

the vineline

May/June 2006

Official Magazine of the NATIONAL WATERMELON ASSOCIATION



**Specialty Crop
Block Grant**

**Immigration
Legislation**

**2007
Farm Bill**

**Small Business
Health Care**

Next Issue:
Vine Decline
--Spring Trials
Report
--Fall Trials & Plans

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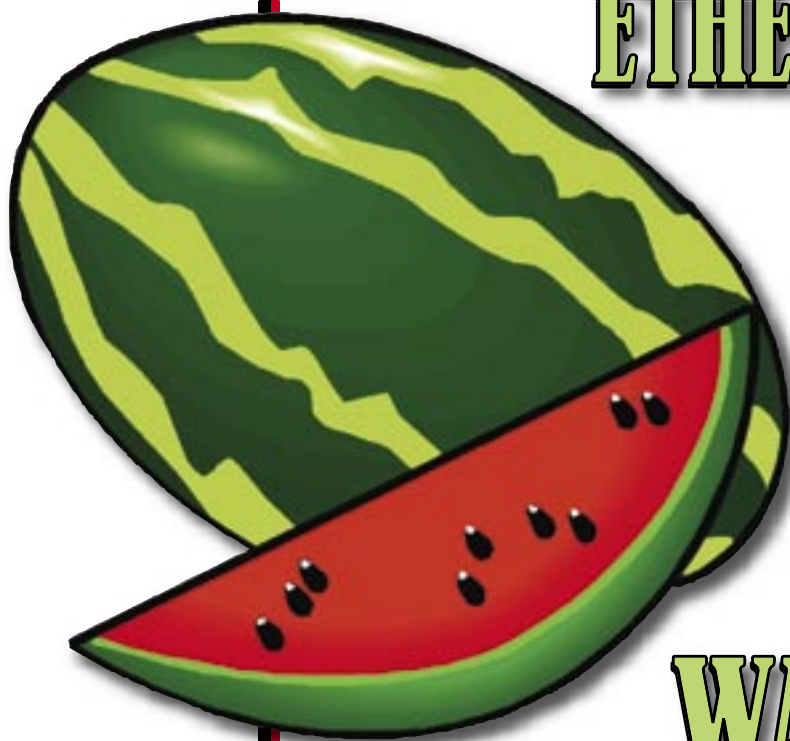
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President's Message

Greetings Watermelon Family,

I do hope this finds you having a wonderful year so far, and eating plenty of watermelons. I know it has seemed like we would never get started, but here we are in the middle of Memorial Day shipping and watermelon season has officially begun. From what I have seen this season the watermelon crops have been of excellent quality and the growing and shipping weather has been excellent, except for the dry spells we have experienced. But I am so thankful man still can't control the weather. I believe it is part of what makes agriculture so exciting. As the old saying goes "the only thing constant is change".

Debbie, Amanda, and Bob have already started working on ways to hopefully make the 2007 convention as exciting and enjoyable as the 2006 convention was in Lake Tahoe. Without letting the cat out of the bag, I will say, it could certainly be a watermelon "mystery event" like never before. More information will be forthcoming during the next few months, as this "mystery event" unravels. We are also working on another great line up of wonderful and informative speakers and roundtable discussions concerning the most pressing issues of our industry.

Bob is making great progress in making contacts and setting up appointments in Washington DC on behalf of the NWA, and in cooperation with the United Fresh Fruits and Vegetable Association. He is getting our issues in front of key leaders that can help shape the future for our industry, concerning diseases, the Lane, OK research facility, and grants to assist our current Queen and promotion program.

Queen Candice and Eleanor have already begun being goodwill Ambassadors for our industry and will soon be busy as bees promoting our own "nature's treat", throughout this spring and summer season.

I will close for now and wish everyone a safe, happy and prosperous growing and shipping season. As always *"let's keep eating more watermelons"*!

Brent Jackson

NWPB Resources At Your Fingertips!

food safety

industry news

research projects

Check Out the Industry Section of Your Web site, www.watermelon.org.

Tuning in to the latest industry news, tools and resources is just a click away when you visit the password-protected industry section of your NWPB Web site at www.watermelon.org.

• Gain Marketplace Muscle

Your NWPB has developed a category management section in the industry area where all the latest consumer research and data-supported merchandising tips are housed. Visit today to get a leg up on the competition.

• Access Voluntary Food Safety Guidelines for the Watermelon Industry

These Guidelines serve to assure your buyers you are doing everything possible to ensure safe product. Did you know we have them in English and Spanish?

• Research

In the industry area, you may access research reports and information that contributes to the long-term success of the industry, ranging from research into watermelon disease control and prevention, pest control and prevention, to food safety and nutrition research.

• American Heart Association Certification

The NWPB has worked with the American Heart Association to create PLU labels for red seeded and red seedless watermelon that display the heart checkmark. According to the AHA, nearly 90 percent of consumers find the heart checkmark helpful when making purchasing decisions. The heart checkmark helps boost sales, which translates into moving more watermelons out of the growers' fields and into consumers' homes. From the main section, click on Resources to find out how you can use this tool in your own marketing materials.

In the industry area you may also order free promotional materials, access shipping reports and provide feedback to the NWPB about your concerns, requests and questions.

To log in to the industry section, simply go to www.watermelon.org. Look for the industry box on the lower left-hand side of the page and type in your password. If you have any questions about logging in to the Web site just contact the NWPB staff, toll-free, at 1-877-509-9595.

get connected at www.watermelon.org!





Mark Arney
Executive Director



News from the National Watermelon Promotion Board

The International Fresh-cut Produce Association's (IFPA) Fresh-Cut Expo was held April 26-29 in Baltimore, Maryland. More than 1,500 fresh-cut industry executives came to the largest turnout in the show's 19-year history. The National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB) and IFPA had recently worked closely to identify and address issues and opportunities to improve the quality and sales of fresh-cut watermelon.

Moving more watermelon in non-traditional parts of the year is consistent with the NWPB goal to promote watermelon consumption year-round as a healthy, everyday choice. The result of IFPA cooperation was the establishment of the new Melon Working Group within the IFPA.

"IFPA is dedicated to forming partnerships just like this within the produce industry that foster greater knowledge and experience with fresh-cut. We want to be the source for support in growing this profitable category", said Jerry Welcome, President of IFPA.

The Melon Working Group kicked off with its first new break-out session addressing watermelon and the melon category at this year's Fresh-Cut Expo 2006. President Brent Harrison represented the NWPB and spoke during the Melon Working Group session. Slides from Brent's presentation are available by contacting the NWPB.



Brent Harrison, Bill Winseman and Mark Arney of the NWPB



Brent Harrison, President of the NWPB

Fresh-cut Expo is the only trade show and business/technical conference dedicated to the technology, science and market innovations behind value-added produce. This was the first ever session dedicated solely to melons that the group has sponsored. IFPA and United Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Association announced plans to merge and offer both memberships a higher level of value to meet critical challenges facing the fresh produce industry.

Washington Update

As you are most likely aware, there has been much to do in Washington these past few months in particular surrounding agriculture as a whole, and making sure that Watermelon fits in to the equations.

With the loss of our friend and colleague, Vern Highley, and with D.C. taking up so many issues that watermelon needs to be involved with at once, it has been somewhat of a challenge at times, but one that I truly look forward to. We all face challenges in our lives, as this one is for us, and me. But we are making strides along the way, and facing issues head-on. Possibly we wish Washington would move quicker, but that is not how our government works.

In some cases, you can help when you see a plea in The Vineline or a fax from the NWA office to contact your legislative leaders. When those requests come from us, would you consider taking a few minutes to help us? A communication from you will help to springboard our efforts, and get us that much closer to achieving our public affairs goals.

It is important for you to know what we are working toward for you. The following articles will provide a brief update of our dealings with our Congressional leaders and the USDA in D.C., and where we may be headed in the future:

Small Business Health Care Reform Bill

The ability to negotiate a national health care plan for small businesses and associations such as the NWA is of paramount interest to many of us. There are over 120 organizations that represent in excess of 80 million people that wish to have the ability to purchase health care as do labor organizations, major corporations and the federal government.

With that comes a debate that has great divides in the ranks, both lobbying for or against the bill whilst stating their side of the bill. As many organizations and States have come forward against this bill due to their contention that a federal program would disallow their involvement, and make such plans federally-managed, versus the current state of affairs that exists.

The U.S. Senate considered a bill (S.1955) sponsored by Senator Michael Enzi (Wyoming) and co-sponsored by Senators from 7 states including John Cornyn (TX), Richard Burr (NC), Larry Craig (ID), and Wayne Allard (CO). The purpose of this bill is to expand health care access and reduce costs through the creation of small business health plans by modernizing the health insurance marketplace.

After some limited debate, the bill was sent to the Senate Finance Committee for further review. In order to bring the bill back to the Senate floor, we need to gain 5 additional Senators' votes to reach the



needed majority (60 votes), and begin that process. The NWA is continuing to work with many other organizations to gain those votes (and others) to complete this legislative process and be in a position in the future to negotiate and provide a health care plan to our members.

The NWA is contacting numerous Senate offices that did not support the further debate of this bill, but rather forced it back into committee. As well, we will be working with Senator Enzi's office to support his efforts to get the bill back into debate on the floor.

You can help us by sending a letter, fax, email or telephone call to your Senate offices with encouragement to support the bill. The following is a list of (NWA Member) states that we need Senate communications with to gain their votes:

Arkansas (Lincoln and Pryor)
California (Boxer and Feinstein)
Colorado (Salazar)

Delaware (Biden and Carper)
Florida (Nelson)
Illinois (Durbin and Obama)
Indiana (Bayh)
Iowa (Harkin)
Maryland (Mikulski and Sarbanes)
Massachusetts (Kennedy and Kerry)
Michigan (Levin and Stabenow)
New Jersey (Lautenberg and Menendez)
New Mexico (Bingaman)
New York (Clinton and Schumer)
Oregon (Wyden)
Washington (Cantwell and Murray)

In addition to this list, the Democratic Senators from all other non-watermelon producing states opposed the bill, less Senators Landrieu - LA and Nelson - NE, who both supported it. Only one Republican opposed the bill (Chafee - RI).

The majority of us can use more affordable health care, or know of fellow members that can. We have a suggested letter prepared for your use. Let's put some pressure on our elected leaders to allow debate in the Senate. Please call us, and help us to help you.

Specialty Crop Block Grants



United States Department of Agriculture

As we shared in the last issue of The Vineline, the USDA will issue \$7 Million in funding to each State Department of Agriculture to promote the competitiveness of specialty crops (which includes watermelon). This is a result of the Specialty Crop Competitiveness Act which was signed into law in December, 2004. This is a great opportunity to gain some funding both at the chapter level and national level to increase promotions and advance current programs for the future.

Each State will receive at least \$100,000 in funding, with the remaining funding (almost \$2 million) to be dispersed based on the percentage of each state's specialty crop production. The larger the state's specialty crop production, the larger the grant pot will be.

The primary function for this grant opportunity is for the promotion of specialty crops (i.e. watermelon) through marketing and public relations. In-store promotions, watermelon festivals,

expanded queen promotions, exhibit booths and other opportunities can be considered by all of our chapters.

The USDA may have published their final rule for the allocation of this funding by the time you are reading this article. The open comment period for their initial rule expired on May 22nd. The actual rule can be found at www.usda.gov, and then search for specialty crop block grant.

It is our understanding that we will not be required to create nor write the typical, lengthy proposals that a few of us are accustomed to. Each state will have differing variations, but in the end, we should all be able to apply with not too much trouble or time. The NWA will help you as much as we can, but the responsibility will rest on your shoulders to write the requirements and submit them to your state(s).

We encourage you to contact every state that you have members in to gain as much as you can. If you do not make the contacts, then you will not be part of the grant process. Please don't let other fruit, vegetable or horticulture groups take it all. It is up to you at the chapter level. If you have not already contacted your State or States' Department of Agriculture, please do so ASAP!

Immigration Reform

The hottest news from Washington of late has been the Senate's debates and votes surrounding immigration, border controls along Mexico in particular, future citizenship opportunities, and an agricultural component that will keep our industry with the needed availability of workers, primarily from Mexico.

Hundreds of miles of reinforced fencing across a major portion of the Mexican border, Disallowing past felonies and/or misdemeanors, National Guard troop patrols, penalties or fines of illegal aliens, citizenship possibilities, reform of the H-2A program, prevailing wage rates, and so much more have been debated and or decided by the Senate.

This is an extremely contentious issue, especially during a Congressional election year. Work-day walk-outs, boycotts, protests, and debates have become commonplace. Words such as 'amnesty' and 'prevailing wage' have been argued daily amongst Congressional colleagues of both parties. National news media outlets have covered this issue almost daily.

The NWA has been involved with three agricultural groups in Washington to

assure that Congress does not close our borders without making concessions to allow guest workers to keep our industry working. From weekly conference calls to periodic meetings and Hill visits, we have been successful in getting agriculture on the docket to keep the labor force in place. How that shakes out with this legislation in the future is yet to be seen.

We have not been alone in this effort. Each committee that we work with (United Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Association, Agriculture Coalition for Immigration Reform and National Council of Agricultural Employers) is made up of numerous agricultural groups that have worked together to protect the availability of laborers. In addition, major groups representing similar interests from the hotel motel, trucking, construction, home building, landscaping, restaurants, and many more have been vital parts of this lobbying effort.

Congress may still be in a joint conference between the Senate and House (at this issue's publication time) to work out and debate the differences in their bills. If and when they can develop a mutual agreement on the Hill, then Congress will send the bill to the White House for the President's consideration.

Earlier this spring, immigration officials arrested 7 executives and hundreds of employees during raids on IFCO, a manufacturer of crates and pallets. The charges by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents included conspiring to transport, harbor and encourage illegal workers to reside in the U.S. for commercial advantage and private financial gain. This became national news and a pedestal for some legislators in Washington.

Indications are that hundreds of such raids have been and are happening across the country, and will continue into the unforeseen future. As a result, we have worked with groups in agriculture to develop a recommendation for our members to have available in case such a visit were to ever occur at your packing shed, fields or business. It is better to be prepared and safe. The recommendation is as follows.

Important Information for Growers on Labor Audits and Raids

The Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is currently conducting audits and raids across the country. This agency has the authority to investigate the possible employment of undocumented



workers, or to look for undocumented workers within constitutional parameters (i.e. reasonable search considerations). For more information on the agency's activities, go to: <http://www.ice.gov/graphics/news/factsheets/EnforcementFS.htm>

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

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

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

- Have growers/packers review their I-9 procedures to verify that proper protocols are being used.
- Confirm that documents used





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

- Review record retention practices to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal laws.
- Designate a company representative who is authorized to meet and talk to Department of Labor and/or ICE personnel.
- Educate employees to refer I-9 inquiries to the designated company representative.
- No management employee should submit to an interview or provide documents to the government before conferring with the designated company representative.

If ICE shows up to a grower's/packer's office with a search warrant, the grower/packer should have a protocol already in place to alert senior manage-

ment and legal counsel. The warrant should be carefully reviewed for what records are being requested, and remain mindful that criminal prosecution for immigration law violations may result if seized records reflect violation of IRCA's criminal statutes.

Developed in conjunction with Farm Bureau Federation



2007 Farm Bill

It is coming time again for Washington to create the next Farm Bill in 2007. Numerous listening sessions have been held in multiple states by the U.S. House Agriculture Committee and the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Mike Johanns. More are scheduled in Washington this year by the House, with the sessions beginning by the Senate.

The NWA has been a major part of this process thus far, with Vern Highley and Brent Jackson providing testimony at two of the listening session during the past nine months. Bob Morrissey has been one of 18 members of United Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Association's Farm Bill Committee, which has developed recommendations to both the Senate

and House Agriculture Committees.

Additionally, the UFFVA Farm Bill Committee is working with a number of Senate and House offices to write legislation to be introduced to Congress later this year. Senators Larry Craig (ID) and Debbie Stabenow (MI) will sponsor the Senate bill, while Congressmen Richard Pombo (CA) and Dennis Cardoza (CA) will sponsor the House bill. There are numerous co-sponsors as well from across the country. The bill writing process is well underway, with the overall details of the recommendations presented to both Congressional committees and the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture already.

The committee's intentions are to protect fruits & vegetables whilst gaining a fair share for specialty crops (fruits & vegetables in particular) in the next Farm Bill. F&V has never received a fair share in the past, but with the supporters that we have on the Hill, we believe that now is the time to pursue our goals. Following is a brief synopsis of our recommendations:

Overview:

Specialty crop production across the United States accounts for over \$46 billion in farm cash receipts, representing 44% of the U.S. total crop value. Over the years, the specialty crop industry has gone through tremendous changes in an effort to remain profitable, satisfy consumer demands, adapt to new technology, and compete in an increasingly global market place. Today, growers are facing the most strident economic conditions and regulatory challenges they've seen in decades. Meanwhile, the consumption of our commodities seems to be stagnating. While the perishable nature of our products present unique challenges and highly volatile markets, our industry has not relied on traditional farm programs to sustain our business. We're proud of our commitment to free markets, and don't want that to change.

The specialty crop industry also produces crops that are vital to the health of Americans and represent a significant segment of American agriculture. However, because they are not considered "program crops," specialty crops are often ignored when it comes to the development and implementation of U.S. farm policy. Yet, like producers of program crops, the specialty crop industry faces significant challenges in the production and marketing of their commodities that must be addressed if they are to remain competitive.



Specialty crops are important to the good health of Americans and to the efforts in our country to prevent disease, reduce obesity, and improve the well-being of our citizenry. We are also working hard to fulfill consumer needs for high-quality and affordable healthy food choices, but we need agricultural policy priorities to assist us in that effort. It is in this context that we raise the importance of specialty crops today – not as simply one more sector of the agricultural economy, but as a vital national priority in every Congressional district and to the health of our nation overall. The industry strongly believes government policy should provide incentives for private investment, tools to increase profitability, and help to those producers who are committed to constant improvement to better serve consumer needs. We do not want policies that sustain yesterday's business; we want investment in the future.

Ultimately, the goal of any specialty crop federal agriculture policy should be to enhance the tools necessary to drive demand, utilization, and consumption of our products and not distort the production of those products with respect to domestic and international markets.

The Federal government should elevate its financial investment into program priorities for the specialty crop industry and work cooperatively to ensure U.S. specialty crop producers are competitive in domestic and international markets. In turn, the goal of any farm policy should be to enhance the tools necessary to drive demand, utilization, and consumption of specialty crops, and not distort the production and marketing of these commodities in the United States.

Committee Recommendations (in brief):

- **Restrictions on Planting Flexibility** – We support this long-standing provision as a fundamental matter of equity among farmers. As long as some farmers receive direct payments from the government, they should not be allowed to plant crops on that subsidized land that competes with unsubsidized farmers.

- **Nutrition Programs** – We support a strong new focus within the 2007 Farm Bill on increasing the access and availability of fruits and vegetables, particularly to children. We support expansion of the school fruit and vegetable snack program, increased commodity purchases, higher allocation to the Department of Defense (DOD)

fresh program for schools, development of a new nutrition promotion program to assist producers in enhancing their markets, and a general requirement that USDA feeding programs and commodity purchasing comply with the 2005 Dietary Guidelines.

- **State Block Grants** – We support an expansion of the State Block Grants for Specialty Crops program originally authorized in the Specialty Crop Competitiveness Act of 2004, and funded through appropriations in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 Agricultural Appropriations bill. Due to the wide diversity and localized needs in specialty crop production, state departments of agriculture are uniquely able to assist local growers with the specific investments they need to increase competitiveness.

- **International Trade** – We support programs to increase foreign market access, to increase funding for the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops program, and creating a new Export Division within Animal, Plant, Health, and Inspection Service (APHIS) to attack with much greater vigor the real but too often hidden trade barriers facing our industry in Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) issues. We will also work with allies to seek continued support for the Market Access Program (MAP).

- **Invasive Pests and Disease** – We support significant new investment in prevention of the unintentional introduction of plant pests and diseases. Investment in prevention is more cost-effective than mitigation.

- **Research** – We support significant new investment in research for specialty crops, through both the National Research Initiative and programs within Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES) and Agriculture Research Service (ARS).

- **Conservation Programs** – We support a mandatory allotment of funding for specialty crop production within the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQUIP) similar to what currently exists for the livestock industry. We will work with all allies to expand general support for conservation programs.

- **Unique Attributes of Specialty Crop Producers** – Due to the nature of

high-value specialty crop production, many current Farm Bill programs and disaster programs are of limited benefit to specialty producers due to payment caps, limits on Adjusted Gross Income, limits on off-farm income even if integral to farming operations, etc. We support a thorough review of all farm programs to ensure that specialty crop producers have access to benefits comparable to other farmers, rather than being excluded or limited simply due to a higher-cost of production.

That provides you with a top-line of the committee's recommendations to Congress. There will be much more to come including additional listening sessions, debate, give-and-take, negotiations, etc. before Congress completes this process next year. If you would like to see all of the detail and budgetary information that makes up the entire bill recommendation (our fruit & vegetable portion), please contact the NWA office.

One last note We recently learned that there is a bubbling discussion on the Hill to simply extend the 2002 Farm Bill as status quo. That is absolutely not acceptable to the specialty crop industry. We have already begun meetings and a letter campaign with both Agriculture committees and the USDA to head this off at the pass. More to come.



Washington Update

Clearance Sale

Watermelon Ball Cap



\$12.00
(includes mailing)

NWA Ball Cap



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BROWN BRIM

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Limited quantities
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(available in red or
green)

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Adult sizes in S, M, L and XL

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- Everything Must Go!

*Congratulations to
Paul and Missy Bowling
On their new baby girl!*

*Berkleigh Kay
7.9 lbs and 18 1/2" long*

and she is perfect!



Just a Reminder!

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National Report

Candice Fralish, 2006 National Watermelon Queen, began her tour less than two weeks after her crowning during the NWA convention in Lake Tahoe. Candice is excited about her year, and is looking forward to working for you. We have some very exciting promotions planned for the months ahead

Illiana Convention

Our first stop was the Illiana Watermelon Convention. We were welcomed warmly. Rich Novak treated us to dinner; we were joined by the Brad Tony family. Thank You Rich! It was great catching up with the watermelon family! Brad put together a breakfast and tour of the Amish country for several of us visiting the area.

Kristy and Elizabeth had an exciting competition planned. We enjoyed the growers meeting and checking out all the exhibits. Illiana President, John Nowaskie and wife Doris certainly planned and enjoyable convention with dinner and dancing for the Presidents reception. They had a record breaking auction and attendance.

We enjoyed the opportunity to visit with NWA President Brent Jackson and wife Debbie, as well as NWA Executive Director, Bob Morrissey. It was an outstanding convention! Congratulations to Miss Alexis Vice, on being crowned the 2006 Illiana Watermelon Queen! We look forward to spending time with you! I'm sure a wonderful year awaits you! Special thanks to the Illiana Association for sponsoring us!

Florida Convention

Next stop, beautiful Sarasota, Florida for the annual Florida Watermelon convention. En route from the airport in Tampa, Candice and I made a stop by the NWA office in Plant City, Florida. We enjoyed the opportunity to visit with Bob and Amanda! It was a great chance to check out the new office in Plant City. Thank you both!

We were dinner guests of Chuck Elam and Russ Beckham of Abbott & Cobb, and were joined by Carr and Jane Hussey. Thanks Chuck and Russ!

It was good to see all of our Floridian friends and Watermelon family! Mike and Carol Caruthers had an excellent convention! Good Food and Entertainment!

It was good to see the Florida queen, Kelly Addison. We also visited with Sharon McCall. They were both busy all weekend! Congratulations to Katie Grantham of Arcadia, Florida on being chosen the 2006 Florida Watermelon Queen! You are sure to have a great year!

I was so excited to visit with my 1992 National Queen Bonnie Mullins-Settle, and my 1996 National Queen,

Holley Brown Murphy, and both their beautiful daughters!

Congratulations to FWA on their most successful auction ever! Thanks again to the FWA for sponsoring us to your convention.

NWPB Seminar

The National Watermelon Promotion Board hosted their annual training seminar in Orlando. It's all about Watermelons! This informative session is sure to be helpful to our National Queen, and all the State Queens and their runner-ups that attended. The session included interview and video taping tips, followed by critiquing. Also included were tips on traveling, dressing, body language, demo how to's, and understanding the media. Leslie Coleman went over key messages for watermelon.

We thank Mark, Leslie, Stephanie, Rebekah, and Gordon for a very successful day! We also thank NWPB for a delicious dinner!

Until next printing! Enjoy Healthy and Delicious Watermelon Everyday!!

Eleanor Bullock
NWA Promotion
229.273.8638 or 229.322.9933
email, eleanor@websign.net





Dinner with Rich, Brad, Angie and Son



two pretty ladies!



IWA President John Nowaskie and Candice visit



Elizabeth and Candice congratulate Alexis



Candice enjoys NWA President Brent Jackson and his wife Debbie



Thank You Anita!



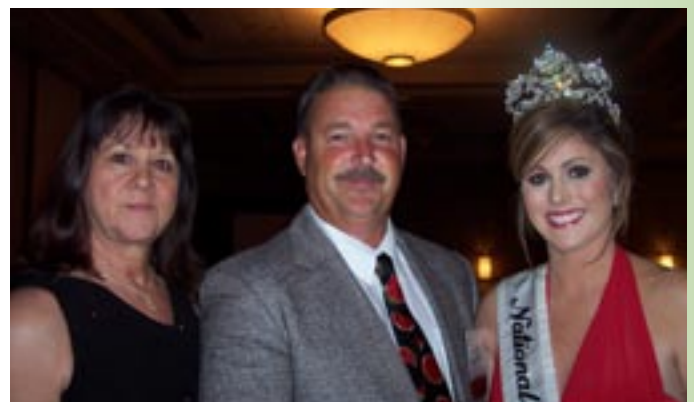
Candice poses with Kristy and Elizabeth



visits with Amanda and Bob at the NWA office



Good Pals...Candice and Kelly



Thank You Mike and Carol



Kelly and Candice with all the FWA contestants



Congratulations Katie!



Holley and Halley Murphy at the FWA auction



Thank You NWPB



Candice poses with Bonnie and Macey



Mark and the girls

Alabama Report

Greetings everyone from our Alabama Watermelon Association,

Our 2006 AWA Queen Catherine is off to a great start! Catherine attended the FWA Convention held in Sarasota at the beautiful Hyatt Resort and Spa April 1st and 2nd. Congratulations to Katie Grantham on being crowned the 2006 FWA Queen. The first event during the convention for Catherine to participate in was the seed spit contest. We held our breath, watched as her seed sailed through the air and screamed with delight as the seed flew to an unbelievable distance of 31 1/2 feet. Yes, Catherine was the overall winner at the FWA Convention. Way to go Catherine! We would like to thank the following people for sponsorship to this convention: David Coates, Rose Elliotte, Myron Harrison, Bill Johnson, Terry Jones, Jim Mastropietro, Ken Mears, Tommy Smith, Harry Vaughn, Arnold Mack, Kelly Marinaro and Doyle Bennett. Thanks to each of you for getting Catherine off to a great start for her 2006 AWA Queen reign!

Our AWA sponsored Queen Catherine and 1st Runner-Up Jennifer Himburg to attend the annual NWPB Meeting held in Orlando on April 22nd. Mark Arney, Gordon Hunt, Leslie Coleman and Stephanie Simek did an awesome job explaining in detail exactly how to get our message out... EAT MORE WATERMELON! Catherine and Jennifer left the in-depth seminar armed with the knowledge to handle in-store promotions, television, radio, magazine, and newspaper interviews. After an intense day of learning we were treated to a wonderful dinner at Houlihan's by the NWPB. Thank you to the AWA for sponsoring Catherine and Jennifer. They now have the confidence and tools to promote our association for the year ahead.

Catherine is being sponsored by Rose Elliotte and Ronda Elliotte with Don Green Melon Sales, Inc., to attend the Newberry Watermelon Festival May 12th and 13th. This will launch her Florida Tour for the south region. We will be visiting with and learning from Arnold Mack, Kelly Marinaro, Eugene Tolar, Tommy Smith, David Coates, Eric Hammons, Tom Holbert of Wal-Mart, Jim Mastropietro and Rose Elliotte. As many of you know, our NWA Queen Candice benefited greatly from the three Florida Tours we did last summer. I am certain our AWA Queen Catherine will benefit greatly as well.

Billy Smith will be sponsoring Catherine for the Chief-land Watermelon Festival June 2nd and 3rd. This is also one of our favorite tours as we are always surprised at what comes about during our visits to Billy's office and packing house. You never know whom our queen will run into or where she will go on an evening ride...can't wait!

Catherine will be graduating from high school in May and will be attending the University of Mobile in the fall. She will receive a major in music and minor in forensic science...just ask her how she came up with that combination! Catherine has a wonderful and exciting year ahead. Please, let us know what we can do for you and how we can further promote our association. Until then, a great and successful watermelon season to each of you.

Cindy Vaughn
AWA Promotion Coordinator
www.alwatermelon.org
352-314-5988 home 407-448-3780 cell





AWA Queen Catherine arriving at the Hyatt Sarasota for the FWA Convention.



AWA Queen Catherine and NWA Queen Candice with incoming FWA President David Coates. Hey David, we really like your hat!



Catherine was the overall winner of the seed spit at the FWA Convention. Honestly this is true... she spit her seed 31 1/2 inches!!! Way to go Catherine!



Billy and Corlise Smith...



During the auction Harry Vaughn purchased a really cool watermelon bowling ball for Catherine.



Myron Harrison...and Catherine



AWA President Jim Mastropietro presenting Catherine with a beautiful watermelon slice necklace purchased by the AWA.



Arnold Mack and Brenda getting to know Catherine during the FWA Banquet.



What a year to look forward to for these four queens: GWA Queen Jenna, AWA Queen Catherine, FWA Queen Katie and TWA Queen Emily.



Always a treat for a new queen to get to know Cheryl Hicks.



Catherine is looking forward to her year ahead with Jean and Kelly Marinaro.



Our new group of young ladies taking a break during the NWPB meeting held in Orlando.



Catherine had a great time meeting everyone during the NWPB meeting.



Thank you Mark, Gordon, Leslie and Stephanie for the wonderful dinner at Houlihan's.



Catherine's trip to Sarasota, FL, would not have been complete without a trip to the beach. What fun!



Greetings from the West!

**The California – Arizona Watermelon Association
Is alive and
“Kickin”**

Our membership is made up of industry leaders from many of the western states including New Mexico and Oregon. We are in place to assist these members, and the industry, in circulating pertinent information and can be contacted at the addresses/numbers shown below if we may be of assistance to any of you.

Have a Wonderful Season!

**Dana Abercrombie
Director**

California – Arizona Watermelon Association

Phone: 661-269-0788

Fax: 661-269-0812

Email: CAWAmelon@sbcglobal.net

Website: H2Omelon.com

2006-2007 President - Eric Champion

**Annual Convention held the third weekend of January (dates may vary)
Contact the CAWA office for exact dates**

Florida Report

Watermelon Greetings from The Sunshine State!

The 38th Annual Florida Watermelon Convention was held March 31-April 2 in beautiful Sarasota. This year's convention was dedicated to Robert (Bob) Valentine, a lifetime friend and dedicated member of the Florida Watermelon Association, who is truly missed by all of us. The convention was filled with workshops and activities which included various industry issues and new dimensions for the ever changing economy and production needs. A special thanks to Mike and Carol Caruthers for planning and hosting a great convention.

This year's auction was a record breaking event. The King Buyer for Loads Award was presented to Wal-Mart buyer Tom Holbert. The King Auction Buyer Award was presented to M.G. Ford. Load #23, donated by Global Produce sold for the most per pound at the auction. A special thanks to all of the Auction Load Donors and Buyers, and to each of you who donated or purchased items at the auction to make it one of our most successful ever!

Two distinctive awards are annually given to members at the Florida Watermelon Convention. The recipient of the Outstanding Service Award is a dedicated member of FWA who has exhibited quality features in all areas of service to the industry. This year the Outstanding Service Award was presented to John Lapide. The Lifetime Achievement Award is presented to a longtime member who has led and excelled in all aspects of the industry and association. The 2006 Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Tommy Smith.

After an exciting weekend of competition, Saturday evening's banquet ended with the crowning of the 2006 Florida Watermelon Queen - Miss Katie Grantham of Fort Ogden, who also received the Miss Jubilee award. The first runner-up is Miss Katie Hunt of Gainesville and second runner-up is Miss Catie Walton of Bell. Thanks to Ellen Valentine and Shawn Shurley for the Robert Valentine Memorial Scholarship to our new queen and to Tri-Wall (Ken Mears) and Highland Corporation for scholarships to the new queen and first runner-up. Thanks also to the queen contestant sponsors who made it possible for the young ladies to compete: International Paper, Indian Hills Produce, Arcadia Watermelon Association, Coates Farm Produce, Hanshaw Sales, Murray Tillis Melons, Newberry Watermelon Festival, and Mike Caruthers. Congratulations Katie - welcome to our watermelon family, we look forward to a great year of promoting our favorite product!

A special thanks to the following promotion sponsors who made the queen program a success in 2005: Billy Smith's Watermelons, Browning & Sons, Bruce Hanshaw Sales, Bruce Leber Company, Cheryl Hicks-PCA, Coates Farm Produce, David Hobbs Produce, Don Green Melon Sales, Eugene Tolar, Etheridge Produce, Florida Watermelon Association, Global Produce Sales, Gordon Etheridge, Heather Raulerson-PCA, J.R. Sales, LaBelle Plant World, Lafayette County Sheriff Carson McCall, Lamar Rou Produce, Larry Bullock, Leathers Melon Sales, M.G. Ford Produce, McMelon, Mike Caruthers, Murray Tillis Melons, Nature's Choice Produce, Paul Sawyer, Phil Turner Farms, Ray Land Productions, Raymon Land Watermelon Sales, Rich Chastain Melon Sales, S & O Farms, Sexton Produce, Southern Corporate Packers, Sunny Fresh, Sun State Produce, C & L Packing, International Paper, and Tri-Wall.

Congratulations to our new FWA officers: President-David Coates, 1st Vice President-Paul Sawyer, 2nd Vice President-Rich Chastain, and Chairman of the Board-Mike Caruthers.

Governor Jeb Bush has proclaimed June 4-10, 2006 as Florida Watermelon Week. A poster contest was held for Kindergarten through 5th Grade students from throughout Florida. A record number of entries were received and the winning posters will be displayed throughout the state during Florida Watermelon Week. If you would like to join in the celebration or sponsor a promotion, please contact me. We wish all of you a very prosperous season.

Sharon McCall, FWA Promotion Coordinator
4898 SW CR 300
Mayo, FL 32066
(386)294-2616
Cell: (386)590-4834
Fax: (386)294-2646





President Mike Caruthers and First Lady Carol welcome the Queen Contestants to the FWA Convention.



Queen Contestants found time for a little clowning around in Sarasota.



FWA Board Members



Contestants are ready for the evening gown competition.

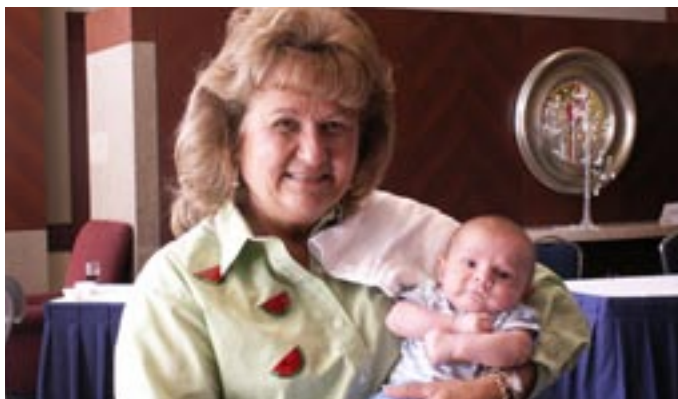


Ann Sanchez and Doris Ayoob enjoy visiting at the convention.

John Lapide receives the Outstanding Service Award from 1st VP David Coates.



President Mike Caruthers presents Tommy Smith with the Lifetime Achievement Award.



Grandmother Annette introduces Baby Joseph Lee Land to his watermelon family.



A special thanks to Ken Mears (Tri-Wall) for the scholarship presentations ..

King Auction
Buyer - M.G. Ford



King Buyer for
Loads - Tom
Holbert of
Wal-Mart



... and to Shawn and Lindsey Shurley and Ellen Valentine (not pictured) for the Robert (Bob) Valentine Memorial Scholarship Award.



Board Chairman
Kelly Marinaro
presents Mike
Caruthers with
the Presidents
Award for his
two years of out-
standing service
and commitment
to the Florida
Watermelon
Association.
THANK YOU!



The group behind the difficult task! Our judges - 1988 FWA Queen Lana Harris Harrison, Ellen Valentine, Terrie Fishman, Betty Land Whigham, and Tom Holbert.



Our Queen and Court - 2nd Runner-Up Catie Walton, 2006 Florida Watermelon Queen and Miss Jubilee Katie Grantham, and 1st Runner-Up Katie Hunt. Congratulations!



Herman Sanchez and Raymon Land congratulate the 2006 Florida Watermelon Queen, Miss Katie Grantham.

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Georgia Report

Hello friends! With the season heating up Georgia wishes each of you a successful season.

Jenna Stanford, 2006 Georgia Watermelon Queen was welcomed with warm greetings from her hometown of Cordele at their annual Duathlon race held at The Retreat at Lake Blackshear. Jenna enjoyed old and new faces during her visit back home. We appreciate the awesome job the Cordele Chamber of Commerce performs each year hosting this exciting event.

We were gratefully welcomed back to the Georgia Freight Depot in Atlanta for the "Ag Kick-Off" week celebration. We enjoyed being in the presence of our Governor Sonny Perdue along with a few of our members including Bob Rawlins and family, Buddy Leger and Ken Lewis. We also enjoyed other familiar faces amongst the crowd including Charles Hall and Gary Black. The attendance at the Depot seemed to be doubled from last year's celebration and we were delighted to be amongst the crowd. Congratulations to Bob Rawlins for his Government Environmental Stewardship Award voted on by the Governor's Ag Awareness Committee.

Our next stop was the Florida Watermelon Convention. Jenna had a blast meeting new watermelon faces and state queens. Jenna was overwhelmed with the nice gifts she received during the auction and the southern hospitality from the Florida Association members. Congratulations to the Florida Association for such a remarkable attendance and successful auction.

Jenna and I headed to Orlando for the N W P B weekend seminar where we were joined by our first runner-up Ashley Edge. We all enjoyed every moment of the weekend and thank the entire Promotion Board staff! The girls gained so many helpful promotion tips and confidence on interviewing techniques. We ended the weekend with a nice dinner at Houllihan's along with the promotion board. We appreciate the nice dinner and company throughout the weekend.

A big thank you to Roger and Mona Thompson for inviting us to North Dodge Elementary School in Eastman. Jenna read a watermelon story book and taught the children nutritional facts about watermelon. Both Jenna and the children ended the day with a smile.

Next we headed to Atlanta to join the Sutherland family at The Atlanta's Farmers' market. The Sutherland's Food Show is an annual treat! Jenna was treated like royalty and invited back to speak at their next customer meeting.

Note: DON'T MISS THE FUN!!! The week of July 4th we will begin our Watermelon Festival held in Cordele. In the past we've had several state queens and National Queens join us and we invite you all to join us this year. Please reach our office for more details.

Wish You All The Best!

G W A

Julie Akins

Sec.Treas/Promo. Coord.

P. O. Box 2278

Dalton, GA 30722

770 842 3309

akinsjulie1@alltel.net





Kelly and Gene Marinaro always treat our queens with royalty! Thank you for Jenna's beautiful auction gift at Florida Convention.



Laura Bland and Jenna enjoy the beautiful weather and friendly company in Florida.



Our Georgia guys are always F U N!!



Borders Melons East doing a good job spoiling our queen!



Jenna is getting prepared to spit her first seed at the Florida Convention. Watch out!



Jenna has fallen in love with our National family.



Thanks John Lapide C & L Packing for the awesome auction gift donated to Jenna.



Chandler Mack and Jenna taking a moment to chat together.



We have a great group of girls representing us this year!



Georgia “has beens” in Atlanta with Jenna—Fallon Garret “04” GA Queen, Allison Hutto “03” GA Queen & currently Miss Atlanta, and Jenna “06” Queen.



Jenna poses with the GA Dept of Ag display at the Sutherland’s Food Show.



Jenna enjoyed the children at N. Dodge Elementary School.

Daylon Thompson had a lot of fun sharing watermelons with his classmates.



This girl LOVES watermelon.

Mona Thompson is very familiar with watermelon queens & greeted Jenna with style in Eastman.



Thanks Roger Thompson for the watermelons we served the children.



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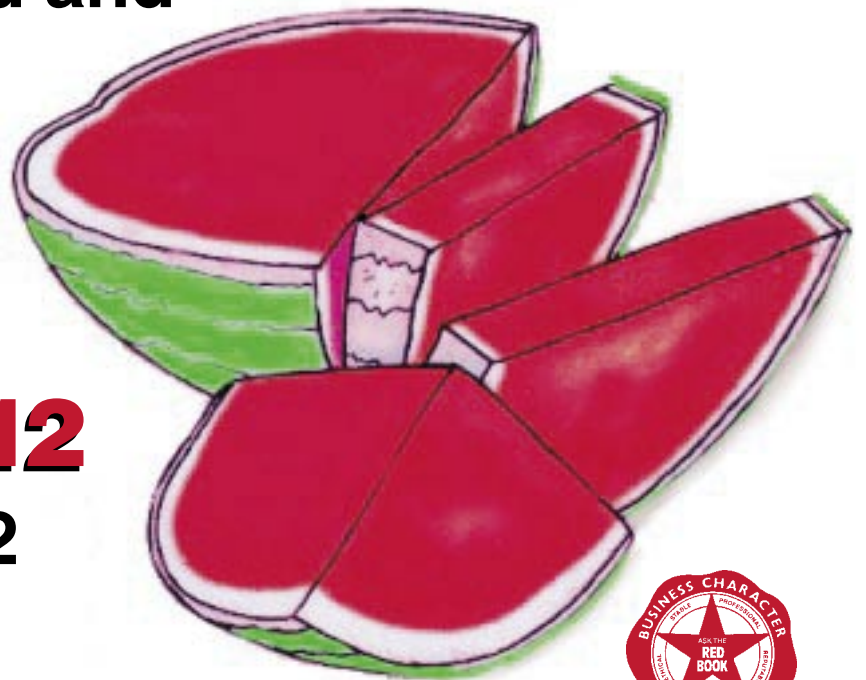


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**Arnold Mack
Chandler Mack
Terry Jones
Jason Turner**



Illiana Report

The Illiana Watermelon Association would like to thank 2005 Illiana Watermelon Queen Elizabeth Coffman for a fantastic representation at the 2006 National Watermelon Convention in Lake Tahoe, NV. Congratulations Elizabeth on receiving the honor of 2nd runner-up. The Illiana Watermelon Association is very proud of you!

The Illiana Watermelon Association held its annual convention the weekend of March 10-11, 2006 at the Vincennes, Indiana Quality Inn. It was another great convention hosted by President John T. Nowaskie and the Illiana Watermelon Association. Thank you to everyone who attended the convention and helped in anyway to make it successful. We appreciate all those who sponsored the queen and court, donated auction items, bought auction items and watermelon loads, served on committees and worked at the convention. We want to personally thank our outgoing President, John T. Nowaskie for all his hard work with the Illiana Watermelon Association over the past two years. A special thank you to our 2006 Illiana Watermelon Queen Elizabeth Coffman and her family for their dedication to the association.

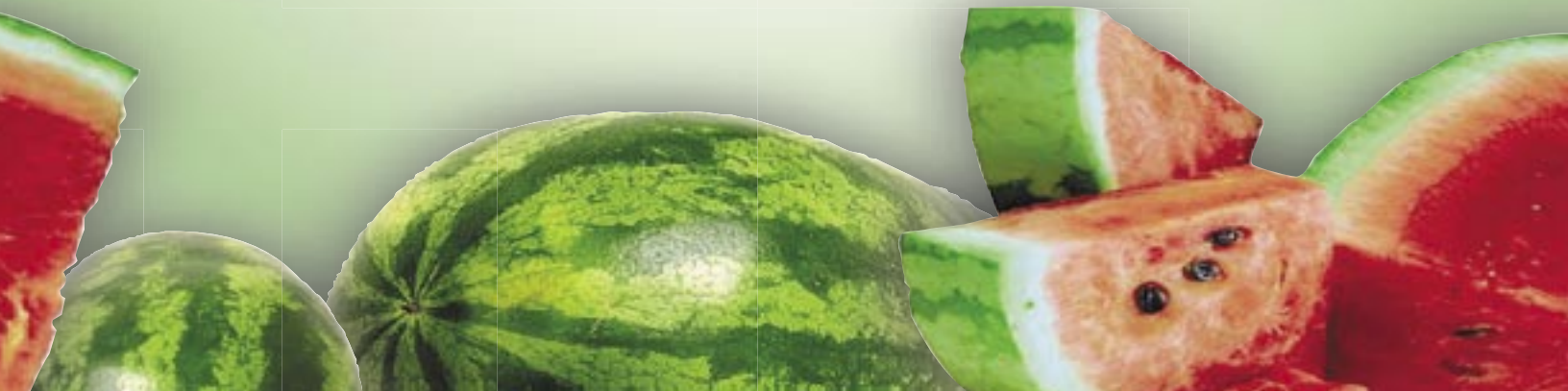
On behalf of the Illiana Watermelon Association, we welcome new President Dennis Mouzin. The Illiana Watermelon Association elected new officers and board of directors at the 2006 Illiana Watermelon Convention. The following officers are: John T. Nowaskie, Chairman of the Board; Dennis Mouzin, President; Brad Toney, 1st Vice President; Carrie Smith, 2nd Vice President; Stephanie Nowaskie, Secretary/Treasurer; and Kristy Cardinal, Promotion's Coordinator. Board of Directors: Mark Browning, Brandon Cardinal, Kim Cardinal, Adam Delisle, Jack Dietz, Matthew Ellerman, Steven Fore, Jay Halter, Cheryl Hicks, Brad Johnston, Judy Kenworthy, John F. Nowaskie, Steve Nowaskie and Mike Yochum. Past President Council: Anita Field, Ken Frey, Kolby Frey, Curt Field, Ed McClellan, Joe Mouzin and John T. Nowaskie. Executive Council: Anita Field, Curt Field, Ken Frey and Joe Mouzin.

The Illiana Watermelon Association would like to welcome the 2006 Illiana Watermelon Queen Ali Vice. Ali is the 19 year-old daughter of Steve and Debbie Vice of Paris, Illinois. Miss Vice received a \$1,000 scholarship from Tri-Wall and a \$1,000 wardrobe allowance from First American Bank and Knox County Visitor's Bureau. She also received a crown, banner and trophy from the Illiana Watermelon Association. Brooke Bishop, Longaberger Consultant sponsored Miss Vice. 1st runner-up was Lindsay Owens of Oaktown, Indiana. Lindsay received a \$500 scholarship from Tri-Wall. Mayall's Market and Greenhouse and Hall's Melons sponsored Miss Owens. 2nd runner-up was Gretchen Booher of Vincennes, Indiana. Gretchen received a \$250 scholarship from Frank Stangle and Son LP Gas. Bloebaum Farms sponsored Miss Booher. Jennifer Rehwald of Vincennes, Indiana was named Miss Jubilee. Jennifer received a \$100 scholarship from Temple Inland. Sternberg International sponsored Miss Rehwald. The Mental Attitude Award was presented to Amanda Burns of Sumner, Illinois. Amanda received a \$100 scholarship sponsored by the Illiana Watermelon Association. Vincennes Save A Lot sponsored Miss Burns.

If anyone would like to book Miss Ali Vice for a promotion, please contact Kristy Cardinal, Promotion's Coordinator at 812-882-3570. We are eager to serve the watermelon industry! Thank you again to all of our 2005-2006 Illiana Watermelon Queen Tour Sponsors.

Sincerely,

Kristy L. Cardinal
Promotion's Coordinator
Illiana Watermelon Association
2408 E. Henry Rd.
Vincennes, In. 47591
812-882-3570
812-890-8932
melons@vincennes.net





There is nothing better than a slice of watermelon!



Congratulations Elizabeth!!!!



Thank you to Anita Field for the goodies at the auction.



We are proud of you Elizabeth!



I'm a lucky girl with great bodyguards!



Thank you to everyone from the Illiana Watermelon Association!



2006 National 2nd runner-up.



Two pretty gals- Lacey & Elizabeth.



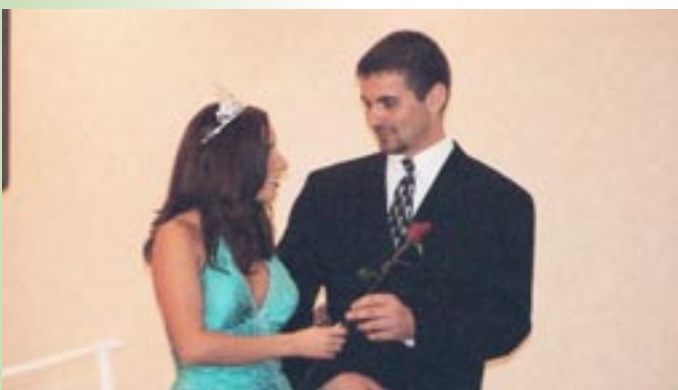
Elizabeth always has time for a picture with Myron and Lee.



Elizabeth and Rich Novak pose for a picture.



Thank you to Dave Coates and Harry Vaughn for the afghan.



Thank you Lawrence and Delisle Farms for always being there for me as my sponsor.

Congratulations
2006 Illiana
Watermelon
Queen Alexis
Vice.



L-R Miss Jubilee, Jenny Rehwald; 2nd runner-up, Gretchen Booher; 2005 IWA Queen Elizabeth Coffman; 2006 National Watermelon Queen, Candice Frelish; 2006 IWA Queen, Ali Vice; and 1st runner-up, Lindsay Owens.



NWA President Brent Jackson congratulates the girls!



NWA Executive Director Bob Morissey talks with Ali at the convention.

Mo-rk

We're Still Here!!!

The Mo-Ark convention, held during the first weekend of February was a huge success!



Special thanks to all of you who were able to join us in February! Our auction, Beale Street and Graceland would not have been the same without you!

Contact:

President:

Rich Novak
Phone/Fax: (314) 835 ñ 0027
Email: richnovak@sbcglobal.net

Queen Coordinator:

Summer Keylon
Phone: (918) 258 ñ 8321



"Walkin' In Memphis"

The purpose of the Missouri-Arkansas Watermelon Association is to promote the best interest of the watermelon industry from production to consumption. The Missouri-Arkansas Watermelon Association, in conjunction with The National Watermelon Association, is constantly seeking improvements in the growing, grading, handling, transportation, distribution and sale of watermelons. We request that you join us in this endeavor by becoming a member of our association.

Mar-Del Report

If someone were to ask me last year what my summer 2006 would probably look like, I would have never guessed Watermelon, Watermelon and more Watermelon! Yet here I am, thrilled to be the 2006 Mar-Del Watermelon Queen! My name is Kathryn Onken and I am a junior at the University of Delaware. For those of you who do not know me, I am pursuing double majors in Food & Agribusiness Management, with a concentration in Food Marketing, and Agriculture & Natural Resources, with a minor in Resource Economics. I am also a member of the National Agricultural Marketing Association's (NAMA) Competitive Marketing Team for the University of Delaware. Each year our NAMA team creates a new food product and marketing plan, to present to a panel of judges at a nation-wide competition. In addition, I am on the Dean's List and a member of Alpha Zeta.

My year so far began with the National Watermelon Promotion Board's Queen Media Training in Orlando, Florida. What a great weekend I had! Not only did I learn tons of valuable information, but I was also lucky enough to be able to share the experience with such a great group of girls! I came back to Mar-Del energized and full of ideas as to how my job, as a public relations representative, can positively impact the Watermelon industry.

My promotional calendar for Mar-Del will begin here shortly around the middle of June; with July and August jam-packed with fun promotional events such as state fairs, legislative visits, festivals, grocery stores and roadside stands. All of these events will be great opportunities for me to interact with the public, and most importantly spread the word about the health and nutritional aspects of watermelon! I am looking for-

ward to the excitement and busy schedule that the next few months promise to bring!

Watermelon Wishes,
Kathryn

Promotion Team Update:

This year Lani Kennedy and I will be at the head of the Mar-Del promotions team. We have already met with Kathryn and have a calendar of events and promotions planned. Lani and I are looking forward to a successful 2006 promotion season and to working with everyone. This year we are focusing on direct watermelon sales by targeting our promotions to grocery stores, farmers markets and road side stands as well as the usual fairs and big events. Feel free to contact me with any questions or ideas for promotions, akbrown@umd.edu or 410-310-7966.

Yours truly,
Amanda Brown

PS 2007 Mar-Del Banquet will be held at the Hyatt Resort in Cambridge, MD the first weekend in February. Mark your calendars for a great time with Mar-Del.





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Manager - Thomas Wright

North Carolina Report

Greetings from North Carolina

The 25th Annual North Carolina Watermelon Convention was held March 3-4, 2006 at the Hilton Wilmington Riverside in Wilmington. The convention was filled with workshops and activities to address industry issues and production needs. It was also a time to enjoy visiting with family and friends. Visiting guests included Bob Morrissey, NWA Executive Director, Leslie Coleman, NWPB Director of Communications, South Carolina Queen, Alison Cureton and South Carolina Queen Coordinator, Mary Beth Hiers. This year's auction was a huge success. Many thanks to everyone who donated or purchased items at the auction to make it our most successful ever.

Six young ladies competed for the NC Watermelon Queen. Contestants participated in the Speech, Interview, Sportswear, Evening Gown competition, the seed spit contest and assisted at the auction. Katie Mills of Fayetteville, NC was crowned the 2006 Watermelon Queen. Stephanie McLamb of Benson, NC was the first runner-up. Jean-Ashley Noble was named Miss Jubilee. Congratulations to these young ladies. Thanks to everyone—individuals, companies, queen sponsors, judges, NCDA, Gloria Richardson, President and NCWA Board and NCWA Co-Directors, Cathy Price and Bonnie Holloman. Katie Mills, the 2006 NCWA Queen is an eighteen year old senior at Cape Fear High School in Fayetteville. She is the daughter of Mike and Susan Mills and plans to attend Campbell University this fall. Katie began her reign by participating in the NC Azalea Festival Parade in Wilmington, NC. A visit in April to Jackson Farms to meet Brent Jackson, National Watermelon Association President and his wife, Debbie, allowed Katie to see his farm operation and even get to learn all about planting watermelons.

On April 21-23, Queen Katie and 1st Runner Up Stephanie and Queen Coordinator Sandra Woodard attended the National Watermelon Promotion Board Queen Media Training in Orlando, Florida. Both young ladies enjoyed meeting all the other state Queens and National Queen Candice Fralish. The NWPB was a great host and we all learned so much about watermelons and how to successfully promote and work with the public and the media. A very special Thank You to all who made the media training a success.

Wishing for all a great watermelon season.

Sandra Woodard

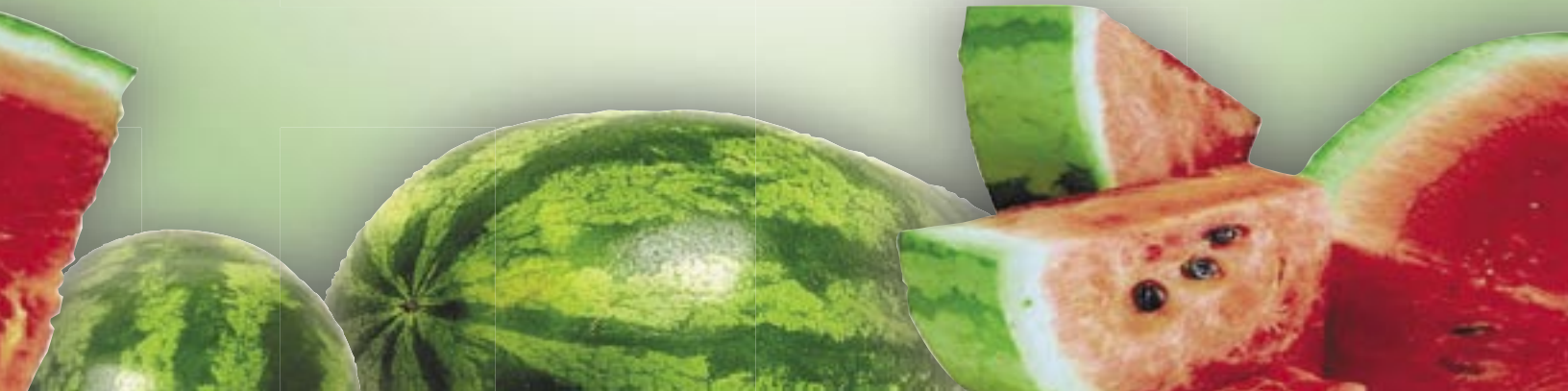
NCWA Promotions Coordinator

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2005 NC Watermelon Queen Amanda Wilson welcomes NWA Executive Director Bob Morrissey to the 25th Annual NC Watermelon Convention in Wilmington.



And our 2006 NC Watermelon Queen is Katie Mills of Fayetteville, NC.



2006 Contestants pose before their interview competition.



2005 Queen Amanda Wilson congratulates newly crowned 2006 Queen Katie Mills as NCWA President Gloria Richardson and Chairman of the Board, Don Hiller look on.



Contestants, Daisy Daughtry, Jean-Ashley Noble, Katie Mills, South Carolina Queen Alison Cureton, 2005 NC Amanda Wilson, and Mar Del Queen Allison Castellano, Stephanie McLamb, Emily Merritt, and Rachel Spears take a break during the Seed Spitting Contest.



Thurston Jackson of Circle J Produce presents auction items to Katie Mills, 2006 Watermelon Queen.



Josh Rowe and Rich Novac present to 2005 Queen Amanda watermelon auction items bought and donated by Tri-Wall.



Josh Rowe congratulates 2006 Queen, Katie Mills and makes presentation of the Tri-Wall Scholarship.



Billy Williamson of Williamson Produce congratulates and presents Queen Katie with auction items.



NCWA President welcomes Katie as 2006 NC Watermelon Queen.



Queen Katie accepting the Adam Brent Jackson Memorial Scholarship from Brent and Debbie Jackson.



Queen Katie, with her proud parents, Susan and Michael Mills of Fayetteville.



South Carolina Watermelon Queen Alison congratulates NC Watermelon Queen Katie.



Queen Katie clowning around at the NC Azalea Festival Parade in Wilmington, NC.



Past NC Watermelon Queens welcome Katie Mills to the Watermelon family.



Queen Katie in her first official appearance at the NC Azalea Festival Parade.

South Carolina Report

Hi everyone! Hope that all of you are enjoying your summer. I also hope that your watermelon season is the best ever.

Nationals in Lake Tahoe was absolutely beautiful. I would like to thank Brent Jackson and his staff for a fun, informative and exciting convention. South Carolina would like to congratulate Candice Fralish on winning the National Watermelon Queen title. Candice, we wish you the best and know that this will be a year that you'll never forget!

At the beginning of March Queen Alison and I attended the North Carolina Watermelon Convention in Wilmington, NC. We always have a good time in North Carolina. Alison met many new people and loved every minute of it. She would like to thank Rusty Kinard and Freddie Ellis for the wonderful gifts at the auction. We would like to congratulate the new NCWA Queen. Sandra, you did a super job too. Alison and I love our gifts! Thanks NCWA for the invite—we enjoyed it!

At the end of March Alison and I journeyed to Clemson, SC for an Ingles Grand Opening. The store was beautiful and we thank Jim Ray for inviting us to his new store. Alison handed out stickers, brochures, coloring books, and watermelon.

In April we were off to Orlando, FL for the Queen Promotion Training. The National Watermelon Promotion Board did a fabulous job of training the girls. Alison really appreciated all of the helpful tips and training. She is so eager to get out and promote watermelons! We would like to thank Mark Arney for the great meal at Holihans. Although it was a quick trip Alison and I enjoyed meeting all of the new queens and spending time with Eleanor and Candice.

Until next time...

Watermelon smiles,

Mary Beth Hiers
404 N. Trenholm Road
Columbia, SC 29206
803-331-3362
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Anita thanks her family for their support at Nationals.



Seed-Spitting at the NCWA Convention.



Anita thanks the SCWA for the beautiful pewter watermelon Tray.

Alison meets NWAs Executive Director Bob.



Congratulations Candice!



Alison thanks Freddie Ellis for the watermelon gifts.



Alison spends time with Minta Wade, Gerald Funderburk, and Pete Suddarth at the NCWA Convention.



Great job Sandra! We thank you for the gifts.

Alison congratulates the new NCWA Queen.



Alison loves watermelon!



Alison is working at the Ingles in Clemson, SC.



Alison enjoyed meeting Candice in Orlando, FL.



We enjoyed spending time with Jim Ray at the Ingles in Clemson, SC.



Thanks National Watermelon Promotion Board.



A big fan of Ingles and watermelon!



Thanks Mark for the wonderful meal.



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Bob

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Texas / Oklahoma Report

Greetings from the TEXAS WATERMELON ASSOCIATION.

Yes, we have changed our name, but it is only a name change. The name change will in no way alter how we promote watermelons. A unanimous vote from the board at our annual convention in San Antonio made us the Texas Watermelon Association.

Also at our annual meeting in January the following Board members moved to the Executive Council: Bob Ramming—Hinton, Oklahoma, Clifford Hamilton-Lubbock, Texas, and Don Dobbs-Peaster, Texas. Congratulations to the Executive Council and also to the new Board Members: Merritt Taylor-Lane, Oklahoma, Myron Harrison-Bogalusa, Louisiana, Brad McWhirter-Plains, Texas, David Willis-Uvalde, Texas, Paul Wiggins-Snook, Texas and Aaron Pennington-Grapeland, Texas.

Our convention in 2007 will be back in McAllen, Texas at the Embassy Suites Hotel. They are remodeling and say that it will be completed by the time we get there January 18-21, 2007.

The Association has sent out many letters to our Senators and House members about the closing of the Lane Research Center. We have received positive responses and some detailed reports of support for the Lane Research Center.

Congratulations to NWA for a great Convention. Thank you....

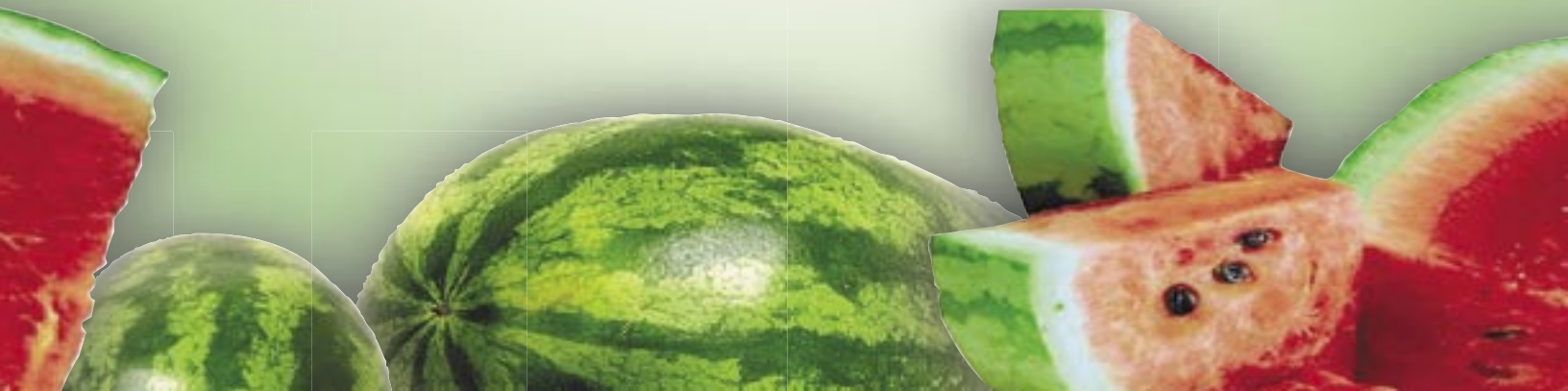
Our 2006 Texas Watermelon Queen Emily Laffere has been busy going to the state conventions since the NWA Convention. She attended the Illiana Convention and enjoyed everyone there, seeing friends she had already met and meeting new ones. Thanks to everyone at the Illiana

a Association for your great hospitality, we always enjoy your meetings.

Next we were off to the Florida Convention, Emily again enjoyed seeing everyone and helping out at their annual auction. Thanks to the Sunshine State for inviting us to your convention and for making us feel so very welcomed and at home.

We attended the National Watermelon Promotion Board's training class in Orlando, Florida. This one day that they spend there is so beneficial to the young ladies. All of the girls leave there more secure in their working position and knowing what is expected of them. Our Thanks to the NWPB for all that you do.

Until next time,
Wanda Letson
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www.texasoklahomawatermelons.com





A nice group of folks out for breakfast at the Black Buggy near Vincennes, Indiana



Our NWA President, Brent Jackson, visits with the queens.



NWA, Bob Morrissey signs for his auction item at the Illiana Auction.



Past Queen Stephanie Duda visits us at the Illiana Convention; looks like Steph and Emily are having a great time.



All the contestants and queens at work at the Illiana Auction.



Paul Teague enjoying himself at the dance.



Nice to see Mr. & Mrs. Buddy Leger in Illiana.



Always a pleasure visiting with Anita Field.



Emily say thanks to the Illiana Watermelon Association for their invitation to the convention.



Emily helping out at the Florida Auction, Billy looks busy.



Emily visits with TomiBeth with Zeraim Gedera in Florida... Tomibeth, a Texas girl working in Florida.



Emily says thanks to Jean and Kelly Marinaro for the auction item.



Emily visits with her Tennessee friends Nancy and Lee Harber.



A future watermelon queen maybe Halley....remember Holley Brown, past queen.



In Sarasota, Florida Emily finds a OU cigar boat along with lots of others.



A beautiful group of 2006 watermelon queens at the Florida Convention.

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