth it! She represented us with style and grace and we are so proud that she was pick by the girls as Miss Juiblee—congrats, Stephanie!

Queen Christina and I didn’t let any grass (or watermelons) grow under our feet... we quickly whisked her off to Vincennes, Indiana for the 2008 Illiana Convetion. Everyone at this convention is just as nice as I had heard. Anita, Kristy, Carrie, and Queen Emily, thank you for your wonderful hospitality, we really enjoyed ourselves. The following weekend we caravanned with our favorites, Will and Candice Hales, to Wrightsville Beach, NC for the NC Convention. I always enjoy seeing so many kind, familiar, faces and Christina defiantly did, too. Again, thank you to; Sandra, Cathy Price, Frances Bunch, and everyone else, for showing us that great southern hospitality— we had a blast. Next stop for us will be Media Training in April. Our farmers our busy planting watermelons now and I CAN’T WAIT for another MAR-DELicious season!

Thank you to everyone who purchased items for our Queens; Bradley and Louise O’Neal, John Alisa Lapide and Melon One, David Lowe, Craig Mathis, Paul Sawyer, Jim Mastropietro, The MAR-DEL Watermelon Assoc, Will and Candice Hales, Freddie Ellis, Josh Rowe, and Randy and Jim Smith—we appreciate you always making our Queens feel so welcomed!

Warmest Regards,
Allison Castellana
Promotions Coordinator
443-783-5553
mac0912@ecu.edu



Stephanie enjoying her time in SC with Jim Mastropietro, Richard Wojciak, and Steve Crowder



Part of the MAR-DEL group at Nationals; Travis Hastings, Mark & Dawn Collins, Queen Stephanie, Kevin Evans, and



Queen Stephanie and her family. Dennis and Theresa Reid, her parents Kathy and Dwayne, and Brent and Audrey Serman



We had fun at MAR-DEL! Doug Corey, John Lapide, Hammy Dicks, Rich Chastain, and Steve Crowder



The Hastings Ladies; Tracy Adams, Kim, Pat, and Harriet Joyce



All the visiting queens enjoying the view of the Chesapeake Bay!



Stephanie with Richard Wojciak and Paul Sawyer



Candice, Queen Christina, and Allison see no evil, hear no evil, and speak no evil in NC!



Queen Christina enjoyed meeting Mr. Gordon Etheridge and Adam Lytch



We were excited to have so many visiting queens! April Brilliant, Lisa Woods, Amanda Brown, Lani Kennedy, Allison Castellana, and Stephanie Abt with Christina Gallant



Our beautiful 2008 MAR-DEL Queen and Miss Jubilee, Christina Gallant



Stephanie having fun and taking a break at Nationals with Steve Crowder and Josh Rowe



Christina working the auction and visiting with Carrie Smith and Anita Fields



Thanks to Randy and Jim Smith of Midwest Marketing for the cute skirt!



Christina in Vincennes with Greg, Dennis, Steven, and Jim



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2008 NWA Convention; another Record Setter!

The 95th annual convention of the NWA was held in mid-February 2008 at the Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach, Alabama. And, WOW, was it ever a great convention. Let’s review some of the highlights:

Wednesday, we kicked it off with a three hour Food Safety Seminar to discuss the importance of GAP certification, worker training, documentation, and traceability. The golf tournament and a fishing tournament followed later that day, with a fun time enjoyed by all participants.

Thursday, we held our NWA Committee meetings on the outskirts of the Business Exhibit Center, followed by a series of 16 workshops that afternoon. The workshops covered key topics and issues of our industry such as the Farm Bill, Immigration, Ethanol, NWA Insurance Programs, USDA Research, Clemson & NC State Research, GAP Certification, Employment Raids & Audits, and Farmer PACA Licenses. That evening, we were entertained by a great beach band, The Cool Rayz!



The face of The Weather Channel shares his views of our ever-changing weather patterns.



New Chairman of the Board, Bradley O’Neal, hands the gavel over to our new President, Nowell Borders.



The fishing tournament was prosperous, and full of fish (and a few fish tails too!)



Buddy Leger receives an autographed copy of the U.S. Senate watermelon proclamation that he helped to deliver in 2007.

Friday, multiple speakers in the morning session including Sheriff Hoss Mack, U.S. Congressman Jo Bonner (AL), Laura Wellington (creator of The Wumblers), Anthony Senagore (Ethanol Operator), and Autumn Veazey (United Fresh Produce Association). The afternoon held the highest revenue generating auction in NWA History! That evening, we held the first ever, Watermelon idol karaoke competition with our 3 Idol judges (Simon Cowell - aka Brent Harrison, Paula Abdul - aka Jennifer

Carden, and Randy Jackson - aka Richard Murrin). That was a grand, fun event to watch, with many signing (or trying to sing).

Saturday, speakers included William Coffman - 2008 Young Ag Spokesperson, Bob Morrissey presented the “State of the NWA Address”, followed by the NWPB’s DVD presentation. The afternoon was free for most attendees, with the raffle drawing in the early evening. Our keynote speaker at the banquet was The Weather Channels’ Jim, Cantore. Jim talked about the “Warming of the Globe” which highlighted changes in our planet as it warms, and how that is effecting weather



The Wumblers Laura Wellington discusses the partnership with the NWA and her media plans including plush toys.



Seed Spit They lined up in a long line to take their turn. Come on Harry; stop holing up the line, pal.



Thursday reception included signing Happy Birthday to Bob’s 1-year old grandson, Little Oscar.



Lee Harber tries to imitate Jimmy Buffet, or is trying out for the Watermelon Idol competition.

patterns and the severity of weather across the U.S. The evening was concluded with the crowning of our 2008 National Watermelon Queen.

Sunday morning, Nowell Borders became the 2008 NWA President by accepting the gavel from new Chairman of the Board Bradley O’Neal.

Award winners this year included William Coffman (2008 Young Ag Spokesperson), Charlie Lankford (Outstanding Service Award), NWPB (Marketing Award), and auction awards presented to Melon One, Borders Melon Company and The Giumarra Companies.

Our internal evaluation of the national convention exceeded our initial goals, and has us on track to be even larger and stronger in the future years to come. Although our attendance was slightly less than 2007, primarily due to a conflicting produce convention and the flu virus that was taking over the country at that time, we felt very good about the outcome. We set a new record in sponsorships, and thoroughly expect to improve on that effort next year! We held the first ever series of educational workshops that was attended by over 150 convention attendees. We attracted other suppliers to the convention as first-timers that will be back year after year as a result of the experience. We had a record Auction, due in large part to the efforts of Mr. Arnold Mack! You are Awesome, Big Daddy!

“We are headed in the right direction with the national convention”, said Bob Morrissey. “The addition of educational workshops and quality speakers, especially a high profile keynote speaker at the banquet, will

provide the appeal to attract more and more people every year. A few tweaks here and there, and we’ll be where I would like to be currently. Now that we do not have a conflicting convention for the next few years, it is a Katie-bar-the-doors approach to attendance levels, and everything that goes with each convention. That most exciting part of this for me is that we will need to respond to that expansion and the new issues that will occur to provide the best possible experience for our members. And we have the team, the volunteers, the support group, and the members that will help us to make it happen. As Larry the Cable Guy says, ‘Get-R-Dun!’ We’ll Get-R-Dun!”

Convention Volunteers; We can’t do it without You!

Our national convention has grown farther in a short couple of years than any of us ever projected. With that increase in attendance and participation comes the need for volunteers and support from so many people to help us to create and conduct a quality convention that is appealing to you and every member of the NWA that shares the experience with us all.

From the registration desk and all of those preparations, to table center-piece set-up, to auction set-up, to running the seed spit contest, to helping with the golf and fishing tournaments, to running the computers and microphones at the auction and raffle drawing, to taking tickets to each meal event, to helping with the national queen pageant, to audio/visual support, to being a Watermelon Idol judge, and so much more.

Many thanks in particular go to a few people that took time away from their normal jobs and activities to help us meet the growing needs. We thank you so much for your dedication and support. In particular, we want to thank a few people that worked tirelessly across multiple days to help us.

- Shaun Shurley Valentine
- Betsy Morrissey
- Lee & Nancy Harber
- Marti Smith
- Ranell Borders
- Louise O’Neal
- Stephanie Duda
- Jennifer Carden
- Linsey Hay
- Cathy Price
- Arnold Mack
- Paul Teague

There are so many others that helped us also, and we wish we had the space to list everyone. Please know that we know who you are, and we love you for your help, your support, and your contributions. Thanks to all of you, for we could not do it without you. May God Bless you!

Thank you to our Auction Item Supporters

We could not have asked for a larger and better presentation of donated items for the national convention. There were some very unique, one of a kind items offered at the auction. And because of you, we generated in excess of \$110,000 in auction items alone, which is an all-time record for the NWA.

Over 65 NWA members donated items for the auction. It is because of you that we are able to create excitement at this annual event, and offer some of the most unique watermelon-related items for bid.

Paintings, dinnerware, clothing, glassware, jewelry, knick-knacks, truck-loads of pallets and corrugated bins, lots of watermelon seed, thousands of watermelon plants, bowling balls, hats, shirts, skirts, baskets, figurines, purses, neck-ties, and much much, more was offered, and won through our unique auction bidding process.

Where do we begin to say “Thank You” to all of the generosity that has been offered to the NWA from our donors and buyers? Words cannot express the gratitude that we have for you. Our promise is to continue to offer you a fun environment at each national convention and auction in return. God Bless!

If you or your company was one of the many generous donors or buyers of watermelon loads at the NWA convention in Orange Beach, Alabama, we not only owe you a great deal of “thanks” for your generosity, but may also owe you a “gift”.

We presented a nice plaque that is customized & dated that can be hung on your office wall or can stand on a book shelf or countertop. We want to make sure that you receive that gift in recognition of your donation.

If you are one of the donors or buyers of watermelon loads from the recent convention, and did ‘not’ receive your gift, please let us know, and we will send it to you ASAP. You can call, fax or email your name and address, and we will mail the gift to you immediately. Thank you again!

CHEP continued from page 1

you directly. Additionally, any company that is not a current CHEP customer can also participate, with their pallets utilizations counting toward our goals. With your help, the \$10,000 that we earned in 2007 will be increased significantly in 2008.

Sakata Seed America has chosen their seedless variety, Sweet Treasure (SSX 7401) for a new incentive program with the NWA. Every unit of this seed that is purchased by the NWA will provide an incentive payment directly to the NWA.

This is a unique partnership that can also provide a new revenue stream to the Nwa, and allow us to improve and expand our member services and programs in the future. Whether it be a small test plot, one field or an entire farm ---- it all counts, and will help the NWA to “win” in the end.

The NWA remains open to discussing incentive partnerships with any of our suppliers that are looking for something different; something unique; a new way to build their business. Give us a call. Let’s talk about your ideas to help one another. Good luck to us all!

Auction Load Recognition

Auction Load Donors

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Sun Dance Farms
Cactus Melon Distributors/Big Chuy Produce
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Frey Produce
George Perry & Sons
Melon One/C&L Packing (3)
Premier Melon Company
Mack Farms/McMelon, Inc.
Jackson Farming Company
Georgia Watermelon Association
Leger & Son/Dan King
Coosaw Farms
Perennial Produce/Growers Select
Dulcinea/Syngenta
Phil Turner Farms/Raymon Land Watermelon
EMB Farms (2)
Van Gronigen & Son
Alabama Watermelon Association
North Carolina Watermelon Association
L&M Companies
Mar-Del Watermelon Association
Wabash Valley Growers/Mouzin Brothers
South Carolina Watermelon Association
DMC Farms/McMelon, Inc.
Gilliland Melon Sales
C.H. Robinson
Leger & Son/Bob Rawlins

Auction Load Buyers

McMelon, Inc. (3)
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George Perry & Son (2)
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Van Gronigen & Son
H.C. Schmeidling (2)
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Borders Melon Company (3)
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Hales Farms
Illiana Watermelon Association
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Indian Hills Produce
Midwest Marketing/F.H.Dicks
Six L’s Produce
Vincent Farms
Sandia Depot
Texas Watermelon Association
G.A. Funderburk
Evans Farms LLC/Plum Creek/DC Farms
Florida Watermelon Association
Rieds Grove Melons


Global Produce Sales (3)
Sunny Fresh Watermelons
Warren Produce (4)
Premier Melon Company
The Giumarra Companies
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North Carolina Report

North Carolina Watermelon Association is extremely proud of 2007 Watermelon Queen Stephanie McLamb who has been a wonderful spokesperson and Ambassador for the State Association and our watermelon industry this year. As Queen Stephanie's reign came to a close, she traveled to Mar-Del Watermelon Association Convention held February 1-2, 2008 at the Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay Resort in Cambridge, MD and joined other State Watermelon Queens for a fun-filled weekend. Thank you Mar-Del Watermelon Association, Queen Stephanie Abt, Allison Castellana, Candice and Will Hales for a wonderful visit.

Stephanie McLamb, our 2007 Queen represented North Carolina Watermelon Association superbly as she competed in the National Queen Pageant held during the 94th Annual Watermelon Convention, February 20-24 at Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach, Alabama. The Association was extremely proud of Stephanie as she participated in the Speech, Interview, Promotions Wear and Evening Gown competition. Thanks, Stephanie!

The North Carolina Watermelon Association 27th Annual Convention was held March 14 – 15, 2008 at the Holiday Inn Sunspree Resort Hotel in Wrightsville Beach, NC. The weekend was an educational and enjoyable one for those in attendance. Four young ladies competed for the 2008 NC Watermelon Queen title. All contestants did a wonderful job. Brittany White of Whiteville, NC was crowned 2008 NC Watermelon Queen. Candi Allen of Pendleton, NC was named first runner-up. Karla Gurganus was selected by her peers as Miss Jubilee. Congratulations to all young ladies competing for the 2008 NC Watermelon Queen title.

Thank you to all members, individuals, families, auction donors, companies and NCWA for such a wonderful Convention. Thanks also to ten former NCWA Queens who were in attendance to show support for the NC Watermelon Queen program.

The North Carolina Watermelon Association welcomes Brittany White as their 2008 North Carolina Watermelon Queen and Ambassador for the coming year. Brittany is a nineteen year old student at UNC Wilmington, majoring in Elementary Education. She is the daughter of Edward and Phyllis White of Whiteville. Brittany is excited and looking forward to opportunities to promote watermelon in 2008. Visit our website at www.ncmelons.com for more information on our 2008 NCWA Queen Tour.

Please also welcome Susan Mills, NC Watermelon Promotions Coordinator who began her duties on April 1, 2008. Susan and Queen Brittany look forward to a great year. I look forward to continuing my association with the "watermelon family".

Sandra Woodard
Susan Mills
NCWA Promotions Coordinator



NC Queen Stephanie is welcomed to Mar-Del Watermelon Convention in Cambridge, MD.



Queen Stephanie visits with the NC Watermelon family during the Mar-Del Convention.



Watermelon Queens take a break at the Mar-Del Watermelon Convention.



Queen Stephanie congratulates newly crowned Mar-Del Watermelon Queen.



What a sight to be greeted by the lovely Watermelon Queens at the Welcome Reception and "Beach Party" at NWA Convention held February 20-24 in Orange Beach, Alabama.



Watermelon Queens gather prior to their Promotions Wear competition.



Queen Stephanie with NCWA President Floyd Taylor and Percy Bunch as they present her with her Queen gift from the NC Watermelon Association.



Proud parents, Susan and Timmy McLamb with Queen Stephanie during her National competition.



Lovely ladies awaiting Evening Gown Competition at National Convention.



Queen Stephanie and 2008 NC Watermelon Contestants greet Senator Charlie W. Albertson as the Guest Speaker at the NCWA Convention held March 14-15 in Wrightsville Beach, NC.



Mar-Del Watermelon Queen, NC Queen Stephanie and Watermelon Queen Contestants take a break during a beautiful afternoon at the NCWA Convention.



2008 NC Watermelon Queen Contestants pose prior to the Banquet.



Newly crowned 2008 NC Watermelon Queen Brittany White is congratulated by 2007 NC Watermelon Queen Stephanie and 2008 Mar-Del Queen.



Congratulations to Candi Allen, NC Watermelon Queen Runner-Up and 2008 NC Watermelon Queen Brittany White.



Former NC Watermelon Queens gather to congratulate newly crowned 2008 Watermelon Queen Brittany White of Whiteville, NC.



2008 NC Watermelon Queen Brittany with her proud parents, Edward and Phyllis White.



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WATERMELONS

South Carolina Report

Hello from sunny, warm and beautiful South Carolina! I hope that you are having a wonderful spring and that all watermelons are growing beautifully in the fields. In January, we had a wonderful convention in Columbia, SC. We crowned our new 2008 South Carolina Watermelon Queen, Amanda Turner. Amanda is from Landrum, SC and is a 22 year old graduate of Lander University with a BS degree in Exercise Science. Amanda is going back to school to study esthetics and cosmetology. I know that all of you will enjoy getting to know Amanda this year. She is very excited to be the new SC Watermelon Queen and is looking forward to representing the industry. Amanda's enthusiasm and excitement will be a great asset to the association.

Our trip to Orange Beach, AL for Nationals was lots of fun and truly exciting. We would like to congratulate, Brittney, the new NWA Queen. The SCWA wishes Brittney much luck. Congratulations to Emily, the 1st runner-up –we are very proud of you. We would also like to congratulate our 2007 SCWA Queen, Christina, for placing 2nd runner-up at Nationals. Christina represented us very well and we appreciate all of the hard work she has done for the watermelon industry this past year. Thank you Christina for being you and representing us so well! We wish you much luck in the future.

Lastly, I would like all of you to know that I have resigned from the position as South Carolina Watermelon Queen Promotions Coordinator. I have enjoyed my seven years working with the watermelon industry. All of you are indeed very special people. Please know that I will not be a stranger. Watermelons have always been a big part of my life and will remain that way. Do not hesitate to contact me at anytime if I can do anything for any of you. I will be passing the position along to former National Queen, Julie Bryant Murdock. Julie will do a fabulous job and will be a great asset to South Carolina. I will include her phone number at the end of this report. Please contact her with any promotions that you may have.

Until next time...eat lots of watermelon!
Watermelon smiles,
Mary Beth Hiers

Julie Bryant Murdock
864-313-8168



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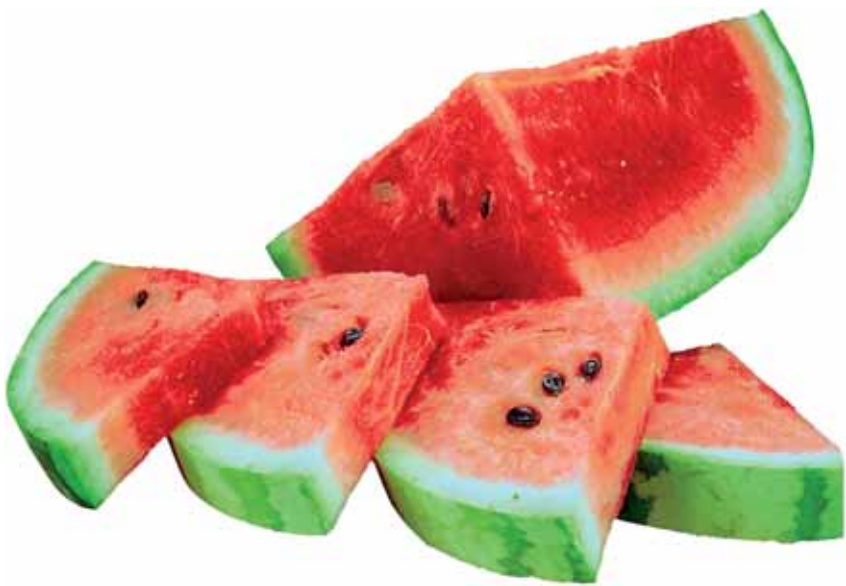
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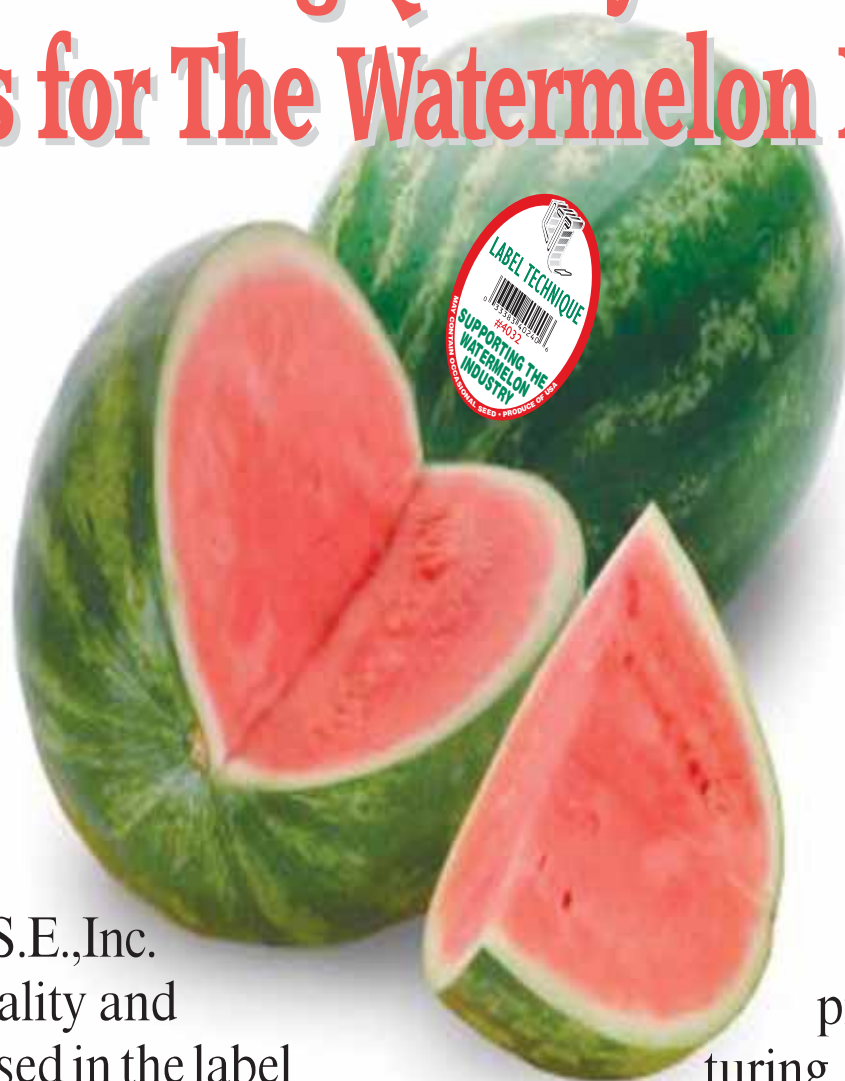
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Texas Report

Hello to everyone and welcome to the 2nd edition of the new NWA Vineline. My first news for the year is our annual convention which was held in McAllen, Texas. The convention was great and was made possible by a host of SPONSORS:

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- J R Produce Supply-McAllen, TX
- Shippers Supply-Pharr, TX
- Tri-Wall Weyerhaeuser- Butler, IN
- Willhite Seed, Inc.-Poolville, TX
- Warren Produce-McAllen, TX
- Wiggins Wholesale, Snook, TX
- Texas Melon Exchange-McAllen, Tx
- International Paper Co.- Edinburg, TX
- Borders Melon Co.-Hargill, TX
- Keithly Williams Seed- Pharr, Texas
- Zeraim Gedera, The Seed Company, McAllen, TX

We would like to say a big thank you to our 2007 Texas Watermelon Queen who fulfilled all of her promotions with great pride and made a lot of new friends along the way. Kelly Rotzler has been a joy for all that have met her with her winning personality. Kelly will succeed in all of her endeavors in life. Thank you so much. Also thanks to our speakers who spent their time with us on Growers Day:

- Bob Morrissey, Executive Director NWA-Plant City, Florida
 - Gordan Hunt, NWPB-Orlando, Florida
 - Richard De Los Santos, Texas Dept. of Agriculture-Austin, Texas
 - Dr. Benny Bruton-Lane, Oklahoma
 - Alfredo P. De La Rosa, Sr- Assistant Director Dept. of Labor-McAllen, TX
- President Ward Thomas added a new agenda item to our convention... no more wasted time! If you were not in a meeting you were welcome the the Texas Poker games. They have asked for it to come back next year, everyone must have had a lot of fun (I know they could not all have won). I believe it was called (WSOP) Watermelon Seeds of Poker.

Thanks to Ken Mears for always coming through with the Queen and 1st Runner Up scholarship prizes. Also thanks to Bates Container for buying and giving Marie her luggage. Ranell Borders, I call her the Pageant Lady, thank you for all you do for the Association! We could not make it without you. NWA, you are lucky to have her as the First Lady of Watermelon. As you can see from the pictures, a good time was had by all and we welcome everyone to come and join us next year.

Queen Marie's first trip out was to The Illiana Convention, she had a great time and says she is so happy that she was chosen to be our queen. She says she already understands what it means to be a member of the huge watermelon family. Marie goes to school in Indiana so she was real close by Evansville. Our next trip out was to the Florida Convention, what a great convention. She was happy to get away from the cold and into the warm Florida weather. It was still a little cool though. By the time you read this we will have already begun shipping watermelons out of Texas beginning about April 21st I'm told. To all the watermelon family, may you have a bountiful watermelon season!

Wanda Letson
Texas Watermelon Association
P. O. Box 903
Weatherford, TX 76086
melonred@sbcglobal.net



Congratulation to NWA Queen Brittney.....



Marie says thanks to John Nowaskie.



Thank you Tri-Wall Weyerhaeuser for continually sponsoring.



and also a big thanks to Anita Field.



Wonder what these girls are up too???



NWA President Nowell Borders presents Queen Marie a watermelon necklace purchased by the Texas Association at the Florida convention.



Nowell and Ranell Borders thank Louise and Bradley O'Neal for coming to Texas.



Welcome Bob Morrissey to the Texas Barbecue.



Alicia meets up with um.....from Florida:HINT-Initials KM



Dalton, Ranell, and Jenna dress for the occasion.



Texas President Ward Thomas and wife Sue singing... and they really sound good.



Congratulations to our new 2008 Texas Watermelon Queen, Marie Fletcher.



Harry Vaughn buys Kelly a set of fine watermelon china.



A beautiful group of girls.



Queen Kelly with her big catch at the fishing tournament at the NWA Convention.



Young Wiggins and Jenna doing a duet, maybe a future star instead of a watermelon grower.



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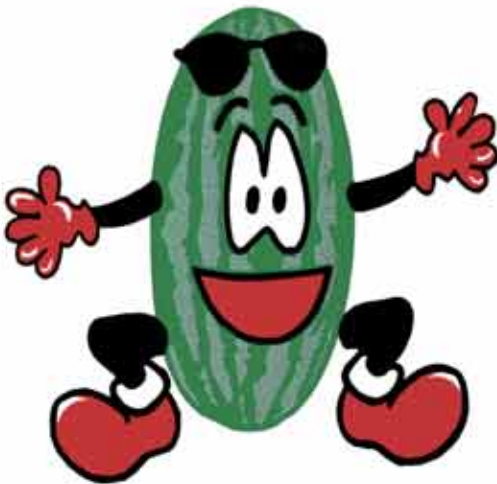
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Cucurbit Yellow Vine Disease Suspected in Florida

B.D. Bruton, USDA-ARS, Lane, Oklahoma; P.D. Roberts, Univ. Florida, Immokalee, FL.

In the late fall of 2007, a watermelon field in Hendry County, Florida was examined that had symptoms of vine decline. The watermelon plants exhibited some symptoms that were consistent with Watermelon Vine Decline, caused by the whitefly-transmitted virus. However, there were additional symptoms that were not consistent with Watermelon Vine Decline. These included the decline and death of vines at a much younger stage (fruit-set) than would have been expected if caused solely by the virus. In addition, microscopic examination of the lower crown revealed a honey-brown discoloration in the phloem of some plants; a symptom that is consistent with Cucurbit Yellow Vine Disease (CYVD) caused by *Serratia marcescens*. Bacteria isolated from the affected tissues and inoculated into squash suggest that the disease is CYVD. PCR analysis has sometimes produced ambiguous results indicating that additional characterization of the bacterium will be necessary. At present, the squash bug is the only known vector of the CYVD pathogen in cucurbits. Based on information from the field consultant, there was a low population of squash bugs in the early season. Although CYVD has previously been confirmed in the states of Arkansas, Colorado, Indiana, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, and Massachusetts, this is the first time the disease has been suspected in Florida.

New fungicides for managing Phytophthora fruit rot of watermelon

C.S. Kousik, G.J. Holmes and M.L. Adams
US Vegetable Laboratory, USDA, ARS, Charleston, SC 29414, and Dept. Plant Pathology, NC State University, Raleigh, NC 27695

For the past several years, *Phytophthora* fruit rot of watermelon (causal agent: *Phytophthora capsici*) has been considered an important problem and a top research priority by the NWA. Management of *Phytophthora* fruit rot is particularly difficult because of the long duration of contact between the soil and fruit, and the difficulty in getting fungicides through the plant canopy to the belly of the fruit for protection. Since 2005, we have been testing fungicides to manage *Phytophthora* fruit rot in North and South Carolina. Three new fungicides with varying levels of effectiveness have been recently labeled for management of *Phytophthora* on cucurbits. Over the years and under severe fruit rot pressure in our fields, the fungicide Revus (a.i. Mandipropamid, Syngenta) provided 12-76% reduction of fruit rot. Presidio (a.i. Fluopicolide, Valent) reduced fruit rot by 30-60% and Ranman (a.i. Cyazofamid, FMC) reduced fruit rot by 23-46%. Ridomil Gold, the current standard reduced fruit rot by 0-29% in these tests. The wide range of fungicide effectiveness emphasizes how important local conditions are to disease development and management. Resistance in the pathogen population to Ridomil Gold and Ranman has been identified. There is always a possibility of *Phytophthora* developing resistance to these new fungicides. Therefore to prolong their life, these fungicides should be rotated along with some of the available older fungicides (e.g. copper and mancozeb). Fortunately, each of the new fungicides has a different mode of action and can be rotated among themselves effectively.

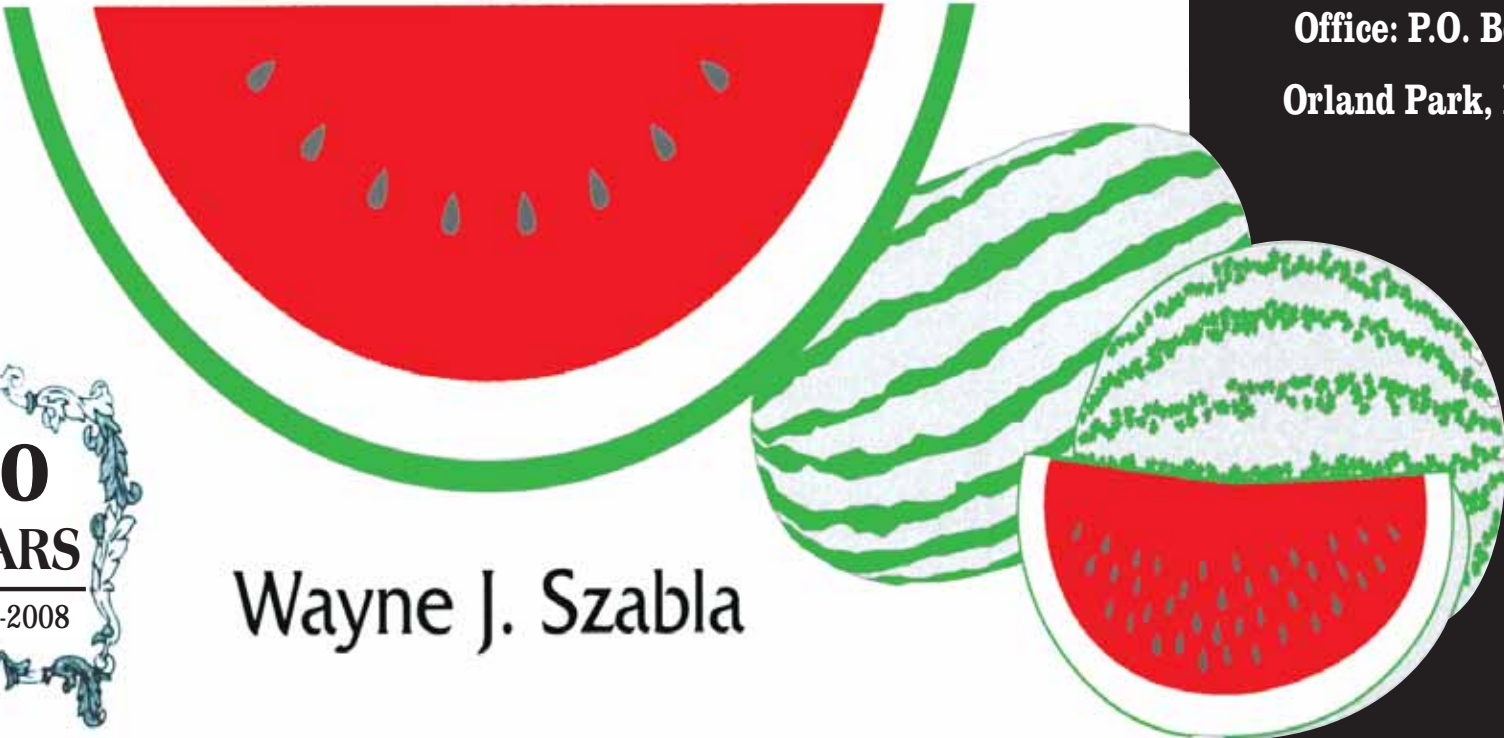
Mention of a proprietary product does not constitute an endorsement or recommendation by the USDA-ARS or NC State University for its use, nor does it imply exclusion of other products that may be suitable. Parts of this research were funded by a grant from NWA to Dr. G.J. Holmes.

Gummy Stem Blight



In recent years, the gummy stem blight pathogen, *Didymella byroniae*, has shown a remarkable ability to adapt and become resistant to many of the most effective chemicals developed to control it (Fig. 1). In some cases, resistance has been detected after only one or two years of commercial use of a fungicide. Resistance in *D. bryoniae* has been reported to Topsin-M, Quadris, and most recently, Pristine. A new fungicide, penthiopyrad, has shown some promise against gummy stem blight. However, like most of the other newer fungicides, penthiopyrad has a single-site mode of action and consequently, is also at risk for resistance. SEQ CHAPTER \h \r 1 Plant pathologists at the University of Georgia, Dr. Katherine Stevenson and Dr. David Langston, are currently conducting research, funded, in part by the National Watermelon Association, to determine baseline sensitivity of the pathogen to the new fungicide, penthiopyrad, assess the frequency of resistance to the different fungicides in populations of the pathogen, and evaluate effectiveness of different fungicide mixtures, alternations, and application timings for gummy stem blight control and fungicide resistance management.

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