



Watermelon Food Safety Program Released!



On October 24th, the NWA released the first draft of a food safety program for farmers and packers that is specific to the Watermelon Industry. All of the details and the program can be found on the NWA web site, www.nationalwatermelonassociation.com.

Why did the NWA pursue this course of action? The Food and Drug Administration determines which crops or groups of crops are considered “High Risk” due to past incidents affecting American consumers. Since the 1980’s, watermelon has been grouped in the “Melon” category with cantaloupes and specialty melons because of the common growing and harvesting practices of melons. During that same time frame, cantaloupes have had seven (7) food safety incidents and specialty melons have had two (2) incidents. Watermelons have Zero, but we are “Guilty by Association” because of the melon category designation. After two requests to the FDA to separate watermelon or cantaloupes from the category, our request has been denied both times.

Thus, we are taking a proactive stance and approach by developing “voluntary” principles through Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) for farmers and Good Handling Practices (GHPs) for packers & shippers in our own

SAFETY continued on page 30

FDA Open Comment Period on GAPs

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is requesting comments and scientific data and information that may assist the agency to improve the guidance to industry set forth in the “Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables,” issued in 1998.

Specifically, FDA is seeking information about current agricultural practices and conditions used to grow, harvest, pack, cool, and transport fresh produce; risk factors for contamination of fresh produce associated with these practices; and possible measures that FDA could implement that would enhance the safety of fresh produce.

All of the information can be reviewed at:
<http://www.fda.gov/OHRMS/DOCKETS/98fr/E8-20187.pdf>

Submit written comments and scientific data and information or electronic comments by December 31, 2008 to:

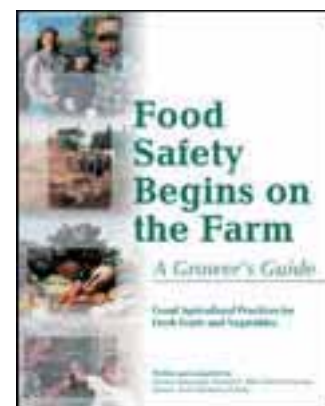
Division of Dockets Management (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane
rm. 1061
Rockville, MD 20852.

FDA continued on page 30



NWA responds to Wal-Mart Audit Standards

On behalf of our member suppliers of watermelon to Wal-Mart and Sam’s Club stores, the NWA responded to the recently announced third-party audit requirements which are to be in place for ‘high risk’ fruit and vegetable crops by July 1, 2009.



The new requirements are based on the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) standards, which place substantial negative effects on our industry’s ability to farm, harvest, pack and ship watermelon profitably to their stores.

“We all share a deep commitment to providing consumers with the safest possible foods, and we continue to prove that through every shipment to Wal-Mart and Sam’s Club through a certified third-party audit process with companies such as Primus Labs”, said Bob Morrissey. Our objections, with respect, are based primarily on two variables:

(1) “The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has been handling produce food safety incidents for many years dating back to the early 1980’s. Watermelon has shown ‘no’ incidents to date. However, watermelon is ‘guilty by association’ because we are grouped in the same ‘melon’ category with ‘cantaloupes’ which have had at least seven (7) incidents in that same time frame. Cantaloupe incidents have placed the melon category into the ‘high risk’ categories with other crops, and watermelon is suffering the consequences as a result, even with a clean track record”.

(2) The ‘increased’ costs that the requirements will create and be bared by every farm, packer and shipper that

WAL-MART continued on page 30

NWA visits Washington

In September, the NWA partnered with the United Fresh Produce Association (UFGA) in the largest public policy event of the year in Washington, DC, joining with over 340 other fruit & vegetable industry association members. This is the second year that the NWA has partnered with UFGA, with 34 representatives from the NWA participating.

“The Washington Public Policy Conference allows us to join hands with other F&V crop peers to talk directly

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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
Laurie Hotts

Layout & Design
Derek Reusser
www.rubberneckerdesign.com

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Convention Highlights

Extra-Curricular Activities Deadline January 16, 2009

The deadline for registration for the outside activities (invitation golf tournament and southern plantation tour) must be made by January 16, 2009 in order for us to make the final arrangements and meet our commitments. Patriots Point Golf Links is what golf in Scotland (the home of golf) is like. Lunch is included, and the course is a 15-minute drive from the hotel across the harbor in Mt. Pleasant. Middleton Place is a historic landmark and southern plantation dating back prior to the American Civil War. A coach bus is provided as well as lunch at the plantation.

Hotel Reservations Deadline January 25, 2009

The convention activities will be held at the historic Francis Marion Hotel, with supplemental room availability at the Embassy Suites and Hampton Inn, both within a 3-4 minute leisurely walk across the park. We will NOT be able to hold any hotel rooms after the deadline of January 25, 2009. Please make your reservations Today to get your hotel choice reserved before the room blocks sell-out!

Convention Registration Deadline February 1, 2009

As a convention attendee, if you register with the NWA Office before February 1, 2009, you will receive a \$100.00

discount on your registration fee, which makes our convention the most cost effective national or regional convention today! After that date, there will be a supplemental charge of \$100.00 per person. Please make sure that the registrations for you, company representatives and family are made as soon as possible with the NWA Office to take advantage of this discount program.

Business-2-Business Exhibit Center Space is Limited

We will be limiting the Business-2-Business Exhibit Center to the first thirty-five (35) companies that submit their paperwork to the NWA Office due to limited space that we have available, and the need to provide close access and traffic-generation to our supporting exhibitors. Please complete and submit your paperwork as soon as possible, and don't get closed out. We have a few Prime Locations available that will maximize your company's exposure to the convention attendees, at a slight premium. First come is first served!

Sponsorships for the full year (plus the convention)

In order for us to continue to provide the high quality of our national convention that our members have come to expect, sponsorships are a vital part of our progress and success, even during tough economic times. We have the most cost effective produce convention of any national or regional produce organization in the country, and want to make sure that we can continue that trend. Please consider being a sponsor at one of our numerous levels, and helping us in our effort to provide memories and fellowship that will last for many years to come.

NEW Diamond Sponsorship Available!

A new sponsorship level called the Diamond Level is available, although it did not make it to print on the convention brochure. The Diamond Level is for those

corporations or companies that sponsor the NWA at a level of \$20,000 or more. In exchange for your generous contribution, the NWA will provide the highest levels of recognition to include a five-minute presentation at the meal function of your choice to promote your company as well as one year of advertising in a four-color full-page format in The Vineline magazine, our association's member publication.

Educational Workshops of key issues

We have four educational workshops planned for the convention that will address the highest profile issues affecting our industry. The seminars will be conducted by some of the brightest minds and experts in the country leading each session. Each seminar is a must attend for anyone in our industry, and are:

- The Farm Bill - Opportunities that your company can (and should) pursue
- Watermelon-specific Food Safety Program - Farmers and Packers
- Join Employment of Migrant Workers - Who is Responsible for documentation?
- Country of Origin Labeling of fresh produce - Imports and Domestic crops

Watermelon Food Safety program Released!

Yes, the first ever, watermelon-specific food safety program for farms and packing facilities will be released to the association at this convention. You will agree that produce food safety is one of the highest profile issues of today in America, and the World. We have taken a proactive approach to create a GAP and GHP program that is realistic, affordable, and reliable to help our industry continue to provide a safe, healthy crop to consumers. The program also includes a viable traceability program that has been proven to work within minutes in 2008, and includes the National Watermelon Promotion Board's crisis management program. This session is a must for everyone in the industry!

95th Annual Convention Agenda

Wed, February 18, 2009

11:30 AM - 5:30 PM	Golf Tournament and Plantation Tour
9:00 AM - 8:00 PM	Exhibit Set-Up

Thurs, February 19, 2009

8:30 AM - 12:30 PM	NWA Committee Meetings
8:30 AM - 5:00 PM	B-2-B Exhibits
1:30 PM - 5:30 PM	Business Center Open
6:00 PM - Midnight	Concurrent Educational Workshops
	Welcome Reception & Dinner

Fri, February 20, 2009

8:00 AM - 10:30 AM	General Session I & Breakfast
12:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Buffet Lunch and Annual Auction

Sat, February 21, 2009	
8:00 AM - 10:30 AM	General Session II & Breakfast
10:30 AM - 2:00 PM	B-2-B Exhibits
10:45 AM - 1:30 PM	Business Center Open
	Annual NWA Executive Committee Meeting

1:30 PM - 4:30 PM	NWPB Board of Directors Meeting
5:15 PM - 6:15 PM	Reception & Raffle
6:30 PM - 10:30 PM	Drawing
	Annual Awards
	Banquet
Sun, February 22, 2009	
8:00 AM - 8:30 AM	Worship Service

NWA Sponsorships

The NWA offers the 2009 Sponsorship program with multiple levels to better serve you through expanded and continued NWA programs, the creation of new member services, and provision of education and support services that are needed to solve business needs throughout our industry.

Sponsorship gifts given to the NWA can complement your marketing plan by offering you:

- Increased company exposure and visibility
- Reinforce your brand messages
- Reach a large audience in a cost-effective manner
- Position your company as an industry leader

Sponsorships are available at many levels for you to choose from, ranging from the Diamond Level at \$20,000 and Up to the Bronze Level at \$100-\$249. Your support at any level allows us to provide the national convention and experience that you expect from us. We in turn are able to provide a convention filled with education, fellowship, high-profile speakers, NWA programs, member services, entertainment and fellowship for all to enjoy.

You are cordially invited to join us in one of our country's most historic cities, Charleston, South Carolina.

Tour Southern Plantations and Mansions of yesteryear.
Experience where the American Civil War began at Fort Sumter.
Come to the city where shopping is a sport ranging from the farmers market table vendors to high-end retailers like Ann Taylor and Saks Fifth Avenue.
Average high Temperature = 62; average low = 39.

Charleston Where History Comes Alive!

Hotel reservations lines are now open. Our convention will be based in the historic Francis Marion Hotel, with additional room blocks available in the Embassy Suites and Hampton Inn (both within a 3-4 minute leisurely walk of the main hotel).

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Keyword: National Watermelon Association

HAMPTON INN
\$159 per night
1-843-723-4000
Keyword: National Watermelon Association

Hotel reservations deadline is January 25, 2009!
Make the call today to secure your favorite hotel and room(s).

We look forward to seeing you in Charleston.

www.nationalwatermelonassociation.com

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***A donation will be made to the National Watermelon Association for every seed sold!**

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National Report

Outstanding promotions, fantastic coverage, exciting travel and one Amazing Queen! I have so much to cover but, I will make every attempt to keep it brief. Brittanie has had, and continues to have a promotion-filled year! Thank You Sponsors!

LEGER & SON, CHRIS GREEN, FRASER’S AUTO SPONSOR CORDELE
Brittanie was able to participate in most of Cordele’s pre-festival activities. These included the Taste of Melon with Phil Streetman, promotions with kid’s day classes and WALB TV, Albany’s live coverage of the festival filmed in Cordele, she shared the stage with the Man of the Year, Buddy Leger (Congratulations Mr. Buddy!) and Georgia Watermelon Queen, Hannah Jones.

NWPB WAL-MART DINNER
Brittanie and I attended a dinner hosted by NWPB with Dennis Randolph, head buyer for Wal-Mart, during his industry tour stop in the area. He was accompanied by NWPB’s Gordon Hunt and Marcia Adler. We were also joined by Mr. Buddy Leger and Greg Leger of Leger & Son. Mr. Randolph is a firm believer of the benefits of our Queen Program, and the benefits they bring to retail promotion.

COOSAW FARMS & SOUTH CAROLINA WATERMELON ASSOCIATION SPONSOR
Brittanie was sponsored to the Hampton County Watermelon Festival by Coosaw Farms and SC Watermelon Association. She enjoyed spending time with SC Queen Amanda, Coordinator Julie Bryant Murdock, (2002 National Queen) her mother Ann, and little Thomas. The girls enjoyed all the events of the festival including the fantastic parade. They visited Bradley and Louise O’Neal, sponsor and owner of Coosaw Farms. Amanda and Brittanie enjoyed the tour of their watermelon operation. Thanks, Bradley and Louise, and to the SC Association for sponsoring!

BROWNING & SONS SPONSOR
Browning & Sons sponsored Brittanie to Nashville, GA for the taping of a television commercial for Watermelon, and Harvey’s Supermarkets! This promo commercial aired several times a day for the month of July in Georgia, and parts of Florida, and Alabama. Fantastic coverage for watermelon, and it came during our National Watermelon month! We could never pay for this kind of watermelon coverage! Thanks Browning & Sons!

MIDWEST MARKETING, SUNSTATE PRODUCE, PREMIER MELONS, NATURES CHOICE PRODUCE SPONSOR
Special thanks to the above mentioned sponsors for sponsoring Brittanie to the Cincinnati, Ohio area for Kroger stores. Special thanks to Ann Bryant for filling in for me. They indeed had a warm welcome from Kroger and were treated to dinner by the buying office! The ladies worked two days in three Kroger stores in the Cincinnati area. Thanks to Midwest Marketing, Sunstate Produce, Premier Melons, and Nature’s Choice for sponsoring to Kroger!

LEGER & SONS SPONSOR
Greg Leger of Leger & Sons sponsored our National Queen to Duluth, Georgia for outstanding watermelon promotions in several area Kroger stores. Watermelon was on ad for this Forth of July event, and they flew out of the stores! Brittanie stayed busy helping the Kroger shoppers. Thanks to Leger & Sons for your support!

NORTH CAROLINA WATERMELON ASSOCIATION SPONSORS
During the North Carolina Watermelon convention, the top buyer gets a paid promotion with the National Watermelon Queen. This year’s top buyer was Wal-Mart... Brittanie was booked many months in advance in California for Wal-Mart promotions and both runners-up booked solid, the NC Watermelon Association agreed to have the talented and freshly retired Jenna Stanford fill in for Brittanie. Jenna was greeted in by Susan Mills Coordinator, and their Queen Brittany. NC sponsored Jenna for a fantastic Wal-Mart grand opening in Garner, NC. The girls and Susan had a busy and very successful grand opening for Wal-Mart in Garner, NC. Special Thanks to the NC Watermelon Association for sponsoring.

WESTERN WATERMELON ASSOCIATION SPONSORS
In mid- July we were sponsored to the Sacramento, California area for one of National Watermelon month’s Wal-Mart promotions. We were sponsored by the newly reorganized chapter of the Western Watermelon Association. Larry Hilliard, Regional Buyer for Wal-Mart had ALL California stores involved in special pricing and highlighting California melons and local supplier Van Groningen & Sons. This was one huge event for National Watermelon month! The Van Groningen & Sons group hosted a dinner to kick off the event. Larry Hilliard, NWA Executive Director Bob Morrissey, NWPB Executive Director Mark Arney, Western Association chapter President Tashi Zouras, Mr. and Mrs. Ron Perry, Jim Auchard and many other members as well as the entire Van Groningen family attended. Thanks to Dan, Ryan and the entire Van Groningen group for a great evening! We both enjoyed our time with all of you.

The outside event at the West Sacramento store might have broken a world record for a watermelon display, it was tremendous! Fantastic job Larry! Several media outlets were on hand to cover the event. Brittanie handled the popular seed-spitting contest, complete with great prizes.

We appreciate the support of the Western Watermelon Association. Thank You! While in the area, Brittanie was able to have a quick tour of San Francisco, thanks to Bob! She also enjoyed scenic Napa Valley. Thanks to, Tashi and the Western Watermelon Association for your support in this awesome promotion!

ILLIANA WATERMELON ASSOCIATION SPONSORS QUEEN AND RUNNER-UP
The Hoosier state hosted an event so big it took Two National Queens to work on the promotion. First runner-up, Emily Frey was on hand to help out with two days of Kroger in-store promotions in the Indy area, in addition to Brittanie. The Illiana Association had amazing support from the state chapters to handle the twelve assigned Kroger stores. IWA’s Queen Maggie, and the IWA runner-up, and Emily, serving as National Queen, Florida’s Queen Kaley, Texas Queen Marie, and Georgia Queen, (runner-up) Whitney, as well as our own Brittanie. As a team they got the job done! The IWA team, with State and National assistants’ next accomplishment...handling the serving of the MOST WATERMELON, AT the FASTEST PACE that I have ever experienced!!! We served thousands and thousands of cups to the NASCAR Nationwide Race fans in Indy. What a huge success! Dennis Mouzin, Jason from NWPB and our own Bob Morrissey kept us supplied with the tubs of cut watermelon, and about seven of us ladies filled cups at a record pace and simply at times could not keep up with the number of people attending. The Queens never slowed down. We had

Maggie, IWA runner-up, Marie, Kaley, and Brittanie working tirelessly all day! Congratulations to IWA on this successful promotion, and thank you for sponsoring us!

Until Next Printing
Enjoy More Watermelon!
Eleanor Bullock
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229.322.9933 cell
eleanor@websign.net



Mark Arney chats with Brittanie and Larry



This seed-spit winner gets a new bike!



NWA's Bob Morrissey speaks at the Wal-Mart Watermelon event



Brittanie ready for the TV filming



Jenna and NC Queen Brittany at Wal-Mart Grand Opening



Working hard in Garner, NC



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Brittanie is welcomed warmly to Cincinnati



they loved her in Duluth



Brittanie and Larry Hilliard pose with Ryan Van Groningen and their team



on the air, WALB Albany live from Cordele Festival, Mr. Buddy Leger with the girls



NWPB's Jason and Brittanie worked hard on Race Day



Dinner with Dennis Randolph of Wal-Mart, and NWPB's Gordon Hunt and Marcia Adler



Bradley and Louise of Coosaw Farms help sponsor Brittanie



Our Queens pose with Travis Kittleson NASCAR driver at the Nationwide Race in Indy!



GWA President Mitch Mitchell, wife Janice, and Illa visit with Brittanie



Amanda and Brittanie on their float in Hampton, SC



These girls worked really hard in Indianapolis



on the air with Phil's "Taste of Melon"



IWA President Brad Tony, wife Angie and their little Princess!



Bob, Dennis and Brittanie at the end of IWA 's Race Day Promotion!



hugs to sponsor Chris Greene



Chef Joe Poon works his Magic as Maggie and Brittanie serve the customers in Indy



Bob and Brittanie enjoy a chilly boat tour in San Francisco



Our Queen chat's with Mr. Dan Van Groningen



Western Chapter President Tashi Zouras poses with Brittanie and Larry



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Alabama Report

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

Samantha and I are having a very successful year promoting our AWA. Samantha is always eager to get involved in all aspects of her job. After a busy summer Samantha headed back to Auburn to finish up her college education. We wish Samantha success in all her future endeavors as she has certainly been an outstanding Alabama Watermelon Queen!

Samantha had the opportunity to work with four Wal* Mart stores in the Auburn area...yes...four stores back to back in one long day! I wish to thank Megan Flinn for filling in as coordinator for the day. Catherine Odom, our 2006 AWA Queen also worked four Wal*Mart stores in the Montgomery, Alabama, area the same day. I wish to thank Catherine's mom, Cathy, for working with Catherine during this promotion. As we all know, when a "queen" promotes watermelons they fly out of the store! Thanks to the Alabama area Wal*Mart representatives for your diligent work in this outstanding promotion.

Samantha was sponsored by Arnold Mack, Terry Jones and Kelly Marinaro to attend the Franklin County Watermelon Festival in Russellville, Alabama. While representing our AWA, Queen Samantha was actually "hands on" judging six pageants. We would like to thank the Russellville Chamber of Commerce for the outstanding preparations made for Samantha's arrival and for giving her the royal treatment. We hope to make this an annual event!

Samantha was fortunate to have the sponsorship of Will Hales of Hales Farms, Inc. and Harry Vaughn of Gulf Seed, Inc. for the weeklong Mar-Delicious promotion in the Maryland/Delaware area. Samantha worked with Mar-Del Queen Christina and Promotion Coordinator Allison Castellana during various in-store promotions, Rehoboth Beach activities, Annapolis Riverfront festival, WMDT News live interviews (ABC), Clear Channel Radio interviews, Dover watermelon auction...so much activity...so short of time! One special couple I would like to acknowledge is Will and Candice Hales for opening their home to Samantha and me during our stay in Salisbury. You two are very special to me and of course to our Alabama Queen Samantha as well!

September 10th – 12th, Samantha lobbied agriculture issues on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. A special thank you to Bob Morrissey and United Fresh Produce for setting our itinerary. With Arnold and Brenda Mack as our "assistants" Samantha and I met and discussed immigration issues with U.S. Congressman Terry Everett and U.S. Congressman Jo Bonner. A lively and successful discussion was held with each politician.

Samantha and I are looking forward to seeing so many of you during our AWA Convention to be held at the beautiful Beau Rivage, Biloxi, MS, February 13th & 14th. I expect our convention to be even bigger and better than last year so make your reservations and we hope to see you there. Until then, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to each of you!

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



While in Annapolis, MD, AWA Queen Samantha, NWA Queen Emily and Mar-Del Queen Christina entertained tons of kids with watermelon eating contests. Here we have a few of the lucky winners!



Acting NWA Queen Emily Frey celebrated her 21st birthday during the Mar-Del promotion, August 9th. Her surprise party was a blast as she painted the town red with Ms. Eleanor, AWA Samantha, FWA Kaley, Mar-Del Christina, Ms. Allison, Ms.



Samantha had a blast entertaining everyone at the Heritage at Milford Assisted Living Facility during her promotion for the Mar-Delicious group. Samantha is pictured her with our seed spit winner. Can you believe this pretty lady is 89 years young! Amazing!



Check out this group! Samantha handed out delicious watermelon slices during the in-store Kroger promotion.



Queens Samantha, Emily and Christina are all smiles with Doug Miller of 6L's and Will Hales of Hales Farms. A big thank you to Will for sponsoring Samantha and myself during the Mar-Delicious promotion!



After a long day of handing out watermelon slices to hundreds upon hundreds of vacationers at Rehoboth Beach, MD, NWA Queen Emily, AWA Queen Samantha, past AWA and NWA Queen Candice, Ms. Eleanor and Ms. Lani took a walk along the beachfront. If you have the chance, ask Samantha what happened to her on the beach when the waves practically knocked her down!!!



A special thank you to Allison Castellana for setting up a very unique promotion while Samantha was visiting Maryland/Delaware. Our three queens handed out cool watermelon slices to a packed crowd prior to the movie "Grease". Christina, Samantha and Emily look as if they could step right into the movie! Agree?



Samantha was up quite early to begin her day with WMDT ABC News. She was interviewed live during two segments of their early show. Great job, Samantha!



After working many long hours promoting watermelons it is always a treat to have a few hours of pure fun and this picture tells it all! Samantha had a blast helping with the Laurel Auction Block this year. At our upcoming conventions ask Samantha the weight of the heaviest watermelon...I'll bet her biceps are still sore!!!



Samantha fell in love with this beautiful flower watermelon carving accomplished by the produce department of the Whole Foods Market. Samantha tried various watermelon recipes prepared by each department and was wooed by each station's watermelon carvings.



As you can tell by this picture, Samantha had a great time at this extremely delicious and delightful promotion!



Here is our beautiful AWA Queen Samantha at our Nation's Capitol in Washington, D.C. This was just the beginning of a long day of "lobbying on the hill" for our agriculture issues.



An unforgettably successful experience, meeting with U.S. Congressman Terry Everett.



It is always an educational experience meeting with U.S. Congressman Jo Bonner. Thank you Samantha for meeting with our congressmen and getting our agriculture issues to the forefront of their agendas.



During the Franklin County Watermelon Festival, Russellville, AL, Samantha judged six pageants. WOW! What a day! Samantha is pictured with the newly crowned Watermelon Queen Hannah



Our AWA Queen Samantha wishes everyone a safe and happy holiday season. We are looking forward to seeing everyone at our AWA Convention at the Beau Rivage in Biloxi, MS, February 13th & 14th. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to each of you!



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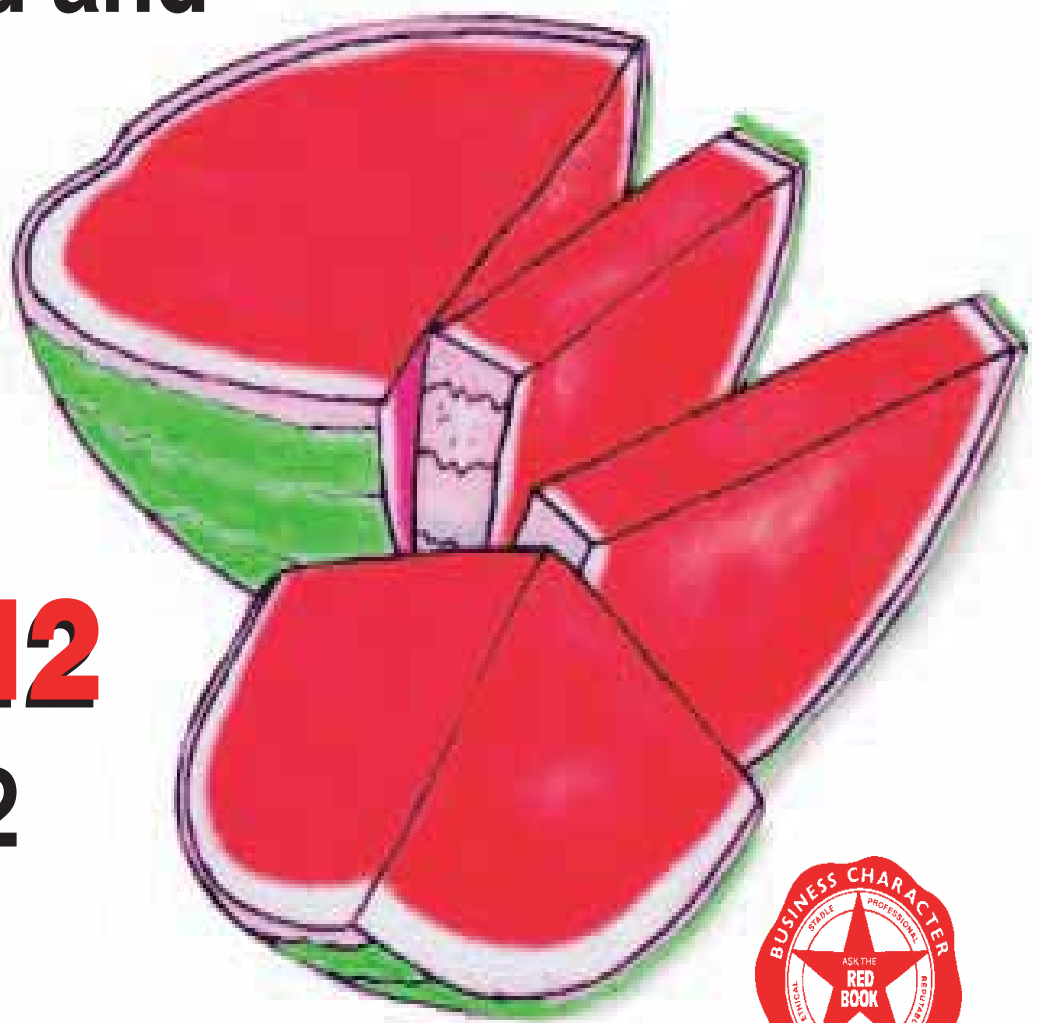
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Florida Report

These past five months as the 2008 Florida Watermelon Queen have been amazing! I have traveled as far as Canada, where I promoted Florida Watermelons in Longo grocery stores. I have also had two segments on the A-1 Channel News Station. At the end of July, Debra and I flew to Indianapolis to help the Illiana Watermelon Association with a promotion at the Kroger Busch Race. What an amazing experience, passing out watermelon to race fans! I have really enjoyed every single promotion since I was crowned in March. I look forward to every weekend, and every adventure I experience. Of course, none of this would be possible if it wasn't for my wonderful sponsors. I am so thankful for each and every one of you. You have all given me the opportunity to experience so much. I really appreciate your generosity. Thank you! Kaley Jo Harper – 2008 Florida Watermelon Queen

What a busy summer Queen Kaley and I have had! We have promoted our Florida watermelons not only in the Sunshine State of Florida but all over the United States including Toronto, Canada!

Kaley started out the first week of June visiting the town of Chiefland for the 54th Annual Watermelon Festival. Kaley started out in the morning riding in their annual festival parade followed by a queen luncheon at noon. She ended that evening with attending the queen pageant. Congratulations to Maddy Kelly for being chosen as the Chiefland Watermelon Queen! Thank you to Southern Corp. and Etheridge Produce for sponsoring this wonderful event.

For the sixth consecutive year, the Florida Governor has proclaimed Florida Watermelon Week, which started June 1, 2008. Florida Watermelon Week was held at the state capital in Tallahassee. Shelly Allen, our first runner-up, filled in for the day along with Terri Fishman of the Florida Department of Agriculture. We all spent Wednesday at the capital having a seed spitting contest and passing out watermelon slices throughout the day.

Our next weekend Queen Kaley and I headed to Toronto, Canada to promote our favorite Florida watermelons in the Longo's stores. Brad Brownsey and Stephanie Simik occupied us through out the day helping us pass out sliced Florida watermelons. What an amazing trip that Kaley and I had. Thanks Brad and Stephanie for a wonderful and adventurous trip. The same weekend Shelly Allen was in Monticello for their annual Jefferson County Watermelon Festival. Thanks to Dixie Rou for chairing this event and Lamar Rou Produce for sponsoring this. Shelly represented the association extremely well.

On June 28, FWA Queen Kaley along with five other queens were ready for our annual Super Wal-mart Blitz! This was the day to get your watermelons at Wal-Mart. We covered stores from Pensacola across to Tallahassee down to Gainesville and then southern Florida. A huge thank you goes to the ladies Meagan Marsh, Heather Johnson, Shelly Allen, and Karen Vincent for helping us with this day. A big thank you to Wal-mart Regional Buyer Tom Holbert for arranging and setting up this huge event!

On The Fourth of July Queen Kaley and I celebrated in the town of Leesburg along with Shawn Shirley for their annual baseball event. A day was enjoyed passing out slices of watermelon to all the baseball fans. Thanks to Shawn for a wonderful promotion and hospitality of your home.

The next day FWA Queen Kaley and I traveled to US 231 Florida Welcome Center in Jennings and were greeted by visitors coming to the State of Florida. Thanks to Browning and Sons for providing watermelons for us to pass out that day.

On July 24, FWA Queen Kaley and I headed to Indiana for the Kroger Busch Race. Kaley passes out coloring books and slices of watermelon in the Kroger stores.

Thanks to our sponsors: Indian Hills Produce, Nature's Choice, Raymon Land Watermelons and Horrall Family Farms.

Thanks again to all of our sponsors for such a wonderful summer! Be on the look out in the next issue where I will be covering our promotions in Delaware, Washington D.C. and PMA in Orlando Until next time!

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



"Welcome to Killingly, Connecticut" where Queen Kaley promoted Florida watermelons at the grand opening for Stop n Shop.



Florida Watermelon Week at the capital with Ms. Terri Fishman of the Dept. of Agriculture along with our first runner-up Shelly Allen.



Brad, Stephanie, Queen Kaley, and Mimmo at Longo's in Canada.



Cooking on the air with A-1 Channel Morning News hosts Cheryl Weedmark, Jeremy John and Michelle Filice.



FWA Queen Kaley enjoys her tour at the Wal-Mart Distribution Center in Winter Haven with Mr. Tom Holbert on how the operation of watermelons produces works.



Queen Kaley passing out slices of watermelon and coloring books on "Wal-Mart Blitz" day!



Having fun with Mr. Rick Reed and Mrs. Shawn Shurley at the Baseball Field.



"Welcome to the Sunshine State!"



Queen Kaley at the Ronald McDonald House in Orlando along with Stephanie and Gordon with NWPB handing out Wumblers.



Thanks to Tonya Harper (Kaley mom) for helping serve watermelon at the Kroger stores in Indiana!



NASCAR Driver #56 Travis Kittleson with Queen Kaley.



What awesome watermelon carvings done by Chef Poon!



Kaley showing a Wal-Mart customer how to choose a delicious watermelon.



A visit with Carr Hussey and family in Laurel, Delaware.



It's always a pleasure to see M.G. and Kathy Ford.



West Palm Beach is where 2007 Queen Katie and 2008 Queen Kaley passed out watermelon slices at the Kids Festival.



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Mark Arney
Executive Director



Culinary Institute of America Flavor, Quality and American Menus



Executive Director for the National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB), Mark Arney attended and presented at the Flavor, Quality & American Menus Leadership Forum at the Culinary Institute of America Greystone. The NWPB was a Silver sponsor of the event.

This fifth annual CIA meeting is designed to bring together agriculture industry groups with food industry professionals from leading restaurant, food service, institution and restaurant venues.

Attending were corporate chefs from several national restaurant and fast food chains including Red Lobster, Pizza Hut, TGIFriday's, Olive Garden, Jack-in-the-Box, Chick-fil-A, and Harrah's. Grocery stores chains represented included the following: Safeway, Whole Foods Trader Joes and Byerly's. There were several mass food service companies like Sodexo, Morrison's, Stanford, Cornell, and Disney as well.

On the final day of the event, the chefs were divided into groups and asked to create recipes using the sponsor's products. The group that used watermelon in its menu used red and yellow fleshed watermelon to create some outstanding dishes. They even served watermelon lemonade to all the participants during the general session luncheon.

Mark gave a presentation to the entire group that included a DVD on all the ways to use watermelons for breakfast, lunch dinner and snacks. The DVD emphasized the health aspects, profitability, and taste of watermelon. He also told the group how popular watermelon has become as a year-round food.

The presentation was well received. In fact, several leads were developed with requests for additional recipe ideas and support for possible customized recipe development with the larger national chains represented.



News from the National Watermelon Promotion Board

Don't Forget!
Fall Board of Directors Meeting
November 13th—14th,
2008
Orlando Airport Hyatt

Marketing Update

Visit to Mexico

Gordon Hunt and Mark Arney recently visited Monterrey, Mexico to follow up on an earlier visit to Mexico City to meet with the USDA's Ag attaché and a number of major retail chains who had expressed interest in US watermelon.

Monterrey is the primary industrial city of Northern Mexico and as such has a large middle and upper middle class population which can afford imported agricultural products. In addition, Monterrey is close to the US border and is heavily influenced by North American consumption trends. The meetings with potential importers went very well and resulted in requests for US suppliers to contact them, initially about supplying watermelon during the fall season when Mexican production is limited, but also perhaps throughout the year for varieties that are not generally available in Mexico.

The Board has a small budget from FAS to help support retailers with in-store promotions and materials this fall. If successful, we have asked for additional funds for a larger program next season.

Chicago Presentation

Dr. Penny Perkins and Gordon Hunt attended the annual US/Japan Natural Resources Food and Agricultural meeting in Chicago. The UNJR meeting allows scientists from the US and Japan to present papers on a wide range of scientific studies involving food and nutrition, with particular regard to food safety standards.

Gordon was asked to present the Marketing and Communication benefits of the recent research on both Lycopene and Citrulline as a means of demonstrating the specific value of scientific research to a particular commodity.

His presentation was followed by Dr. Perkins' presentation on the actual scientific results of her Board-sponsored research.

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Who can list on the MarketPlace:

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- Fresh-cut suppliers
- Concentrate manufacturers
- Bin and merchandising companies
- Seed and crop protection suppliers
- Label and packaging companies
- And more!

Please note that all listings have review and approval on the NWPB end, 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.



Thank you again Watermelon Reception Sponsors

The 7th Annual Watermelon Industry Reception was another smashing success! Thank you to the sponsors that made this possible:



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October 25, 2008
8pm - MIDNIGHT

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BB King's Blues Club @ Point Orlando
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Dancing & more!*

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Georgia Report

Hello to everyone from Georgia!

Fall is here which means PMA is near! Georgia would like to invite everyone to visit our Georgia Row at PMA in Orlando, Florida in October of this year. GWA would also like to invite everyone in our industry to our annual GWA Convention held the last weekend of January at The Retreat at LakeBlackshear in Cordele. For more information please call Charles Hall at the GWA office at 706-845-8575.

Our 2008 Queen Tour has been fantastic! Picking up from our last Vineline printing~Hannah handed out hundreds of slices of watermelon donated by Chase Daughtrey held in Atlanta at Hero For Children hosted by the UGA Football Team. This event is to benefit underprivileged children in the area affected with the HIV virus. Watermelon on this hot July day was well appreciated! After we left Hero we headed to WholeFoods Grocery store in Buckhead for an in-store promotion sponsored by Leger and Son. WholeFoods hosted a month long Georgia produce promotion and we were honored to represent GA watermelon! On this same day we were proud to have our First Runner-up Whitney Conner in Hiawassee, GA with the GA Department of Ag at the GA Mountain Fair. Whitney rode on the Department of Ag's float and greeted visitors at the fair with watermelon stickers.

Next, Whitney Conner filled in for Hannah during our Indianapolis Kroger promotions sponsored by Harry Vaughn, Albany Pallets, PCA, Greg Leger, Susan and Brent Harrison, Joy Faison and Chris Greene. The promotion was successful as we worked in four Kroger stores while in Indianapolis. We were delighted to visit with former National Queen Stephanie Duda while in Indiana! After we returned home Whitney filled in for Hannah in Ft. Valley, GA at a Harvey's John Boy & Billy Grilling Contest sponsored by Browning & Sons. As always our Harvey's promos are a treat.

In August, Hannah was off to Perry, GA where we met up with our sponsors Buddy and Margie Leger at the Governor's Fish Fry. Hannah greeted the guest as they were being served the delicious fried fish. While Hannah was in Perry we had Whitney Conner filling in for us in Thomson, GA at the annual Tom Watson Watermelon Festival. Thank you Dexter Rhodes/Watson Brown Organization for our lodging and meals while in Thomson. On August 14th Hannah celebrated a birthday---Happy Birthday Queen Hannah! Our next promotion was in Cordele along with the Cordele Chamber of Commerce at the annual Triathlon. Hannah helped the Chamber hand out awards to all the winners. Our August 23rd Harvey's promotion was cancelled due to the hurricane. Meanwhile, on the same day we had sent Whitney Conner to fill in for us as we were double booked. Whitney served slices of melons at a Kroger store in Macon. Thank you NWPB for funding this promo.

September we joined Eleanor Bullock and National Queen Brittanie in Albany at the Civic Center with Harvey's for the Children's Expo. Thousands of children attended and the day was a tremendous success! Thank you Browning and Sons for sponsoring. Allison Hutto filled in for me during our Washington D.C. Legislative Week. Hannah enjoyed attending the United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Conference as well as the legislative visits. Thank you GWA for this fantastic legislative promotion.

We would again like to thank Browning & Sons for sponsoring us to Harvey's John Boy & Billy Grilling Contest in Fitzgerald. We love our Harvey's team Michael Purvis and Lisa Overman.

As you see we have been blessed again this year with wonderful promotions to promote Georgia watermelon. Thank you to each of you that make this tour possible year after year. Don't forget to mark you calendars for our upcoming GWA convention and we look forward to seeing you in Orlando at PMA.

Sincerely,
Julie Akins Daughtrey
Promotion Coordinator
P. O. Box 2278
Dalton, GA 30722
770-842-3309
akinsjulie1@alltel.net



Hannah enjoying her day in Atlanta at Hero for Children with UGA Football Team.



Hannah at WholeFoods in Buckhead serving GA watermelon!



Texas and Georgia having a great day in Krogers in Indianapolis!



Miss Whitney was treated like royalty in her second Kroger store in Indianapolis.



Thank you Illiana for setting up a wonderful promotion for us all.



A good day is a day spent with Mr. Buddy and Mrs. Margie.



Miss Hannah in Perry at the Gov. Perdue's Fish Fry.



Two Georgia girls with Harvey's at the Children's Expo in Albany.



Hannah serving coloring books and stickers with Harvey's.



Brittanie and Hannah enjoying the children at the Expo in Albany



Hannah on Capitol Hill in D.C. making legislative visits.



Hannah at United Fresh Fruit & Vegetable in Washington.



Hannah loves WATERMELON!



Hannah and Mr. Charles Hall at United Conference.



Poon always entertaining the crowd!



Hannah's feet had a full day while in DC.



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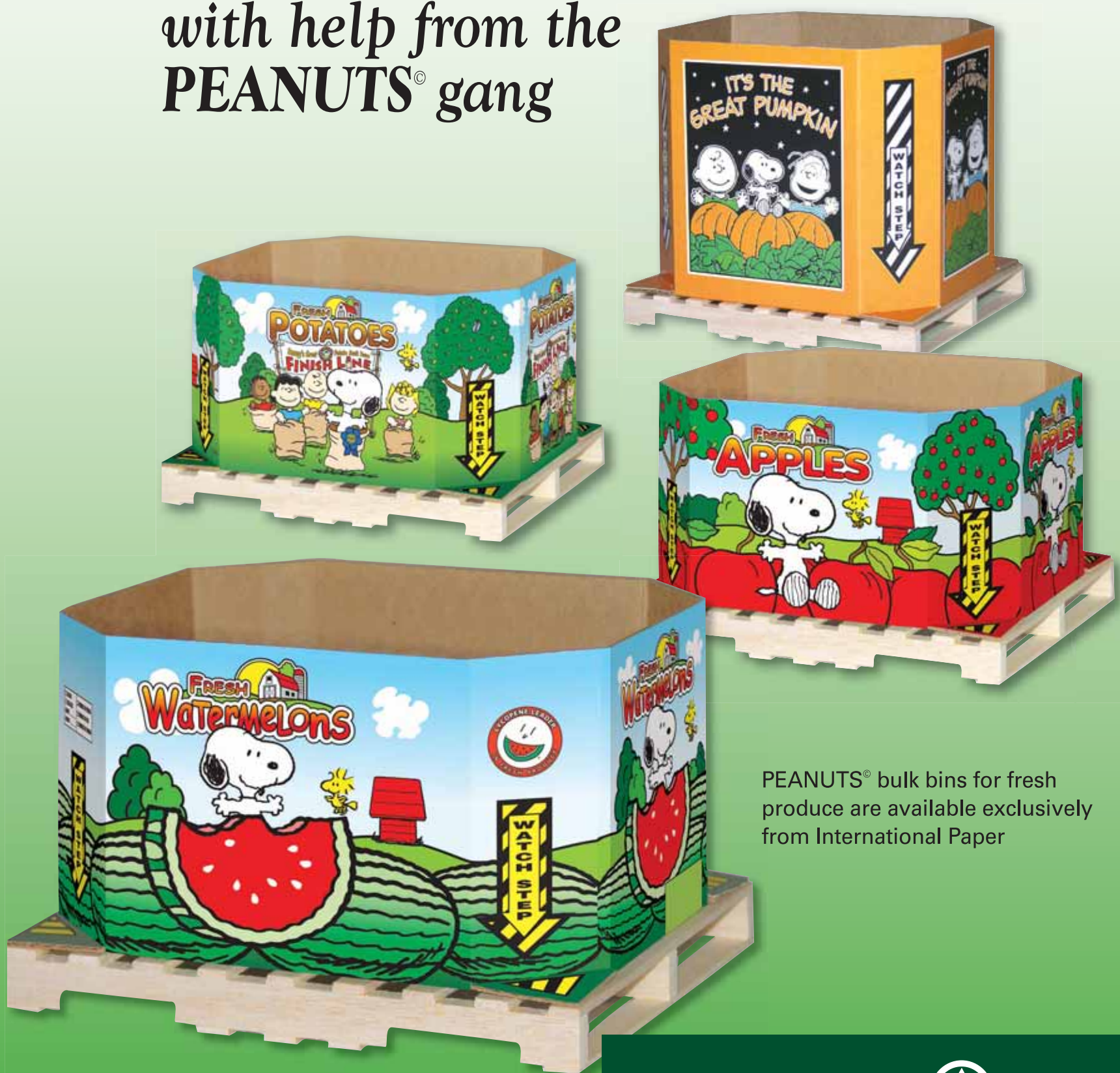
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Illiana Report

The Heart of Illiana watermelon season started with a bang for Queen Maggie. July 4th she passed out watermelon at the Knox County Veteran’s Monument rededication, rode on the Watermelon Association Float in the parade, and closed the day as a judge in the Knox County Idol contest. One week later Maggie handed out watermelon when the nationwide Cancer Awareness bus stopped in Vincennes on its way to Washington D.C. That evening she also attended the Knox County Fair Queen pageant.

July 16th Maggie was in Columbus IN courtesy of Frey Produce to support Wal-Mart’s homegrown initiative. The next day Queen Maggie celebrated National Watermelon Month by passing out framed congressional resolutions to many of the Illiana Association Board Members. She also recorded four commercials which then ran for the next month promoting the watermelon season in Indiana and Illinois. Maggie was at the Day at the Strip Car Show on July 20, passing out delicious watermelon and handing out car awards at the end of the day.

Next up were the Kroger 200 events held in Indianapolis on July 23-27. Maggie was joined by National Queen Brittanie, National 1st runner up Emily, Texas Queen Marie, Florida Queen Kaley, Georgia 1st runner up and Illiana 1st runner up Laura. The young ladies promoted watermelon in Kroger stores all around Indianapolis for two days. Chef Joe Poon joined us to bring his special brand of fun to the race. Queen Maggie and Chef Poon were on WTHR at noon on Friday. On Saturday Chef Joe’s creations were a hit, and the ice cold watermelon was a perfect treat for the race fans. We were also lucky enough to have racecar driver Travis Kittleson in our booth to sign autographs. Thanks to Mouzin Brothers for sponsoring him.

On July 28 Queen Maggie toured Packaging Corporation in Vincennes with Mark Branyon. She was on the radio again the next day promoting National Watermelon Month and gearing up for August which is Watermelon Month in Indiana. On July 30 Maggie was on the airwaves again before heading off to Indianapolis for the Taste of Indiana Agriculture Wine Reception.

Watermelon was the theme at the Vincennes Sun -Commercial Block Party on August 1. Queen Maggie and 2nd runner up Jaclyn Fenwick sang for the crowd. Then Maggie was joined on stage by Florida Queen Kaley and Festival Queen Emily Snider to conduct a Watermelon trivia contest. Watermelon prizes were given. Watermelon slices were provided by Nowaskie Melons for all to enjoy. Maggie spent August 2 at the Knox County Watermelon Festival. She was joined by Festival Queen Emily and Florida Queen Kaley who was home visiting family. Queen Maggie started the day by running in the 5K and ended the day judging the Festival Queen competition.

At the Indiana State Fair on August 13 Maggie passed out watermelon nonstop at the Taste of Indiana Farms Event. The next day Queen Maggie was in Martinsville for the Kroger Grand Reopening. It seemed like the whole town was there for the party celebrating the store re-opening after the devastating spring floods.

Saturday the 16th Maggie was sponsored by Jill Williams at the Melon Patch. She spent the morning at the Farmer’s Market passing out watermelon and salsa samples, which were a big success. That afternoon Maggie headed to the Melon Patch where she passed out watermelon and enjoyed meeting the shoppers.

Queen Maggie was treated like royalty at the Brownstown MelonFest on August 22-23. She hosted the Baby Contests, Eating Contests, Races, and the Bands. Maggie was the main attraction on the Chamber of Commerce Float and greeted festival goers at the Chamber tent. Thank you to Nunhems for sponsoring her. August 30 Maggie joined Queen Brittanie in Nicholasville KY for a Kroger opening.

Queen Maggie headed off to Washington D.C. Sept 10-12 to support the Watermelon Association at the United Fresh Produce Convention and March on Capitol Hill. She enjoyed the political atmosphere and also the opportunity to see her nation’s capital for the first time.

The Illiana Watermelon Association is proud of the hard work Maggie has put in during the summer watermelon season. Thanks again to all the sponsors who make these events possible. Maggie has been an enthusiastic and professional addition to the Illiana Association team as she promoted watermelon in over 40 events this far.

Sincerely,
Beth Frey
Illiana Watermelon Promotions Coordinator
loveshallmark@hotmail.com
812-886-5409



July 4th Parade



Maggie, Beth and the Caito Food guys at Senator Lugar's office



Columbus IN
Wal-Mart....
Indiana
Melons!



Before the tasting event on Capitol Hill



Maggie with Mark Branyon of Packaging Corp. of America



Maggie and the Mr. Watermelon Head Winners at Brownstown



Maggie and Sean from Kroger at Martinsville Re-Opening.
We served and sold Vincennes Watermelons.....Yummy!



Maggie checks out the melons at Freyco in Decker. Kennedy and Lexi say they're 'So Good'



Juicy and Sweet!



Maggie and Brittanie at a Kroger in Indianapolis



Thanks Jill, We
loved being at the
Melon Patch!



Maggie, Kaley and Emily(Festival Queen) host the Block party in Vincennes.






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Mar-Del Report

Queen Christina has done an outstanding job this summer representing our association. Her knowledge of the industry and attentiveness to the needs of customers make her a wonderful asset to the MAR-DEL association. Equally as wonderful as our queen this year were our MAR-DELicious Watermelons—it was a great season!

We didn't waste any time in July and Queen Christina enjoyed being at judge at the Froggy 99.9 Gong Show held at the Nanticoke Riverfest in Seaford, DE. It was a hot day and attendees were glad to see Christina and her MAR-DEL fans. Then it was an annual stop at the J. Millard Tawes Clam and Crab Bake in Crisfield, MD. Featured on the all-u-can-eat menu were delicious, cold slices of watermelon and Christina was on hand with stickers and fans greeting the 6,000 anxious eaters. We saw lots of MAR-DEL members including Jay Rider, Pat Hastings, and Charles and Michelle Wright. Next stop was a nine day visit at the Delaware State Fair in Harrington, DE. Christina manned our exhibit booth, spent a day with the governor, lead three demonstrations, and greeted thousands of watermelon lovers. A big thanks to Doug Corey and the MAR-DEL association for all the Watermelons needed for the fair and thank you to everyone who helped make this possible by working a slot in the booth—it's much appreciated!

Before we knew it, August was upon us this summer and it was time for the Annual Wright's Watermelon Festival—what fun! Charles and Michelle Wright do a great job with the day's festivities and Christina had a great job signing autographs, seed spitting, watermelon bowling, and of course, crowning the new Little Miss Watermelon Princess, Miss Maci Carter. After the Festival we quickly got ready for an action packed 2008 National Queen Tour. We were excited to be joined by the National, Alabama, and Florida Watermelon Queens. The week's activities included a stop at a Safeway, a wonderful live morning segment with Baltimore station WJZ-13, a Harris Teeter in-store, the tradition stop at the Old Mill Crab House, a stop at Brent and Audrey Serman's home (thank you!!), the Rehoboth boardwalk, Slices at the City Dock in Crisfield, MD, a morning interview on WMDT-47, the Laurel Auction Block, a huge event at the City Dock in Downtown Annapolis, MD in conjunction with the Maryland Department of Agriculture, the 2nd Annual Maryland Ag. Day at the Whole Foods in Annapolis, and the always entertaining Melon Ball put on my Brenda and Arnold Mack. WHEW! I'm tired all over again just listing everything. All these events don't just happen magically, thank you to all the members who attended and made them possible such as Will Hales, Doug Corey, Jay Rider and Travis Hastings. As special thanks to Will Hales for making a special trip all the way to Baltimore from Salisbury one night to bring Emily a crown and for the wonderful dinner—thanks Candice for letting us borrow it all week! National Queen tour was a success again as the girls received wonderful media coverage in print, television, and on the radio. Our "big" event in Annapolis was well attended and very well received—what a great time! Thanks to everyone who made the trip up and stayed for the wonderful dinner that evening, thanks to Will Hales and Travis Hastings for our dinner.

Christina got a little bit of rest and we were off again. We attended an in-store promotion at a Giant in DE and the Wal*Mart in Camden, DE. Christina hosted a live seed-spit on WBOC TV-16 at the Sharptown Carnival and handed out a bin of watermelons from Jimmy-Lee Goslee. The next day we had a ton of fun at the Sam's Club in Dover with Chef Joe Poon thanks to John Lapide and the guys at Melon One.

I'm out of room and I can't wait to tell you what else we've done in the next addition. Until then...

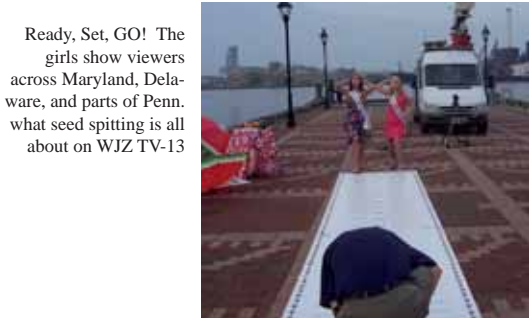
Watermelon Wishes,
Allison Castellana
MAR-DEL Promotions Coordinator
443-783-5553



Queen Christina found two watermelon lovers at the Nanticoke Riverfest while taking a break from judging



Queen Christina and the newly crowned Little Miss Watermelon at Wrights Watermelon Festival



Ready, Set, GO! The girls show viewers across Maryland, Delaware, and parts of Penn. what seed spitting is all about on WJZ TV-13



The sun isn't even up! It was a early 4am morning for the live spot at WMDT TV-47



Christina, Emily, and Samantha LIVE on Froggy 99.9. We had a fun morning playing games with listeners



Emily, Samantha, and Christina pose with all the Watermelon buyers at the Laurel Auction Block--thanks so much guys for your generosity!



We love Mark Collins and Chandler Mack--thanks for your support at the Laurel Auction Block



Christina, Kaley, and Emily with Carr and Jane Hussey and Pawl Sawyer at the Laurel Auction Block



Christina and Emily had a wonderful day at the 2nd Annual Maryland Ag. Day at the Whole Foods in Annapolis--what a great promotion!



Thanks Alisa, Harry, and John for coming to Annapolis to enjoy the promotion with us!



Pat, Travis, Will, and Queen Christina are having fun in Annapolis slicing up Hales Farm watermelons



Christina and two WBOC TV-16 reporters after the eating contest at the Sharptown Carnival



Christina and Emily watch the famous Ron Matz fire up for a big spit live on WJZ



We had a wonderful promotion at the Dover Sams with Chef Poon thanks to Melon 1. Look at the fun carvings!



What a perfect picture of Christina and Kevin Evans with two perfect melons!



We were glad to see some familiar faces at the Clam Bake. Seen here is Queen Christina with Charles and Michelle Wright



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This is the most cost-effective exhibit center available amongst any national produce organization in the country. Please take advantage of this opportunity and get in before the spaces are sold out!

Middleton Place Plantation Tour & Lunch

Henry Middleton, president of the First Continental Congress, began this plantation, located on the banks of the Ashley River, in 1741. The 60-acre gardens are America’s oldest landscaped gardens. Until 1865, the garden was nurtured and embellished by Henry’s son, Arthur Middleton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, his son Governor Henry Middleton, U.S. Minister to Russia and his son William, who signed the Ordinance of Secession. The Stableyards at Middleton Place, complete with a blacksmith, potter, carpenter, and weaver, demonstrate the tasks necessary to sustain an eighteen-century plantation. Agricultural displays, together with horses and mules, hogs and milking cows, sheep, goats and guinea hens, bring to life the rice and cotton eras.

The house museum will be open for touring. Built in 1755 as a gentlemen’s wing, the House became the family residence after the plantation was burned during the Civil War. Guided tours interpret the Middletons’ vital role in American history. Collections include portraits by Benjamin West and Thomas Sully, Charleston rice beds, fine silver, and rare first editions by Catesby and Audubon.



Invitational Golf Tournament & Lunch

The NWA Invitational Golf Tournament is open to all convention attendees, and will be held at the Patriots Point Golf Links. This course is what golf in Scotland (the home of golf) is all about. The course is located on a peninsular jutting out into Charleston Harbor with its sweeping winds and challenging holes that provides the look and feel of the origins of golf.

The tournament will be a four-person scramble for golfers of all handicaps in an average temperature of the low 60s. Lunch is included, and the course is a 15-minute drive from the hotel across the harbor in Mt. Pleasant.

Date: Wednesday, February 18, 2009

11:30am Box lunch will be provided at the course

12:00pm Shotgun start for the Invitational Tournament

5:00pm Return to the hotel.

Cost: \$160.00 per person for lunch and the tournament

Sponsors: \$100.00 per Tee Sponsor will include signage and recognition

Gift bag items can also be donated for up to 60 golfers



You will enjoy lunch in the unique setting of Middleton Pavilion. A delightful Southern style buffet will feature such Southern specialties as corn pudding, fried chicken, red rice and buttermilk biscuits.

Date: Wednesday, February 18, 2009

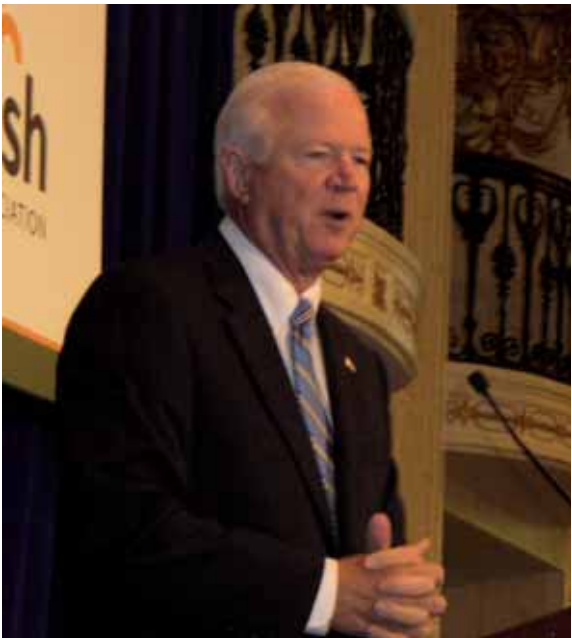
11:30am Depart hotel on a deluxe coach with a registered tour guide.

12:00pm Arrive at Middleton Place Southern Plantation, Stableyards & Gardens.

4:00pm Depart the Ashley River Historic District for hotel.

Cost: \$100.00 per person for the coach transportation, guide, lunch and tour.

DC continued from page 1



with our Congressional members, USDA officials and the Food and Drug Administration, on the highest of issues”, says Bob Morrissey. “We come together each fall in collaboration with UFPA as we embrace common goals related to the F&V Industry, and share our common needs in federal legislation, rules, regulations and programs.”

The 2007 program included a Fresh Festival on Capitol Hill (which provides one-on-one interaction with Congressional members and key agriculture staffers), educational workshops (involving grant opportunities in the Farm Bill, requirements of Country of Origin Labeling, and proposed Food Safety legislation), Congressional visits on Capitol Hill, FDA food safety meeting & open dialogue, talks from Senators Saxby Chambliss (GA) (pictured above) and Debbie Stabenow (MI), and Congressmen Dennis Cardoza (CA) and Jim Costa (CA). The NWA culminated the trip with a tour of the East Wing of The White House.

Organization executives from across America, farmers, packers, shippers and agricultural suppliers joined with retailers from Wal-Mart, Wegmans, Food Lion, Harris Teeter, Giant Eagle, Safeway, Whole Foods, and others in a coordinated effort throughout the three days of high profile events. No matter whether you have been to Washington or not, this event is one of the most unique experiences that you can attend in any year. Busy, enlightening and fulfilling.

“There is ‘power in numbers’, and as a result of two years of NWA support of the WPPC, we will help UFPA promote our partnership to other F&V organizations starting next year to increase the numbers larger than what they were this year. Even with the largest attendance that they have ever had, we have a great story to tell, and look forward to encouraging other groups to get the word out. “If we do not tell our elected officials what we expect of them, then how can we get them to stand up for us”, says Morrissey. “Our organization has responded beyond anyone’s projections in the past few years, and we look forward to continuing that momentum in the future”.



NWA Members participate in a dinner with United Fresh. From left to right, Paul Nuzzo, Jane & Carr Hussey, Alisa & John Lapide, Louise & Bradley O’Neal and Bob Morrissey.

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Manager - Thomas Wright

North Carolina Report

Watermelon Greetings from North Carolina!

Brittany White, the North Carolina Watermelon Queen is excited about her year as the 2008 Queen and we are pleased to share some of her watermelon promotions with you.

Queen Brittany has been very busy this summer. In June, Frances and Percy Bunch as well as Mike, Vanessa and Michael Bunch welcomed Brittany for a visit to Murfreesboro for lunch and a tour of Murfreesboro Farms on her way for a special afternoon with the 2nd grade students at Gatesville Elementary School. Students gave Brittany a warm, royal welcome and shared their watermelon knowledge thru dance, video, artwork, watermelon recopies and a beautiful of Queen Brittany. Thanks to teacher Ervina Bunch and the Gates County Superintendent for the visit with the students.

Our next stop was Food Lion Corporate Headquarters. There, Queen Brittany signed autographs for the employees and served delicious watermelon. Queen Brittany also visited the first Food Lion store in Salisbury. This kicked off the “Goodness Grows in North Carolina” campaign. Queen Brittany visited many Food Lions over the summer promoting delicious watermelon.

Onslow County Farmers Market Annual Grand Opening was held in June in Jacksonville. Queen Brittany was delighted to be a part of the celebration event with area dignitaries. Watermelon contests, autographed photos coloring books, and recopies promoting watermelon were highlights of the promotion.

Queen Brittany started her North Carolina Farmers Market Tour in Raleigh at the local farmer’s market. There Queen Brittany gave stickers, coloring books and recopies, as well as watermelon slices to the crowd. After Raleigh, she toured the Asheville Farmers Market, the Lumberton Farmers Market and finished up at the Charlotte Farmers Market.

Queen Brittany was welcomed at Jackson Farms by Brent Jackson and Josh Jackson. Brittany toured their facilities and learned about watermelons and the process they go through before leaving for market. Thank you to Brent and Josh for the tour!

We were especially delighted to have the 2007 National Queen, Jenna, visit with us. National Queen Jenna, and Queen Brittany were on hand for the Grand Opening of the new Wal-Mart in Carner. Thank you to Jenna for helping us out.

Visit our website at www.ncmelons.com to learn more about Queen Brittany’s wonderful watermelon adventures!

Susan Mills
NCWA Promotions Coordinator



Queen Brittany admiring watermelon sculptures with a student at Gatesville Elementary school



Mike Bunch of Murfreesboro Farms with Queen Brittany



Helping to promote watermelon at Food Lion Corporate Offices in Salisbury



With the Manager and Produce Manager at the original Food Lion in Salisbury



Queen Brittany with the Big Cart promoting “Got to be NC” produce



Queen Brittany shares her expertise with a customer



Winner of the seed spitting contest at the Onslow County Farmers Market



Promoting Watermelons at Food Lion



Queen Brittany surrounded by her fans at the Farmer’s Market in Raleigh



Taking time to pose with a fan, Queen Brittany always has a smile



At the Ashville Farmer’s Market, Queen Brittany made a friend for life!



With Mike Smith at the Lumberton Farmer’s Market



Queen Brittany taking time out to enjoy some delicious watermelon



Queen Brittany is all smiles with Brent and Josh Jackson of Jackson Farms



National Queen Jenna and North Carolina Queen Brittany at the Grand Opening of Wal-Mart in Garner



Queen Brittany at Wal-Mart in Wilmington with the store manager



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South Carolina Report

Summer started off in high gear with Queen Amanda Turner traveling the state making media appearances and spreading her message...EAT MORE WATERMELON!! Media Week began in Florence where Amanda was interviewed on the radio show Kinard 'n Koffee. We then attended a Meet and Greet at the Pee Dee State Farmer's Market. Later that day we were off to Cheraw where Amanda and I were interviewed on WCRE Radio. Amanda then sat down for an interview with THE LINK Newspaper. The next day Amanda appeared on WLTX-TV with Curtis Wilson in Columbia. By the middle of the week we were back home in the Upstate where Amanda put together six delicious watermelon recipes on the Peggy Denny Show. She also did radio interviews in Spartanburg and Clemson. Next we headed back to Columbia for an interview with The State newspaper. We then made our way to North Augusta for a radio interview and a newspaper interview. Media week concluded in beautiful Mt. Pleasant on the morning show Low Country Live where Amanda whipped up a Watermelon Parfait. She then gave an interview to the local newspaper. We would like to thank Donna Bundrick Griffin for helping to make Media Week a huge success.

The annual Hampton County Watermelon Festival was next on our agenda where National Queen Brittanie Faircloth joined us. In two short days the girls attended a queens reception, street dance, dignitaries luncheon and rode in the parade. Hampton is always one of the highlights of the year because everyone makes you feel so welcomed! Before heading home Amanda and Brittanie were excited to visit Bradley and Louise O'Neal at Coosaw Farms. Thanks Bradley for giving us the grand tour! We also made a stop by Rusty Kinard's farm where he loaded our cars up with melons! Thanks Rusty!

During the months of June and July our association provided watermelon to several youth camps at Furman University in Greenville. Amanda stayed busy passing out melons at the Ladder Day Saints Youth Camp and the Suzuki Music Camp. The children loved to see the watermelon queen and sample her tasty treats. While Queen Amanda was busy traveling the state for Media Week, runner up Amanda Gold was also promoting the industry at a Softball Camp. This promotion was a huge success with Amanda handing out melon to numerous softball players from across the state. After word got around a few other sports camps even joined in the fun! Who can resist a slice of watermelon on a hot summer day? Former SC Watermelon Queen Christina Loftis was also there to help us out at a youth wrestling camp. She did not miss a beat passing out watermelon samples and offering a smile to the children. Thanks for your help Christina!

For our next promotion I met Amanda in her hometown of Landrum. We joined Brad Boozer and several other Department of Agriculture employees at the Landrum Welcome Center to support our local farmers with the Certified SC program. Amanda was a huge hit and even got a visit from her proud parents and grandmother.

Watermelon Field Day in Blackville was very informative! Amanda heard all about the planting/growing process and tasted too many melons to count. She was also able to try her first yellow meat melon. She loved it! We enjoyed visiting with Gilbert Miller, Martin Eubanks, Brad Boozer, Ansley Rast, Stevie Still and Rusty Kinard. On the way home we even had the chance to visit Scotty Sandifer who was Amanda's sponsor at the SC Watermelon Convention. Although he did not have any watermelons he did not send us home empty handed. He sent us on our way with a ton of cantaloupes. Thanks Scotty!

The Pageland Watermelon Festival was another great event for Amanda where she was honored as the Grand Marshall of the Pageland Parade. Amanda later helped with face painting on the children at the festivities following the parade.

We were asked to come and speak at the South Carolina Farm Bureau Youth Leadership Conference, which was held in Columbia. Amanda and I got to be teachers for a day by presenting a PowerPoint presentation on watermelon facts, selection tips, recipes and health benefits to a group of high school students. Since the students had been asked to come up with a slogan and ways to sell watermelons, they found us very helpful. This was a great promotion and it was exciting to see how others love to sell our favorite fruit!

Amanda and I finished up the month of July at the North Carolina Watermelon Festival where we were able to spend time with North Carolina Queen Brittany and Mrs. Francis Bunch. We would like to thank Mrs. Bunch for all of her help and Mr. and Mrs. Enzor for opening up their beautiful home to us. We really appreciate their hospitality. Amanda enjoyed numerous activities such as a special dinner, parade, duck race, luncheon and canoe ride. Thank you Judy Enzor for making us feel so at home! The festival finished up with the North Carolina Watermelon Festival Pageant, which I had the opportunity to judge.

Until next time,
Julie Murdock



Amanda had a laugh with Curtis Wilson on WLTX-TV Fox News in Columbia, SC.



Amanda's proud parents and "MeMe" came to the welcome center to support their queen.



Amanda sharing a recipe with Peggy Denny on her cooking show.



Gilbert Miller helps Amanda select the perfect melon.



Amanda chatted with Rhonda Mathews in Clemson, SC during Media Week.



Amanda enjoyed talking with Stevie Still at Watermelon Field Day.



Amanda and National Queen Brittanie pose before the parade at the Hampton County Watermelon Festival.



Amanda was also happy to see Martin Eubanks during Watermelon Field Day.



Naturally, Thomas Murdock loves Watermelon Queens!



Amanda thanks Scotty Sandifer for sponsoring her at the SC Watermelon Convention.



Amanda thanks Rusty Kinard for all those watermelons!



It was an honor for Amanda to be the Grand Marshall in the parade at the Pageland Watermelon Festival.



Amanda and Brittanie thank Bradley and Louise O'Neal after touring their packing shed.



One of the many materials Amanda shared with the students at the SC Farm Bureau Youth Leadership Conference.



Supporting SC Certified at the welcome center in Landrum, SC.



These beautiful Carolina girls enjoyed each other's company at the NC Watermelon Festival.



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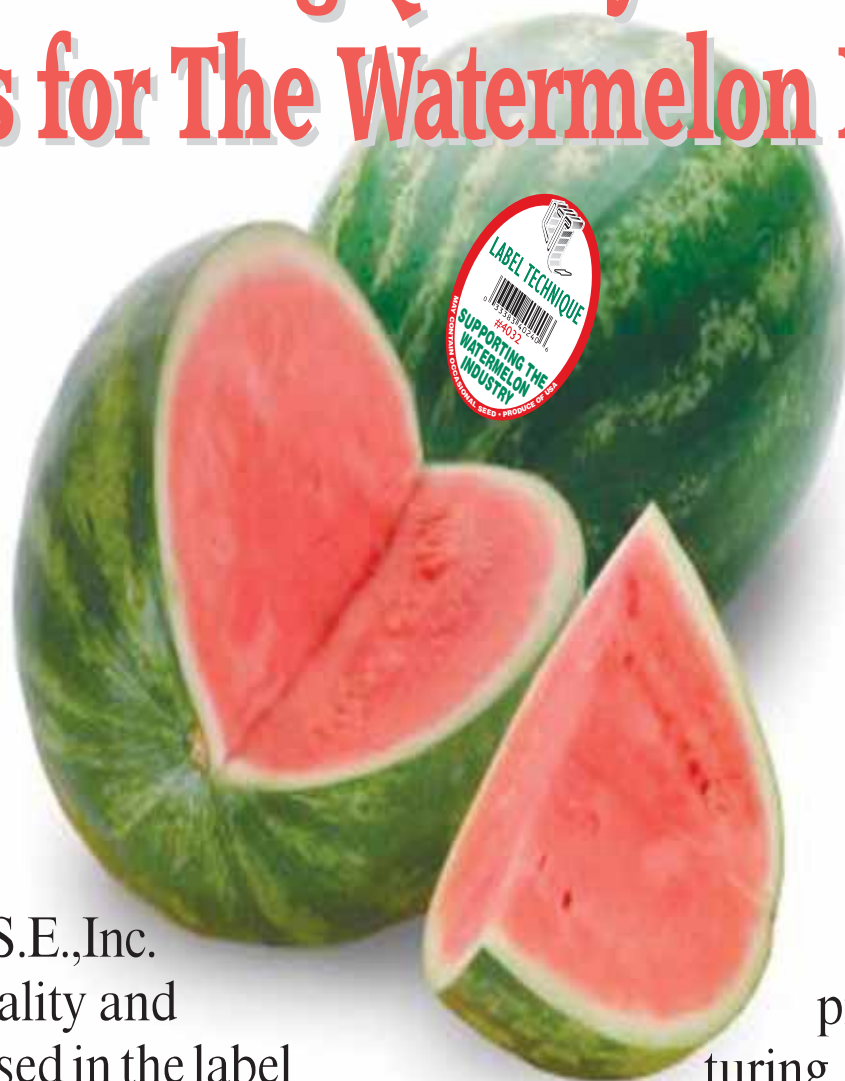
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Texas Report

National Watermelon month was a busy month for Texas Queen Marie, the first promotion being a successful and great promotion. Marie was sponsored to the Walmart store in Bryan, Texas (College Station) by Frontera Produce, thanks to Jarrod Snider. Frontera is a brand new member to the Association this year and has been very supportive. Also Wiggins Farms from Snook Texas, provided a bus load of watermelons that was parked in front of the store and I must say that was pretty impressive, Thank you Wiggins family.

The next weekend Marie and I were off to the Indianapolis to the races, and also did a few instore promotions. Mr. Bob did the honors of escorting us to our first day of promotions and we do thank him for that. The next day we were with Mrs. Julie from Georgia and her queen and we enjoyed serving watermelon in the stores with them. And, WOW, the race track, I don't know how many people, but I do know that a lot of watermelon was served and everyone loved it, and they were from all over the states. We were a little further down the race track and many people said they came looking for us and I think they all found us. Joe Poon was quite a hit, he always had a crowd. Thank you Indiana for always inviting us to this promotion, it was great.....

The next weekend our first runner up, Mollie Bennett and I were off to San Antonio, Texas sponsored by the National Watermelon Promotion Board to do a grand opening, a giant size HEB. There were watermelons everywhere, in front of the store, several spots in the store, and Heb said that both days were record days for sale of watermelons, everybody was coming in the front door with a watermelon already in their grocery buggy. The employees were busy keeping the watermelon bins full. We were in the store 3 days and we want to say a big THANK YOU, to Mollie our first runner up from Grapeland, Texas, she has helped us out two times when Marie was at another promotion with Jennifer.

On Friday before Labor Day we were in Lubbock Texas bright and early at 5:45 AM to go on the local TV station to promote the Plains Watermelon Roundup, Thanks to Connie McWhirter and Teretha Jones they always have a nice festival for all. Thanks to the McWhirters and Anderson Produce for all the free watermelon they serve.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS, JANUARY 15-18, 2009, TEXAS WATERMELO ASSOCIATION CONVENTION, RADISSON HOTEL, SOUTH PADRE ISLAND, TEXAS.

I am not sure yet what President Ward Thomas has in store for you at the convention but I do know he is planning some outside fun for all. Until next time,

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



Texas Commissioner of Agriculture, Todd Staples and Queen Marie at Walmart in College Station Texas



Mollie and 2 beautiful watermelon girls



Richard De La Santos with the Texas Department of Agriculture, Thank you Richard for all you do with Texas Watermelon.



Indy Race Tract – these 2 soldiers are Army Hero's. Hero figurines made and available.



Paul Wiggins and beautiful granddaughter with Marie at Walmart



Marie on TV at Lubbock, TX KLBK promoting the Plains Watermelon Round-up.



Thanks so much to Frontera Produce for sponsoring Queen Marie to College Station, TX – Walmart.



Connie McWhirter always willing to help at the Plains Watermelon Round-up.



Quite a bus load of watermelons, Thanks to Wiggins Farms.



A group of Texans visiting the Congressman.



These girls having fun promoting watermelons in Indiana.



And another visit Randy Neugenbauer with Marie on her Washington DC Trip.



Lots and Lots of watermelon served at the Indy race.



Store promotions make the difference, and Marie helps them to be successful."



A surprise visit from home town folks, Grapeland TX, visit Mollie at HEB in San Antonio



ADD a seed spit contest to a promotion, and customers will come



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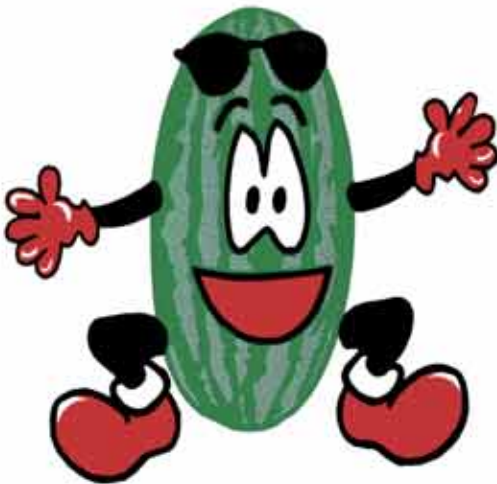
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SAFETY continued from page 1

industry. The principles that we are recommending are comprehensive in nature, follow the best food safety programs in the country, and work in parallel to food safety legislation and federal standards that are being proposed and debated in Washington, D.C.

“None of us want new federal standards or over-sight that will cost us money”, says Bob Morrissey, “but it is in all of our best interests to include food safety processes into each and every operation that touches watermelon to make sure that we continue to provide a safe, quality crop to consumers across North and Central America and export countries in Europe. Some where in the near future, there will be federal mandates that will have to be followed. Without food safety processes in place, we may be playing Russian Roulette and be awaiting for something to happen without being ready for that day. Believe me the national media is ready. We need to be better prepared than they are to protect our own businesses, and the industry.”

“We have a safe crop, as history continues to show. But complacency should not be our decision to do nothing. All that it will take is one bad actor or one situation to occur, and the entire industry can be decapitated (i.e. baby spinach and tomatoes).

The program is catered to the farm and the packing side of our business, and features key areas including:

- Farm GAPs
- Water Quality
- Restrooms & Hand Washing
- Farm BioSecurity
- Animal Management
- Pesticide Management
- Manure & Compost Use
- Packer BMPs
- Storage & Transportation
- Worker Training & Aids
- Equipment & Shed Sanitation
- Record Keeping
- Traceability
- Crisis Management
- Other Support Materials



Every section and topic that is part of this program has been included in a self-audit for the farmer and a separate self-audit for the packer. Each self-audit is closely comparable to third-party audits from the USDA, Primus Labs and Cornell University’s National GAPs Program, and capsulizes the entire Watermelon Program in a workable document for your use. The self-audits are not provided as a complete ‘be all’ resource, but it does cover over 90% of what any third-party firm’s audit will look for on your farm or in your packing shed.

Our path forward is to provide the program to our industry’s farmers and packers and gain their input while we have an expert panel of food safety reviewers combing through the details. The expert panel has been chosen from United Fresh Produce Association, USDA, FDA, University of California - Davis, Georgia Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association, Publix Super Markets, Wal-Mart and from within the NWA. We have also asked the Boards of both the NWA and the NWPB to provide their input.

FDA continued from page 30

Submit electronic comments and scientific data and information to <http://www.regulations.gov>.

In 1998, FDA and the USDA issued guidance to industry entitled “Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables” (Ref. 3), to enhance the safety of fresh produce, to assist the fresh produce industry in addressing common risk factors in their operations, and to minimize potential food safety hazards. (The document is referred to hereinafter as the “GAPs/GMPs”.

While FDA recognizes current technologies cannot eliminate all potential food safety hazards associated with fresh produce that will be eaten raw, the GAPs/GMPs Guide emphasizes that implementation of risk reduction measures is critical to minimizing these potential food safety hazards. The agency has worked with the fresh produce industry and other food safety partners since the issuance of the GAPs/ GMPs Guide to promote its recommendations and to advance the scientific knowledge applicable to enhancing the safety of fresh produce, and the GAPs/GMPs Guide has been used as a basis for a number of food safety programs, both in the United States and internationally. Choices by buyers to purchase from producers and other suppliers that provide self- or third-party audit verification that they are following the GAPs/GMPs Guide have further promoted adoption of the guidance.

Data and experience indicate that the recommendations in the GAPs/GMPs Guide can be effective when implemented. However, the fact that outbreaks of foodborne illness associated with fresh produce continue to occur supports a close examination of the extent to which the recommendations in the GAPs/GMPs

WAL-MART continued from page 1

is involved with the Wal-Mart and Sam’s Club supply chain will bring little to no improvement in the food safety or quality of watermelons shipped to Wal-Mart or Sam’s Club stores. Morrissey wrote, “Our initial estimates project the increased costs to escalate as much as 20 times (or more) than today’s current investments! We see little to no possible improvement in food safety practices by using GFSI processes such as SQF that Primus Labs and other approved third-party firms have provided for many years within our industry. Due to our history of providing a safe, reliable and quality crop, a lack of incidents in food safety issues, the provision of third-party audits through a quality service provider(s), we ask that you reconsider including watermelons in your program that includes ‘high risk’ crops. Watermelons are a low risk crop, and should be treated as such”.

Finally, we offered Wal-Mart and Sam’s Club the opportunity to join with us in our review of the upcoming first draft of a Watermelon-specific Food Safety Program for farmers and packers to make the review and the development of a second edition a total supply chain effort.

Our letter follows similar paths by the leafy greens and tomato industries, with both industries declining to follow the new GFSI standards. Our response for the industry should hold much better promise of acceptance because of the ‘low risk’ that our watermelon crop holds with food safety incidents. The NWA will keep you posted as any new developments arise.

This step includes taking the program into their operations and running it through a litmus test for completeness, reliability, reality, cost perspective, and then providing their input for consideration. You are also invited to get involved by reviewing the materials and providing your input. Our goal is to gain all feedback by the end of 2008, consider the input, and provide a second edition at the February 2009 national convention in Charleston, South Carolina.

Food safety is all of our responsibility. No one should consider themselves to be immune! Providing a safe, quality food supply is our job and our livelihood no matter whether you farm, pack, ship, sell, load, supply, truck, receive, or merchandise our crop. We are all in this together, and must be for the future of our industry. Protecting your business interests and the interests of the industry are both at stake. Please join us in this effort. Together, we can make a difference and continue to provide one of the safest, quality crops in the world Watermelon!

Guide have been implemented; the extent to which they have been effective, if implemented properly; and what additional or different interventions might be appropriate to reduce the risk of future outbreaks. The agency now has 10 years experience in implementing this guidance and observing how and the extent to which it has been implemented by the industry.

FDA is seeking information and comment on the issues and questions in the open comment period process. If possible, they request scientific information and data in support of your comments. In addition, they request information as specific as is feasible about the estimated costs and benefits associated with your responses (e.g., the costs and benefits of current practices and/or the cost and benefits of any recommendations you may make). FDA is not seeking information and comment on issues of traceability in this document, because FDA plans to do so in the context of a public meeting.

The GAPs/GMPs Guide addresses potential sources of microbial contamination associated with a range of issues, or variables, such as: Water (both agricultural water and post harvest water uses); manure and municipal biosolids; worker health and hygiene; packing facility sanitation; transportation; and traceback.

Specifically, the FDA is asking for your comments to twelve (12) questions pertaining to GAPs/GMPs that will help them to improve the effectiveness and implementation of the program in future years. Please take a look at the federal register and submit your comments and any applicable data before the end of this year.

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- Position your company as an industry leader



The program book has become a keepsake for our industry and a reference for our farmers and packers throughout the season. Place your company at the forefront by showing your support of the NWA. Advertise and become an important contributor to our success on behalf of the industry.

The advertising rates can be found on the NWA web site in The Vineline agreement. Join us as we continue to find solutions for the industry’s needs, and help you to build your business.

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The NuStart Plant Program provides the convenience and quality you demand from a plant program with the flexibility to accommodate your unique needs.

