



Senate Announces New Ag Committee Chair



Senator Blanche Lincoln (Arkansas) will be the first woman to head the U.S. Senate agriculture committee. According to Senator Lincoln, implementing the new federal farm bill and ending the trade embargo with Cuba are some of the top issues facing the Senate panel.

Senator Lincoln is taking the place of Senator Tom Harkin (Iowa), who is replacing the late Ted Kennedy as chairman of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee.

Lincoln supports government farm subsidies and has served on the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. As a congresswoman, she served on the U.S. House Agriculture Committee from 1993-1995.

USDA Launches “Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food” Initiative

USDA’s Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food initiative will begin a national conversation to help develop local and regional food systems and spur economic opportunity. To launch the program, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack recorded a video to invite Americans to join the discussion and share their ideas for ways to support local agriculture. The video is just one of many ways USDA will engage with consumers and producers, who can comment on the YouTube playlist, as well as submit videos or provide comments by e-mailing knowyourfarmer@usda.gov.

USDA Announces Availability of Value Added Producer Grants



Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that USDA will be accepting applications for approximately \$18 million in grants to assist agricultural producers seeking to add value to the commodities they produce.

The grants will strengthen rural economies and create jobs by helping farmers and ranchers add value to their agricultural products by using them for planning activities such as feasibility studies, marketing and business plans, or for working capital. The program also supports the country’s expansion of renewable energy resources by helping farmers develop renewable energy from agricultural products.

USDA plans to award planning grants of up to \$100,000 and working capital grants of up to \$300,000 to successful applicants. Applicants are encouraged to propose projects that use existing agricultural products in non-traditional ways or merge agricultural products with technology in creative ways. Businesses of all sizes may apply, but priority will be given to operators of small and medium-sized family farms - those with average, annual gross sales of less than \$700,000.

Applications must be submitted through www.grants.gov to the Rural Development state office in the state where the project will be located. A list of state offices is available at www.rurdev.usda.gov/recd_map.html. Further information on value added grants and other rural programs is available at www.rurdev.usda.gov.

The USDA announced approximately \$65 million in funding for “Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food”. “An American people that is more engaged with their food supply will create new income opportunities for American agriculture,” Vilsack says. “Reconnecting consumers and institutions with local producers will stimulate economies in rural communities, improve access to healthy, nutritious food for our families, and decrease the amount of resources to transport our food.”

One component of the initiative is the Farm-To-School program that aims to better connect children to their

Watermelon Juice: A New Fuel?

According to a new study, leftover watermelons from farms’ harvests could be converted into up to 9.4 million liters (2.5 million gallons) of clean, renewable ethanol fuel every year destined for your gas tank.

Watermelon farmers across the country leave between 20 and 40 percent of their crop on the ground each year; primarily misshapen or blemished melons that simply won’t sell at the grocery store.

Dr. Wayne Fish of the USDA in Lane, Oklahoma said, “I had farmers telling me, ‘I’m leaving one-fifth of my melons on the land. Is there anything I can do with them?’”

Across the U.S., he estimated that 360,000 tons of watermelons spoil in fields every year. Growers wonder whether the waste melons could be turned into ethanol, the clean-burning fuel derived from plant sugars. In a series of new experiments published in the journal *Biotechnology for Biofuels*, Fish and a team of researchers proved that they can.

What’s more, watermelon juice may turn out to be the perfect way to optimize industrial-scale production of ethanol. Watermelon juice is about 10 percent sugar by volume, about half the concentration that manufacturers consider right for producing ethanol. But it’s chock full of amino acids that provide a crucial source of nitrogen for yeast to feed on during fermentation.

On its own, the team calculated they could make about 2.5 million gallons of ethanol each year from waste melons, a drop in the bucket of an industry that last year produced 9

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food and create opportunities for local farmers to provide their harvest to schools in their communities. Farm-To-School teams will tour America’s school cafeterias to identify challenges and opportunities to help them transition to purchasing more locally grown foods. The teams will work with local farmers, local and state authorities, school districts, and community partners to develop Farm-To-School projects and provide assistance on the best ways to buy more local produce for the National School Lunch program.

Watch the YouTube video at www.youtube.com/usda, and for more information, go to www.usda.gov.



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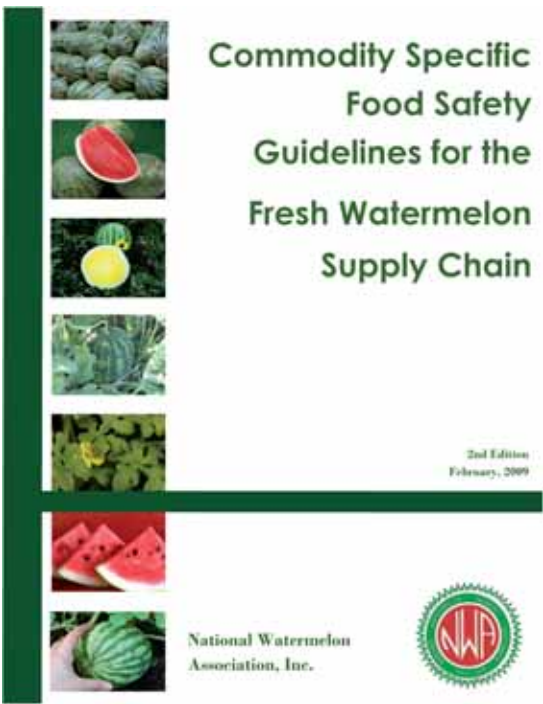


Harmonizing Produce Food Safety Standards

Leaders throughout the produce industry have recognized the cost and inefficiency of multiple standards and audits now being used to measure compliance with food safety procedures and programs. Neither produce suppliers nor retailers and foodservice companies are well served when duplicative standards and audits raise total supply chain costs without enhancement of overall food safety.

At the Global Conference on Produce Food Safety Standards conference held in April, a number of conclusions that may serve as a platform for further effort ahead were identified:

- Produce standards used in various audits seem to be at least 90% the same, providing a clear opportunity for harmonization.
- Commodity-specific food safety standards and audits are getting done and being accepted through the supply chain. The process of bringing key stakeholders together to develop and endorse commodity-specific standards provides a good model for building consensus on general standards.
- Inclusion of non-food safety standards (environmental, social issues) is a likely obstacle to harmonization, particularly in North America. These issues may need to be addressed separately.
- Harmonization of general standards and audits must be transparent with open communication of intent,



- progress, and conclusions.
- Retailers, foodservice companies, fresh-cut processors, grower-shippers, and government must all be at the table working together.
 - Auditors and standard owners need to be at the table as well, but not at the expense of the harmonization goal.

- Upcoming and future work on harmonization includes a single, generic checklist for audits:
- Focused on food safety practices of pre-farm gate produce operations;
 - With clearly defined requirements that minimize opportunity for misunderstanding, misinterpretation and “standards creep” by operations and auditors;
 - Globally recognized, but specifically applicable to North America operations;
 - Requirements that are achievable, auditable and verifiable;
 - Scalable to all size fresh produce operations;
 - Considerate of regional- and commodity-specific food safety needs;
 - Sufficiently non-prescriptive to be accepting of equivalent food safety practices;

A Steering Committee of major industry representatives has been assembled with the ability to drive broad industry acceptance of common standards; who are committed to achieving the harmonization vision with broad representation from the fresh produce supply chain; and who represent a critical mass of volume of produce purchased. The committee will meet to achieve consensus on the draft vision of harmonization; to identify concerns that must be addressed in the process; and to create/support and direct a larger Technical Working Group representing all stakeholders interested in cooperating to achieve the harmonization vision. Audit companies and standard owners may participate if they permit their standards to be used in the comparison and they agree to support the vision of a harmonized standard in North America when developed.

Upon completion of the harmonized standard, with consensus from the Technical Working Group, the Steering Committee will consider the standard for endorsement and recommend its adoption across all industry stakeholders and industries.

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billion gallons from corn and other feedstock in the United States alone.

But both corn and molasses require lots of water, and sometimes nitrogen supplements to prepare for fermentation. The team suggests that watermelon juice from reject melons could drastically cut down on water usage, supply needed nitrogen, and even add some sugar to the mix, cutting the amount of corn or molasses by up to 15 percent.

“This is not going to replace corn. In that sense watermelon will be a niche source of biofuel,” said Jim Rausch, president of the College Station, Texas-based company Common Sense Agriculture, LLC, which is developing a prototype watermelon juice-to-ethanol processing plant. “But unlike algae biodiesel or cellulosic ethanol, it’s a right now thing. There’s no new technology that needs to be developed to make it economical.”

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Bill would ax estate tax for agriculture



Farmers and ranchers are supporting a bill in Congress that would exempt certain land from the federal estate tax as long as the property is kept in agriculture. The bill by U.S. Reps. Mike Thompson, D-Calif., and John Salazar, D-Colo., would deduct from the estate tax the value of farmland in cases where the heir had been involved in the farm operation for 5 of the past 8 years.

Currently, estates valued at more than \$3.5 million, or \$7 million for a couple, are taxed at a 45 percent rate. If Congress doesn’t act, the rate is set to revert in 2011 to 55 percent on estates worth \$1 million or more. Farmers and ranchers have long contended that the tax often forces families to sell all or part of their land when a loved one dies.

Numerous trade groups have met with the House Agriculture Committee members and other lawmakers to seek relief from the so-called “death tax.” If the land is used or sold for other purposes besides agriculture, a recapture tax would be imposed.

Along with the fact that the exemption is set to expire, it creates a lot of uncertainty. The bill would provide a whole degree of protection at the time of generational transfer. There are a lot of farmers that want to keep their traditions alive, along with their children. The last thing they want to have is a tax bill that pushes the farm under.

NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR THE PRESTIDGIOUS NWA AWARDS

It is that time of year again, the time to make your nominations for the NWA awards. These awards signify those that have been outstanding within the industry.

The first is the Marketing Award. This is presented to the person, chapter or company that has gone above and beyond in marketing our favorite fruit, watermelon! Have you had or know of a great promotion? This is the time to react!!!!

The second award open for nomination is for Outstanding Service. This award is presented to the person that has gone above and beyond in their support of the National Watermelon Association. This support is not only over the past year, but also in years past. This is the highest recognition award with the NWA! Know someone who deserves this honor? Nominate them now!

You can find the nomination forms at www.nationalwatermelonassociation.com and the deadline for entries is December 31, 2009. Award nominations will then be judged and revealed at the

Immigration Forum at White House

A summer meeting was held at the White House on August 20th for the purpose of energizing support from diverse stakeholders interested in comprehensive immigration reform. Approximately 130 groups, ranging from immigration advocates, faith-based leaders, unions, law enforcement and the business community were in attendance.

Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano provided an overview of the Administration’s commitment to reform and legislative objectives, with the following summarized comments:

- DHS has brought prominent immigration experts into high positions at DHS to help develop the legislative objectives for a reform package.
- She has been working behind the scenes with key members of Congress to push legislation. Judiciary Committee Chairman Leahy has committed time to move a bill this year, as has Senator Reid.
- The stakeholders need to aggressively help promote legislation in the media and at the grass roots level
- Comprehensive reform must address 8 components:
 - a. Effective and smart enforcement. Obama will target persons who endanger public safety, and he will emphasize E-Verify rather than a no-match policy
 - b. Make it easier for employers to comply with work authorization obligations
 - c. Make sure that those subject to deportation are removed



- d. Develop a legalization program that will bring people out of the shadows
- e. Streamline and make fair the process for visas
- f. Improve the efficiencies of the deportation process including administrative and judicial adjudication
- g. Ensure that the legislation is realistic, workable, and can be implemented in the real world
- h. Ensure that the legislation is fair, enforceable, now and in the future

President Obama made an appearance at the end of the meeting and made the following points:

- We are a nation of laws and immigrants, and both interests must be served
- Reform must be comprehensive and fair with meaningful enforcement.
- Our border must be secure
- The law must target unscrupulous employers that exploit workers and depress wages
- We must listen to our opponents and understand their viewpoints—the debate must be civil
- The American people want immigration reform
- Stakeholders must make sure the pro-reform message is clear and accurate to defeat distortions of opponents

Labor Department wants to raise H-2A wages

The Department of Labor wants to erase some reforms to the H-2A agricultural guest worker program that the Bush administration approved in January, leading to higher employer expenses if left unchanged.

The department has also determined that the areas in which agricultural workers are most vulnerable — wages — has been adversely impacted to a far more significant extent than anticipated by the 2008 Final Rule.

The labor department’s document said the Bush administration reforms reduced wages by \$1.44 per

hour, and said the department would “rectify” that adverse effect on agricultural workers.

“We need to carefully review all the substance, but our expectation is that it is somewhat a mix of the pre-Bush rules program and possibly some elements of the Bush rule program,” said Craig Regelbrugge, vice president of government relations for the American Nursery and Landscaping Association, Washington, D.C. “The pessimist in the group believes what the final proposal will contain is the worst of both.”

“This proposal is negative news for growers and producers who are using or thinking of using H-2A,” Regelbrugge said.

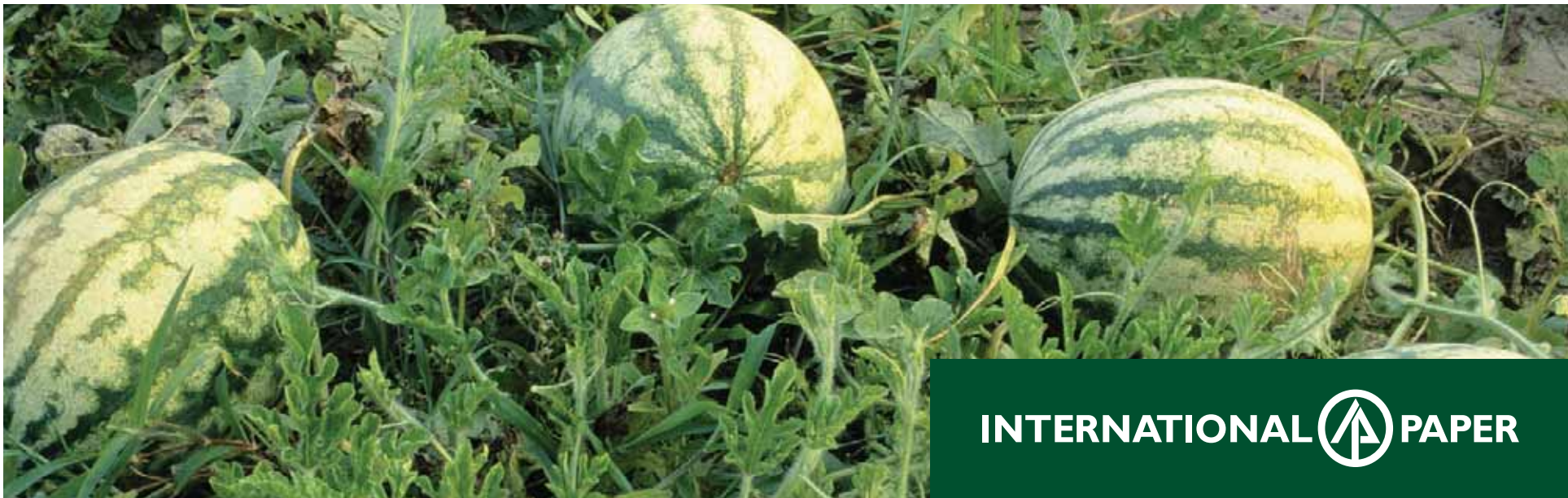
“What it absolutely does is underscore the need to get statutory reform where there is an agreed framework in statutory law so we don’t have the industry succumb to the whims of administrations coming and going,” he said. “What we need is legislation like Ag-Jobs, which locks what we need in statute and would give us a predictable program.”



Fourth Quarter Awards Banquet at the 2010 Dallas Convention! Do you know someone that deserves one or both of these awards?

Don’t delay; they will appreciate your nomination. Remember, they can’t win unless you nominate!





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96th Annual National Watermelon Association Convention

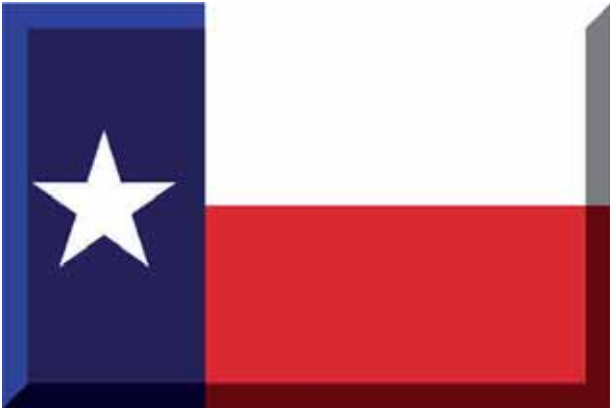
You are cordially invited to the Official KICK-OFF of the 2010 Watermelon Season, and what a super way to start the new season!

Bob, Laurie, Betsy, Alisa and John have planned an action-packed convention for you in addition to the business and fellowship that is always a great part of our annual event.

Dallas, Texas and the fabulous Fairmont Hotel will host the 96th annual convention of the National Watermelon Association in grand Texas style. Complete with an NFL-theme throughout the festivities, you will thoroughly enjoy the convention from start to finish.

Start out in the NWA invitational Golf Tournament on the only NFL-themed golf course in the world, or experience a tour and wonderful lunch at the famous Southfork Ranch. If that is not enough to get you started, coach buses will deliver you right outside the Dallas Cowboys locker room to enjoy an evening with the Cowboy Cheerleaders, tours of the fabulous stadium, in a great private stadium club with a great deal of fun to be enjoyed.

The 50-Yard Line Business Exhibit Center this year will hold the Thursday Tailgate Reception, and features a raffle for a High Definition flat screen Television, to be awarded from entries on Saturday



evening. Entries will be issued by our exhibitors, so make sure to get yours and enter to win!

Thursday evening will be our Tailgate Party, with a huge NFL Experience theme. A variety of football-related games will fill the ballroom (Dunk Tank, Quarterback Throw, Foosball, Tailgate Toss, Action Picture Books, Video Games with Madden 2010, Football Player Statutes, and much more), along with a fabulous band called Maiden Texas. Wear your favorite football team's jersey to show your team spirit.

The annual Watermelon Auction this year will also feature many pieces of football memorabilia and collectibles which will be displayed at the Tailgate Party on Thursday evening. You will want to see what is available before the auction!

The Saturday Reception, presented by the National Watermelon Queen program to honor the 2009 Tour Sponsors, will be followed by the Annual Awards Banquet and Trophy Presentations. You will not want to miss the lights, the music and the honors as we announce and present awards during this elegant affair.

Just look at the fun we had last year!!!!



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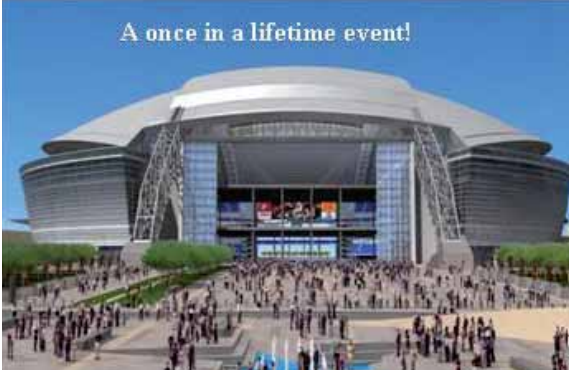


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This year at the NWA convention you will get an opportunity to visit the new 1.3 billion dollar Dallas Cowboy’s Stadium.

Tour buses will whisk you away from the hotel at 7:00 p.m. and shuttle you underground into the stadium where a private cocktail and buffet reception will be held in the Miller Lite Field Lounge. This is right where the Dallas Cowboys strut onto the field every game! Tour the stadium and locker room as well! And oh did we mention the 160’ x 72 foot 11,520 square foot Jumbotron – the worlds largest! If that excitement was not enough, members of the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleading Team will be on hand to sign autographs.

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50-Yard Line Business Center

Hours of Operation & Exhibit Fees

Wednesday, February 17th, 2010
Set up from 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, February 18th, 2010
Exhibit hours 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
includes Locker Room Reception
from 5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Friday, February 19th, 2010
Exhibit hours 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Includes Seed Spit contest
From 10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Saturday, February 20th, 2010
Exhibit hours 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Tear down from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
(tear down must be completed by 3p.m.)

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Deadline for 50-Yard Line Business Center registration is **Monday, December 21, 2009**
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FDA announces new vision for regulation enforcement



Commissioner Margaret Hamburg presented a new vision for enforcement of the FDA regulations and rules in support of public health. In her announcement, she highlighted six initial steps designed to hone the effectiveness and timeliness of the FDA’s regulatory and enforcement system.

The FDA has been asked to work more transparently with state/local agencies to improve best practices, identify gaps in capability and capacity, and speed communication among all agencies. Dr. Hamburg’s announcement reinforces the thought that broader information sharing will help industry and government work swiftly toward the same goal of protecting public health.

The six steps announced are:

- **Set post-inspection deadlines.** The FDA will establish a clear timeline for regulated industry to respond to significant FDA inspection findings, generally giving no more than 15 days to respond to such findings before the agency issues a warning letter or takes other enforcement action.

- **Take responsible steps to speed the warning letter process.** The FDA will streamline the warning letter process by limiting review of warning letters by the Office of Chief Counsel to those that present significant legal issues.

- **Work more closely with FDaA’s regulatory partners.** In some cases, such as with food safety issues, state, local, and international officials can act more quickly than the FDA. When public health is at risk, the agency will coordinate with its regulatory partners to take rapid action.

- **Prioritize follow-up on warning letters and other enforcement actions.** The FDA will work quickly to assess and follow up on corrective action taken by industry after a warning letter is issued or major product recall occurs.

- **Be prepared to take immediate action in response to public health risks.** To better protect the public health, the agency is prepared to act more quickly and aggressively to deal with significant public health concerns and violations. Such actions may occur before a formal warning letter is issued.

- **Develop and implement a formal warning letter “close-out” process.** If the agency can determine that a firm has fully corrected violations raised in a warning letter the agency will issue an official “close-out” notice and post this information on the FDA Web site. This will be an important motivator for corrective action by manufacturers.

By taking these steps, Commissioner Hamburg said, the FDA will ensure that “violative inspection results are taken seriously, that warning letters and enforcement actions occur in a timely manner and that steps are taken to protect consumers in cases where immediate enforcement action is not possible.”



FDA orders reporting of probable problems

The FDA launched the Reportable Food Registry at <http://rfr.fda.gov/> and the start of new reporting requirements on Sept. 8 - including a 24-hour deadline for shippers and processors to tell the FDA if they find a “reasonable probability” food will cause severe health problems or death.

The rule also puts the burden on food marketers to notify their upstream suppliers and downstream customers about possible food safety problems. The FDA, however, still does not have the power to enforce a recall.

Companies aren’t required to report problems to the FDA if they found and corrected the problem before food was shipped.

The FDA said some examples of reasons a food may be reportable include bacterial contamination,

allergen mislabeling or elevated levels of some chemicals.

The new reporting requirement would not discourage product testing because retailers are asking suppliers to do so, and growers and processors already have internal standards for testing.

The FDA plans to use the information to report food safety trends over time.

David Gombas, senior vice president of food safety and technology for United Fresh Produce Association, Washington, D.C., said he hoped the FDA would allow the industry time to get up to speed with the new law. “I think it is going to be a learning experience for the next several months, and I’m hoping the FDA is going to show some discretion in how it enforces the reportable food registry and use it as a learning opportunity,” he said. Gombas said he believes most of the industry is “completely unaware” of the reportable food registry.

The requirement applies to all facilities registered with the FDA as food facilities. Under the rule, food facilities must:

- investigate the cause of the adulteration if the adulteration of food may have originated with the responsible party;
- submit initial information, which must be followed by supplemental reports; and
- work with the FDA authorities to follow up as needed.

This new rule is in direct response to the peanut outbreak based at a processing plant in Georgia earlier this year.

Global Produce Traceability Campaign Launched



The guide aims to provide fresh produce growers, packers, exporters, importers, and distributors with a practical guide to traceability practices, using GS1’s standards system. It is intended to help firms tackle events such as product recalls more efficiently and effectively.

The guide tells how to implement effective traceability through best business practice examples and is divided into sections for the needs of each segment of the fresh produce supply chain.

The guide is available to download on the NWA web site in the food safety section, and is based on GS1’s overall Global Traceability Standard.

In an effort to bolster fresh produce traceability on a global scale, the global supply chain standards body, know as GS1, and the International Federation for Product Standards have released a traceability guide.

The two organizations have launched the Global Traceability for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Implementation Guide, a move driven by demand from the fresh produce industry.

U.S. Chamber study on Mexican Trucking Tariffs

U.S. Chamber of Commerce released a study that quantifies the economic damage U.S. companies and workers are suffering as a result of the U.S. government failing to implement a cross-border trucking program with Mexico.

The U.S Chamber of Commerce study notes that Mexican tariffs, which have only been in place for seven months, are having a devastating impact on U.S. exports and causing Americans to lose their jobs as a direct result. The study concluded that the U.S. failure to implement NAFTA’s cross-border trucking provisions has resulted in the loss of 25,000 U.S. jobs, \$2.2 billion in higher costs for U.S. families and companies and another \$2.6 billion in lost U.S. exports. The study unfortunately confirmed that U.S. workers are headed to the unemployment line as a result of inaction by Congress and the Administration.

In spite of findings by the DOT’s Inspector General that Mexican trucks and drivers were meeting U.S.

safety standards, political claims of safety concerns prompted Congress in March to effectively eliminate a cross-border trucking safety demonstration project run by DOT. That action put the U.S. in violation of NAFTA. It also prompted Mexico to announce retaliatory tariffs on about \$2.4 billion of U.S. manufactured and agricultural exports to Mexico. Mexico’s actions were deemed permissible by an international panel of trade experts, including representatives from the U.S.

The study clearly demonstrates the direct, negative impact the tariffs are having on U.S. workers. We are urging Congress and the Administration to immediately resolve the cross-border trucking dispute, so that the U.S. can fulfill its obligations, and U.S. companies and workers can get out from under these devastating tariffs and back to work.

The study can be found at: http://www.uschamber.com/international/trade_study_trucking.htm



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**Indirect Food Additives 21 CFR 178 (US FDA)

National Report

Greetings from NWA, National Queen Maggie and myself! Maggie is back in school but we are still busy promoting! We have had such an amazing tour this year, Maggie has enjoyed every moment. International travel, Twice into Canada, Newfoundland and Vancouver, and even to Tokyo, Japan! Thank You NWPB! We will have very limited space to report on this busy tour year, so it must keep it brief! Special thanks to all those whom have sponsored Maggie this year!

Leger & Son Sponsor

Memorial Day weekend found us in the North Atlanta area of Duluth, Georgia. Upon arrival we took a quick tour of Helen, GA in hopes of seeing Margie and Buddy Leger, but missed them. Maggie was welcomed royally at the Kroger! The shoppers enjoyed their samples, recipes, coloring books and selection tips from Maggie! Thanks Greg, Leger & Son for sponsoring us to Kroger!

Taste of Pinellas

Maggie and I were so pleased to join Florida Watermelon Queen, Jessica Southard, and Coordinator Debra Harrison for the 3 day event at Taste of Pinellas, benefiting the All Children’s Hospital. An awesome promotion, excellent media and for a worthwhile cause! Special Thanks to; Browning & Sons, Borders Melons, Jim Barfield, Global, Al Wroten and Sunny Fresh for sponsoring us to Taste of Pinellas. It was an awesome promotion, with six bins of watermelons served! Thanks to each of you!

Wiggins Watermelons sponsors Snook Fest

We were soon off to Snook, Texas for their annual Snook Fest sponsored by Wiggins Watermelons, James Wiggins and Sons. It was great to see the entire Wiggins Family, Mr. James and Mrs. Jeanine and the family for this fun filled weekend. We were joined by Texas Queen, Mollie Bennett and Wanda! The event was complete with a parade and lots of watermelon games at the festival site. We had a visit to the warehouse and dinner with the whole family, at the lovely home of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Wiggins. Thanks to Wiggins Watermelons for sponsoring us to the Snook Fest, we had a ball!

C & L Packing Sponsor North Carolina Grand Opening

We were sponsored to Cary, North Carolina for the Grand Opening of a new club store by NWA President, John Lapide and Rich Chastain of C & L Packing. It was a super busy event crowded with shoppers; they enjoyed Maggie and appreciated all her help in selecting the perfect Melon 1 Melon! They loved their samples, recipes and stickers. Thanks to John and Rich for sponsoring us to Raleigh, NC for this club store Grand Opening!

Land Watermelons, Sun Fresh Farms, Sun State Produce and Midwest Marketing Sponsor

We enjoyed Kroger promotions in both Ohio and Kentucky. In the Dayton store it was employee appreciation day, we joined the employees for lunch and special activities. The store was super busy and melons on ad, we also had special watermelon smoothies to sample, this store went all out. The wine department manager even sampled watermelon wine and watermelon margaritas! The watermelon flew out of the store... Special thanks to Kroger for your hospitality and to our sponsors for making it possible. Thanks again to Land Watermelons, Sun Fresh Farms, Sun State Produce, and Midwest Marketing, we appreciate your support



Maggie points out the Leger & Son Sticker

SC Watermelon Association and Coosaw Farms Sponsor Hampton Festival

Maggie attended the annual Hampton Watermelon Festival in Hampton, South Carolina. Her first stop for the weekend was a visit to Sponsor Coosaw Farms., Bradley and Louise O’Neal. Maggie was joined by my fill in Mona Thompson, SC Watermelon Queen, Summers and Coordinator Julie Murdock (2002 National Queen). They enjoyed a tour of the Coosaw Farms operation, and visiting with Bradley, Louise and family. They attended a reception for all the visiting Queens and dignitaries. The next stop was the annual street dance, where Carolina Beach Music is the event of the evening. The girls enjoyed the famed annual parade the following day. It was a wonderful watermelon weekend in Hampton. Special thanks to the SC Association and the Coosaw Farms for sponsoring.



Young Watermelon Lovers

Coastal Growers Sponsor DC Safeway Event

Maggie was sponsored to Washington, DC for the 17th annual Safeway National Capital Bar-B-Q Battle. The event is 8 blocks long on Pennsylvania Avenue. She was sponsored by Travis Hastings and Will Hales of Coastal Growers. They joined the Safeway group serving delicious samples of watermelon to the 2 day event that draws crowds in excess of 100,000 people. Candice Hales filled in for me. They were also joined by; Mar-Del Queen, Jessica, AWA Queen Melinda, and SC Queen Runner-up. What an exciting event in our Nations Capital. That’s watermelon promotion in a big way! Thanks Coastal Growers, Will and Travis for sponsoring Maggie!



hard working Queens

Sweet Mama Produce Sponsors Six Flags Event

Special thanks to Sweet Mama Produce for sponsoring Maggie and I to the Six Flags Great Adventure Theme Park for the July Fourth Watermelon Event. Heidi Schwartz of the Wumblers did an outstanding job setting up the promotion, event partners were; Sweet Mama, Pathmark Supermarkets, Temple Inland, and the FFA. A massive amount of watermelon was served to the thousands of park guest on this July 4th event! A seed spit competition was held with the winners going to the Jimmy Fallon Show in New York City, where the Championship was decided. The Six Flags Great Adventure was a huge success, thanks to Sweet Mama for sponsoring us!



Just Clowning around

Leger & Son Sponsor Kroger Promotions

Thanks to Greg Leger of Leger & Son we were back in the Atlanta area for more exciting Kroger promotions. We were joined by Lindsey Mann, Georgia Watermelon Queen for Kroger promotions in Flowery Branch, Newnan and Douglasville. The girls did a great job promoting those Leger & Sons melons. The Kroger shoppers enjoyed the selection tips, recipes, coloring books and delicious samples from the Georgia Queen Lindsey and National Queen Maggie! Thanks Greg! Lots More to Share Next Printing!



Maggie, Debra and Jessica in St Petersburg

Eleanor T. Bullock, NWA Promotion Coordinator
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National Pictures



Maggie and Mollie enjoy Mr. James Wiggins



the Wiggins Family



Maggie enjoys the festival with Mr. & Mrs. Paul Wiggins



helping Shoppers



Slicing those Samples

Watermelon Wine



Great Display... Great Promotion

they went all out for watermelon



Bradley gives Maggie a tour



Louise with the girls, Maggie and Summers



Interviewed in Hampton



Maggie with Sponsors, Will Hales and Travis Hastings of Coastal Growers



the girls in DC!



Maggie enjoys serving watermelon to the BBQ Battle Crowd. What a view



Sponsor Paul Nuzzo from Sweet Mama Produce at Six Flags with Maggie



Brad and Billy Morrissey keep Maggie entertained at Six Flags



Paul and Donna enjoy the day!



T J, Bob, Heidi and our Seed Spit Champs at Six Flags



Maggie and Lindsey with Happy shoppers



Maggie says teach them young



Autographs for the shoppers!



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Farm Production Expenses Increase in 2008



U.S. farm production expenditures totaled \$307 billion in 2008, according to the Farm Production Expenditures 2008 Summary released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). Total farm expenditures for 2008 rose 8.3 percent from the 2007 total of \$284 billion.

The NASS expenditures report shows that the largest dollar increases per farm were feed up \$2,325; fertilizer, lime and soil conditioners up \$2,208; tractors and self propelled machinery up \$1,286; and rent up \$1,252. All other average increases were less than \$1,200 per farm.

To provide a more in depth look at operations in the highest economic class by gross value of sales, NASS divided the category of operations with \$1 million or more in sales into two classes: farms with \$1 million - \$4,999,999 in gross sales and those with \$5 million and over. Average per farm production expenditures for operations in the \$5 million and over class totaled \$11.4 million, 6.4 times larger than those in the \$1million - \$4,999,999 class. Farms in this second to highest class averaged \$1.8 million in production expenditures, followed by the \$500,000 - \$999,999 economic class averaging \$0.7 million.

As reported in the Farms, Land in Farms, and Livestock Operations 2008 Summary, the number of farms in the United States in 2007 was 2,204,950, an increase of 129,430 farms. The increase in the number of farms had the greatest impact on the following farm production expenditure categories: livestock and poultry (\$6.3 billion), feed (\$3.8 billion), labor (\$2.6 billion) and farm services (\$2.5 billion). Growers and other agriculture producers spent about \$307 billion on fuel, fertilizer, seed, machinery and other input costs in 2008, up 8% from 2007. In 2008 growers paid an average of 19% more for fuel, 27% more for fertilizer, 20% more for seed, 34% more for machinery and 14% more for rent.



Higher Load Of Pathogens Linked To Colony Collapse Disorder

Viruses, bacteria, and fungi appear to have the strongest link with Colony Collapse Disorder found so far, according to a new study published by Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and university scientists.

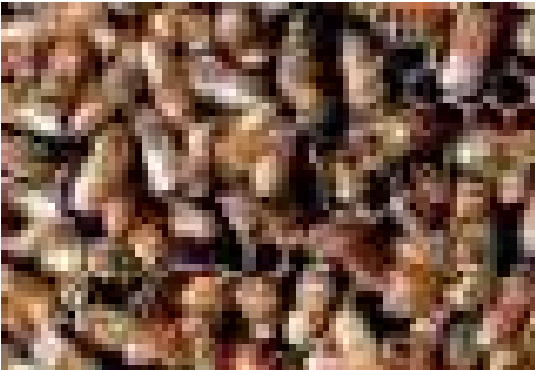
The study was headed by Pennsylvania State University entomologist Dennis van Engelsdorp and entomologist Jeff Pettis, geneticist Jay Evans, and virologist Yanping Chen with the ARS Bee Research Laboratory in Beltsville, MD. The scientists looked at more than 200 variables in 91 colonies from 13 apiaries in Florida and California, two states where many beekeepers over-winter their honey bees. The researchers screened for factors such as bacteria, mites, Nosema (protozoan parasites), viruses, nutrition status and 171 crop protectants. Also sampled were adult bees, wax comb, beebread (stored and processed pollen), and brood.

Their findings showed that no single variable was found consistently in only those honey bee colonies

that had Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). CCD is a syndrome denoted by the sudden disappearance of adult honey bees in a colony. This syndrome has been devastating some beekeepers in the U.S. and other places around the world.

According to the research, overall, CCD colonies were co-infected with a greater number of pathogens. About 55% of CCD colonies were infected with three or more viruses, compared to 28% of non-CCD colonies. The researchers also found detectable levels of residues from 50 crop protectants in all of the sampled colonies. There was no association between increased pesticide levels and CCD.

A report that summarizes research progress on CCD can be found at www.ars.usda.gov/is/br/ccd/ccd_progressreport.pdf



Researchers Study Fusarium Wilt

Fusarium wilt is a devastating disease for many crops, but is manageable if the affected crop is rotated out of the field for several years and replaced with a crop that isn’t susceptible to the disease. Reduced land availability has made that option considerably more difficult, leading USDA scientists to find management techniques for watermelon crops that don’t involve rotation.

“Over the years, (fusarium wilt) has become one of the biggest constraints to yield that we have,” said Benny Bruton, research plant pathologist at the USDA-ARS South Central Agricultural Research Laboratory near Lane, Okla. “If you keep planting watermelon to a field without rotating out, inevitably you’re going to develop a fusarium wilt problem.”

Studying fusarium wilt control in watermelon is an ongoing project at the center, dating back at least 25 years. Recent research has focused on studying the toxicity of the fungus, and researchers found there are several races of fusarium wilt that affect watermelon, termed race zero, race one and race two. Most watermelon varieties exhibit some level of resistance to race zero, but 75 percent to 80 percent of varieties currently grown in the U.S. are susceptible to the other races.

A virulent new race, termed race three, has recently been discovered in some watermelon fields. Race three is different because it is considerably more virulent than the other races. The good news is that the pathogen currently is found only in Maryland, but because the fungus can be seed-transmitted, researchers believe it could eventually spread across the U.S. They aren’t waiting for it to spread and are studying it now to find control methods before it becomes a problem.

One thing that makes the races difficult to understand is that they can each produce different toxic compounds affecting the plants, and researchers are trying to understand how these compounds may be involved in the wilt process.

“What makes a race different than another race? Is it in the ability of the fungus to get into the root of a plant? Or in the release of toxic compounds and the intensity of their toxicity to the plants?” asked Wayne Fish, research chemist at Lane. “What we’re finding out with fusarium wilt is if you take two races and isolate the compounds toxic to watermelon plants, you don’t always find the same chemical.” Scientists are studying the toxic compounds to find out how much of each

kind of toxin the fungus releases and why strains tend to attack a particular type of plant instead of others.

Fusarium wilt strains affect individual crops, but those pathogens don’t affect other plants. Immunity to certain strains has led to the success of grafting in Europe and Asia, where watermelon plants are grafted onto rootstock of other cucurbits, such as gourd, that are unaffected by the fungus affecting the watermelon rootstock.

Grafting has not gained popularity in the U.S. due to high costs associated with the process, along with availability of fungicides and cultivatable farmland, but decreased availability of land has led to an increased problem with fusarium wilt, leading researchers to revisit the practice.

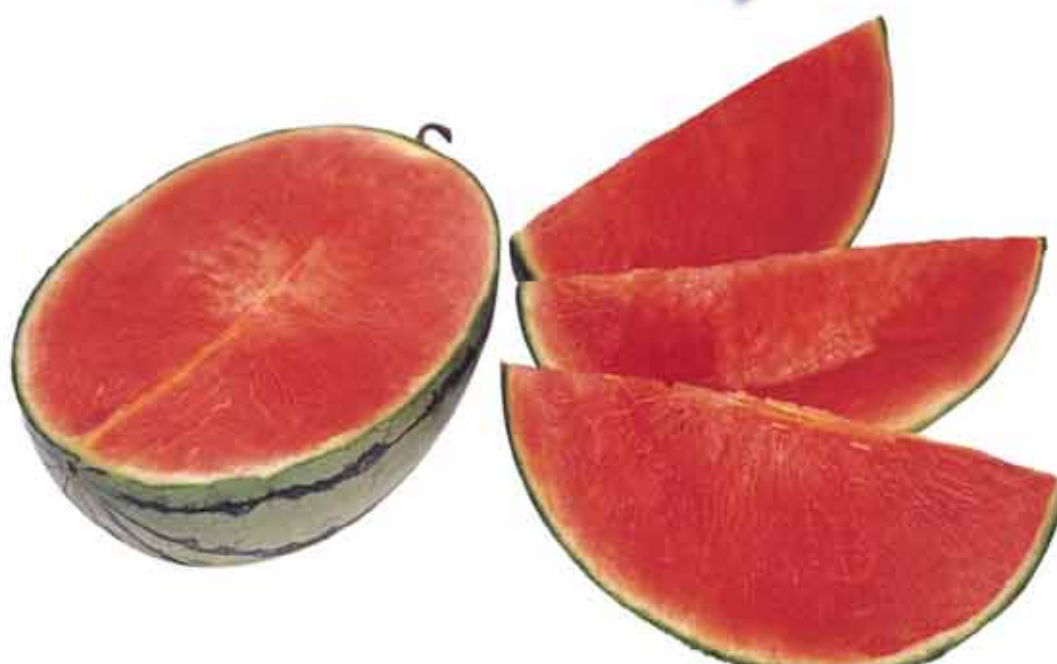
The watermelons were grafted onto rootstock of squash and gourd, and researchers found that the grafting works well to control fusarium wilt. Bruton said, “You can control a number of soil-borne diseases by grafting.”

Scientists looked at using Indian mustard as a method for fumigating the fungus. The plant produces a natural cyanide compound, but in a small enough concentration that it isn’t dangerous to humans. When mulched into the ground, it can have a negative impact on the fungus.

Researchers chopped the plant shortly after flowering, when the plant has the largest biomass, and plowed it into the soil. The plots were irrigated with sprinkler systems in an effort to concentrate the gas, but they didn’t get the results they were looking for. That may be because beneficial microbes antagonistic to fusarium wilt are fumigated along with the fungus. By adding beneficial microbes to the soil following fumigation, control was much higher because it increased the microbial population.

Soil additives, including humates, humic acid and molasses, also show benefits to fungal control, and by adding them to the soil. Bruton hopes to create an environment that is less conducive to fungal pathogens and more favorable to the beneficial microbes. Researchers dissolved the humates in water and applied them through a combination of irrigation and spray rigs. They also used molasses, dissolving it in a mixture of 50 percent water and 50 percent molasses and applying it through spraying rigs.

“Some of these plots are looking great, and some of these plots are wilting,” Bruton said. “We don’t know if the plants will hold up to the end of the season, but what we’re seeing right now is pretty exciting.”



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Alabama Report

Greetings everyone from our Alabama Watermelon Association Queen Melinda!

Melinda is having a wonderful year so far as our queen. She has been busy traveling the world the past few months, with trips to Florida, Washington D.C., and even to Europe! In June Melinda traveled to Orlando where she enjoyed wide-ranging experiences, including a Broadway performance of “Stomp!” and witnessing the excitement of the NBA Finals.

In July, Melinda was blessed to study in Brussels, Belgium for a month. She studied International Crisis and Judicial Systems with two University of Alabama professors and 10 other Alabama students. While in Europe, she traveled to France, London, Germany, the Netherlands, and all over Belgium. Melinda was even lucky enough to enjoy some watermelon in her neighborhood in Brussels! Melinda wants to thank AWA for all of their support of her overseas endeavors.

On September 5, Melinda enjoyed a wonderful lunch with Arnold Mack and his wife Brenda at the Alabama vs. Virginia Tech football game in Atlanta. They gave Melinda two tickets to the game at the Georgia Dome and she got to enjoy a Crimson Tide win sitting alongside Ray and Alice Gilliland.

September 9-11, Melinda attended the Public Policy Conference in Washington, D.C. with all of the state queens and NWA Queen Maggie. Together they lobbied on Capitol Hill for many important agriculture bills as well as important issues dealing with the nourishment and health of school children. On Wednesday, Melinda served watermelons with Chef Poon at the Fresh Festival in the Cannon Building. That night Melinda enjoyed dinner with Florida Queen Jessica, John and Lisa Lapide, and Jane and Carr Hussey. On Thursday Melinda met with various senators including her own Sen. Jeff Sessions. Thursday night she enjoyed a night out with all of the queens at Hard Rock Café. Melinda got to tour Capitol Hill on Friday.

Melinda also attended the Montgomery Farmers Market on September 17 and served watermelon slices to the commissioners of agriculture from all 50 states. The promotion was a huge success and Melinda was able to meet some very influential people. Melinda will travel to Anaheim, California for the PMA Fresh Summit in October. She is looking forward to this wonderful trip and amazing event. She will also attend the University of Florida homecoming game in Gainesville along with Florida Queen Jessica and will ride in the homecoming parade. Melinda looks forward to seeing her first game at the Swamp and all of her upcoming events this fall.

Melinda wanted to share a few words with everyone. “As my reign as Alabama Watermelon Queen comes to an end, I would really like to thank the Alabama Watermelon Association for everything they have done for me this year! I have had the best experience and it keeps getting better every day! I have been given so many wonderful opportunities through the AWA that I would have never otherwise received, and I am so grateful for those experiences! I also want to thank everyone who has sponsored me and has shown me love and support all year! The AWA will always hold a special place in my heart!”

Alabama Watermelon Association
www.alwatermelon.org
352-463-6925 or 352-463-6878



Melinda enjoys cheering on the Orlando Magic outside the arena after seeing the Broadway show Stomp!



Florida Queen Jessica, Illianna Queen Johnna, NWA President John Lapide, NWA Queen Maggie and Alabama Queen Melinda outside the Capitol after lobbying for agriculture bills on Capitol Hill.



Queen Melinda passed out slices to the congressional pages at the Cannon Building in D.C.



Melinda finds some watermelon at a fruit stand while studying in Brussels,



Melinda in D.C. holding one of Chef Poon's beautifully carved watermelons!



Melinda loved her time and the beautiful parks in Brussels.



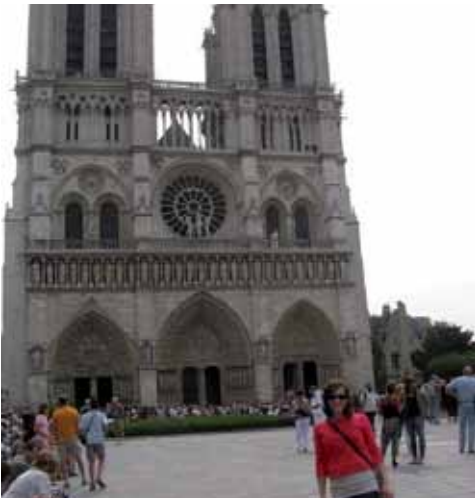
Alabama Senator Jeff Sessions and Melinda outside of the Senate Chambers in the Capitol Building right before watching the Inauguration of Florida Senator George LeMieux.



Melinda got to see the Broadway show Jersey Boys in London while in Europe.



Mar-Del Queen Coordinator, 2005 AWA and 2006 NWA Queen Candice Fralish Hales and Melinda at Hard Rock Café celebrating with all the queens after a long day of campaigning on the hill.



Melinda enjoyed seeing the landmarks while visiting Paris, including the Notre Dame Cathedral.



Queen Melinda stands outside the Capitol building after the Public Policy Conference in Washington D.C.



Melinda couldn't pass up the chance for a photo with the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France.



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Mark Arney
Executive Director



1st Bilingual SMT for Watermelon

The National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB) participated in a co-op satellite media tour with nationally recognized chef and Food Network personality Aaron Sanchez.

The theme of the tour was “Sizzling Summer Soirees” and there was only one other partner so watermelon was really in the spotlight. Chef Aaron presented watermelon beverages, salsas, salads and carvings as the staple of summer parties. The tour aired 99 times at 93 stations in 75 markets throughout the U.S.

A total of more than 4 million English and Spanish-speaking viewers saw the tour which was valued at more than \$40,000 in air time. After the television and radio airings, the spot was distributed through the internet with even more value and exposure being added.

You can view an online clip used for internet distribution at this web address: <http://www.prnewswire.com/mnr/summerparty/38681/>.



Chef Aaron on Set

NWPB Joins Latino Nutrition Coalition



Watermelon is joining the Old Ways Latino Nutrition Coalition (LNC) to reach out to the Latino population through this well respected advocacy group that promotes fruit and vegetable consumption as an important part of a healthy diet.

As a member, watermelon will be included in a number of different professional and consumer outreach tools, including the following:

- Latino cooking tips with recipes sent to over 10,000 journalists, RDs, health professionals, and consumers



Latin American Melon Congress

NWPB traveled to Manzanillo, Mexico with two representatives from our Mexican merchandising company, Grupo PM, to give a presentation about the U.S. watermelon market and our promotional efforts at home and abroad. Luis Moreno of Grupo PM gave a thorough presentation in Spanish to the well-attended conference.

While many of the conference talks focused on growing conditions, harvesting, food safety and



Brent Harrison, Rocio Gallardo, Luis Moreno, and Stephanie Simek (NWPB)

the like, the marketing presentations garnered much interest from the conference attendees and were an important part to the success of the event.

Canadian Retail Meets the Queen

The Canadian market has been hot this season with strong movement across the entire country. This summer, Board staff and merchandising reps called on major accounts in Nova Scotia and Quebec, visiting retailer headquarters and stores in Halifax, Stellarton and Montreal.

The Board then sent National Watermelon Queen Maggie Bailey to Newfoundland for in-store promotions and public relations activities with the Colemans retail chain. The queen gave press interviews and presided over watermelon eating contests, product sampling, and recipe demonstrations at stores in Corner Brook and Stephenville.

Just recently Gordon Hunt and the queen traveled to Vancouver, British Columbia for more retail visits and appearances on local TV news programs. She was the star attraction as she presided over watermelon contests and extolled the heart healthy virtues of watermelon to local shoppers.

As a result, watermelon got terrific coverage during a period of bright sunshine and unseasonably high temperatures.



Queen Maggie's appearance was well prepared for

While in Vancouver, Gordon Hunt and Brad Brownsey met with buyers and managers of H.Y. Louie, The Produce Terminal and Thrifty Foods to go over results of the current season's activities and discuss prospects for next year.

Contestants at Colemans – Great aprons guys!



With the Colemans store grandchildren

- Quarterly Sarita's Seasons, 7-day healthy menus featuring ingredients and recipes from LNC members
- Weekly blogs from Sarita's Kitchen, including benefits of fruits and vegetables
- Annual celebration of Latino Month with a recipe contest, healthy Latino shopping, cooking and eating tips, and Latino traditions and heritage
- The new Latino Health Professionals Kit to educate RDs about members' products
- The new Latin American Diet Pyramid and poster
- LNC's twitter, blog and Facebook page that is updated daily
- Expanded distribution of Camino Mágico, the LNC's colorful, bilingual Latino health and shopping guide.

Konnichi Wa! U.S. Watermelon in Japan

From Vancouver, Gordon Hunt, Queen Maggie and queen coordinator Eleanor Bullock flew to Tokyo for the first ever U.S. watermelon promotions in Japan! With the help of the USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service, (FAS) at the U.S. Embassy, in-store promotions were arranged with a large Japanese retailer called SEIYU.

California-grown watermelon from Van Groningen & Sons was featured in 20 SEIYU stores across Japan. The queen made appearances in stores in the Tokyo area for two full days of sampling and recipe promotions, and she gave out hundreds of “Heart Healthy” stickers to SEIYU shoppers and their kids.

The watermelon flew out of the stores and SEIYU store managers were clearly pleased with the results. Plans are now being made for the board to implement a full time promotional program in Japan in the coming year.



Kahori Ochi tries on the crown. Visit the blog from her family's kimono shop at www.kimono-sakaeya.com



Gordon Hunt and Queen Maggie in front of a SEIYU building



Another lifelong watermelon fan!



One of the watermelon displays in-store



Maggie offering samples, stickers and brochures



Heart Healthy U.S. watermelon makes its way to Japan



Cultural break to learn about kimonos



The paper lantern at the Asakusa Temple

We would like to extend our sincerest thanks and gratitude to Miss Eleanor and Queen Maggie for the terrific promotional and media work. Great job!



THE WORLD'S PREMIER CULINARY COLLEGE

Watermelon at the Culinary Institute of America

NWPB participated in another event that was part of the sponsorship of the continuing education program at the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) program at Greystone: Flavor, Quality & American Menus. More than 50 executive chefs and menu development professionals attended the event in St. Helena, California, September 9-12. These culinary pros are responsible for millions of meals served each day.

Watermelon menu items were prepared by CIA chefs and showcased during receptions, breakfasts and lunches served during the event. The items varied from a breakfast preparation, to a “Crazy Watermelon and Feta Cheese Salad” and “Watermelon Bellini Float” cocktail – the variety of items gave the chefs a first-hand experience of the versatility of watermelon. NWPB also had the opportunity to make a 10-minute presentation to the group which discussed the many product benefits of watermelon, including its powerful ability to make people feel good – something every food service professional or restaurateur wants for their operation.

The reaction was outstanding. Many chefs mentioned they didn’t know that watermelon could be grilled or paired with salty or savory flavors, or used for meals at so many different times of the day. Renowned west-coast chef Duskie Estes even included a watermelon salad in her presentation that was themed: “Creating High Flavor Dishes While Controlling Food Costs.” Estes did a great job of presenting watermelon as a high-flavor, yet low-cost ingredient – perfect!

We are reaching more and more chefs with each event we attend at CIA.



Chef Duskie Estes

Florida Report

Watermelon Greetings from the State of Florida

Hope everyone had a great summer. As some of you know we have had some new “Sugar Babies” added to our watermelon family this summer. I was blessed with my new granddaughter born on May 18th “Macie Brooke Hickox” weighing 6 pounds 7 ounces. In August, Rich and Rhonda Chastain, were blessed with a set of twins boys Judson Thomas (JT) weighing 5 pounds 5 ounces and Kaiden Rich (Kaid) weighing 5 pounds 11 ounces, Last but not least Phil and Shirley Turner announced their new grandson John Henry Turner V (Jhett) weighing 9 pounds 8 ounces, born on July 11th. Congratulations to the Hickox, Chastain, and Turner Families.

Jessica and I have been busy this summer covering the State of Florida and parts of New Jersey, Indiana, Canada, Maryland, and Delaware. We would like to thank all of our wonderful sponsors this summer for sponsoring us on all of these exciting and adventurous promotions.

On June 3, Queen Jessica and I headed to Tallahassee for our seventh consecutive year for Florida Watermelon Week June 1-7 that was proclaimed by Governor Charlie Christ. Thanks to Terri Fisherman with the Dept. of Agriculture. During the month of June, Jessica and I covered all of the state watermelon festivals taking place in Florida.

On Fourth of July, we spent an amazing day serving watermelon slices at Six Flags in New Jersey. Thanks to everyone that helped out at this watermelon event. Then on July 24-26 we headed to the Kroger Busch Race held in Indianapolis, and served cups of watermelon slices to the fans. Thanks to Indian Hill Produce, Raymon Land Watermelon, Nature’s Choice, Cheryl Hicks –PCA, and FWA for sponsoring us.

The month of August Queen Jessica and I traveled to Mar-Del for there annual Queen Tour. Our journey begin heading over to the Baltimore Inner Harbor passing out watermelon slices and stickers. Thanks to Mar-Del Coordinator Candice Hales and Mar-Del Queen Jessica for inviting us to be a part of there queen tour along with NWQ Maggie and NWA Coordinator Eleanor Bullock for a wonderful time!

Until next time!
Debra Harrison
Florida Watermelon Promotions Coordinator
Email: debrathreel@earthlink.net
Cellular: (863) 633-8306



FWQ Jessica along with MDQ Jessica and NWQ Maggie in Baltimore, Maryland at the Safeway grocery store.



“Welcome to Florida, the Sunshine State!”



Queen Jessica and Debbie Brady President of the Florida Agri-Women in Orlando, Florida



Queen Jessica and FWA second vice-president Chandler Mack in Washington, D.C.



One of Jessica favorite things she loves Race Car!



Queen Jessica at the “Kids Festival in West Palm Beach”



FWA Queen Jessica visiting with Mary Jones of Sunstate Produce at the Kroger Race in Indianapolis



A summer afternoon visit with Heidi and Steve Singletary of Bayshore Farms



Jessica and I taking a little time to see “Niagara Falls” in Canada



Queen Training in Fort Lauderdale with “Mr. Food”.



Thanks Stephanie with NWPB for all that you do!



We always love to stop and see the Melon 1 Guys!



Queen Jessica in Canada at “Longo’s”



A rainy day at the Capitol this year with Terri Fishman and the staff of “The Florida Department of Agriculture”



A day at the Welcome Center in Jennings, Florida



Queen Jessica visiting in Chiefland with Bob Gibson and Murray Tillis. Thanks Bob for the shirt!



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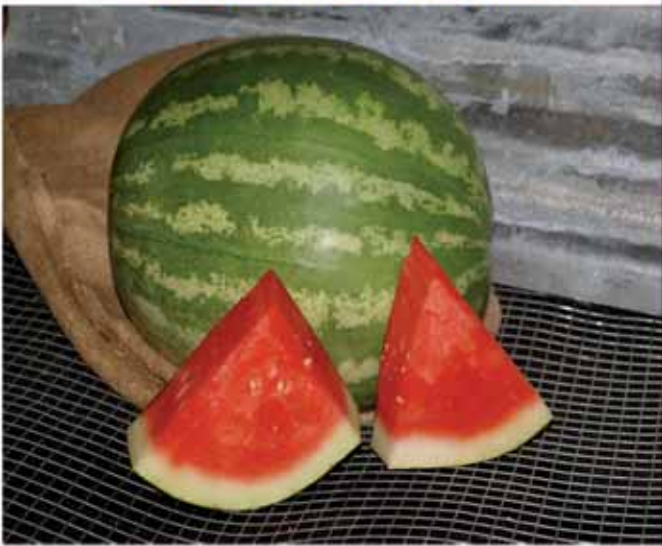
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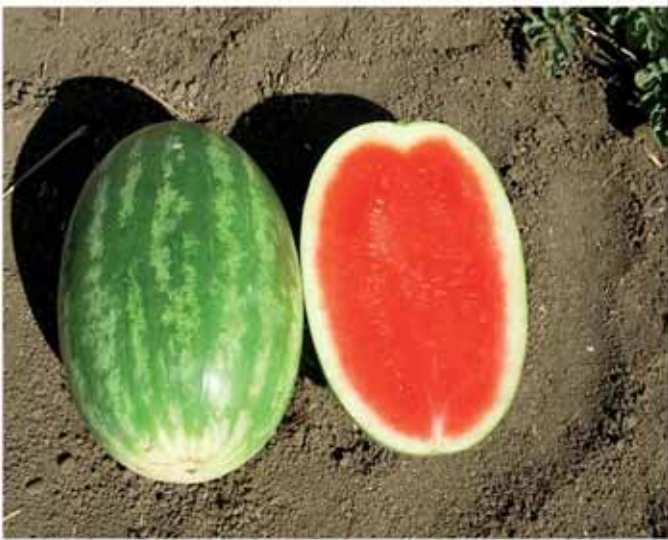
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Georgia Report

Time flies when we're having fun! Our season is drawing to an end but what a great Queen tour Georgia has had. Traveling the state from the North end to the South end while managing to visit Newark, New Jersey, Toronto Canada, Florida and Washington DC our Queen Lindsey has kept busy with a smile on her face.

From the last issue we traveled to Atlanta for an interview on Atlanta Public Access TV. Lindsey did a super job promoting the nutrients and fun recipe tips to all the Atlanta viewers on this hot June day. Thank you Greg Leger and NWPB for introducing us to Atlanta Public Access Television.

From Atlanta Lindsey and "Has-Been" Wendi Youngblood Wolf headed to Newark, New Jersey to help promote watermelons at our National Promotion at Six Flags theme park. Slices were handed out all day to the theme park guests. The hard work paid off as the girls got the opportunity to attend a LeeAnn Rhimes concert in the park immediately after working watermelons. Thank you Bob Morrissey and the NWA crew for getting this fabulous promotion together. We're shooting for Six Flags over Georgia next year!!

The following weekend Queen Lindsey met Eleanor and National Queen Maggie in Atlanta for four Kroger promotions. We were thrilled to promote watermelons for our own Leger and Son. Thank you Mr. Buddy and Greg Leger for the opportunity to promote your Kroger stores.

On July 21st a very special young man entered the world. Baby "Cash" Watkins, son of Lee and "Has-Been" Niki Jernigan Watkins was welcomed into our watermelon family! Both mommy and baby are doing great. We hope to have pictures in the next issue.

Queen Lindsey and I brought in the month of August at the Tom Watson Brown Watermelon Festival in Thomson, GA. Thank you Dexter Rhodes for sponsoring our rooms for this special promo. This is a great annual festival held in Thomson, GA every August. It continues to grow and grow every year! Dexter we appreciate all your support.

From Thomson Lindsey and I headed to Athens to participate in a watermelon slicing for the UGA football team. Queen Lindsey helped tremendously to make this promotion possible. The football team greatly appreciated the watermelon during their break and enjoyed a good ole fashion seed spit on the field before practice resumed.

We ended the month of August with a spectacular "Sponsor Appreciation" cocktail party held at Leslie and Chris Bloebaum's beautiful home in Tifton, GA. Thank you Leslie and Chris. You did a top notch job hosting this party! Thank you to all our corporate sponsors that attended. We enjoyed the fellowship and truly appreciate you all.

September we promoted watermelon at Harvey's in Bainbridge and Donaldsonville, GA. This particular day was Georgia's first game day. The stores were filled with excited consumers. Thank you Michael Purvis and Harvey's for your support in promoting Georgia Grown!

With the season drawing to an end please mark your calendars for our Annual Georgia Watermelon Convention that will consist of a lot of fellowship, education and fun. We invite you all to join us the last weekend of January in Cordele at The Lake Blackshear Resort. For more information please contact Dawn Cheplick in the GWA office at #706-845-8575.

Sincerely,

Julie Akins Daughtrey
Promotion Coordinator
akinsjulie1@windstream.net
770 842 3309



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Illiana Report

Queen Johnna and the Illiana Watermelon Association started National Watermelon Month off by winning first place of a non-commercial float in the Knox County July 4th Parade. The entry consisted of Queen Johnna, a float carrying the County Watermelon Festival Queens, and the huge watermelon used in the Watermelon Drop on New Year’s Eve.

Next up Johnna welcomed the new Knox County Fair Queen Sara Alsmann. Then Johnna headed to Oaktown for Ole Oaken Days. She passed out watermelon provided by Norman Lamb and then visited Prairie Acres for some delicious ice cream! Thanks to Kim and Tammy Cardinal for sponsoring us.

Queen Johnna literally stepped out of her backdoor to attend the Day at the Strip Car Show and Drag Race. She handed out watermelon provided by Norman Lamb Produce and then presented the car show awards.

Many thanks to Judy and Jerry Kenworthy for hosting Johnna at their farm market and then taking her to the Hendricks County Fair. They sponsor the watermelon eating contests and Johnna helped judge and hand out awards. We ate some delicious watermelon and had a blast at the fair.

Off to the Races!...the Kroger 200 at O’Reilly Raceway that is! From July 21-25 Johnna was in Indianapolis promoting watermelon with Kroger. On Tuesday she was in the Plainfield Kroger passing out watermelon and that night Johnna attended a Taste of Downtown Indy progressive dinner fundraiser for Riley Children’s hospital. Wednesday Johnna was joined by National Queen Maggie at New Castle Motor Sports Park for another Riley Children’s hospital fundraiser. Thursday more royalty joined in with South Carolina Queen Summers and Mar-Del Queen Jessica, as well as, Johnna and Maggie handing out melon samples at the Rockville Road Kroger where Kroger hosted a pre-race carnival and fundraising for Riley. Queens Johnna and Maggie joined Chef Joe Poon on WTHR at noon on Friday before meeting up with Jessica and Summers to attend an afternoon play party for Riley Children’s hospital patients. Race day on Saturday brought another queen Jessica from Florida to join the fun. Queens Maggie, Johnna, Jessica, Summers, and Jessica all worked enthusiastically to share watermelon with many many race fans at O’Reilly Raceway. Chef Joe provided those fantastic carvings and the crowds loved them. Driver Danny O’Sullivan joined us at our tent for autographs and thanks to the NWPB his car hood sported a huge watermelon logo. Last but not least, we collected donations for Riley Children’s hospital throughout the day for a grand total of \$500. Pretty sweet icing on the cake for a successful week! Many thanks to NWPB, NWA, Florida, South Carolina, and Mar-Del for helping us with this promotion.

Queen Johnna attended the Lawrence County Queen contest on July 26. She was back in Indianapolis on the 29th for the Indiana State Fair Wine Taste. She was sponsored by Cheryl Hicks at Packaging Corporation and the watermelons were provided by Judy and Jerry Kenworthy.

Saturday August 1 Johnna was in downtown Vincennes for the Knox County Watermelon Festival. She greeted the festival goers throughout the day and then judged the queens competitions that evening. She also spent time that afternoon at the Elks golf course where the Think Pink Day on the Links was being held. She passed out watermelon to the golfers as they came off of the course. Thank you to Double T Trucking for sponsoring her.

I want to invite all of you to join us in Vincennes on New Year’s Eve for the second annual national Watermelon Drop. We are working on making it a bigger and better event this year. There will be music, food, drinks, splatting melons, and much New Year’s Eve revelry! We would love to celebrate the new year with all of you in the watermelon family. Please think about ringing in 2010 in Vincennes at the Watermelon Drop.

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



Queen Johnna at the July 4th Parade.



Stephanie, Queen Maggie, and Queen Johnna pose before the Riley Children’s hospital patient’s party.



Yummy Watermelon from Norman Lamb Produce in Oaktown.



Johnna and race driver Danny O’Sullivan (notice the hood with the watermelon logo).

Thank You Kim and Tammy Cardinal for sponsoring us at Ole Oaken Days.



Checking out the Kroger logo on the racecar at the pre-race carnival.



Watermelon Eating Contest at Hendricks Co Fair sponsored by Kenworthy’s for the 25th year!



At the Finishline!



Johnna cheers on the melon eating contestants at Hendricks Co Fair.



This bin is holding a sweet surprise!

Congratulations to the overall winner and check out that watermelon prize!



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Queens Johnna and Maggie with driver John Andretti at the Race for Riley.



A yummy bite of melon at the Winetaste. Thanks to Cheryl Hicks at Packaging Corp. and Kenworthy’s for the melons.



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Mar-Del Report

Watermelon season is slowly fading into the distance and another year’s crop has come and gone. It is with thankfulness and appreciation for all of the hard work throughout Maryland and Delaware that I am able to share our queen travels with all of you. Queen Jessica has been given immense opportunities to travel, learn, and promote the livelihood of growers everywhere.

The nation’s capitol made room for Safeway’s National Barbeque Battle. Queen Jessica was joined by the National Queen, Alabama Queen, and the South Carolina Queen. It was surely a good time with good friends and good food especially, “The Watermelon”. Thank you to Will Hales and Travis Hastings for giving Jessica the opportunity to participate in such an exciting event.

This Fourth of July was better than ever! Six flags held the first “National Watermelon Seed Spitting Contest” in Jackson, New Jersey and Mar-Del was a part of it. Queen Jessica had a blast handing out slices and helping to encourage participants to see if they could beat the seed spitting record.

The summer was packed with all types of events! Queen Jessica joined many other state queens in Indiana to help promote watermelons. The queens visited Riley Children’s Hospital and spent hours playing games, taking pictures, giving out stickers and hugs to all of the children. During Queen Jessica’s visit she went to several grocery stores. She did a fabulous job educating consumers on the health benefits of watermelon and raising awareness of the importance of agriculture to our economy. But that’s only the beginning; the highlight of the week was the race! The sun was beaming off the dark asphalt but the queens kept up the enthusiasm and smiles as they carried their buckets of watermelon! A special thanks to the IWA for hosting such an action-packed week.

Shortly after the out of state travels, Queen Jessica got back to her roots while promoting locally grown watermelon at the Delaware state fair. She put in long hours behind the booth greeting attendees, demoing some of the best watermelon recipes, and riding in the nightly parade. The most exciting part was that she got to be part of the governors’ entourage for a day! Another great occasion that I can’t fail to mention was the Wrights festival; Queen Jessica got to MC the Watermelon Princess contest and enjoy all of the festivities! If you know Jessica, then you know that two of her favorite things are little girls and talking, so no doubt she was in her element.

Just around the corner was the beginning our very own National Queen tour. This is honestly the time when you see all of the hard work come to surface. Thank you so much to all of the members who took their personal time to help, donate or deliver produce so that the whole association could benefit! The tour began with the Rehoboth boardwalk and ended with a relaxing sailboat ride after spending the day slicing melons at the city dock in Annapolis. Somewhere in between, were media appearances, grocery store promotions, and time well spent with those dedicated people we love to see. It was such a pleasure to have the National and Florida Queen visit our home states in which we take so much pride. I can’t emphasize enough how great it is to see such a hard working association who is sincerely dedicated to the best interest of all who are involved. Thanks again to everyone that helped with queen tour.

By the end of the tour we had just enough time to squeeze in few farm visits, Thanks for the tour Jay, Travis, and Jimmy lee. If we didn’t catch you the first go around there’s always time for another. Also thank you to Kevin and Katey, Queen Jessica had the best time at your produce stand and your hard work on the brochures and the overall event is greatly appreciated!

Sincerely,
Candice F. Hales
Promotions Coordinator
Mar-Del Watermelon Assoc.



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“Queen Jessica hosts the J16 “Queen Jessica surprised Travis with a birthday cake” watermelon eating contest in Annapolis”



“Bugs Bunny check out Queen Jessica”



“Jessica loves the camera”



” Queen Jessica visits children at Riley Hospital”



“A beautiful day at the city dock with WPOC”



“Queen Jessica refilling her bucket of watermelon”



“This watermelon has lots of personality”



” Delaware State Fair sign says it all”



“Jimmy Lee gave Jessica the grand tour”



“Jay and Jessica working hard at Rehoboth boardwalk”



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North Carolina Report

Greetings from North Carolina!

Queen Kensley has had quite a busy summer. When we last reported, Queen Kensley was just getting ready to start her summer tour. I am happy to report that Kensley was quite a success, not only in promoting watermelons, but in winning lots of fans!

We started July off with a visit to Food Lion Corporate Offices in Salisbury and then traveled to several Food Lion stores for in-store promotions. Queen Kensley learned a lot about Food Lion, and the people in the western part of North Carolina.

We also traveled to each of the NCDA Farmer's Markets. In Charlotte, Queen Kensley served watermelon and signed autographs for her fans. Next stop was the Farmer's Market in Lumberton. There Kensley served watermelon to weary travelers and posed for pictures. After the Lumberton stop, Queen Kensley visited Jackson Farms in Autryville where she learned all about watermelons.

After a brief time off, Queen Kensley was on the road again! This next adventure brought her to the Farmer's Market in Asheville. There Queen Kensley enjoyed helping out with a watermelon eating contest, as well as a seed spitting contest.

The Fairbluff Watermelon Festival was the next stop on Kensley's busy schedule. There, Queen Kensley helped out with the auction, and with the Fairbluff Pageant. Queen Kensley also took part in their parade looking very regal in her carriage! Thank you to the Fairbluff Watermelon Association for making this trip possible!

Our final stop for this report was in Murfreesboro for the North Carolina Watermelon Festival. Queen Kensley received the royal treatment in Murfreesboro! She danced with the locals on Friday night at the Street Dance and on Saturday participated in the Parade along with 1st runner up Leslie Revelle, and 2nd runner up Brianna Tracy. Kensley signed autographs and posed for pictures as well as helped out with serving watermelon.

This has been a wonderful summer for Queen Kensley, one she will never forget! Thank you to all who have helped to make this possible for her! If you or any of your customers would like for Kensley to do a special promotion, please contact Susan Mills, NCWA Promotions Coordinator at 910-485-1385, or our watermelon office at 919-790-7099. You can learn more about Kensley and the Queen Tour at www.ncmelons.com.

Until next time-Eat More Watermelons!

Susan Mills
NCWA Promotions Coordinator



Queen Kensley at a Food Lion Promotion



Queen Kensley Dancing with a young fan at the Murfreesboro Street Dance



Queen Kensley ready to share her watermelon knowledge



Posing with the out going Fairbluff Watermelon Queens



Queen Kensley with 2 fans



Mr. Joe Jones and Queen Kensley



Sharing the spot light with a young fan



Ready to plant watermelons



Getting a tour of Jackson Farms with Mr. Brent and Mr. Rodney Jackson



Queen Kensley in her carriage



Queen Kensley helping out with the watermelon eating contest in Asheville



Queen Kensley posing with the new Fairbluff Queens



Queen Kensley with Mr. Nick and Tom Slade of NCDA



Queen Kensley with Brianna Tracy and Leslie Revelle in Murfreesboro



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South Carolina Report

Hello Everyone!

Our summer got off to a busy start with Queen Summers attending a cutting for Velux Corporation that was held at Winthrop University in Rock Hill. Velux is a global company founded on a vision of daylight, fresh air and quality of life. Employees from all over the world including a sizeable congregation from China attended this meeting in Rock Hill. Queen Summers along with our delicious South Carolina melons (supplied by Stephen Hudson from the SCDA) made a huge hit with all in attendance.

Visiting three different Welcome Centers in SC helped to keep us busy during the month of June. We were in Landrum on June 22nd, North Augusta on June 25th and Ft. Mill on June 29th. These promotions were a lot of fun and very productive! We joined Brad Boozer, Aynsley Rast, Amy London and Stephen Hudson from the SCDA to pass out watermelon slices and discuss the importance of buying products grown in SC. People traveling through our state loved trying our homegrown samples!

As always we attended the annual Hampton County Watermelon Festival on June 26th and 27th. We enjoyed seeing National Queen Maggie and meeting her chaperone for the weekend, Eleanor's cousin Mona. The girls enjoyed the lovely Queen's Reception on Friday and were all smiles for the parade the next day. As usual the residents of Hampton County welcomed us with open arms and we would like to thank them for their kind hospitality.

One of the very best parts of the Queen Tour is visiting with the members of the SC Watermelon Association. We were able to visit with some of them around the Hampton area while in town for the festival. Our first stop was to Goat Hill Farms where we were welcomed and shown around by Stevie Still. We then visited with Mark Williams, Hamilton Dicks, Rusty Kinard and Bradley & Louise O'Neal. Summers and I had a wonderful time and would like to thank everyone for sharing their knowledge and making us feel right at home.

Due to Queen Summers duties in the Hampton area our first runner-up, Collins Medlin, and my mother Ann Bryant, attended the National BBQ Cook-Off in Washington, DC, which is an annual event sponsored by Safeway. This promotion was organized by Will and Candice Hales of the Mar-Del Association in conjunction with Coastal Growers. The watermelon queens along with the coordinators and other association members who attended this promotion served over 150,000 people melon samples. Hats off to all of those who stood and dipped melon balls non-stop for two straight days.

Our busy media tour got started when Summers appeared on Fox News in Columbia and was interviewed by Mr. Curtis Wilson. As always, Summers did a wonderful job discussing our product and demonstrating how to make Breakfast a Go-Go. Mr. Wilson loved her recipe and was excited to learn a new way to enjoy one of his favorite treats.

Next up we cut and served watermelons to a large group of puppeteers at Winthrop University. They were from all over the country and were thrilled to meet an actual watermelon queen! Summers did a wonderful job explaining what she does and why we should all be eating watermelons!

On July 9th we were off to Blackville where we attended Watermelon Field Day. This is always a great event for us! Summers learned so much and we would like to thank Gilbert Miller for all of his hard work organizing this special day. After visiting the fields and trying a delicious assortment of red and yellow melons, we were treated to a wonderful meal. As always it was great to get to visit with Martin Eubanks, Connie Garvey and Brad Boozer from the SCDA.

Next we headed down to Mount Pleasant, SC where Summers discussed watermelon facts and whipped up a recipe on Low Country Live. She did a great job talking up our product! The reporters and staff could not get enough of the Fire and Ice Salsa and we were quick to tell them to visit www.watermelon.org for more great ways to use watermelon.

The Savannah River Classic Fishing Tournament was a first time event held in Allendale and proceeds benefited the Boys and Girls Club of Allendale County. Summers was invited to attend this event by Angela Chappell of Coosaw Farms and was happy to lend her support. There were quite a few large catches for the day and many happy children who were lucky enough to go out on the river with their parents and then come back to great BBQ, fun games, and sweet watermelon slices from Coosaw Farms.

On July 17th, Summers and I visited Mr. Bill Drake and were interviewed on Awake with Drake. We were happy to tell his audience some watermelon facts and discuss what a great opportunity it is to be the watermelon queen. Summers and I both agree it is an incredible experience!

I hate to stop here, but we have run out of space for this issue. You can look forward to hearing about the Pageland Watermelon Festival, Clemson Tiger Football, Carolina Gamecock Football, the Schutzenfest Festival, our Washington D.C. visit, the South Carolina State Fair and PMA in the next Vineline!

Sincerely,
Julie Murdock
SCWA Promotions Coordinator
(864) 313-8168
jewels412@charter.net



Summers was excited to serve watermelon at her college.



Two beautiful Watermelon Queens represented us well during the parade in Hampton County.



The girls were all smiles while serving fresh SC produce in Landrum.



First runner up Collins Medlin worked hard serving watermelon in Washington, DC.



Summers and Brad stop to pose for a picture at the North Augusta Welcome Center.



Curtis Wilson of Fox News in Columbia had a great interview with Queen Summers.



Summers and the guys at Goat Hill Farms.



Summers thanks Gilbert Miller for all of his hard work at Watermelon Field Day.



Hamilton Dicks and Summers.



Martin Eubanks enjoyed a chat with Summers.



Mark Williams shows Summers around his packaging shed.



Connie Garvey, Brad Boozer and Rusty Kinard couldn't resist taking a photo with our lovely queen.



Thank you Rusty Kinard for all those delicious watermelons!



Low Country Live was a great promotion!



Bradley O'Neal shows Summers and Maggie around Coosaw Farms.



Thanks Angela Chappell for asking us to the First Annual Savannah River Classic.



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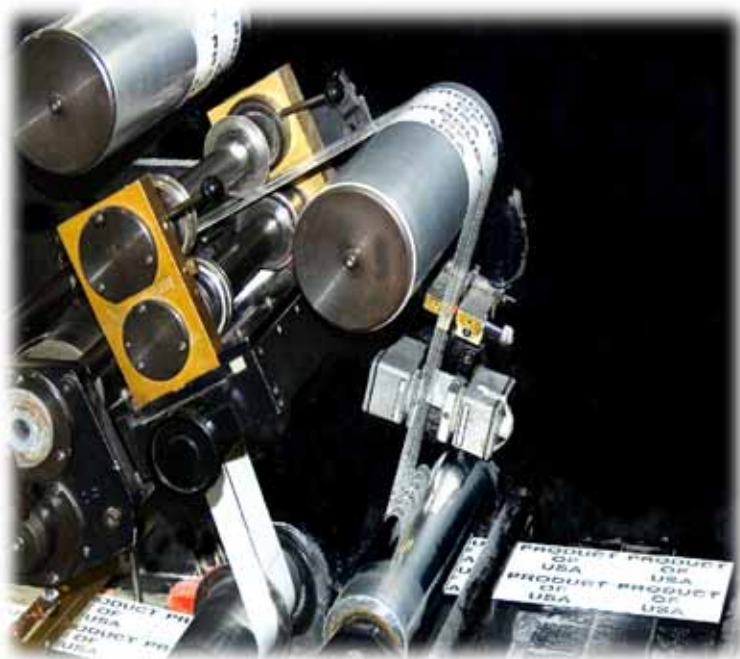
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Texas Report

My first festival of the year was the annual Snook Fest in the small town of Snook located right outside of College Station. I was so excited that Mrs. Wanda was able to attend along with Maggie and Mrs. Eleanor. After arriving in College Station we all made the quick drive to Snook to meet Mr. James Wiggins at his office. We got to chat with everyone in the office, picked up our festival t-shirts and then rounded up everyone for dinner. Mr. James was so kind to invite us out for some delicious seafood and entertaining conversation at Fish Daddy's. Saturday was the day of Snook Fest which began with a parade. Maggie and I rode in a beautifully restored classic car to lead the parade. Following us there were more cars, horses, fire trucks, and beautifully decorated watermelon floats with plenty of cute kids on board. We then arrived at the festival grounds where there was live music, vendors, BBQ cook-off participants and plenty of ice cold watermelon. Throughout the day Maggie and I handed out slices of watermelon, explored the fair grounds, did the chicken dance and helped showcase delicious baked goods for the cake auction. We also helped with the watermelon eating contest, seed-spitting contest and a watermelon crawl contest. I had so much fun at the festival and even more fun afterwards! That evening we were invited to have a BBQ dinner at Paul and Beth's house. I had such a wonderful time getting to know everyone a little better and talking with them about almost every topic imaginable. The Wiggins' are a great group of people and being a die-hard Longhorn I don't like to admit this, but after that weekend I was actually sad to leave the College Station area. However, I would like to say a very special thank you to Mr. James for inviting me to attend Snook Fest and to all of the Wiggins' who opened their homes and arms to me and gave me so much of their support.

On June 19th and 20th I returned to Lakeway for the Randalls Texas Locally Grown event again. The second time around I was accompanied by Tiffany Anderson, Tony and Cheryl's daughter. Tiffany and I had two very productive days handing out delicious watermelon samples, recipe cards and coloring books. We also gave lessons to lots of eager customers who wanted to know how to pick out a ripe watermelon. I'd say the event was a success for a second time due to all the watermelons I saw go out of the store that weekend. I'd like to say a special thanks to (Gerardo & Mark) who invited me to Randalls and were so welcoming. Also, special thanks to Tony Anderson who made it all possible and to my "chaperones," Teretha, Lacy, and Tiffany.

The weekend of June 27th I made a solo trip to my hometown for the 3rd annual Grapeland Watermelon Festival. The festival featured live music, a BBQ cook off, a seed spitting competition and of course, delicious Pennington watermelons. The weather was hot but the watermelon was cold and lots of people came by for large slices of watermelon. We cut some of the biggest watermelons I've ever seen, so big a machete was needed (though I did not attempt it). A lot of people also participated in the seed spitting contest, where the farthest seed spit was 28 feet, just beating my new personal record of 27 feet. I had a relaxing weekend with my family and was happy to be a part of the festival. Special thanks to Aaron Pennington and his family who invited me back home for a great time!

Fourth of July weekend I went to six different Market Street grocery stores in the Dallas area on behalf of the National Watermelon Promotion Board. Mrs. Wanda and I spent three very busy, but always fun, days traveling to two different stores each day. We went to stores in Colleyville and Coppell on Friday, Plano and McKinney on Saturday, then Frisco and Allen on Sunday...and we only got lost once! This was my first time to go to a Market Street grocery store and I was interested to see what each store was like. All the stores were very nice inside and had lovely produce sections. A couple of the stores we visited had some fun events planned for the holiday weekend. The store in Coppell had a watermelon eating contest that I got to judge. Both kids and adults were excited to participate in the contest and get a little messy, ok really messy while eating a huge wedge of watermelon without using their hands. The store in Allen featured various contests for the kids sponsored by Radio Disney and a well-known celebrity, Elsie the Borden Cow! I had so much fun that weekend handing out recipe cards, coloring books and helping people pick out watermelons for their Fourth of July celebrations. It was also pretty cool to see three different fireworks displays from our hotel window. Special thanks to the NWPB and Marcia Adler for organizing the promotions.

The first three weekends in August kept me very busy with Kroger grocery store promotions in Houston, Dallas, and Rockwall. July 31st through August 2nd I was at Kroger on Buffalo Speedway in Houston for a "grand re-opening." Then on August 7th through the 9th I was in Houston again at the Kroger on Buffalo Speedway and one on West Gray. Finally, on August 14th through the 16th I traveled to Dallas for a Kroger promotion on Mockingbird Lane and then in Rockwall. Mrs. Wanda and I put some miles on our cars that month! However, I had a great time in each store and was able to work with some really awesome demo-ladies from the New Concepts in Marketing company. With lots of watermelons in the stores, customers enjoyed samples, recipe cards and of course kids enjoyed the coloring books. Special thanks to again to NWPB, to Mrs. Carolyn, Mrs. Ruth, Mrs. Joy, Mrs. Rose and Mrs. Mabel in Houston and Mrs. Geneva in Dallas who created wonderful demos and made my visits to Kroger so much fun!

With just enough time for me to move into my new apartment and start school I was off again on September 4th and 5th to Lubbock and Plains, Texas for the Yoakum County Watermelon Round-Up. On Friday I went in to the KCB Channel 11 studios in Lubbock for an interview during their noon newscast. The interview was over before I knew it, but it was fun to have that experience since broadcast news is what I hope to do for my career one day. On Saturday we traveled about an hour outside of Lubbock to Plains for their annual watermelon festival. Here we were joined by the familiar faces of Teretha and Guy Jones, Mr. DeRoy and Mrs. Gerry Anderson, and Connie and Mackie McWhirter. They are all such a pleasure to be around and I was so glad to see all of them there. The Plains festival was a lot of fun and featured lots of watermelon contests, music, food and delicious red and yellow watermelon slices. I also was able to take part in the classic car contest by helping hand out awards, one being the "Queen's Choice Car," which took me a long time to decide on. At the festival I handed out lots of coloring books, recipe cards and some autographed photos. I also met some really nice people, including a 95 year old Plains resident who was recently inducted into the Cowgirl Hall of Fame. Before we headed back to Lubbock, we first loaded up the back of Mrs. Wanda's escalade with watermelons from Anderson produce, which were donated to the Millsap ISD. For being at the festival, I received a Yoakum County Centennial Cookbook and a beautiful hand-crafted watermelon necklace, which made wonderful additions to all the memories I received as well. Special thanks to the community of Plains, McWhirter Farms, Anderson Produce, Borders Melons, Texhoma Produce, and Javi Farms for inviting me to such a wonderful watermelon festival.

Coming up soon on my schedule is the State Fair of Texas, some in-store promotions in San Antonio and Austin, as well as the PMA convention in Anaheim, California. I would also like to extend an invitation to everyone to attend our Texas Convention January 21st-24th, 2010 at the Embassy Suite Hotel in McAllen, Texas. And if you'd like to read more about all my travels as TWA Queen and see more photos, check out www.txwatermelonqueen09.wordpress.com.

Mollie Bennett, 2009 Texas Watermelon Queen



At Central Market in Dallas.



Sampling red & yellow watermelons at Market Street on the 4th of July.



Bananas & watermelons go together perfectly.



The perfect size melon for this little guy.



Doing some lobbying on Capitol Hill.



The Queen's Choice in the classic car contest.



Elsie the Borden Cow was at Market Street too.



The right way to eat watermelon!



Getting ready for my interview with KCB.



Two cute watermelon fans.



Getting ready to serve some watermelons on the Hill.



Winner of the watermelon eating contest at Market Street.



Leaders of the parade.



With CNN analyst & UT alumnus Paul Begala.



Mrs. Mabel, a wonderful demo lady in Houston.



With Mr. DeRoy & Mrs. Gerry Anderson in Plains.



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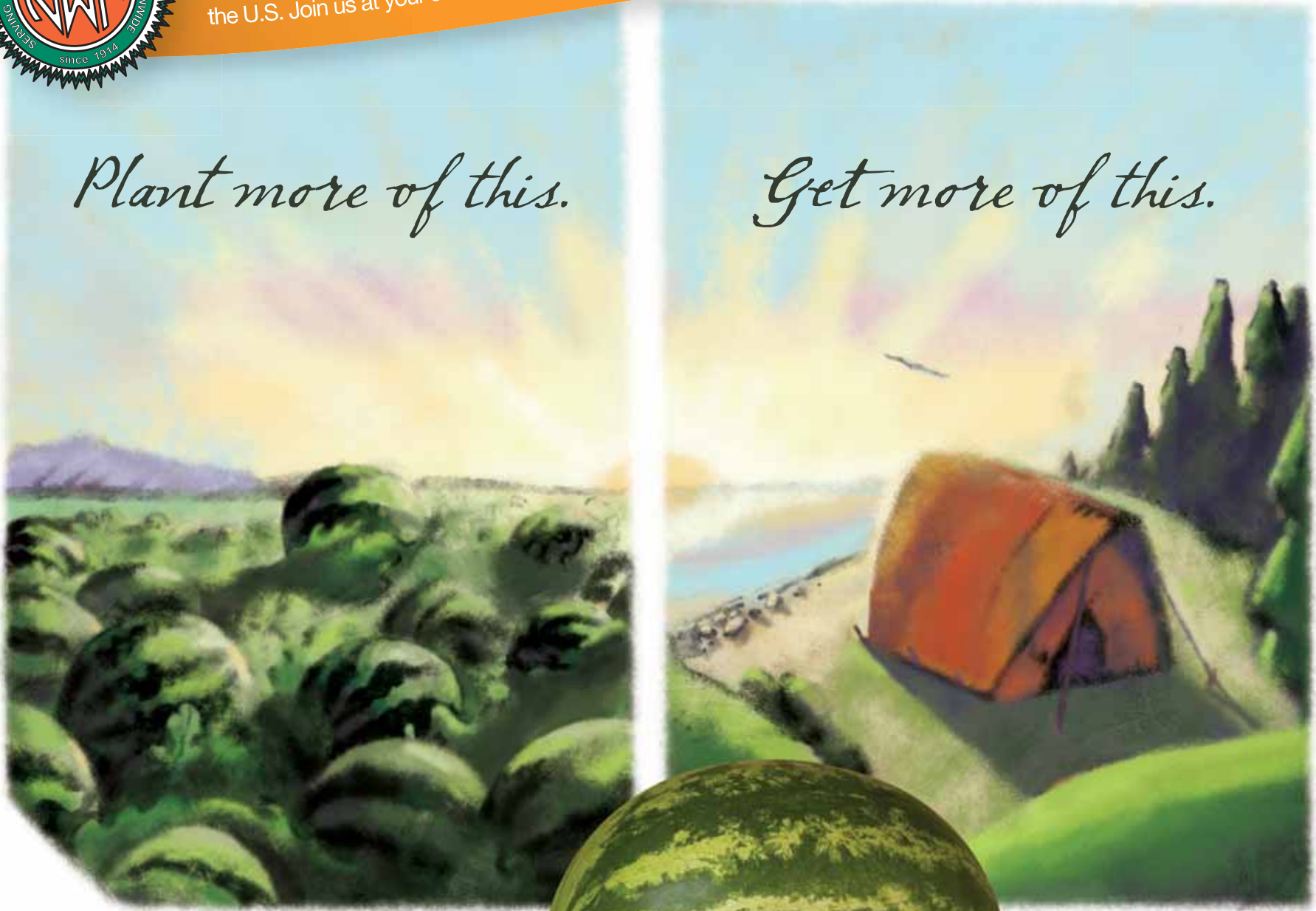
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