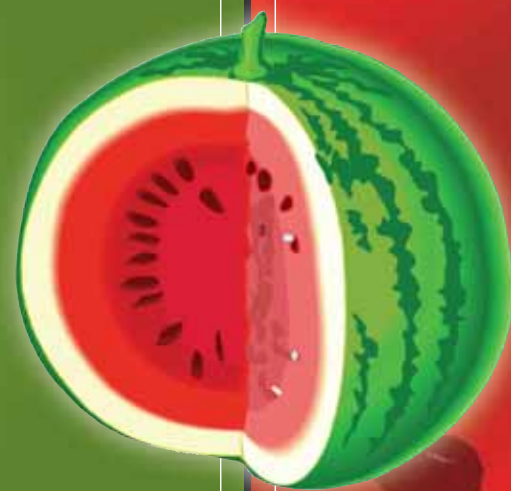


the vine line

Summer 2009

Official Newsletter of the NATIONAL WATERMELON ASSOCIATION



PBH pursuing New Marketing Board



The Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH) is in the midst of a seven month dialog with the fruit & vegetable industry about the possible development of a national fruit and vegetable marketing board.

The proposed objective of the marketing board is: To increase consumption in the United States of all forms of fruits and vegetables for better health through implementation of a comprehensive health marketing, communications, and education effort.

The new board, if created, would be aligned with the PBH mission to increase the U.S. consumption of fruits and vegetables. Their over-arching goal is to initiate a social marketing campaign that will change consumer behavior. All fruits and vegetables (with the exception of radishes, brussel sprouts and a couple others) would be included in the tax assessment. The reason given for not including those crops was that they have a very low perceived consumption, and they would not be promoted. This may be an objectionable area if they truly will trying to change overall F&V consumption behavior.

A total of \$30 million is proposed to be collected from first handlers. This amount would be collected via a 0.046 percent assessment (FOB) market value of all first handlers and importers of both fresh and processed fruits and vegetables. Assessments would exclude exports and organics. The passage of such a promotion board would be dependent on the outcome of a referendum, or vote, of first handlers. Voting would likely occur in 2011; and if passed, assessments would likely begin in 2012.

Two of the more significant draw-backs are that farmers will not have a vote in this referendum, and they will not be considered for Board positions on the newly created board; only first handlers. These objections are two of the largest issues in relation to this new tax idea thus far.

Numerous questions and objections have been presented from farmers, and industry organizations including:

- The majority of farmers will be paying the new tax, not the first handlers. Charge-backs to farmers are common with tax assessments, and they must have a vote in this process.
- The new board does not intend to support food safety or traceability needs of the industry. That in of itself is a high cost to farmers and packers that should be included.
- Farm input costs have increased by almost 45% since 2002, without including investments in food safety audits and traceability. The farmers and packers cannot take on additional taxes and stay in business without a return on the investment.
- Numerous industries have their own boards that handle marketing and research as outlined as a goal by the

H-2A Reforms Suspended

In a recent announcement, the U.S. Department of Labor suspended reforms made to the H-2A regulations by the Bush Administration in December 2008 for a period of nine months, at which point the Department will either make the suspension permanent, or lift the suspension altogether. The notification is the third modification of the H-2A program since December, and is contributing to increased confusion among program participants.



The regulations suspended pertain to the temporary employment and wage rates of H-2A-classified nonimmigrant workers in agricultural and logging capacities in the United States. This notification follows through on the Department's previous notification of intent to suspend those regulations on March 17 of this year. After the Department's initial notice, United Fresh Produce Association (on behalf of their member industries) filed comments that strongly opposed suspending these rules.

In making its ruling, the Department of Labor indicated that they received over 800 substantive comments on the previous notice of suspension. Due to the issues raised and the volume of comments, they previously announced in April that employers with "dates of need" through the end of 2009 would be afforded a transition period under the Bush Administration's reforms.

In addition to the H-2A revisions, the Obama Administration concurrently announced modifications to the Adverse Effect Wage Rate.

From these and previous H-2A reforms to the battle over card check, AgJobs and beyond, the NWA will continue to push for a more functional and pragmatic solution to labor issues so that our industry may count on a reliable and steady workforce.

new board. They have elected members that determine the 'spend' of their tax dollars to benefit the industry. How can a new board with no focus on a particular crop benefit that industry that is already taxing itself?

- The suggestion that possibly the existing marketing boards could 'pay the new tax' on behalf of their industry was not well received.

PBH continues to work with the F&V industry to try to sell this new idea by October. They indicated that

PBH continued on page 24

M.A.P. Funding at Risk



After nearly two-years of debate, Congress passed a new Farm Bill that will govern the nation's agriculture laws for the next five years.

The law makes a tremendous investment in programs that are of significant benefit to specialty crop producers by recognizing the needs and priorities of fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, nursery, and wine grape growers in the United States. This bill dedicates approximately \$3 billion in critical funding for specialty crop, pest and disease, trade, nutrition, research, and conservation priorities.

We have been working closely with USDA on the implementation process to ensure that these provisions are implemented in a way that addresses the unique needs of domestic specialty crop producers, as well as ensuring that implementation is in line with congressional intent. A number of issues have been worked out. We were therefore very disappointed that the President's FY 2010 budget request has targeted one of the most important trade tools many will utilize, the Market Access Program (MAP).

The economic well-being of specialty crops relies heavily on exports which account for one-third or more of domestic production, provides jobs for millions of Americans, and makes a positive contribution to our nation's overall trade balance and generates significant tax revenue to state and federal treasuries. Without improved international trade policies that advance open and fair trade practices in the global market, the U.S. surplus in agricultural trade, which has declined over 90% since 1996, will continue to fall.

U.S. specialty crop growers face significant obstacles in the development and maintenance of export markets for their commodities and unique challenges due to the perishable nature of our products. Without further commitment to export market development by the Federal government in programs such as the Market Access Program, the U.S. specialty crop industry will continue to lose market share to global market competitors.

Watermelon exports to Central America, Canada, Europe and Japan are all potentially included in this program, and are being pursued for market development by the NWPB. As a result, we are strongly encouraging Congress to allow the Market Access Program to continue at the levels provided in the Farm Bill and under the current terms of eligibility that have proven effective and successful.



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NWA Incentive Programs 2009

The NWA announces its incentive programs with sponsoring member companies for 2009. In 2008 the NWA received incentives exceeding \$20,000 through this unique relationship.

The partnership program was first established with CHEP USA in 2007 and has become a new valuable source of funding for the NWA. “The program has allowed us to increase our investments in cornerstone programs such as research grants and food safety while the participating companies market their goods and services to our membership”, said Bob Morrissey, NWA Executive Director. “It is a win-win scenario for both parties.” The programs in place for this domestic season are:

CHEP USA



The original program through CHEP includes both current and new CHEP users within our membership. A goal structure has been developed whereby each milestone contributes dollars to the NWA at the end of the year. To support this program, please consider utilizing CHEP pallets and service programs to fill your pallet needs. Morrissey said, “CHEP was the first member company to step forward with an incentive program, and it has paid the NWA handsomely every year. We look forward to another successful year with our friends at CHEP as they continue to offer their products & services to our members across the country.”

For more information, please contact Tony Mosco at (813) 792-1916, Anthony.Mosco@chep.com or <http://www.chep.com/>

HINKLE PRODUCE/Snoopy & Friends watermelon bins



In 2008 a program involving the Snoopy & The Peanuts Gang watermelon bins began through Dan Hinkle at Hinkle Produce. Once we reached an established level of corrugated bins sold, the NWA received an incentive for the increased numbers of Snoopy & The Peanuts Gang Watermelon Bins.

“2008 was a partial year for us with this program, yet was a successful start with a motivated marketer that looks to get much bigger this year”, said Bob Morrissey. “Now that Dan is back in the saddle from his successful disc surgery, and International Paper is involved with the program, we should have a great year with Hinkle in 2009. If any one can drive the deal, it is Dan.”

International Paper manufactures and provides the Snoopy & The Peanuts Gang corrugated bins. Hinkle Produce is based in Cissna Park, Illinois. For more information, please contact Dan Hinkle at (815) 457-2650, dhinkle@hinkleproduce.com or <http://www.hinkleproduce.com/>

LABEL TECHNIQUE SOUTHEAST



In 2008 we began a new program with Joan Wallace and the great folks at Label Technique Southeast. Similar to other programs, the NWA receives an incentive payment at the end of the year, in this case, for ALL labels that are purchased by our members throughout the year. “Joan and her staff have been wonderful to work with, and we truly appreciate their long-time support of the NWA, including the relatively new incentive program”, said Bob Morrissey. Label Technique Southeast is based in Pensacola, Florida. For more information please contact Joan Wallace at sjw@labeltechnique.com or <http://www.labeltechnique.com/>

SAKATA AMERICA



Also in 2008, we began a partnership program with Sakata America as they promoted a variety of water-

melon seed, SSX 7401. They also marketed the seed through advertising in The Vineline magazine. “Jay Jones and the Sakata Team wanted to do something a little different to differentiate themselves, to promote the watermelon seed variety, and they have done so with this program”, said Bob Morrissey. They presented an attractive check to the NWA at the Charleston convention, and hope to increase that check amount next year. We are greatly appreciative of their incentive check from 2008, and hope that they can increase the amount in 2009, too.

For more information, please contact Jay Jones at (239) 354-6732, jjones@sakata.com or <http://www.sakata.com/>

ALBANY PALLET EXCHANGE



A brand new program for 2009 was just agreed to with Albany Pallet Exchange. Based in Albany, Georgia, Milan and Steve Dubravcic own and operate a regional pallet supply company that currently services about four Southeastern states (Florida, Georgia, Alabama and South Carolina), with plans to expand to North Carolina this year. Bob Morrissey said, “Because this is a regional relationship, we decided to provide ALL of the earned incentive revenues to the participating chapters. Once the goals are met, the incentives begin to build, and the chapter that built that portion of the program will receive their share. We hope that this program will provide a new revenue stream for our participating chapters, and help Albany Pallet Exchange to build their customer base as a result.”

For more information, please contact Milan Dubravcic at (229) 883-0807, milan@albanypallet.com or <http://www.albanypallet.com/>



EPA Announces New Soil Fumigant Rules

EPA is strengthening safety measures for soil fumigant pesticides. The safety measures will reduce fumigant exposures to bystanders -- people who live, work, attend school, or spend time near agricultural fields that are fumigated -- and increase overall safety of fumigant use by requiring greater planning and compliance.

“With new restrictions, we’re allowing the continued use of fumigant pesticides without risking human health and the environment,” said EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson. “Full transparency and the best science shaped a plan to protect the economic interests of agricultural communities and the public health of farm workers and consumers.”

EPA took extensive public comments on the safety measures, announced initially in July 2008, to refine the measures as needed and develop an implementation strategy. This included many public meetings and visits with state agencies and agricultural, farm worker, and public health constituents. Adjustments to the 2008 proposal have been made based upon new scientific data and improved information on certain technological capabilities.

The original re-registration eligibility decisions were set at such an extreme level that any concessions would provide critical relief from an impossible burden on growers. The agency obviously considered numerous appeals and applied recently intensified scientific studies to moderate the original proposal. The measures will be implemented starting in the 2010 and 2011 growing seasons.

Fumigants are used on a wide range of crops and involve soil fumigants such as methyl bromide, chloropicrin, dazomet, metam sodium, metam potassium, and iodomethane, which are all subject to the new requirements.

New Mexican truck rules good for U.S. business

A plan containing guidelines on getting Mexican trucks back on U.S. highways has gone through bureaucratic review, which is the first step toward ending Mexican tariffs on U.S. goods.

“The tariffs were imposed as retaliation for legislation enacted in March that took Mexican trucks off American highways, despite the North American Free Trade Agreement’s program to let them into the U.S. The proposal has been through the interagency process and is ready to go to Congress.

After President Obama signed legislation that, among other things, ended the pilot program for Mexican trucks, Mexico quickly implemented the retaliatory

tariffs, affecting 89 U.S. agricultural and industrial products from 40 states. As weeks ticked by with no action on a plan to re-launch the trucking program, growing seasons for some affected agricultural producers have come and gone.

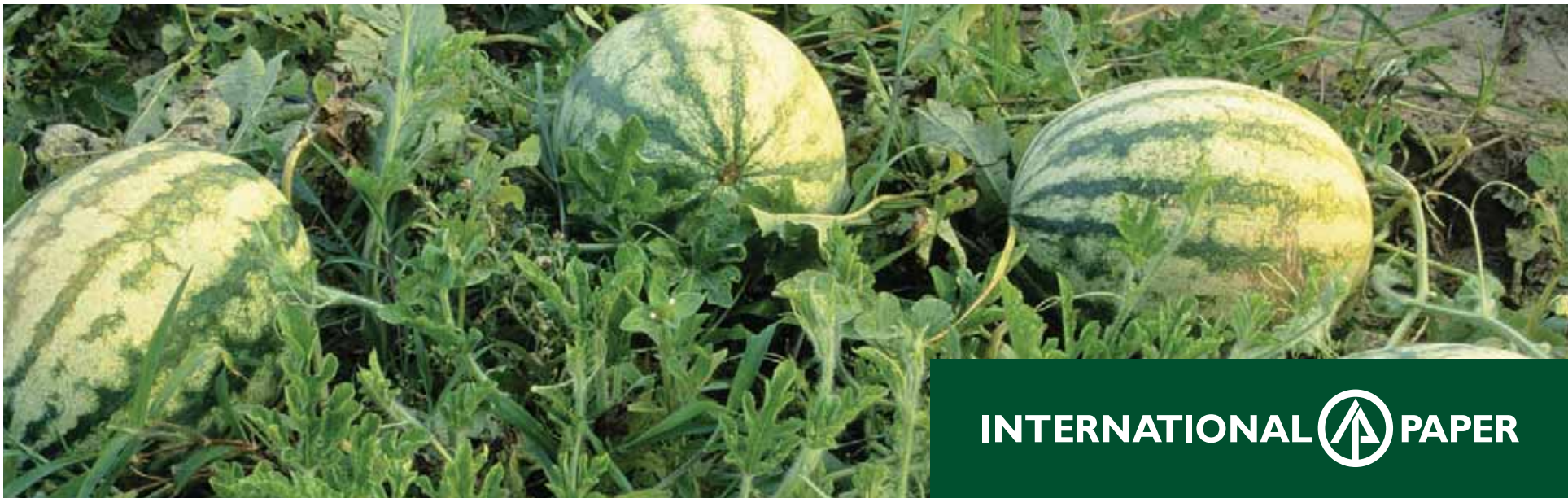
Companies from across the U.S. and their representatives in Washington have written letters, made speeches and lobbied to allow safety-approved Mexican trucks and truck drivers on U.S. roads.

A June 8 letter from 24 U.S. legislators to Mr. Obama noted that “many companies are being forced to shift production abroad or simply stop shipments.” “Over \$1.5 billion in U.S. manufactured products and \$900 million in U.S. agriculture products are impacted by the retaliatory tariffs.”

A letter to Mr. Obama in March warned that California agriculture stands to lose up to half its overall exports to Mexico and that the market could be eliminated for some commodities. Some companies have resorted to exploring alternatives to U.S. production. As part of NAFTA, Mexican trucks were to have

unrestricted access to highways, initially in the states that border Mexico - Texas, California, New Mexico and Arizona - and to all U.S. highways by January 2000.

We remain hopeful that Congress will pass this legislation after the summer break, and send a bill to the White House that will once again welcome Mexican trucks into the U.S.



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URGE CONGRESS TO PASS AgJOBS

On May 14th, S.1038 and H.R.2414, the Agricultural Job Opportunity, Benefits and Security Act (AgJOBS), was re-introduced in Congress. We need to support these critically important bills that would stabilize the ongoing labor crisis in the agriculture. The crisis has already resulted in decisions by farm owners and managers to scale back or cease production, or even move operations out of the country. Localized and costly labor shortages have also been reported in recent years, and will only worsen going forward unless the situation is addressed by Congress. The labor crisis may not have affected your operation yet, but please know that as many states continue to introduce their own stringent versions of immigration laws, it probably will, with damaging results.

AgJOBS is a two-part bill. The bill would extensively reform the broken H-2A seasonal worker program, providing farmers with better access to a stable, legal workforce in the future. H-2A reforms of AgJOBS streamline the application process, bring about legal & wage relief and some housing flexibility. The other part of AgJOBS addresses the fact that a majority of the current trained and experienced workforce in the agricultural sector is believed to lack proper work authorization. AgJOBS would offer many experienced and otherwise law-abiding immigrants already employed on American farms and nurseries to earn temporary legal status subject to strict conditions. Workers who meet all the program’s requirements would potentially eventually earn the right to ‘apply’ for residency, if they choose to do so.

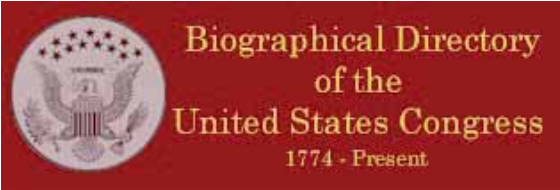
Opponents of any and all immigration reform, such as Lou Dobbs, are already at work to undermine H-2A, H-2B, AgJOBS, and comprehensive immi-



gration. Don’t let them determine the industry’s future. The President has called an immigration summit on June 17th, and has suggested that immigration reform will be debated later this year. Congress must hear from you and your employees now! Time is of the essence. Please act now to let your Senators and Representative know of your support for S.1038 and H.R.2414, AgJOBS.

A growing list of co-sponsors to the AgJobs bill is listed in this issue for your review. A suggested letter that you can print on your letter head or list your mailing address is posted on the NWA web site. You can find the email addresses, mailing addresses and fax numbers for the appropriate Congressional office at www.senate.gov/ and www.house.gov/.

It is up to each and every one of us. The last time that the U.S. Senate considered an immigration bill, Senate offices received 100 negative calls for every 1 positive contact. We must respond, and soon, in large numbers or continue to deal with State bills that place the heavy burden on our farms and packing facilities. Please contact Congress today. It will take you less than 10 minutes. Every letter, fax or email counts! Every one, including yours.



AgJobs Sponsors

H.R.2414

Title: To improve agricultural job opportunities, benefits, and security for aliens in the United States, and for other purposes.

Sponsor: Rep Berman, Howard L. [CA-28]
(introduced 5/14/2009)

Co-Sponsors (45), ALPHABETICAL

- Rep Arcuri, Michael [NY-24]
- Rep Bishop, Sanford D., Jr. [GA-2]
- Rep Blumenauer, Earl [OR-3]
- Rep Boyd, Allen [FL-2]
- Rep Capps, Lois [CA]
- Rep Cardoza, Dennis A. [CA-18]
- Rep Costa, Jim [CA-20]
- Rep Cuellar, Henry [TX-28]
- Rep Diaz-Balart, Lincoln [FL-21]
- Rep Diaz-Balart, Mario [FL-25]
- Rep Farr, Sam [CA-17]
- Rep Filner, Bob [CA-51]

- Rep Flake, Jeff [AZ-6]
- Rep Grijalva, Raul M. [AZ-7]
- Rep Gutierrez, Luis V. [IL-4]
- Rep Hastings, Alcee L. [FL-23]
- Rep Kind, Ron [WI]
- Rep Larsen, Rick [WI]
- Rep LaTourette, Steve [OH-14]
- Rep Lee, Christopher J. [NY-26]
- Rep Lofgren, Zoe [CA-16]
- Rep Maffei, Dan [NY-25]
- Rep Markey, Betsy [CO-4]
- Rep Massa, Eric J. J. [NY-29]
- Rep McHugh, John M. [NY-23]
- Rep Miller, Brad [FL-1]
- Rep Miller, George [CA-7]
- Rep Nunes, Devin [CA-21]
- Rep Peterson, Collin C. [MN-7]
- Rep Perriello, Thomas S.P. [VA-5]
- Rep Petri, Tom [WI]
- Rep Putnam, Adam H. [FL-12]
- Rep Rangel, Charles [NY-15]
- Rep Radanovich, George [CA-19]
- Rep Reyes, Silvestre [TX-16]
- Rep Rodriguez, Ciro [TX-23]
- Rep Rehberg, Denny [MT]
- Rep Ryan, Paul [WI-1]
- Rep Ros-Lehtinen, Ileana [FL-18]
- Rep Slaughter, Louise McIntosh [NY-28]
- Rep Sablan, Gregorio [MP]
- Rep Welch, Peter [VT]
- Rep Thompson, Mike [CA-1]
- Rep Wu, David [OR-1]
- Rep Woolsey, Lynn [CA-6]

S.1038

Title: A bill to improve agricultural job opportunities, benefits, and security for aliens in the United States and for other purposes.

Sponsor: Sen Feinstein, Dianne [CA]
(introduced 5/14/2009)

Co-Sponsors (17), ALPHABETICAL

- Sen Bingaman, Jeff [NM]
- Sen Boxer, Barbara [CA]
- Sen Cantwell, Maria [WA]
- Sen Casey, Robert P., Jr. [PA]
- Sen Dodd, Christopher J. [CT]
- Sen Feingold, Russell D. [WI]
- Sen Harkin, Tom [IA]
- Sen Kaufman, Edward E. [DE]
- Sen Kennedy, Edward M. [MA]
- Sen Kerry, John F. [MA]
- Sen Kohl, Herb [WI]
- Sen Leahy, Patrick J. [VT]
- Sen Levin, Carl [MI]
- Sen Lieberman, Joseph I. [CT]
- Sen Murray, Patty [WA]
- Sen Nelson, Bill [FL]
- Sen Schumer, Charles E. [NY]

Federal Estate Taxes Affect Fewer Farms but Future Is Uncertain



In 2009, Federal estate tax revenues are estimated at about \$26 billion. While the importance of Federal estate taxes is relatively small (about 1% of total revenues), their potential effect on farmers and other small business owners is a major concern. These groups are more likely than the general public to owe estate taxes, and much of the concern focuses on the ability of the next generation to continue operating and investing in these family-owned businesses. For many farms, business assets account for a large share of the owner’s estate. In such instances, estate tax liabilities not only drain the business of funds that might otherwise be reinvested, but could also force the liquidation of business assets.

Over the years, a number of provisions have been enacted to reduce the burden of the estate tax on farmers and small business owners. These include a special provision that allows farm real estate to be valued at its farm use value rather than its fair market value, an installment payment provision, and a special deduction for family-owned businesses. These provisions have increased the ability of many farmers and small business owners to transfer their businesses to the next generation.

Providing tax relief to farmers and other small business owners was an impetus for the Economic Growth and Taxpayer Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 (the 2001 Act). The 2001 Act reduced Federal estate and gift tax rates and substantially increased the amount of property that can be transferred to the next generation free of Federal estate tax, culminating in the complete repeal of the tax in 2010.

Coinciding with repeal of the estate tax is a modification to the “step-up” in basis provision that currently exempts unrealized capital gains earned prior to death from Federal income tax when the inherited assets are sold. The new basis provision, which takes effect in 2010, limits the step-up in basis to a specified amount, resulting in potential income tax liability when inherited assets are eventually sold. However, like many other changes in the 2001 Act, the estate tax changes and basis provisions will expire at the end of 2010. Without further legislation, these provisions will revert to pre-2001 law. As a result, interest is high among farmers, small business owners, and policymakers to enact tax legislation to address these issues before 2010.

Since 2001, the amount exempted from the estate tax has gradually increased from \$675,000 to \$3.5 million, while the maximum tax rate has declined from 55 percent to 45 percent. The estates of small business owners are about twice as likely as the typical estate to owe tax, and farm estates are even more likely to owe tax, primarily because of their land holdings.

The impact of the Federal estate tax varies by farm type. Despite estate tax relief targeted to farmland,

an estimated 10 percent of the estates of commercial farmers (those with annual farm sales of \$250,000 or more) are likely to owe Federal estate taxes in 2009. Under the 2001 Act, the estate tax is repealed completely in 2010. However, since the 2001 estate tax changes are scheduled to expire at the end of 2010, this repeal is only temporary. The resurrected tax in 2011 reverts to the law that was in place prior to the 2001 changes. As a result, the exempt amount would return to \$1 million and the top tax rate would revert to 55 percent. This situation not only creates uncertainty but it also raises concerns regarding the disparate treatment of similar estates depending upon the date of death. The family of a person who dies on January 1, 2011, could owe considerably more than the heirs of a person dying a few days earlier.

The reversion to pre-2001 law will increase the share of estates that owe Federal estate tax and will result in higher Federal estate tax revenues. The share of estates that would owe tax under a reversion to pre-2001 law has been estimated to increase to about 2.5 percent of all estates, with total tax liability nearly doubling to over \$50 billion.

Under current law, the value used to determine gain or loss for tax purposes of inherited assets is their fair market value at the date of death. This “step-up in basis rule” essentially eliminates the recognition of capital gains due to appreciation in the value of property occurring prior to the property owner’s death. This rule is especially beneficial for assets, such as farmland, that are typically held for long periods and have appreciated considerably.

With repeal and resurrection of the estate tax approaching, there is increasing interest in a substantial permanent increase in the exempt amount combined with the retention of the “stepped-up basis at death” treatment for inherited assets. The President’s 2010 Budget would make the current \$3.5 million exemption amount and maximum 45-percent tax rate permanent and retain the stepped-up basis treatment for inherited assets. This would limit the share of estates subject to tax to less than one-half of 1 percent of all estates and between 1 and 2 percent for farm estates. It would also reduce some of the uncertainty and inequity created by the temporary repeal and sunset provisions applicable under current law.

ICE steps-up audits of employment records

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is launching a bold, new audit initiative by issuing Notices of Inspection (NOIs) to 652 businesses nationwide – which is more than ICE issued throughout all of last year. The notices alert business owners that ICE will be inspecting their hiring records to determine whether or not they are complying with employment eligibility verification laws and regulations. Inspections are one of the most powerful tools the federal government has to enforce employment and immigration laws. This new initiative illustrates ICE’s increased focus on holding employers accountable for their hiring practices and efforts to ensure a legal workforce.

“ICE is committed to establishing a meaningful I-9 inspection program to promote compliance with the law. This nationwide effort is a first step in ICE’s long-term strategy to address and deter illegal employment,” said Department of Homeland Security Assistant Secretary for ICE John Morton.

Employers are required to complete and retain a Form I-9 for each individual they hire for employment in the United States. This form requires employers to review and record the individual’s identity document(s) and determine whether the document(s) reasonably appear to be genuine and related to the individual.

The 652 businesses being presented with a NOI for a Form I-9 audit have been selected for inspection as a result of leads obtained through investigative means.

In April, ICE implemented a new, comprehensive strategy to reduce the demand for illegal employment and protect employment opportunities for the nation’s lawful workforce. Under this strategy, ICE is focusing its resources on the auditing and investigation of employers suspected of cultivating illegal workplaces by knowingly employing illegal workers. The nationwide initiative being launched is a direct result of this new strategy.

AgJobs Co Sponsor Letter

I am writing to ask you to consider becoming a cosponsor of the AgJobs bill. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) introduced S.1038 in the Senate, and Reps. Howard Berman (D-28-Calif.) and Adam Putnam (R-12-Fla.) introduced H.R. 2414 in the House. The bipartisan AgJOBS bill will stabilize the agriculture labor workforce and will help our economy.

I am a business operator in the watermelon industry and part of the larger agricultural economy of this country. Many of our businesses, along with those in other labor intensive parts of agriculture, depend on a foreign workforce to fulfill our labor needs. It is estimated that 70 percent of the farm workforce today is undocumented, putting growers and other producers in the precarious position of facing increased enforcement that offers no access to legal guest workers. Without that labor, we cannot grow, pack and ship crops for U.S. consumers.

The AgJobs bill is an important piece of legislation that offers a solution to the legal farm labor shortage facing us today and for many years past. AgJOBS would provide a long-term solution by fixing the broken H-2A program which currently is an extremely difficult, expensive, and time-consuming way to recruit and retain seasonal farm workers. In the short

term, AgJOBS will also allow growers to retain their current trained and trusted workforce. To qualify for this provision, the workers would have to come forward, undergo a background check and pay a fine as well as work in agriculture for three to five years, thereby stabilizing the workforce until employers can use a reformed H-2A program.

Workers in the produce industry help sustain other jobs in local economies, and also generate much needed spending in local communities. Agricultural economists estimate that for every farm worker job, 2 to 3 non-farm jobs are sustained in transportation, packing, processing, insurance and other industries. Many in our industry have already made decisions to plant less or move production out of the country. That production loss equals the loss of non-farm jobs and less economic benefit to our own economy.

There is tremendous uncertainty in our labor supply which is having a profound impact on our outlook for the future and our ability to plan. AgJOBS is about preserving and protecting the American economy. I urge you to become a cosponsor of the AgJobs bill. Thank you again for your consideration of supporting a solution and standing up for agriculture.



FDA Commissioner Faces Large To-Do List

Margaret A. Hamburg, the new commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, wants to reorient the sprawling bureaucracy and remake it into the key federal agency that protects public health.

“It really goes back to what the FDA was about from the very beginning: a very clear public health mission but with a regulatory framework for action,” Hamburg said yesterday, adding that she wants to increase transparency and pump up enforcement.

“The FDA has been seen as a cold regulatory agency and also something of a black box,” she said. “We have a chance to open it up and make sure the American people have the safe, high-quality foods they need, the safe and high-quality drugs and medical equipment they need.”

With nearly 11,000 employees, the FDA is charged with overseeing products that account for a quarter of consumer spending in the United States. During the past few years, consumer groups charged that the FDA was making decisions on the basis of political ideology and not science. The agency was lambasted on Capitol Hill for a series of food-borne illnesses, the most recent of which was a salmonella outbreak that sickened 700 people, killed nine and prompted the largest recall in U.S. history.

The FDA has been unable to ensure the safety of imported goods pouring into the United States from around the world, including food, drugs and raw materials.

“I’ve been really impressed by the dedicated staff,” she said. “There’s a lot to be done, but I don’t think it’s a patient in crisis. I think it’s really important to restore confidence, to restore faith that the FDA is going to use the best available science and has real integrity.”

Hamburg, a Harvard-trained physician, is a former health commissioner of New York City and was an assistant secretary at Health and Human Services during the Clinton administration. Most recently, she was vice president for biological programs at the Nuclear Threat Initiative, a think tank.

A House committee has taken up legislation that would give FDA broad new powers to regulate food safety -- a bill that House leaders are determined to pass this year. The bill would place greater responsibility on the food industry to prevent food-borne illnesses and would require the FDA to significantly expand its inspection and oversight of the industry. She says she is determined not to let the work overwhelm her life and makes it a point to try to eat dinner with her husband and two teenage children, toting home a briefcase filled with 10 pounds of work each night. “The first weeks have been very full,” she said. “And my learning curve is extremely steep.”

National Leafy Green Marketing Agreement



A formal proposal has been sent to the USDA from industry supporters asking the USDA to begin a process to consider a national marketing agreement for leafy greens. This marketing agreement approach, which would be focused exclusively on food safety practices, would be similar to the very successful California Marketing Agreement concept. Once the USDA begins the formal process it is likely to take up to 2 years before implementation.

The California agreement has about 99% of the leafy greens industry in that state supporting the agreement. Unlike a marketing order which is mandatory, a marketing agreement is a voluntary program for produce companies involved with leafy greens. Once a company signs up, the food safety practices and audit processes become mandatory with audits and certification handled by the California Department of Agriculture’s dedicated & trained leafy greens inspectors. It is deemed to be an extremely successful model program and was in direct response to the spinach issue from 2007.

Social Security No-Match Rule Rescinded

The Department of Homeland Security announced that the Social Security No-Match Rule would be rescinded. This marks the end of a long legal and regulatory battle over one of the most controversial immigration enforcement efforts of the Bush Administration.

Under the original rule, employers would have been required to act as an enforcement arm of the federal government. The burden of fines and possible criminal prosecution would have been placed upon growers, labor contractors, and other organizations.

In September 2007, United Fresh joined six other plaintiffs in filing a Motion to Intervene that challenged the No-Match Rule on several grounds, including violations of the Regulatory and Flexibility Act and of the Administrative Procedure Act. Among other claims, the suit cited the severe economic hardship that businesses could endure in order to immediately comply with the regulations. Subsequent court rulings have ruled in United’s favor, successfully blocking implementation of the rule



WIC program includes Fruits & Vegetables

WIC program includes Fruits & Vegetables
Over the summer we expect several more states to join New York and Delaware by implementing the new Women, Infants and Children (WIC) food packages to include fruits and vegetables. The following list is considered to be tentative:

July 2009
Utah, Connecticut, Louisiana

August 2009
Wisconsin, Iowa, Michigan, S. Dakota, Oregon, Minnesota

September 2009
N. Dakota, Illinois, Colorado

October 2009
All other States

The WIC program provides coupons for the purchase of nutritional foods to Women, Infants and Children through this long standing federal program. The inclusion of fruits and vegetables for the produce industry is a huge win for our industry, and for the nutrition of WIC participants.

In March 2008, DHS published a Supplemental Proposed Rulemaking for the No-Match Rule, and in October DHS announced the Supplemental Final Rule, which was meant to address the procedural issues raised in the lawsuit. In December, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California refused to lift an injunction against the Bush Administration’s revised Social Security No-Match Rule until the Obama Administration took office.

“The No-Match Rule would have cost produce industry employers millions of dollars in administrative costs, so we are pleased that DHS has chosen to rescind this rule and look to develop a more effective program,” said Robert Guenther, senior vice president of public policy for United Fresh. “United will continue to work with DHS on this important issue.”

Also today in a related development, Senator David Vitter (R-LA) has submitted an amendment to a DHS FY2010 appropriations bill that would prevent DHS from rescinding or revising the current 2007 final rule. We have submitted a letter to Congress opposing this amendment. Stay posted to the NWA web site for more information.

National Audit process beginning?

Following the Global Food Safety Audit conference held at United’s convention in April, it was agreed by the majority of the group that United will lead the industry to compare every available third-party audit to achieve some common goals:

1. Identify the 90% commonality of audits
2. Separate non-food safety questions (i.e. quality, environment, social, economic)
3. Begin a dialogue with the entire food chain to develop a common template
4. Reduce audit costs for the produce industries

A United food safety working group will have the 90% commonality and side-by-side comparison of audits released in July 2009, which will spear head this process moving forward.

It is vital that we come together as produce industry and open dialogue with retailer and food service customers to reduce the repetitiveness and numbers of audits from so many third party firms. Although no retailers were in attendance at the seminar, indications are that many are open to engaging in the discussions. Positive signs that we can find common ground? Let’s hope so.

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*EU Safety of Toys NIST GCR 01-823, National Institute of Standards and Technology Toy Safety Directive 88/378/EC (European Commission)
**Indirect Food Additives 21 CFR 178 (US FDA)

National Report

We are in the height of the Season, and our 2009 National Watermelon Queen has been extremely busy promoting our product. Maggie is doing a fantastic job for us, working hard and enjoying every moment! We have covered a lot of ground since she was crowned in Charleston; we have limited space so I will have to keep it brief.

ILLIANA BRINGS HOME THE CROWN & THE QUEEN

The week following National convention, Maggie and I were sponsored to her home team IWA for their annual convention! They were indeed Home Town Proud! President Brad Tony welcomed Maggie! He and his wife Angie hosted an Island Luau President’s reception complete with a pig roast! The IWA group congratulated Maggie with a cake, banners, life size cut photo and all the warmth and pride that an association could show! It was such a pleasure to be sponsored to their convention. Maggie thanks all the people that purchased the countless items for her during the auction, as well as myself, thank you for all your generosity! We congratulate Johnna Thompson on being selected their new 2009 Queen, she is already having a terrific year! Thanks again to IWA for sponsoring us to your convention at the Casino Aztar! Maggie and I were thrilled to be there!

FLORIDA WATERMELON ASSOCIATION SPONSORS

We were sponsored to the annual Florida Watermelon Association in Sarasota, Florida. President Paul Sawyer and Jackie had an awesome convention. It was great seeing everyone! Debra had a great lineup of contestants. Kaley Jo Harper (First Runner-up at Nationals) left some big shoes to fill! It was a delightful convention! We congratulate Jessica Southard on being selected the 2009 Florida Watermelon Queen! She has been off to a great start! I was thrilled to see my 1992 National Queen, ’91 FWA Queen, Bonnie Mullins and her beautiful daughter Macy. Special thanks to, Paul, Patty and Debra for your hospitality and to FWA for sponsoring us!

MAGGIE GETS NATIONAL COVERAGE ON MR. FOOD SHOW

In mid April we were sponsored by the National Watermelon Promotion Board, to Ft. Lauderdale for the taping of a famous and nationally syndicated television show and radio chef, Art Ginsburg, better known as, “Mr. Food”. He originated quick and easy cooking for TV! We joined Stephanie Simek at the Mr. Food studio. He is a delightful person and Maggie truly enjoyed working with him! The show is set to air on July1, 2009! Maggie did a fantastic job! We, along with Stephanie prepped for the training seminar the following day. Stephanie treated us to dinner on the beach at Aruba the evening before! Thanks NWPB!

NWPB TRAINING WORKSHOP

The same afternoon we started the weekend training workshop. We enjoyed the roundtable discussion with the Coordinators, Gordon and Stephanie, while the girls were going over interview tips, key messages, and communication skills with Leslie. We all enjoyed a group dinner. It was so nice to visit all the new Queens and our Coordinators, and NWPB staff! The following day the girls enjoyed touring the Mr. Food studio, meeting him, and all the photo ops! We were pleased to be joined by Jean Marino, new NWPB board member. Maggie and I prepared a couple of recipes, and cutting demonstration. This was followed by a marketing overview from Gordon, and Stephanie.

In the afternoon the girls enjoyed meeting Nicole Johnson, 1999 Miss America. She shared etiquette tips and stories from her experiences. She has diabetes, and is an advocate, promoting awareness, prevention and management. Nicole has a weekly TV show on CNBC. It was a real treat for the girls. Special thanks to NWPB for this special weekend for us! We appreciate you!

CHEP PALLET, YOTTA MARK AND SYNGENTA SPONSOR UNITED

We were sponsored to the United Fresh Fruit & Vegetable convention in Las Vegas, Nevada, by Chep Pallet, Yotta Mark and Syngenta. Our first event was the bowling tournament, the MELON team headed by Bob Morrissey, with his wife Betsy, Maggie and myself. We didn’t win but certainly enjoyed the event! The three day show was a great opportunity for Maggie. We thank Chep Pallett, and Mr. Craig Kelly for treating us to dinner and including us with the group. Thanks for your hospitality! We also thank Scott Carr and Yotta Mark, and Craig Mathis with Syngenta, as well as Chep for helping sponsor us!

BROWNING & SONS AND DELTA FRESH SPONSOR RACE FOR THE CURE

We left Las Vegas headed for Bentonville, Arkansas to participate in their first annual Race for the Cure event to benefit breast cancer awareness. We teamed up with the CH Robinson group. It was a fantastic turn out, around 30,000 people. Bruce Bolton, of C H Robinson and I cut watermelon fast and furiously at our booth, with the help of Dennis Randolph of Wal-Mart, while Maggie joined Leslie Bloebaum, and Hillary of Browning & Sons, and other CH Robinson team members, at the kids section. It was a huge success! The chairman of the event thanked each one personally for the success of the day! Special thanks to Gareth Smith, Browning & Sons and Chris & Leslie Bloebaum, and Paul Teague of Delta Fresh for sponsoring us!

We have so much more to share with you, but out of space. Until next printing, “Best of the Season” to each of you!

Eleanor T. Bullock
NWA Promotion Coordinator
229.273.8638 office • 229.322.9933 cell • 229.271.8111 fax email, eleanor@websign.net



IWA President Brad Tony, wife Angie , and family welcome Maggie



Hugs to Beth and Jill



Thank You IWA



Maggie's Supportive Family



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National Pictures



Congratulations Johnna!



Maggie Visits NWA's 2nd Vice President, Jim Schmidt



Maggie chats with NWA President, John Lapide, and wife Lisa FWA



NWPB's Executive Director, Mark Arney and Gordon Hunt in Sarasota



FWA President Paul Sawyer, and wife Jackie, Thank You!



Brenda Mack, Jay Allen Mack treat Maggie, Bonnie & Macy Mullins to lunch



These ladies Congratulate Jessica Southard, 2009 FWA Queen



Dinner on the Beach with Stephanie



Maggie meets, 1999 Miss America, Nicole Johnson in Ft. Lauderdale



On the Air with Mr. Food!



All the girls meet Mr. Food



Maggie shows off her techniques on Mr. Food!



The Watermelon Bowling Team, United in Vegas!



Thank to the Chep Pallet for Sponsoring!



Maggie visits HarvestMark's booth & Miz Nakajima at United



Maggie thanks HarvestMark, Scott Carr and Elliott Grant for helping sponsor her at United



Dinner with the Chep team!



Maggie visits with United Fresh's Jeff Oberman



Maggie serves Watermelon, at Race For The Cure



C H Robinson's, Bruce Bolton sliced lots of Watermelon!



Wal-Mart's, Dennis Randolph worked hard at the Race for the Cure!



Maggie poses with Leslie, of Delta Fresh and Hillary of Browning & Sons in Rogers Arkansas



Maggie checks out the Breast Cancer Awareness Bin



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Alabama Report

Watermelon greetings to one and all from our AWA Queen Melinda,

Melinda’s year as our queen is off to a great start with the University of Alabama awarding her an internship in Brussels, Belgium July 9 through August 9. Melinda will be studying International Conflict and Judicial Systems while in Europe. It is wonderful for Melinda to have her university’s support and encouragement during her time abroad. We not only have an energetic queen, but a gifted one as well!

In April, Melinda attended the NWPB Marketing Seminar in Fort Lauderdale, FL. Thanks to Mark Arney and staff for a very interesting and informative presentation. Those in attendance received marketing information, interview tips, and an overview of the health benefits of watermelon that will lead to a very productive year for our product. While at the seminar, the 1999 Miss America Queen Nicole Johnson presented information related to working with the media and proper etiquette.

Melinda attended the successful Newberry Watermelon Festival on Friday and Saturday, May 22 and 23. The activities included a parade, luncheon, contests, a rodeo, and the queen pageant. Thank you to AWA members Billy Smith of Billy Smith’s Watermelons and Jeff Garrett of Clifton Seed Company for her sponsorship.

Queen Melinda held a watermelon day for St. Paul’s Catholic School in Leesburg, FL on Thursday June 4. She read books, handed out delicious watermelon slices, and signed autographs for over 200 students. The students obviously loved being with Queen Melinda. Thank you to Joey Willis of Willis Farms and John Lapide and Hammy Dicks of Melon 1 for donating 25 watermelons for our promotion.

That weekend, June 5-7th, Melinda attended the Chiefland Watermelon Festival. We would like to give a gracious thank you to Rantz Smith for securing our lodging during the festival at the beautiful Gilchrest Hunt Club. We were joined with the Florida Watermelon Queen Jessica and her coordinator Debra Harrison, and the Newberry Watermelon Queen Brandi and her coordinator Lisa Hughes. Thank you to our sponsor Josh Moore of Timco Worldwide, who also gave Melinda an extensive tour of his packinghouse facility and watermelon farm fields.

After the festival, Melinda spent a few days in the Orlando, FL area. While there, she was able to see the Broadway production of “Stomp.” Coming up, Melinda will travel to Washington D.C. for Safeway’s National Barbeque Battle Promotion, thanks to the sponsorship of Cheryl Hicks of PCA, Terry Jones of McMelon Inc., Jim Mastropietro of International Paper, and Billy Smith of Billy Smith’s Watermelons.

Please keep in mind; we would like to set as many promotions as we can, so help us continue being busy promoting watermelons for you. Good luck to everyone for a productive and successful summer of delicious watermelon!

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



Queen Melinda gets a chance to meet the 1999 Miss America Nicole Johnson and try her crown on for fun at NWPB.



Melinda and experienced chef Mr. Food both enjoy delicious watermelons.



While at NWPB, all of the queens enjoy learning about watermelons and cooking with Mr. Food in his kitchen.



Melinda and NWA Queen Maggie enjoy learning about cooking in Mr. Food’s kitchen.



Queen Melinda looks forward to the schedule of events at the Newberry Watermelon Festival.



Chiefland Watermelon Queen Maddie, Alabama Queen Melinda, and Florida Watermelon Queen Jessica shine at the



Melinda spends some time in the watermelon fields with Rantz Smith.



Melinda is always looking for a good watermelon.



Queen Melinda shares her watermelon passion with the kindergartners at Grandview Elementary in Dothan, AL.



Melinda celebrates a day celebrating watermelons with students at St. Paul’s Catholic School.



Melinda enjoys a cookout with Billy Smith while in Chiefland for the Watermelon Festival.



Melinda loves learning more about watermelon’s at Billy Smith’s.



Newberry Queen Brandi, Florida Queen Jessica, and Queen Melinda enjoy a cookout with Jeff Garrett during their time in Chiefland.



Girls of all ages love to share their passion for watermelons with Queen Melinda.



Melinda and one of the youngest queens enjoy the Chiefland Watermelon Queen Pageant.



Melinda makes a new friend at the Gilchrest Hunt Club.

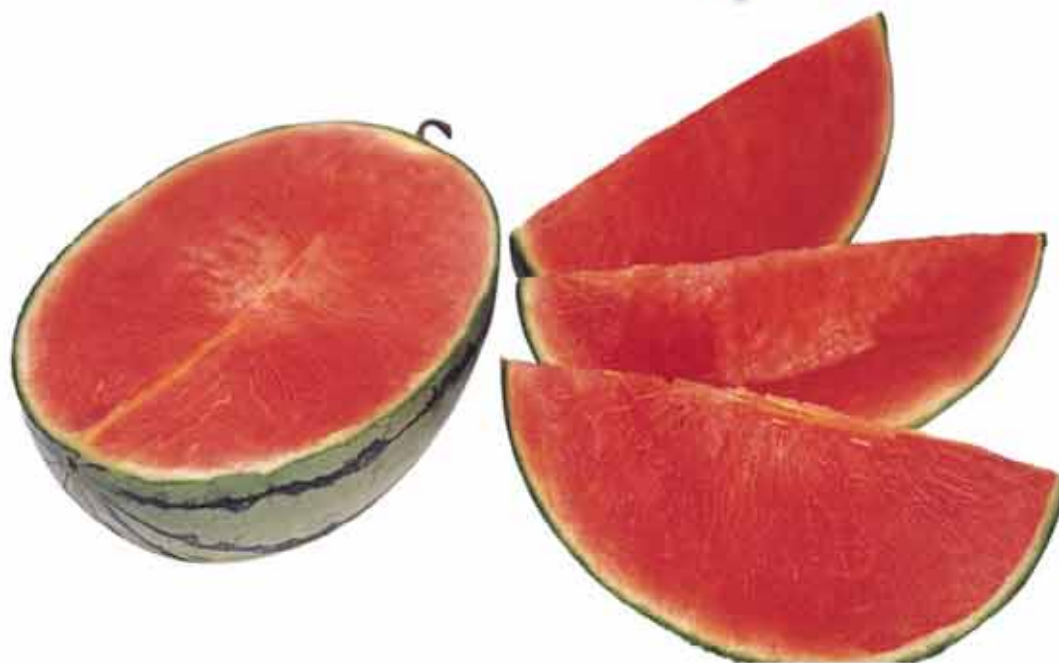


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Florida Report

Greetings from the Sunshine State of Florida

Wow, if you did not attend the 41st Annual Florida Watermelon Convention held at the Sarasota Hyatt in Sarasota, Florida you missed a Jingle Bell good time. A special thanks to our President, Paul Sawyer and first lady Jackie for a wonderful convention at the Christmas Jingle Jamboree. This year's convention was beautifully decorated in Christmas trees and decorations. It was dedicated to our good friends Mr. Bill Ward and Mr. Lester Faulhauber who will be truly missed.

On Saturday evening, after an exciting weekend of competition, the banquet ended with the crowning of the 2009 Florida Watermelon Queen, Jessica Southard of Bronson, Florida. She is the daughter of Gary & Kathi Southard of Bronson, Florida. Jessica is attending the University of Florida (Go Gator's) majoring in Agricultural Communications. The first runner-up is Maddie Kelley of Old Town, Florida attending Jacksonville University and second runner-up is Shelly Allen of Tallahassee, Florida attending Florida State University. Congratulation also goes to Maddie Kelly and Bridgette Utley of Chipley, Florida for the Miss Jubilee Award. Way to go girls!

As you can see Jessica and I have been on the road these last several months promoting our Florida watermelon product. We would like thank everyone who had a helping hand on a watermelon promotion, donating bins of watermelons, or purchasing gift items for Jessica and me. We would also like to thank our sponsors for sponsoring us in all events. Without you Jessica and I couldn't have done it. Thanks so much!

Wishing everyone a successful watermelon season until next time

Debra Harrison
Florida Watermelon Promotions Coordinator
Email: debrathreel@earthlink.net
Home: (863) 494-1163
*Cellular: (863) 633-8306

* Please note my cellular number has changed



Our dearest FWA "HAS BEEN" welcoming Queen Jessica to the watermelon family, Bonnie, Karen Ann, Erin, Kelly, Katie, and Kaley.



Queen Training in Fort Lauderdale with "Mr. Food".



Kids enjoying the Christmas story by our special guests Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus (President Paul Sawyer and first lady Jackie Sawyer) at our Florida Watermelon Convention held in March.



It's always a pleasure to visit with Mike Caruthers and Gordon Etheridge at Etheridge Produce.



Queen Jessica visiting with Doug and Kay Dickerson with Nature's Choice in Immokalee, Florida.



A day in the field learning about watermelons with Mr. Jim Barfield.



FWQ Jessica working at the watermelon wheel at Wolf Island.



It's always fun and a great learning experience when we visit Phil Turner Farms in Arcadia.



FWA Queen Jessica visiting with Carr Hussey in Arcadia.



We would like to welcome "The Southard Family".



Thank you Mr. Don Green for a wonderful weekend in Newberry.



FWQ Jessica visiting our first vice-president Mr. Billy Smith in Trenton, Florida.



Thank you Josh Moore for all that you do!



Queen Jessica teaching the kids at Terringer Elementary School on how to spit a watermelon seed for the Watermelon Seed Spitting contest.



Thanks NWQ Maggie and Eleanor for helping us at the "Taste of Pinellas" in St. Petersburg, Florida.



FWQ Jessica at the "Taste of Pinellas" raising over 3 million dollars for All Children Hospital.



Doris Ayoob receiving this year's June Smith Award.



Our FWA Queen Jessica Southard and her court, 2nd Runner-up Shelly Allen and 1st runner-up Maddie Kelly.



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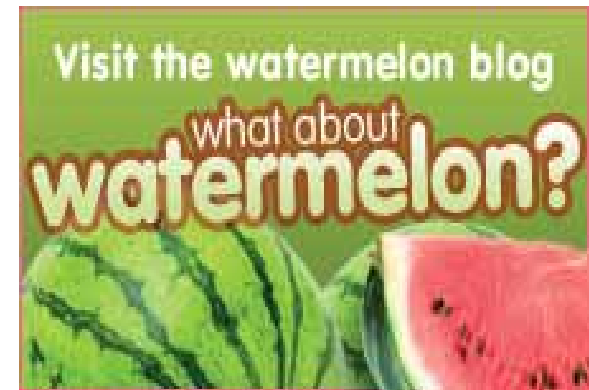


What About Watermelon? The Blog

Watermelon – it’s not just for summer picnics anymore. That’s the message, among many others, behind efforts by the National Watermelon Promotion Board’s (NWPB) to bring the iconic fruit into the 21st century with its very own blog.

The blog, called What About Watermelon and accessible at watermelon.org, is part of an ongoing effort by the NWPB to help Americans fall in love with the juicy produce all over again and offer culinary inspiration by portraying watermelon as an ingredient in everything from pancakes to pasta.

“The image of watermelon is long overdue for a makeover, and that’s what we hope to accomplish with this blog,” said NWPB Executive Director Mark Arney, who noted in the blog’s first entry that of the more than 70 million blogs in existence, the NWPB’s is the first dedicated solely to watermelons. “We’re also looking forward to engaging in conversations with others out there who love watermelon just as much as we do.”



Updated two to three times each week, What About Watermelon will feature watermelon recipes, news and facts – from why knocking on a watermelon to determine ripeness doesn’t work to an inside look at life on a watermelon farm.

The blog will also host monthly polls, award watermelon-related prizes to comments chosen at random, and host a panel of watermelon experts, including a chef, a nutritionist, a farmer, and the National Watermelon Queen herself. Readers can e-mail questions to any panelist and receive personalized answers.

Chef Harry Schwartz serves as the blog’s expert for all things cooking and kitchen related. Schwartz, or “Chef Harry” as he prefers to be called, is an author and national TV personality who began working with the NWPB in 2004 during its campaign to fight childhood obesity.

“There’s so much you can do with watermelon beyond the traditional wedge at the backyard barbecue,” said Chef Harry. “Demonstrating that versatility is just one of many goals of the blog. Another is to have fun, because watermelon is a fun food no matter what time of year it is!”

News from the National Watermelon Promotion Board

Retail Display Contest in July

This July we will be conducting a National Watermelon Month display contest in conjunction with the National Watermelon Association. The contest is open to retailers throughout the U.S. and Canada. There are multiple prize levels for eight retail regions, a \$1,000 first prize and a trip for two to Dallas, Texas.

We are very excited about retail participation in what we hope will be the first annual National Watermelon Month retail display contest, and we encourage you to share this information with your retail customers and accounts. For more informa-

tion, please visit the Retailer section of the website watermelon.org, or call Marketing Director Gordon Hunt toll free at 1-877-599-9595 extension 207.



Summertime Savings with A&W Root Beer

Watermelon received national promotional coverage in June. Together with Vidalia Onions, the NWPB participated in a month-long promotional campaign



- 8 to 10 medium tomatillos, peel off parchment-like coating & rinse
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 Vidalia® Onion, minced
- 3 jalapeño peppers, or to taste, seeded & chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons mild chili powder
- 1 cup tomato sauce or puree
- 1 cup watermelon chunks
- Salt and pepper to taste

Cut the tomatillos into quarters. Heat the oil in a large heavy saute pan over medium-high heat. Add onions and saute for a few minutes. Then add the tomatillos, garlic, and jalapeños. Saute until the onions and garlic begin to brown. Reduce heat to low and sprinkle the cumin and chili powder over the pan. Stir in the tomato sauce and bring to a simmer. Remove from heat. Cool. Place in a blender or food processor with the watermelon. Puree. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Makes about 3 cups.

For more recipes and information:
www.watermelon.org
www.vidaliaonion.org



with A&W Root Beer. The “Summertime Savings” promotion featured a neck-hanger coupon booklet on 2.5 million 2-liter bottles in stores across the country. In the booklet, customers found information on watermelon being “a great value” and “a healthy item for your summer picnics,” as well as a watermelon salsas recipe featured together with Vidalia Onions. A&W Root Beer heavily advertised this promotion during a two week period in TV Guide. This is a perfect venue for watermelon, since it falls in the promotional period between Memorial Day and the 4th of July.



Produce Marketing in Canada

The CPMA Annual Convention & Trade Show is Canada’s largest event dedicated to the fruit and vegetable industry showcasing exhibitors from Asia, Australia, New Zealand, South America, Central America, Mexico, the US and Canada. Attendees include all major stakeholders in the produce supply chain, with one of three visitors representing the retail/wholesale and food service sectors. This year’s event “Produce: Powered by People” was held in May in Toronto, Ontario. The NWPB informational booth was well represented and visited by Canadian retailers, growers, and media.



Stephanie Simek with Faye Clack at the NWPB booth

Queen Taping & Training a SUCCESS

After the Mr. Food watermelon segment taping with National Queen Maggie Bailey, this year's group of queens were treated to some special learning from two very special guests: Art Ginsburg, A.K.A. Mr. Food, and the 1999 Miss America Nicole Johnson.

The annual queen training seminar and coordinator round-table moved to a new venue in Fort Lauderdale, FL to accommodate the special guests. The session was held in late April at the Mr. Food studio and a local hotel, and was attended by all of the state and national associations.

Beginning with a Friday afternoon meet and greet followed by separate sessions for the queens and their coordinators, the first day ended with an informal dinner where the girls got a chance to get to know the other queens and runner's up – they had lots of fun together and that great energy will carry through as they visit each other's states to promote watermelon.

The Saturday morning session was held at the Mr. Food studio where the girls received a studio tour, a training session on conducting in-store demonstrations and serving watermelon at special events, and then a special session with Mr. Food.

The afternoon brought a training session with the 1999 Miss America Nicole Johnson who gave the



Thank you for all your hard work Eleanor

girls a special insider's view of how to make the most of being a representative and how to sincerely be your best for the people you're working for. Nicole had many special stories and was a great inspiration to the girls, and had many practical tips about how they can do their best on behalf of the watermelon industry.

After the session ended we were very happy to hear how much the girls had learned. NWPB always wants to do everything we can to help these young ambassador's help the industry sell more watermelon!



The watermelon segment featuring Queen Maggie Bailey aired on July 1st

USDA Food Assistance Programs



We would like to encourage you to become a registered vendor to participate in the entitlement program. What is the USDA entitlement program? It is an AMS Fruit, Vegetable and Specialty Crop Purchasing Program which buys fresh and processed fruits, vegetables and specialty items from industry vendors. The service then provides those nutritious foods to the school lunch, needy family & other domestic food assistance programs.

To get started log onto the USDA-AMS website for New Vendor Application Procedures. NWPB is working with the NWA to help get watermelon added as an entitlement commodity. Once added, watermelon vendors will be able to get their watermelon into those domestic food assistance programs.



Be a Smart Shopper Program

The Lowes Foods Be A Smart Shopper! program is a hands-on field trip designed to reinforce the educational curricula taught in schools. Now in its 13th year, this program has reached over one million students in grades Pre-K - 6. North Carolina-based Lowes Foods stores will be great places for students to learn how to make smart food and beverage choices, as they learn a variety of life skill lessons. The supermarket is a natural environment to teach principles of healthy eating and healthy lifestyles.

During the field trip, children receive free samples of healthy foods and beverages and free student goodie bags. The FREE Be A Smart Shopper! field trip will help children in grades Pre-K-6 develop and enhance skills in:

- Healthy living and nutrition
- Healthy meal planning
- Decision-making
- Mathematics
- Heart health and fitness
- Kitchen measurement tools
- Smart Snacking

The NWPB is happy to be supporting this program by providing our popular Heart Healthy watermelon stickers to the program and they will be stickered on watermelons and in some goodie bags distributed throughout the 110 Lowes Food stores this September. To learn more about this program or to share with teachers to coordinate a field trip in the Mid-Atlantic area, you can visit the website: www.lowesfoods.bea-smartshopper.com or call the Be a Smart Shopper! hotline at (800) 987-6409.

"Our primary goal is to help students discover healthy food and beverage choices at the supermarket which contribute to a healthier lifestyle. Key topics include fruits and vegetables, lean protein, low fat dairy foods, low sugar cereal, and the USDA Food Pyramid."
- Lowes Foods (excerpt from website)



Georgia Report

The Georgia heat has arrived and the watermelons are here! Our Queen tour is in full swing. Our Queen Lindsey Mann just finished up her junior year at UGA and has returned home to Tifton, GA., ready to promote watermelons. It is already obvious this young lady loves to work and learn as much as possible. Georgia is excited to have such an outstanding young lady represent our industry!

In March Miss Lindsey Mann and Audrey Barrett attended the Florida Watermelon Convention in Sarasota, FL. We love our FL Watermelon family and congratulate the FWA for another successful convention. Thank you Cheryl Hicks and FWA for your southern hospitality.

In April Miss Lindsey and I joined all the state queens and coordinators in Ft. Lauderdale for our annual promotion training seminar with NWPB. This year's training was outstanding. We learned new PR techniques from several different angles of marketing from NWPB, Mr. Food and a former Miss America. New ideas to promote watermelon are always exciting for us.

In May Lindsey joined "Has-Been" Fallon Garrett in Atlanta at Sutherlands Food Show at The Atlanta State Farmers' Market. This is an annual trade show we look forward to each year. The Sutherland family always delivers true southern charm and we cherish their support in our industry. Thank you Mr. Gene Sutherland! It is a amazing how much the Sutherland Food Show continues to grow each year. Miss Lindsey later in the month enjoyed an interview with WMAZ Channel 13 in Macon. This was one of Lindsey's first interviews on camera as GWA Queen and I must say she did great. On Channel 13 Lindsey announced the upcoming GA Watermelon Festival on behalf of the Crisp Chamber of Commerce and discussed new recipes and nutritional watermelon info she had just learned from NWPB. Later on in the month we traveled up to Loganville, GA., to meet former GWA Queen Wendi Youngblood Wolfe for an Ag Day at Loganville Elementary School. Lindsey read Mr. Junkfood Coloring Book, demonstrated how to pick a ripe melon in the grocery store and lead a seed spit contest. We must thank Mrs. Jarret Barnes and Miss Jaye Frazier for joining us in Americus for Lindsey headshots. With Jaye and Jarret's touch we are extremely happy with Lindsey's PR pictures.

June is here and we have officially had the kick-off to watermelon season. Our Cordele Watermelon Festival has begun. Lindsey joined Cordele Capitol Queen Whitney Conner along with the Cordele Chamber of Commerce for the Ribbon Cutting for the festival. After the ribbon cutting we met President Dan King for a tour of farms. We were glad to get a few minutes and a picture with Johnny Veazey on his farm and Bob Rawlins. Thanks you Dan and Bob for lunch! We appreciate Mr. Bob for introducing us to a continued convention sponsorship supporter South GA Bank. We also appreciate Dan for introducing us to Triangle Chemical which is also a convention sponsorship supporter. We appreciate their support!

As I said, our tour is now in full swing and we look forward to updating you on our promotions in the next Vineline issue.

Thank you all for your support. "Eat more watermelon".

Sincerely,

Julie Akins Daughtrey
Promotion Coordinator
2121 Cranford Sumner Rd.
Lenox, GA 31637
770 842 3309
akinsjulie1@windstream.net



Mr. Buddy Leger, Rep. Buddy Hardin, Miss Lindsey Mann and Sen. Dicky Crosby at the Atlanta Capitol.



We appreciate our first runner up Miss Whitney Conner for all her help with our Ag Days at the Elementary Schools.



We traveled to Americus, GA., for Miss Lindsey's headshots where we met up with our "Has-Been" team...Jarret Barnes and Jaye Frazier. What a great day!



We appreciate you NWPB for all you do for us.



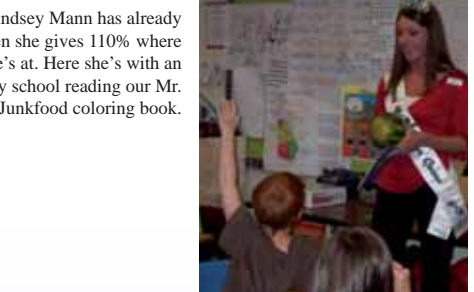
Mrs. Jean Marinaro and Lindsey meet in Ft. Lauderdale during our NWPB Seminar.



What a learning experience Lindsey had from Mr. Food himself!



Again NWPB, we thank you for the wonderful education from former Miss America during our seminar.



Queen Lindsey Mann has already proven she gives 110% where ever she's at. Here she's with an elementary school reading our Mr. Junkfood coloring book.



A former GA Queen Mrs. Wendi Youngblood Wolfe hosted an Ag Day at her school in Loganville. We had the best seed spit competition ever.



Sen. Dickey Crosby and Rep. Buddy Hardin meet with Lindsey in Cordele to award her with her Proclamation as GA Watermelon Queen from the Atlanta Capitol.



Our GA President Dan King with Lindsey and runner up Whitney Conner. The girls truly enjoyed a day with Dan visiting farms and convention sponsors. Thank you for your time Dan!



While with President Dan King we were able to spend a little time with our Board member Johnny Veazey. It was a treat getting to see you Mr. Johnny.



Bob Rawlins introduced Lindsey to one of our convention sponsors South GA Bank. We appreciate their generous sponsorship they have contributed to our conventions.



We always love a little time with Bob and Gayle Rawlins.



his picture says a thousand words. Lindsey and Whitney enjoyed meeting our convention sponsor Triangle Chemical. BUT if you look at the picture we have a special little treat with us...the one and only Mr. Adams King (son of President Dan King). Thank you Triangle for your sponsorship.



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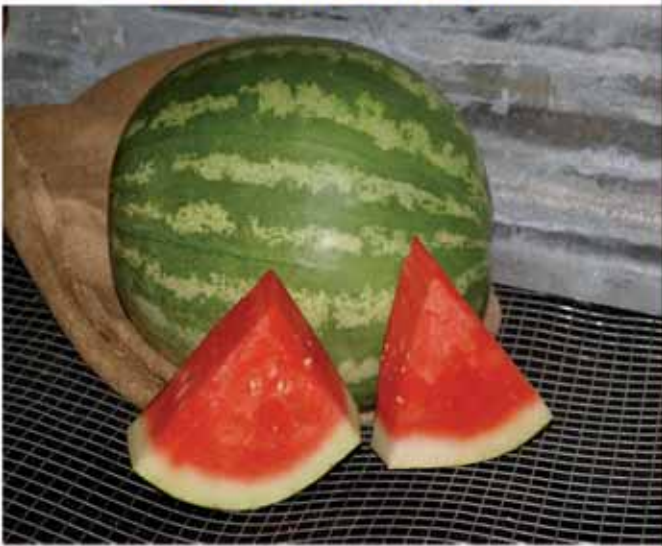
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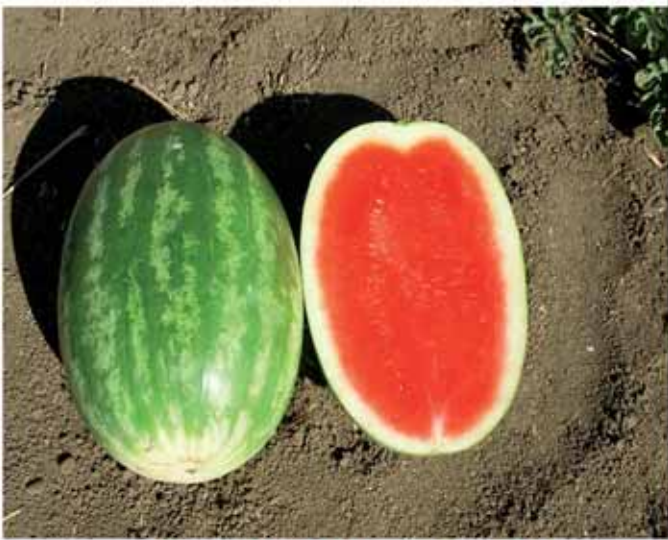
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Illiana Report

Hello to everyone from all of us at the Illiana Watermelon Association! Our queen Miss Johnna Thompson is doing her best to spread the watermelon message. She attended the Queen Training Seminar put on by the National Watermelon Promotion Board in Ft. Lauderdale Florida in April. NWPB put together an informative and fun learning weekend. All the queens toured the Mr. Food studios and met Mr. Food and also were tutored, entertained and encouraged by Miss America 1999 Nicole Johnson. Thanks for everything NWPB.

Queen Johnna started spring promotions with the Purdue University Extension Service “Day on the Farm” where she spoke with all the third grade classes in Knox County. All the children received stickers, coloring books, and a watermelon plant. The Good Samaritan Hospital Employee Health Fair was up next. We passed out recipes and salsa samples which were a big hit! Over 300 people attended.

Queen Johnna was a part of the Illiana Watermelon Association Relay for Life team. Rain caused a shortening of the event but couldn’t dampen the spirits of any of the teams. Many thanks to our sponsor Midwest Marketing. Johnna passed out stickers, pens, coloring books and recipe books in the health fair area and then passed out watermelon samples at the IWA tent for the rest of the event. The Illiana Watermelon Association raised a record amount this year and team member Tim Dunn was awarded the Miss Relay Drag Queen title. This title is achieved by donations brought in and Tim proudly represented Watermelon. Many thanks to all those who supported the IWA team.

Former Queen Emily Frey represented IWA in Anderson IN on the same day as the Relay for Life. She passed out watermelon at the Payless Grocery Carnival Fundraiser for the Anderson Children’s Home. Browning and Sons, Leger and Sons, Wabash Valley Growers and Mouzin Brothers sponsored this trip. Thank You!

The Spirit of Vincennes Rendezvous transported us back in time as IWA teamed up with the Lincoln Band Boosters to sell watermelon to the 15,000-20,000 attendees at the 2-day 18th century reenactment. Battles, music and other entertainment, pioneer crafts and food of all kinds make this the perfect way to spend Memorial weekend. Johnna worked both days selling sweet, refreshing watermelon. Thanks to sponsor Schmieding Produce for providing the watermelons.

Queen Johnna kicked off June with radio interviews on WAOV and WZDM. Johnna did a fabulous job of spreading the Watermelon message.

On Saturday June 14, Queen Johnna rode in the Red Skelton Parade of Clowns. Two clowns suitably dressed in watermelon-patterned costumes escorted her in the parade.

June was wrapped up at the Good Samaritan Hospital Women’s Health Fair. Queen Johnna passed out watermelon samples and recipe books to over 300 participants.

As July starts we welcome National Watermelon Month. We’ll be celebrating by handing out watermelon samples at the Nationwide Series race on July 25 in Clermont IN near Indianapolis. We hope many of you join us there to promote our favorite fruit! We have several other events in the works for the 3 days leading up to the race. See Ya then!

Until next time,
Beth Frey
Promotions Coordinator
Illiana Watermelon Association
812-886-5409 812-890-0620
loveshallmark@hotmail.com



Thank you Indian Hills Produce(for melons), Mouzin Brothers, and Double T for sponsoring Knox County AG Day 2009.



Thanks to Tim Dunn of JRT Trucking for sponsoring Johnna at the North Carolina Watermelon Convention---she had a great time!



Queen Johnna at the Good Samaritan Hospital Women’s Health Fair.



Johnna at Knox Co. Relay for Life ---Everybody loves those Heart Watermelon stickers.



Thank You to Schmieding Produce for donating the watermelons that we served at the Spirit of Vincennes Rendezvous. It was sweet, delicious and refreshing.



Queen Johnna kicked off June with Radio Interviews on WAOV and WZDM.



Knox County Day on the Farm at the Purdue University Extension Center greenhouses.



Johnna enjoys telling this 3rd grade class what is special about Knox County melons.



Leger and Sons, Browning and Sons, Mouzin Brothers, and Wabash Valley Growers sponsored our trip to Payless Grocery in Anderson IN. Thank You so much for letting us help them with their fundraiser!



Queen Johnna sharing yummy watermelon at the Relay for Life. Thanks to Midwest Marketing for sponsoring this event.



Queen Johnna waving to the crowd at the Red Skelton Parade of Clowns.



Thanks NWPB for taking us to meet Mr. Food.



Everyone got to sample the Breakfast-a-Go-Go at the training session in the studio.



Johnna enjoyed the hospitality at the North Carolina Convention. Thanks to Floyd Taylor and everyone there in North Carolina!



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Mar-Del Report

The Mar-Del watermelon season is fast approaching and Queen Jessica has been traveling everywhere to learn all she can about watermelons. The first visit she made was to the Florida Watermelon Convention. Everyone was in the Christmas spirit, and welcomed her to their home for the holidays! That’s right, it was Christmas in March. Queen Jessica enjoyed every event the convention had to offer. She had the opportunity to meet the wonderful people that are part of the FWA and learn more about the world of watermelons outside of Maryland and Delaware. A special thanks to Paul and Jackie Sawyer for a Christmas to remember. We had a great time!

Our next stop was Ft. Lauderdale Florida, for the NWPB media training workshops. Queen Jessica spent the weekend learning lots of interesting and informative facts about the sweet treat! The fun doesn’t stop there the weekend was packed with new found friends and local celebrities. Mr. Food entertained the queens in his cozy kitchen and shared a few of his favorite recipes. Queen Jessica and Mr. Food agree that watermelon is “oooh so good”. Perhaps the highlight of the workshops was meeting a former Miss America! Nicole Johnson had lots of great advice to share with the queens. To top off an already great weekend the NWPB took the queens and coordinators out for dinner and desert. Thank you Gordon, Leslie, Stephanie, and Mark for all of the hard work that made this years’ training a success.

Queen Jessica made her first promotional appearance at Ag Day on the University of Delaware campus. Remembering everything she had learned weeks prior, she did an excellent job of educating people about watermelon. Queen Jessica’s dazzling smile and sincere presence charmed a crowd of thousands! People flocked to the booth to meet the Mar-Del queen and cool off with a refreshing slice of watermelon. It was great to see several familiar faces as we all share a common agricultural bond. The watermelon was a favorite of all ages. Thanks John Lapide for your generous donation, we sliced around ninety melons that day!

Children at the Sussex county community walk loved different activities Queen Jessica had up her sleeve. They made colorful watermelon shakers and hula hooped until our queen was outdone by a six year old. This was only the beginning of several more visits Queen Jessica has made to field days and elementary schools. The children are fascinated by how far she can spit a watermelon seed!

With a significant number of promotions in the rearview mirror, it was time to move forward to much larger audiences. Queen Jessica recorded her first radio commercial with WQMR of Ocean City. Even better, she got to be a part of their live radio talk show. They are so excited about the watermelon season that they have asked her to be a part of their show at least once a month! She also had a blast shooting a local commercial to inform viewers that the Mar-Delicious watermelons would be here soon. Two of her favorite sidekicks, Kiley and Maddie helped make the commercial even sweeter!

The Food and Wine festival at the National Harbor has been one of Queen Jessica’s largest promotions so far. All types of vendors attended this show but of course on a hot day watermelon is always the favorite. We had the same people stop by several times just because they enjoyed the company and others hung around because they couldn’t get enough watermelon. Our most recognized visitors were from the TV series “TOP CHEF”! These ladies loved watermelon and Queen Jessica had the honor of assisting them in several different watermelon demonstrations for kids and parents. Once again Jessica did a fabulous job of representing the Mar-Del watermelon association and educating consumers about the benefits of eating watermelon.

One of the most rewarding events that Queen Jessica has participated in was the Chesapeake Challenge. Around 700 cyclist raised money for MS and rode anywhere from 30 to 100 miles that day. Queen Jessica was set up under the largest shade tree in the area and served up slices with a smile to all who came by. Everyone was thrilled to have such a hydrating snack on that hot June day!

The Mar-Del association is well on its way to a wonderful season. We are looking forward to our upcoming promotions and appreciate all of the support from members who give us the opportunity to work for them. Queen Jessica is an eager and enthusiastic ambassador and I am confident that she will exceed any and all expectations. Let us know if we can do any promotions for you!

Best Wishes,
Candice F. Hales
Promotions Coordinator



“Charlie shared the spotlight”



“Trust me this is not as easy as it looks”



” Feels like home with two familiar faces”
Alisa Lapide & Richard Wojack



“Queen Jessica would never trade in her watermelon crown”
Miss America 96’ Nicole Johnson



“Queen Jessica welcomes another Queen Jessica”



“Queen Jessica shows what Ag Day has to offer”



“ The Queens enjoy the festivities”
Jessica & Maggie



“ She made sure everyone was hydrated even her friend Wiggles”



“Happy 21st Birthday from Mar-Del”



“ No cooking Required for this sweet treat”
Top Chef contestants Arienne and Carla visit our booth



“ Kiley, Queen Jessica, and Maddy love watermelon”
If you don’t believe me look at their faces!



The women of the vine and “vineline.



“ Queen Jessica is ready to promote your watermelons”



“ Queen Jessica working hard, no monkey-ing around”



“ Oooh it’s Mar-Delicious”



“Riders stop by for a pic with the queen”



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Food Safety bill moving in U.S. House



On June 17th the U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee passed H.R. 2749, the Food Safety Enhancement Act of 2009, out of committee. The bill will go to the House floor, and passage seems likely based on the bipartisan support it received in the committee. Just for perspective, this committee is often one of the most contentious in Congress between Democrats and Republicans, yet this bill was passed on voice vote with no amendments and no objections.

Although we are pleased with numerous improvements we’ve been able to get made to the original bill, this doesn’t mean we’re done though, as there remain areas within this bill that we’re discussing with the committee that might be addressed yet still in the House.

Specifically, we found bipartisan support for many improvements which are contained in the bill reported out of Committee:

- Strengthened the bill’s commodity-specific approach to produce;
- Ensured that FDA would work with USDA, state departments of agriculture and other agencies in implementing all produce provisions;
- Kept a mandate for traceability across all foods, but eliminated the draft bill’s prescriptive dictates that

could have set back work on our current Produce Traceability Initiative;

- Exempted produce from any duplicative requirements for country of origin labeling;
- Enhanced the ability of fresh processors to develop individual HACCP programs without rigid one-size fits-all mandates;
- Assured equal treatment of imported and domestic produce in food safety standards;
- Secured a pilot program and feasibility study for potential mandatory test reporting, and limited such testing to facilities required to comply with Good Manufacturing Practices;
- Ensured tighter control of potential FDA geographic quarantine authority, requiring an imminent threat to take such action; and,
- Capped registration fees for both facilities and importers.

These are significant improvements in the bill, and we will continue to work with the Committee and other House leaders to fine-tune improvements as this bill moves to the House floor. We’ll also continue to work closely with Senate leaders as they take up their own food safety bill later this year, in order to eventually pass sound, scientific food safety legislation that will be signed by the President.

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Immigration Reform needed, but not this way!

At this issue’s printing, a great deal of “turmoil” and “political posturing” is occurring in Washington relative to Immigration reform.

Senator Jeff Sessions (AL) was successful on July 8th in getting an amendment to the Homeland Security bill passed by the Senate, but hopefully can be stripped in conference. **THIS AMENDMENT WILL BE OPPOSED BECAUSE:**

- Makes the notoriously flawed E-verify program permanent.
- Requires all federal contractors and subcontractors to use the program to verify all employees including existing employees as well as new employees.
- Harms U.S. workers, citizens and non-citizens alike, who are falsely denied work.
- Harms U.S. businesses, especially small businesses, by creating substantial new burdens.
- Slows down economic recovery.

Making E-Verify permanent without steps to address its fundamental flaws is a serious mistake. Virtually every entity that has reviewed E-Verify carefully - including the Department of Homeland Security, the Government Accountability Office, and the Social Security Administration’s Office of the Inspector

General - has found that it has significant weaknesses, including (1) its reliance on government databases that have unacceptably high error rates and (2) employer misuse, whether intentional or unintentional, of the program. The flaws in the system must be addressed before any expansion/mandate of it or plans to make the program permanent.

Economic estimates point to crippling effects of mandating E-Verify. The Congressional Budget Office estimated in 2008 that mandatory use by all U.S. employers [without legalization] would lead to an increase in undocumented workers being paid ‘outside’ the tax system, which over a 10-year period would result in a loss of \$17.3 billion in federal revenue.

Expanding the program at this juncture is also not in line with the Administration. The President’s budget calls for an extension of E-verify as a voluntary program and focuses resources towards protecting employees from discriminatory practices, safeguarding privacy, and enhancing program efficacy. However, some in Congress see differently.

Stay posted to your emails and the NWA web site for more updates. We will need your help with Congress!

PBH continued from page 1

they want to achieve a 60-65% approval if they go to a referendum in 2011. It is a huge uphill climb for them.

There are additional questions that need to be asked, and answered, such as:

- How will this new board increase watermelon sales and per capita consumption?
- What guarantees do we have that we will have a seat on the new board?
- How will the new board benefit industries that are already taxing themselves with similar boards, and show positive results?
- How will the new board benefit existing marketing and research boards, and not duplicate efforts?
- Many farmers, packers and first handlers belong to voluntary trade groups within their crop industries. A new tax for another board could reduce their membership in some key organizations and curtail those key organization’s efforts for the industries that they serve. When do we stop taxing the agricultural community and focus on keeping farmers in business, profitably?

In this author’s opinion, they have a huge uphill climb to travel. Although the behavioral approach has the initial support of some retailers & brand owners, no trade group has come out in support of this effort to date. We anticipate that this PBH idea will be part of this fall’s PMA Fresh Summit conference in Anaheim. We will keep you updated as new developments occur.

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Manager - Thomas Wright

North Carolina Report

Greetings from North Carolina!

Queen Kensley is off to a great start this year! Kensley participated in Travel and Tourism week in North Carolina by passing out watermelon samples and information on watermelons at the Welcome Center in Norlina. Our 1st runner up, Leslie Revelle did an outstanding job at the Welcome Center in Roanoke Rapids. Both girls met many wonderful people and had a great time!

In the early part of June, Queen Kensley was treated like royalty at Gatesville Elementary School. There the children held a program just for her centered on watermelon. They danced, sang and cooked for the Queen—all with a watermelon theme! Queen Kensley helped them in a seed spitting contest and served watermelon to all!

After the Gatesville Elementary School event, Queen Kensley was welcomed to Murfreesboro Farms by Mike and Vanessa Bunch. There she learned more about the watermelon process.

June 13th found 1st runner up Leslie at the Onslow County Farmers Market, helping with their grand opening. Leslie passed out watermelon samples and judged a seed-spitting contest as well as a watermelon eating contest. Leslie enjoyed the day and the Farmer’s Market certainly enjoyed her!

With our watermelons just about ready, Kensley will be busy representing the North Carolina Watermelon Association on the Queen Tour. If you or any of your customers would like for Kensley to do a special promotion, 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.

Wishing you a wonderful growing season,

Susan Mills
NCWA Promotions Coordinator



1st runner up-Leslie at the I-95 Welcome Center



Queen Kensley with Smokey the Bear!



With a fan of watermelon



Leslie with a young fan



Leslie with the Travel and Tourism Dept. members



Judging the Seed Spitting contest



Queen Kensley at the I-85 Welcome Center



Leslie with the winners of the Seed Spitting Contest



Queen Kensley passing out watermelon



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South Carolina Report

Hello to everyone from SC!

In March, Summers made an appearance at North Elementary School in Columbia, SC where she talked to fourth graders on the nutritional value of watermelons. She also discussed how watermelons were grown and which part of the state had the largest crops. The children loved Queen Summers' watermelon activity pages and were thrilled to go home and try her easy recipe tips. The children were very excited to have the watermelon queen at their school and Summers was invited back for a cutting in June.

In April, all of the queens attended the NWPB Queen Training Seminar in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Queen Summers enjoyed visiting Mr. Foods Studio and was thrilled to meet Mr. Food himself. He gave all the girls some great tips from his cooking shows as well as marketing ideas. Each state queen was given the opportunity to pick out an autographed cookbook by their respective associations – Summers would like to thank the SC folks for this wonderful memento of her Mr. Food experience. The Queens were also treated to a very informative afternoon session of proper public etiquette from former Miss America, Nicole Johnson. Nicole discussed numerous things with the girls such as proper dress, how to handle the media, and how to handle all situations of public contact. Many thanks to the Promotions Board for this excellent training seminar provided for our girls!

On April 29th we attended the annual Taste of South Carolina in Columbia. This event is always so much fun! Summers enjoyed visiting with friends from the SC Department of Agriculture. She especially enjoyed talking with Martin Eubanks and the SC Commissioner of Agriculture, Hugh Weathers. Summers handed out numerous slices of watermelon, stickers and brochures on our product. She also had the chance to meet and talk with the SC Lieutenant Governor, Andre Bauer. This was a great promotion!

Next up was a visit to Freedom Weekend Aloft in Simpsonville, SC. This is one of the larger events held in our state that features hot air balloons and visitors from all over the country as well as the U.K. The rain didn't keep away all of the attendees that visited our booth and received watermelon slices, coloring books and stickers by our lovely queen Summers. We not only enjoyed the company of Summers' mother and grandmother but also my niece Gracen and Brad Boozer's son Jacob who had no problem showing everyone how to eat a slice of watermelon!

Three days later we were on the road again, this time visiting a Blowfish Baseball game in Columbia, SC. Summers was honored to throw out the first pitch. Who knew our girl had such a great arm? We were joined by Summers' mom and dad who watched the game with us. Afterwards Summers served watermelon to all of the players and congratulated them on a great game.

Once again we were in Columbia, for our second trip to North Elementary School. Summers was thrilled to be asked back again and this time served watermelon to the entire fourth grade! Brad Boozer had the tough task of keeping the watermelons cut, while I handed out slices and Summers handed out stickers and visited with the children. She was a huge hit!

As we prepare for the very busy summer months ahead, please contact us as soon as possible for any promotional requests. The calendar is really filling up and we are working hard so keep those melons coming.

Until next time,

Julie Murdock
SCWA Promotions Coordinator
(864)-313-8168
Jewels412@charter.net



The girls had a wonderful time in Ft. Lauderdale!



Even SC Lieutenant Governor Andre Bauer stopped by to have a picture with our queen!



Summers and former Miss America Nicole Johnson.



Gracen and Jacob loved spending time with Queen Summers.



Summers was thrilled to meet Mr. Food.



Summers thanks Brad for all his hard work.



Summers enjoyed talking with Martin Eubanks at the Taste of SC.




Summers always has time to sign a picture for a future watermelon queen.



SC Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers chatted with our Queen.



The Blowfish mascot enjoyed talking with Summers.



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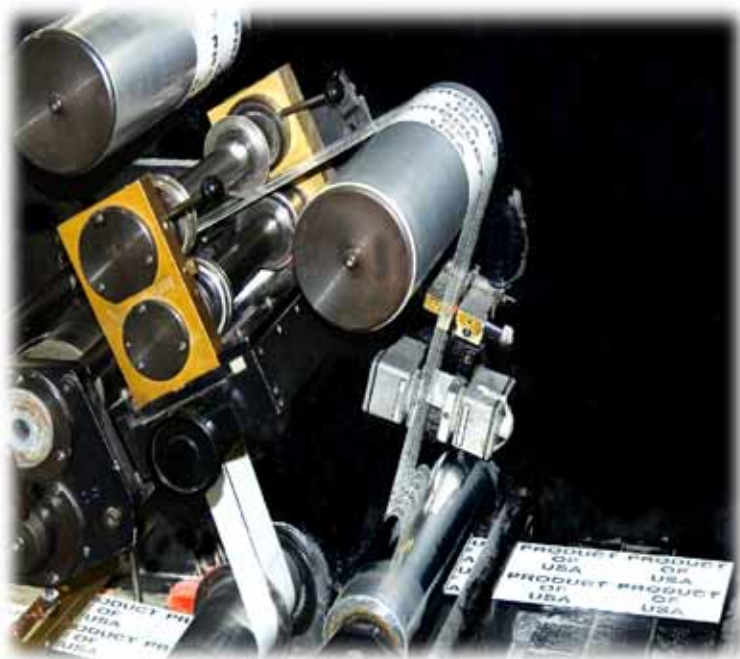
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Texas Report

On March 6th I traveled to Evansville, Indiana for the 20th Annual Illiana Watermelon Association convention. Attending the convention was my first official trip as Texas Watermelon Queen and I was so excited to be able to visit again with Maggie and her coordinator, Mrs. Beth. I was able to attend Saturday morning's meeting and listened to Bob Morrissey discuss some general food safety issues and preventative measures that farmers and packers must take to ensure that every consumer goes home with a watermelon of the highest quality. I learned a lot from Bob's presentation and was thankful to have attended the meeting. I also helped out at the auction where I have never in my life seen so many watermelon themed items. The auction was long but lots of fun, especially when we made Tim Dunn put on a coconut bra. That evening after dinner and speeches given by Maggie and other members of the association, it was time for the new IWA Queen to be crowned! I was thankful to have been an observer rather than a queen contestant this time, but I was just as nervous for the girls as I was for myself at the Texas convention. Out of eight lovely queen contestants, this year's title of Illiana Watermelon Queen was awarded to Johnna Thompson. I had such a wonderful time in Evansville and was sad to leave because watermelon conventions are really fun! Everyone was so nice and treated me like I was family. I would like to give a special thanks to Bob & Pam Clayton, Craig Mathis, the Nowaskies and the members of Midwest Farms who were all so kind to donate auction items to me. Also, thanks to everyone in the IWA who put on a really fun convention and allowed me to have such a great experience.

On the afternoon of April 14th I hopped on a plane for a quick trip (22 hours to be exact) to Kansas City, Missouri. I was asked to attend the Associated Wholesale Grocers exposition to help represent Borders Melon Company, Inc. Mrs. Wanda had recently gotten knee surgery, so Ranell Borders and Gigi were my chaperones for this trip. The next morning we made our way to the expo for a full day of handing out samples, brochures and introducing retailers to the company. Despite it being such a quick trip, I had a lot of fun with Ranell and Gigi and I learned quite a bit, too. I saw first-hand one of the steps it takes to get a product from the fields to the grocery store shelves. It was a great learning experience and I can't wait to take another trip like it. Hopefully next time it will last longer than a day!

Right after that trip, I spent the weekend in Fort Lauderdale for the NWPB Queen's Media Training Seminar. My chaperone this time was Holley Brown Murphy, the '95 Texas Watermelon Queen and '96 National Watermelon Queen. I was especially excited for this trip because I would be able to meet all the other state watermelon queens. Of course, they are all awesome girls and I had so much fun working together with them. We had a short meeting Friday with Stephanie Simek, Gordon Hunt and Leslie Coleman, who presented us with the key messages and ideals that we represent as watermelon queens. The next day, we went to the Mr. Food studios where Maggie, Mrs. Eleanor and Leslie demonstrated proper ways to cut a watermelon and how to make the fire and ice salsa and breakfast a-go-go recipes. We also took a tour of the studio and were able to meet Mr. Food. He was very nice and I was glad he took time out of his Saturday to come visit with us. Afterwards, we had the pleasure of being able to meet another celebrity. Former Miss America Nichole Johnson attended our meeting and gave presentations on being a good representative for our associations. That evening we had some free time to check out the city, so of course we went to the beach! Maggie, Summers and I took some beach side photos and met one of the locals, a parrot named Tabu Keeler. Though Mrs. Wanda couldn't be there I was so happy that Holley could attend because she is so much fun and we had a great time in Fort Lauderdale.

I had one more trip before I was reunited with Mrs. Wanda, but luckily I didn't have too far to travel. On May 22nd and 23rd, I went to Lakeway for the Randalls Texas Locally Grown Event. On these two days, Randalls showcased different products that were all Texas grown. I was there with Tony and Cheryl Anderson, and Teretha and Lacy Jones to help represent the What-A-Melon Brand. In addition to watermelons being showcased, there were also blueberries, corn, honeydew, wine, mushrooms and all sorts of other products. Richard De Los Santos also attended the event and was always eager to sample some sweet watermelon. In the two days that I handed out samples, brochures, coloring books and gave a couple of lessons in picking out a watermelon, Randalls sold over 1,000 watermelons. I had a great time with the Andersons (who were also so nice to rescue me from a flat tire) and I met so many nice people that weekend. The managers at Randalls asked me to come back, so on June 19th and 20th I will go back to Lakeway for the Texas Locally Grown event again.

Also on my schedule is the PMA convention in Anaheim, California. This will be my first trip to Cali and I can't wait! I'm so excited for the opportunity to meet more of the watermelon association members there. I would also like to extend an invitation to everyone to attend our Texas Convention Jan. 21-24, 2010 at the Embassy Suite Hotel in McAllen, Texas.

I'm currently writing an Internet blog of all my travels as Texas Watermelon Queen. If you'd like to read more about them and also see more photos, check out www.txwatermelonqueen09.wordpress.com.

Mollie Bennett, 2009 Texas Watermelon Queen



What's a luau-themed dinner without a roasted pig?



Randalls Promotion



Introducing myself before Saturday morning's speech competition.



Mollie and Maggie with Mr. James & Mrs. Jeanine Wiggins at Snook Fest.



Mrs. Wanda and I had so much fun!



Handing out juicy Wiggins watermelons at Snook Fest.



Tim Dunn and his coconut bra



Getting ready for an interview with the local TV station.



With Bob & Pam Clayton at the auction.



With some cute kids riding a watermelon float in the parade.



All the IWA queen contestants.



All the girls with Gordon, Leslie & Stephanie after dinner at Champ's.



With newly crowned IWA Johnna.




Gordon and I displaying what we're all about!



All the queens with Mr. Food.



With Mr. Food at his studio.



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Product of USA
PUMP3132BC

Jumbo Pumpkin
3130
0 11110 91205 3
Product of USA
PUMP3130BC

Medium Pumpkin
4735
0 11110 91203 9
Product of USA
PUMP4735BC

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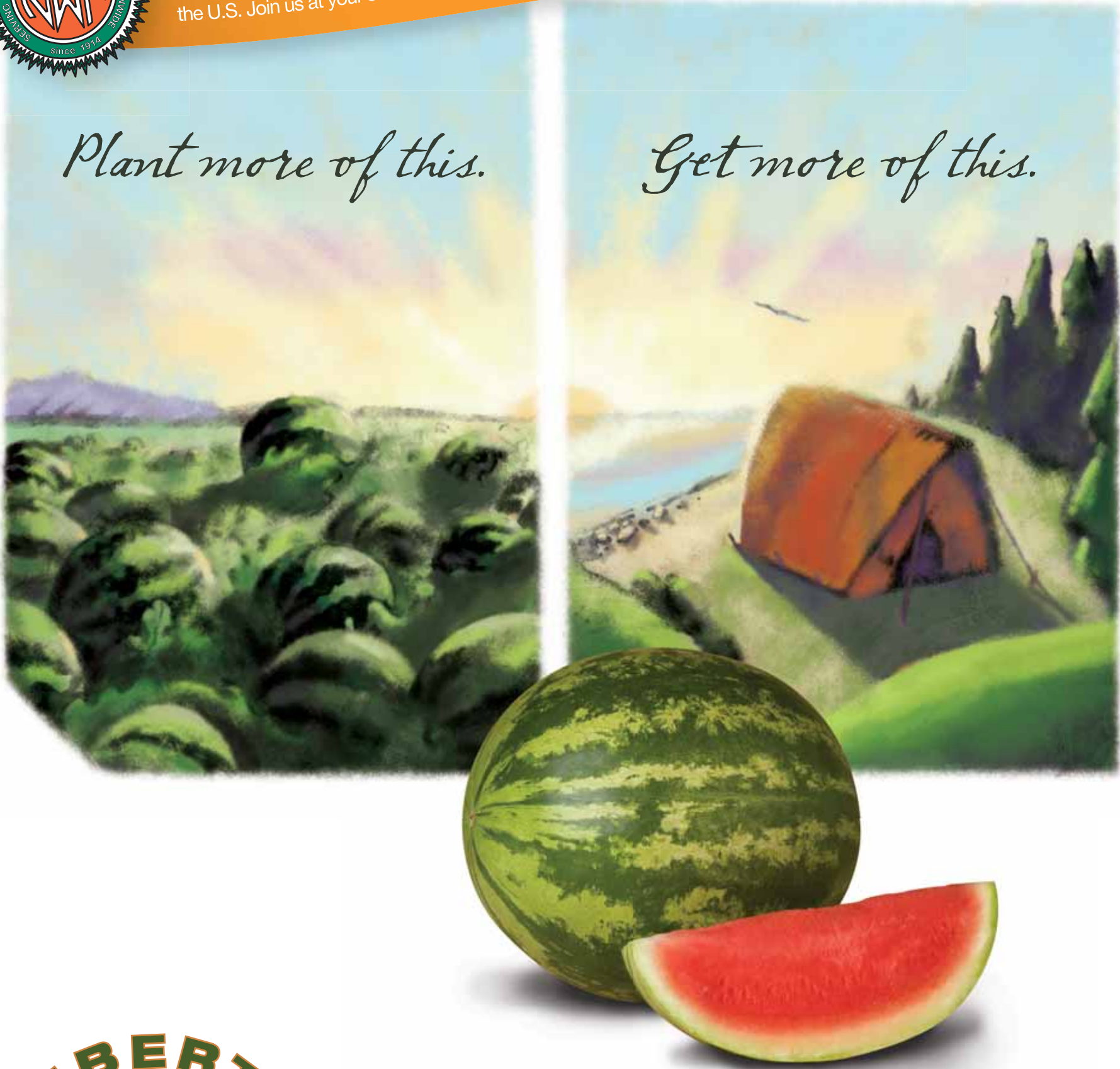
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