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Judge Clears Way For Implementation of Health-Care Law in States That Are Challenging It



A federal judge in Florida who earlier ruled the new health-care law unconstitutional said that implementation can proceed in the 26 states that mounted the legal challenge while the Obama administration pursues an appeal.

However, U.S. District Court Judge Roger Vinson attached two conditions to the “stay” of his ruling: The administration must file its appeal within seven days and it must request an expedited review from either the Court of Appeals or the Supreme Court.

“Almost everyone agrees that the Constitutionality of the Act is an issue that will ultimately have to be decided by the Supreme Court of the United States,” Vinson wrote. “It is very important to everyone in this country that this case moves forward as soon as practically possible.”

Justice Department spokeswoman Tracy Schmalzer said the administration would seek fast-track consideration from the 11th Circuit, just as it has with other challenges to the law that have reached circuit courts.

However, a direct appeal to the Supreme Court is highly unlikely. The administration has opposed an effort by Virginia to do so in a similar but separate case.

The suit is one of 20 pending against the law. Vinson’s original Jan. 31 decision was one of two to rule against it. Like the judge in Virginia’s suit, Vinson found the law’s requirement that virtually all Americans obtain health insurance beginning in 2014 to be unconstitutional.

But Vinson, who like the Virginia judge was a Republican appointee, went a step further, ruling that the insurance mandate was so inextricably linked to the rest of the law that the entire statute should be invalidated.

Three other federal judges, all Democratic appointees, have upheld the law, most recently Judge Gladys Kessler in the District of Columbia.

Technically, the administration had not requested a stay of Vinson’s order voiding the law, but rather a clarification of whether he had intended to halt the law’s rollout pending appeals.

The confusion stemmed from Vinson’s decision not to formally enjoin the law in his original order; instead he suggested that it was “the functional equivalent” of an injunction because it’s presumed the federal government automatically complies with such judgments.

JUDGE continued on page 30

Companies Fear New Driving Regulations

Proposed changes to federal regulations for commercial drivers could disrupt the fresh produce supply chain and raise costs, according to comments filed by some grocery cooperatives and wholesalers.

The hours of service changes, proposed by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, include complicated formulas related to working hours for both long- and short-haul truckers and how long they must rest before hitting the road again.



Currently, commercial drivers who carry property can drive 11 hours during their 14-hour, on-duty window. The proposed changes would reduce the daily on-duty time to 13 hours, unless the driver takes a one-hour, off-duty break. Officials with the FMCSA stated in the Federal Register that they want to decrease driving time to 10 hours, but the proposed rulemaking retains the 11-hour drive time. They will decide on the drive-time rule following the public comment period, which ended Feb. 28. Members of the industry can comment through the administration’s website.

Many truckers and transportation firms have commented that the current rules, which have been in effect for decades, were taken into consideration when many distribution centers and delivery routes were established. They contend the reduced hours would make it impossible to meet existing schedules, disrupting deliveries and adding costs.

Some produce wholesalers, grocers and related associations have filed similar comments, including the Olean Wholesale Grocery Cooperative, Olean, N.Y., and the Associated Grocers of the South - Birmingham, Ala.

Olean president and chief executive officer James Ried said that the 90-year-old company would be “seriously impacted” by the proposed changes. “Changes in driver regulations would have a dramatic effect on our ability to compete, (the) price of food products, increase driver fatigue, and the possible elimination of driving positions currently held by experienced drivers,” Ried wrote in his comments to FMCSA.

Ried also said he agrees with comments from Leland Slay, the vice president of industrial relations for Associated Grocers of the South. “The proposed reduction in drive time alone will severely limit our ability to deliver groceries to the independent grocery store owners we have serviced since 1928,” Slay stated.

The Small Business Legislative Council has also weighed in on the proposed changes to the hours of service rule. The council’s comments, filed by its president and general counsel John Satagaj, state that there would be new costs for “distributors, retailers and service providers in local

DRIVE continued on page 30

PTI Leadership Council Determines Unique GTINs Are a Requirement for Traceability

A proposal for an alternate path for implementing Global Trade Item Numbers, or GTINs, a key component of the Produce Traceability Initiative, has not garnered wide enough support from the PTI Leadership Council to be adopted. The alternate proposal for implementing GTINs was initiated after members of several PTI working groups raised the difficulties that some industry members are experiencing in implementing case configuration-unique GTINs, or “unique” GTINs, within their companies. Tracking of the GTIN in combination with a lot number or pack/harvest date as each case moves through the supply chain provides the chain-wide, electronic traceability sought by the PTI.

The Master Data Working Group proposed the short-term use of less detailed, commodity- or variety-general GTINs, or “base” GTINs, to allow those companies more time to implement unique GTINs. That group then vetted the proposal to the Implementation Working Group, which was unable to reach consensus on the proposal. Due to the impasse, the proposal was presented to the Leadership Council for review and vote.

More than 80 members of the Leadership Council and their companies’ information technology staff participated in a special conference call on February 24 to learn about and publicly discuss the base GTIN proposal in detail. It was clear from council members’ comments even interim use of base GTINs would not be a practical solution for the industry overall. For example, many receivers reported that their data management systems require unique GTINs to map to specific stock-keeping units (SKUs), and could not handle both base and unique GTINs concurrently.

“It was really impactful for me to hear from my buyers that their systems simply won’t allow one base-level GTIN to be associated with several SKUs,” said Doug Grant of The Oppenheimer Group, a member of the Leadership Council and the PTI Executive Committee. “It became evident to me this interim solution just wasn’t workable, and that our time is better spent working to implement unique GTINs as per the existing PTI guidelines.”

“We are committed to being flexible and sensitive to industry members’ needs, and this proposal was developed with a lot of thought about ways we could keep the initiative moving forward,” said Leadership Council Chair Cathy Green Burns, CEO of the Food Lion Family of banners. “With the goal milestones and timelines unchanged, our attention will return to how we can best help members overcome barriers to implementation.”

Green Burns urged sellers and buyers alike to contact their supply chain partners as soon as possible to discuss implementation status. She also noted that the Leadership Council and working groups would consider how to assist companies with GTIN implementation in future meetings.

Industry members are encouraged to visit the official PTI website at www.producetraceability.org for assistance.



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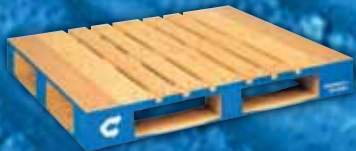


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98th Anniversary of NWA kicked off in San Diego

There were many bright spots from the recent NWA convention in San Diego; only the second time in NWA history that we have held a convention in the State of California. Even with the cooler temperatures and a smaller attendance than normal, spirits were high, and the achievements great! Let’s take a look:

This was the first time in memory that the NWA partnered with the local chapter as our Co-Host. The Western Team went all out, and Tashi Zouras, WWA President, had people in stitches on Thursday evening as he introduced his new Las Vegas executive assistant, Liz, to the audience. Later on during the convention, he showed his skills as a part-time hair stylist with John Lapide. Some people think that the new hairstyle, called ‘The Tashi’ may gain some momentum as a new look in the watermelon world. (That is, with those of you that have hair!)

The annual Watermelon Invitational Golf Tournament had a record turnout at Torrey Pines, home to the Farmers Insurance Open and the 2008 U.S. Open. What a breath taking and enjoyable experience! Three teams went into a tie-breaker at 62 (10 under par)! Congratulations to Jim Schmidt, Wayne Kirschenman, Chuy Lopez and Ken Schultz, the first place team.

Over 200 people climbed on board a private yacht, the California Spirit, for a dinner, dance cruise through San Diego harbor. We were entertained also by two Navy Seal Teams during their maneuvers in the harbor, as we watched downtown San Diego and the Naval Base transform from day to night. Fun was had by all!

The first ever National Watermelon Fair & Festival was held to officially kick off the convention. Jugglers, a balloon artist, caricature artists, and a fortune teller accompanied 10 games of chance to win prizes. Deep fried Watermelon and Oreos were sampled. Many folks tried to ride the surf board on the 10-foot wave. Everyone had a blast!

Friday’s auction set a new all-time record for the NWA, and we are so thankful for the support. This year, we had six tables for a Silent Auction, which gained a lot of attention and fun for many. Items auctioned off were much different this year, and we hope to continue to bring new items in future years.



The convention culminated at the Awards Banquet with some surprises and presentations. Starting off with a ROTC Color Guard from San Diego State University and the singing of our National Anthem by an acapella singer, we enjoyed an evening of honors.

- Eleanor Bullock was honored by the Harrisons and the attending past National Queens as she celebrated her 25th year with the NWA.
- The Georgia Watermelon Chapter won the Marketing Promotion of the Year for their summer-long promotion with the Atlanta Braves.
- Costco Wholesale won the Watermelon Marketer of the Year award.
- Metro, Inc. of Canada was presented the National Display Contest award for the second year in a row.
- Mr. Art Perry was presented the NWA Outstanding Service award by his son, Ron Perry, for his dedication and support of the NWA for many years.

The Queen competition was, in many people’s opinions, the most competitive in years. All of the young ladies did a great job. We had to say goodbye to Jessica Southard, and we welcome Whitney Conner to our Team.

We thank Brent Harrison for his service as NWA President, and look forward to 2011 with Jim Schmidt from La Quinta, California. We also welcome John Corsaro (Vice President of The Giumarra Companies) as our new NWA Officer.

And although he will not be far away, we thank John Lapide very much for his years of dedicated service as a NWA Officer. By the way, John, nice new hairdo. You the Man, Tashi Jr.

It would be very appropriate to single out those folks that worked so many long hours to make the convention work, and helped us to make it enjoyable for our



attendees. When you see them, please say ‘thanks’ to them for us, please. Our core team that worked long hours and made it happen was Dawn Cheplick, Ellen Magee, Kay & John Hayes, Rebecca Diaz, Betsy Morrissey, and Monica McCook.

Our auction happens every year largely because of the dynamic team of Ranell Border and Paul Teague! You are both Awesome!

We also want to recognize the support from Melinda Gooch, Jason Hanselman and Little Oscar (my grandson). And for those that helped here and there, we are truly grateful for your help. Without your time and support, this could not happen. We are truly grateful.

The two-page photo spread following this message will give you a taste of what San Diego was all about. It was fun; a record setter; a lot accomplished; and it was a nice return to a beautiful part of our country. We will return to California in four years to beautiful La Quinta (just outside Palm Springs) in the desert. Gorgeous country!

We have a big workload this year in front of us, and yet, believe it or not, we are already working on the national convention to be held from February 22-26, 2012 in Amelia Island, Florida (just north of Jacksonville). We will celebrate the 99th Anniversary of the NWA there. Put this event on your calendars. It will be the Beach Party of the Ages!

From our NWA Staff to all of you, have a Prosperous domestic season; may good health find each of us; and may we be blessed with the good graces of God. Take care, and be safe.

Bob Morrissey
Executive Director

Agriculture Panel discusses State of Industry

One of the highlights of the convention featured a panel discussion among agricultural industry leaders: Tom Nassif (President and CEO of Western Growers Association - Irvine, CA); Mike Stuart (President of the Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association - Maitland, FL); and Bob Keeney (Deputy Administrator of Fruit & Vegetable programs at the USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service - Washington, D.C.) Bob Morrissey (Executive Director of the NWA) was the moderator.

The topics explored during the hour-long discussion included the Farm Bill, Food Safety, Research Grants, Specialty Crop Block Grants, the climate in Washington and Immigration Reform.

Nassif and Stuart shared concerns about the failure of Congress to address immigration reform.

“Grower-shippers are in a horrible position when it comes to the work force,” Stuart said. “We must figure

out both a short-term and a long-term solution to ensure that our producers have a stable work force.”

A major roadblock, Nassif said, is that political leaders are already focused on winning the 2012 elections, adding that elected officials should put aside their differences for the sake of growers. “Let’s for the short term put the pathway to citizenship on hold,” Nassif said. “Let’s solve the labor problem first.”

Keeney urged attendees to become more proactive in the wake of the Food Safety Modernization Act. “The tasks mandated in the new law represent the greatest challenge the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has ever had, and those are the FDA’s words,” Keeney said. “It’s very important for all of you to work closely with us where you see issues, where you see opportunities for

us to be better than we are today or to do something differently.”

His agency is working closely with the FDA, he said, and while AMS is not a food safety agency, “we do have expertise in a number of areas because we have boots on the ground.”

“With the positive feedback that we received from this session, our plans are to continue to offer similar panels at future conventions”, said Morrissey. “Keeping our members informed is vital to everyone’s success, and sharing the viewpoints from other industry leaders is particularly beneficial.”





2011 NWA Convention -
San Diego, California



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Partnership Programs pay off for 2010; Look Positive for 2011

For a few years the NWA has had a few unique partnership programs with some industry suppliers that sell and service pallets, labels, seed, trucking (logistics) and corrugated bins. The uniqueness of these programs is simple goals are set; the programs are communicated to the membership; the members conduct their business; if the partner’s business meets or exceeds the established goals, the NWA receives an incentive. The customer makes his/her decision and gets what he/she needs; the supplier sells product; and the NWA benefits as well. Call it a Win-Win-Win situation.

In 2010, four (4) companies provided incentive checks to the NWA, making last year one of the best years so far with these exclusive agreements. Bob Morrissey said, “Programs like this have taken on a new meaning for the NWA. During the normal phases of conducting business, many of our members probably don’t even realize that they are contributing to these incentive programs. The supplier partners are happy to be part of this effort, as they win as well.”

For the year 2010, the NWA received the following incentives:



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In 2011, the NWA is looking for a new corrugated partner to replace Hinkle Produce and their Snoopy & The Peanuts Gang watermelon bins. “Dan was the second partner to come on board, and we are truly grateful to him. Unfortunately, Dan has had a string of health issues that have caused him to step back a bit. We are hopeful that a new corrugated partner will climb on board soon.

This year looks very promising for our partners, and we look forward to sharing the good news next February as we celebrate the 99th Anniversary of the NWA in Amelia Island, Florida. To all of you, a great year, Good Selling, and God Bless.

NWA Releases Spanish-language Food Safety Program

Four years ago the National Watermelon Association wrote the watermelon industry’s very own food safety and traceability program, called the ‘Commodity Specific Food Safety Guidelines for the Fresh Watermelon Supply Chain.’ One year later following a re-write with new data and a thorough peer review by industry, government (USDA and FDA) and researcher leaders, the second edition was released.

“I am particularly proud of the work that went into the writing and assembly of our own guidance, and the efforts by a significant portion of the industry to implement the recommended practices”, said Bob Morrissey, author of the program and NWA Executive Director. “The traceability program that the guidance suggests is head and shoulders above all other crops.”

“But, there was an important component missing; it was written in the English language, and the reality was and is, many in our industry read and speak Spanish. The challenge became - how do we get a translated version in their hands so that they can understand it and help the industry put these recommendations into practice?”

The NWA submitted a proposal for a specialty crop block grant, and received the award. Following a few months of production, the Spanish language version is now available on the NWA website, with both languages also available in a CD format for your use.



“Food safety and traceability are cornerstone programs in the NWA, and our efforts will not stop. We will continue to explore ways that will support the industry; ways that will help them to continue to grow, harvest, pack and ship one of the healthiest (and safest) produce crops today.”

Log on to the NWA website, click on the Food Safety tab, and download both versions to help your operation. We thank you for your efforts, as we all strive to be food safety conscious and continue to provide a safe, healthy crop for consumers to enjoy.

Members of Congress Blast HOS Proposal

Nearly 150 members of Congress urged the Obama administration to drop its proposed hours-of-service rule and keep the current work rules for truck drivers.

“The rules currently in place are working well and do not need to be changed,” 122 U.S. representatives wrote to Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood.

The House members were joined by 23 senators who argued shorter hours of service would put more trucks on the road and raise final product costs.

“Companies will be forced to increase the number of trucks on the road necessary for delivering the same amount of freight,” the senators wrote in a separate letter.

The lawmakers called the proposed rules “opaque and complex,” according to ATA.

The letters bring political pressure to bear on an hours-of-service proposal that the American Trucking Association says is the result of “political pressure.”

The association wants the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to stick with its current 11-hour driving limit, 14-hour on-duty limit and 34-hour restart.



The FMCSA is considering dropping the driving limit to 10 hours and requiring truckers to complete all daily work within 13 hours. It also wants to change the restart.

The ATA has attacked the FMCSA’s analysis and estimated health and safety benefits, potentially laying the groundwork for a legal assault on the proposal.

A key sleep researcher claimed the FMCSA “misapplied” his 2007 study to conclude more sleep could generate roughly \$690 million in health benefits for drivers.

The ATA said an independent review by Edgeworth Economics found the proposal would have net costs of \$320 million a year, not \$380 million in annual benefits.

Combating Cucurbit Yellow Stunting Disorder Virus

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) scientists are working to give melon growers some relief from cucurbit yellow stunting disorder virus, or CYSDV.

Melon plant with early symptoms of cucurbit yellow stunting disease.



In 2006, Agricultural Research Service (ARS) plant pathologist Bill Wintermantel with the U.S. Agricultural Research Station in Salinas, Calif., and university colleagues identified the plant disease that growers in California’s Imperial Valley and nearby Yuma, Ariz., noticed was spreading through their cucurbit fields. Cucurbit crops affected included cantaloupe and honeydew melons.

ARS is USDA’s principal intramural scientific research agency, and this research supports the USDA priority of promoting international food security. CYSDV, a whitefly-transmitted virus originally from the Middle East, was identified by Wintermantel and colleagues in the melon-production region of California, Arizona, and Sonora, Mexico, in the fall of 2006. They also identified CYSDV a year later in Florida. Though it remains unclear how the virus spread to California and Florida, virus samples taken from both

regions indicate they are essentially genetically identical to one another, according to Wintermantel.

In an effort to assist growers, ARS horticulturist and research leader Jim McCreight at Salinas is working to develop CYSDV-resistant melons. McCreight describes as serendipitous his discovery in 2006 of resistance to CYSDV in an exotic, salad-type melon from India that was being tested for resistance to another disease.

After screening more than 400 melon accessions from India in the field, McCreight found a few plants in several other vegetable-type melons from India that show promise for resistance to the virus. Work continues on

VIRUS continued on page 9



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National Report

Our 2010 National Watermelon Queen Jessica Southard was busy this 2011 with State Watermelon Conventions. We so appreciate the support from the State Chapters. We both enjoyed each one of this years State Watermelon conventions. All of our States had wonderful candidates for the National competition! We at NWA thank Jessica again for the great job she did representing us this past year and to all our 2010 State Queens for the great job they did!

Rusty Kinard Sponsors Jessica to SC Watermelon Convention

We were delighted to attend this year’s South Carolina Watermelon meeting in Columbia, South Carolina. Special thanks to Mr. Rusty Kinard for sponsoring us! Driving there Jessica got to play in the snow in Georgia and South Carolina. Jessica and I enjoyed the President Mark Williams convention. Thanks to Ms. Ann, Julie and Blair and all the SC team for the warm welcome! Congratulations to Hamilton Dicks IV the new SC President! We congratulate Miss Holly Whatley for being selected the 2011 SC Queen! Thanks Again Rusty! We wish the very best to SC Queen, Blair Boozer you represented South Carolina so well!

Texas Watermelon Association Sponsors Jessica to Texas Convention

Special thanks to the Texas Watermelon Association for sponsoring us to McAllen, Texas for their annual convention. We were well entertained! We enjoyed Texas Queen Mariana Perez and Wanda, and appreciate the warm welcome from all our Texas watermelon family! We were also excited to have NWA President Brent Harrison and Susan make the Texas Convention! We congratulate Veronica Kraemer on being selected the 2011 Texas Watermelon Queen! I am sure a great year awaits you! Best of luck to Mariana Perez on your continued success, you did a great job!

Georgia Watermelon Association Sponsors Jessica

We were excited to be sponsored to the Georgia Watermelon Association annual convention at the Resort at Lake Blackshear! It was a fun weekend. Great Presidents reception with grilled chicken complements of Mitch Mitchell, delicious! It was a super watermelon weekend and Jessica enjoyed getting to visit with her Watermelon Family! We enjoyed the entire Georgia Watermelon Group and appreciate you having us! Congratulations to Jenna Saxton on being selected the 2011 Georgia Watermelon Queen, and fun and busy year awaits you!

Mar-Del Watermelon Association Sponsors Jessica

Jessica and I were so excited to get to attend the Mar-Del Watermelon convention in Cambridge, Maryland after we were both unable to attend because of weather last year! Parris and Dawn, he husband and Mar-Del President Mark Collins welcomed us! It was a great convention and auction! The auction totals were increased by Kevin Evans when he shaved his head for \$5000! Amazing Kevin! We congratulate Jordan Calloway on being selected the 2011 Mar-Del Watermelon Queen, a fantastic year is ahead of you! Best wishes to Parris Travers, and thank you for the fantastic job you did for the Mar-Del Watermelon Association!

Alabama Watermelon Association Sponsors Jessica

We were sponsored to the beautiful Mississippi Coast, Biloxi for the annual Alabama Watermelon convention. It was an awesome weekend. AWA President Billy and his wife Corliss Smith did a great job! It was so good to see Kimberly and Ali. The Queen competition went great and we congratulate Miss Ann-Marie Urrutia on being selected the 2011 Alabama Watermelon Queen! Hang on to your hat it will be a great year! We also congratulate Cheryl Hicks on her Presidency of the Alabama chapter! I would also like to thank Kimberly McCay for the great job she did serving as the Alabama Queen and congratulations on being selected first runner-up at National convention.

2011 National Watermelon Convention

Our 97th annual NWA convention in San Diego, California was a huge success! Though we did not have a record attendance we had a record breaking auction! Special thanks to all that donated and purchased at this years auction. Special thanks to the Western Watermelon Association for your hospitality! It is because of you we continue to grow and enjoy continued success! Thanks to Executive Director, Bob Morrissey and NWA President Brent Harrison for a great NWA convention! Special thanks to the Western Watermelon Association for your hospitality and support!

I would personally like thank NWA for the beautiful service award as well as cash award presented during this year’s convention. Special thanks to Multicorr for their contribution towards my 25th year award. It has been a fast and fantastic 25 years with NWA! Thanks to Bob, Brent, Susan and Jennifer Carden for all you did, I was both surprised and touched!

The culmination of this year’s convention was the National Watermelon Queen competition. We had eight very capable, qualified, and beautiful State Queens competing for the title. These girls represented their State Associations with intelligence, competence and class! It is such a pleasure to work with this outstanding group of young ladies! They each did their States proud!

Congratulations to Whitney Conner for winning the 2011 National Watermelon Queen title! I would also like to congratulate Mariana Perez on being selected Miss Jubilee, and the Kimberly McCay for first runner-up and Shelley Allen on being selected second runner-up! You all did an outstanding job!

Whitney Conner Crowned the 2011 National Watermelon Queen

Congratulations to Whitney Conner, Georgia Watermelon Queen for being selected the 2011 National Watermelon Queen! Your busy year has already begun! Whitney thanks all that purchased items for her from the auction and to all that gave awards, memorials and prizes! She appreciates your thoughtfulness! Special thanks to the following; Multicorr; Sunny Fresh; Brent Jackson; Sue Childers; Chris and Leslie Bloebaum; Tommy Smith; Nunhems Seed; Abbott & Cobb; and Wiggins Watermelons and NWA for all your contributions and donations to our 2010 National Queen, Whitney Conner. We are looking forward to a great year and it started with a bang right after San Diego!

Browning & Sons Sponsors Harvey’s Grand Opening

After only a couple of days home Whitney was off to her first promotion. She was sponsored by Browning & Sons to a Harvey’s Supermarket Grand Opening in Hahira, Georgia. We were greeted by Michael Purvis Director of Produce for Harvey’s and Lisa Overman, Director of Marketing and Advertising. Whitney was set up outside the beautiful store and the Harvey’s shoppers loved her! Whitney had stickers, recipes, coloring books and smiles for all the shoppers. Special thanks to Browning & Sons for sponsoring us!

Melon 1 and C&L Packing Sponsor Whitney to South East Produce Council Conference

Thanks to sponsors John Lapide, Hami Dicks, and Rich Chastain for sponsoring us to Orlando for the South East Produce Council’s annual show, Southern Exposure. We were joined by Hami and Rich and Rhonda for this awesome weekend. Terry Vorhees did a fantastic job with the Rock N Roll themed, record breaking event! It was super to be able to be a part of the Melon1 team’s booth at this show and to visit with so many people in the industry. We enjoyed Rhonda, Rich and Hami during the show, and the social events. Thanks again to Melon 1 and C&L Packing for sponsoring us!

Illiana Watermelon Association Sponsors Whitney

Whitney and I are pleased to be able to attend the Illiana Watermelon convention in Evansville, Indiana. Thanks so much for your gracious hospitality! We congratulate Carrie Smith on a very successful and fun convention! Former President Brad Tony helped raise an additional, in excess of \$9,000.00 for their auction by shaving his head and his beard. The contestants did the honors. He had not been without his beard for over 30 years! Now that’s a fund raiser! Congratulations to Sabra Brianne on being selected the 2011 Illiana Watermelon Queen; I know you will have a great year! Best of luck to Sylvia Crowder, you served your Association so well, and did a fantastic job at National convention! We applaud you! Special thanks to IWA for having Whitney and I to your convention!

Until Next Printing
Best of the Season to You!
Eleanor T. Bullock
NWA Promotion Coordinator
1606 Pine Acres Drive
Cordele, GA 31015
eleanor@websign.net email
229.273.8638 Office
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National Pictures



Jessica and sponsor Rusty Kinard



Great looking group at the GWA convention



Thank You Jean & Kelly!



Ann and Julie welcome Jessica to South Carolina



Jessica and the girls at the GWA Presidents Reception in GA



Jessica thanks Josh and Amanda Moore



Jessica and new President of SC Watermelon Association, Ham Dicks and family



Jessica congratulates Jenna Saxton



Jessica congratulates Ann-Marie Urrutia



Jessica and Rusty Congratulate Holly Whatley



Jessica gets a hug from Bob Morrissey



Jessica and Kimberly poses with visiting queens and contestants



Welcomed to Texas!



Mar-Del President Mark Collins welcomes Jessica to Mar-Del



Jessica thanks New AWA President Cheryl Hicks and out going President Billy Smith



NWA President Brent Harrison and Susan visit with Jessica, Sylvia & Mariana in McAllen, Texas



Jessica is so glad to see Dawn and Parris



Thanks to my judges and this great group of girls!



Jessica and Sylvia congratulate Veronica Kraemer



Congratulations to Jordon Calloway



What a group!



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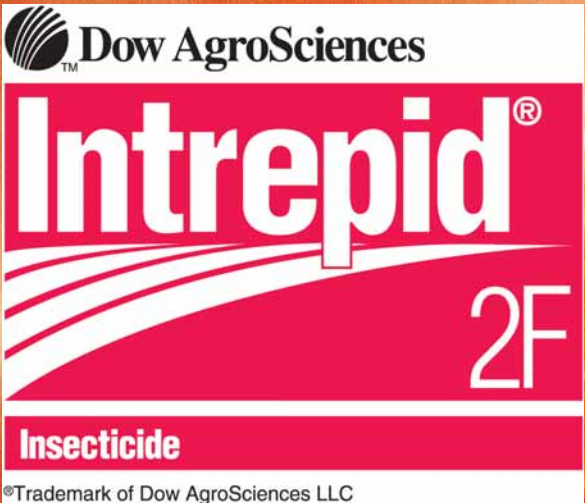
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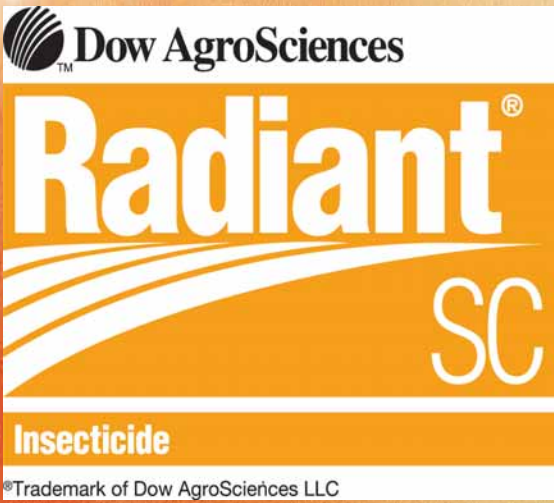
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National Pictures



Mariana Perez wins Miss Jubilee



Greg Leger presents Whitney with the Oren Childers memorial Scholarship on behalf of Sue Childers. Greg Leger also presents the Bob Bloebaum memorial scholarship on behalf of Chris and Leslie Bloebaum



Whitney's proud family!



Jessica crowns the 2011 National Queen Whitney Conner



Michael Bunch presents on behalf of Brent Jackson the Adam Jackson Memorial Scholarship to Whitney



Congratulations Whitney!



Whitney with 1st runner-up Kimberly and 2nd runner-up Shelley



Jean Marinaro presents Whitney with the June Smith Award on behalf of Tommy Smith



Michael Purvis, Director of Produce for Harvey's welcomes Whitney to the Harvey's Grand Opening!

NWA Vice President, AL Wroten presents Whitney with a check from NWA



Wiggins Watermelons present her with luggage purchased by them for her

Director of Marketing & Advertising Lisa Overman congratulates Whitney!



Multicorr's Steve Crowder presents Whitney with a check



The Proud Georgia Group



These kids loved Whitney at Harvey's



Rob Beets of Nunhems presents Whitney with a laptop computer



All the former NWA Queens with Whitney in the past to present crowning shot



The Melon 1 Team at the opening party at the SEPC



Kelly & Jean Present Whitney with a Waterford vase



Thank You to our Judges!



Whitney and Rich, with whom, Roy and Elton?



Richard Wojciak of Abbott & Cobb presents Whitney with a camera

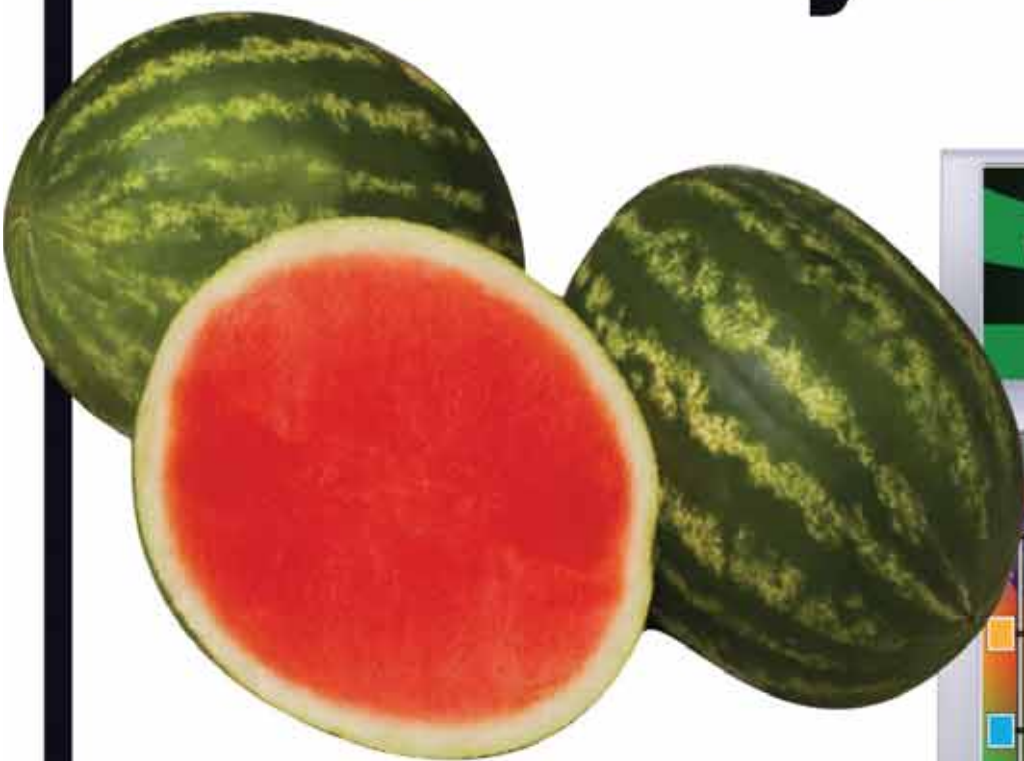


NWA Officers Congratulate Whitney



Matthew Chastain enjoys Whitney!

Sweet Polly a Sure Winner!



Don't bet on anything else!

Sweet Polly

Triploid Watermelon

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Usage	FRESH/ FRESH PROCESS
Fruit Shape	Blocky
Seed Size	Small-Medium
Approximate Days To Maturity	88
Fruit Rind Description	Modern style, dark green, crimson rind pattern
Fruit Weight Range (US - LBS)	15-18
Pip Size	Small-Medium
Fruit Flesh Description	Red flesh color. Penetrometer readings of 2.5-3.0 lbs.

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Alabama Report

Hi There to our Watermelon Family!!

What a fantastic few months this has been! Thank you to every person that has made these past few months possible for the 2010 Alabama Watermelon Queen Kimberly McCay, the 2011 Alabama Watermelon Queen Anne-Marie Urrutia, and myself. It's been a busy but phenomenal few months and we've truly done our best to represent our Alabama Association well.

Finishing up her reign, 2010 Queen Kimberly attended the South Carolina Association's Annual Convention in Columbia, South Carolina and I must give a big thank you to all of the South Carolina members for showing us such great hospitality as first time visitors to the beautiful state. Quickly thereafter, we made a stop in Cordele, Georgia for the Annual Georgia Watermelon Association Convention. Next up was the Annual Alabama Watermelon Association Convention, held February 11-12th at the Beau Rivage Resort & Casino in Biloxi, Mississippi, followed by the National Convention in La Jolla, California!

In Biloxi, we had a great AWA convention again this year! With 61 in attendance, we raised over \$63,000 at the annual auction! I want to personally give a great big thank you to everyone who attended and all of those who put time and effort into making the convention possible! During our awards ceremony, outgoing AWA President Billy Smith awarded Jim Mastropietro, International Paper, with the Lifetime Achievement Award. Harry Vaughn, Gulf Seed Co., received the Outstanding Service Award, while his beautiful wife and past coordinator, Cindy Vaughn, received the Jan Ware Award. Congratulations to each of you and thank you for everything you do for this association and the queen program.

Our newly crowned Queen, Anne-Marie Urrutia took home the Queen Seed Spit Winner title for the second year in a row, while Jay Jones, Sakata Seed, took home the Adult Seed Spit Title. Josh Moore with First Choice Melon Growers, received the King Buyer Award yet again this year and McMELON, Inc. took home the King Donor Award for their generosity at the annual auction. To wrap up the awards ceremony, our queen results were as follows – 2011 Queen Anne-Marie Urrutia, 1st Runner-Up Hannah Smith, 2nd Runner-Up Meghan Patterson, and Miss Jubilee Sarah Ernst. We are excited to have Queen Anne-Marie join the family. Congratulations and Good Luck!

I also want to take a moment to thank all of our 2011 Annual Convention Sponsors: Billy Smiths Watermelons, Inc., Morgan Wood Products, Valdosta Plant Company, Smurfit-Stone, Temple-Inland, Clifton Seed Company, Allen Lund Company, McMELON, Inc., NWPB, NWA, International Paper, Genecco Produce, Wm. Manis Produce Marketing, LTF Greenhouses, and Toro. Thank you so much for making our convention not only possible, but a big success. Thank you!

Lastly, I would like to give a big congratulations and thank you to our outgoing Queen, Kimberly McCay. Kimberly did a fantastic job at Nationals and received 1st Runner up. She represented the AWA very well and I'm incredibly proud of her. Thank you for doing such a great job this past year Kimberly! With that said, I'd also like welcome Anne-Marie to the watermelon family and wish her luck on the year ahead. After our first trip to the Illiana Convention, I know it's going to be an extraordinary year that I cannot wait to get started. Keep an eye out for us in the coming months – we'll be busy utilizing our Specialty Crop Block Grant funds and look forward to staying busy!

See you next time!
Ali Rauch
AWA Promotions Coordinator
ali.rauch@gmail.com
217-317-0553



Queen Kimberly with newly crowned GWA Queen Jenna.



What Beautiful Royalty – 2010 AWA Queen Kimberly, TWA Queen Marriana, 2011 AWA Queen Anne-Marie, 2010 National Queen Jessica, and FWA Queen Shelley – Thanks for joining us ladies!



AWA Board Member, Josh Moore, proudly modeling the watermelon panties purchased for him at the Annual AWA Convention. Thank you Dave Genneco!



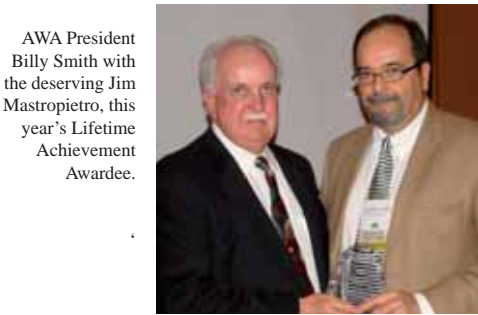
Queen Kimberly with her favorite Alabama Fans – Arnold & Brenda Mack at the Annual Auction at Nationals.



AWA President Billy Smith with 2nd Time Seed Spit Winner and our new Queen, Anne-Marie Urrutia.



Oh Harry...That's about all you can say to this. Harry Vaughn the watermelon man takes a break to pose with Queen Kimberly and Jenna Garrett.



AWA President Billy Smith with the deserving Jim Mastropietro, this year's Lifetime Achievement Awardee.



Queen Kimberly with her supporting sisters, Kayla & Kelly, at Nationals.



AWA President Billy Smith with our King Buyer, Josh Moore with First Choice Melon Growers.



Newly crowned Queen Anne-Marie is on a ROLL!!! She is officially undefeated in the seed spit – At Illiana, not only does she take home the Queen Award but also the Adult Award! Way To Go!!



AWA President Billy Smith with Past President Terry Jones, accepting the King Donor Award for McMELON, Inc.



Queen Anne-Marie with newly crowned IWA Queen Sabra, NWA Queen Whitney, and outgoing IWA Queen Sylvia.



AWA President Billy Smith passing the Presidential Torch down to Cheryl Hicks.



Queen Anne-Marie with AWA President Cheryl Hicks at the Illiana Convention.



The 2011 AWA Queen's Court – Queen Anne-Marie Urrutia, 1st Runner Up Hannah Smith, 2nd Runner Up Meghan Patterson.



Queen Anne-Marie with NWA President Jim Schmidt at the Illiana Convention.

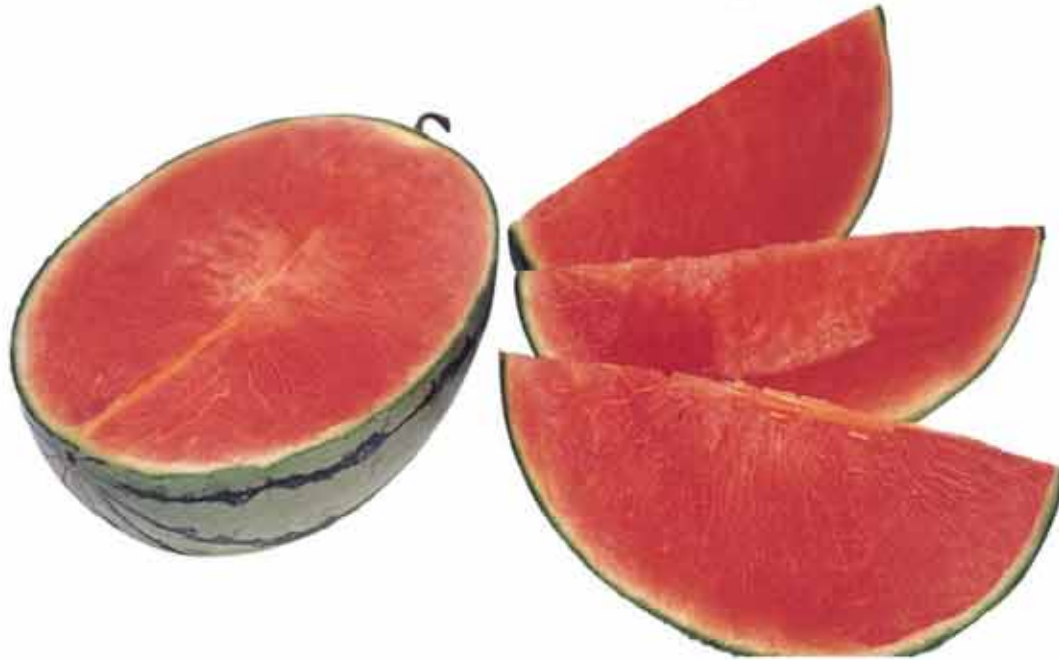


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Florida Report

Greetings from the Sunshine State of Florida

Our 2010 year ended with Shelley traveling to Fort Myers, Florida for the Tux & Trees Christmas Event being held at the Fort Myers Sidney Davis Art Center. This event raised over \$35,000 dollars for the Goodwill Industries to help people find jobs that have been unemployed within this year. Last year they helped over 200 people find jobs. Second highest auction bid was a decorated Watermelon Christmas Tree that was auctioned off for \$3500.00 and then it was displayed at the ICU Unit at Health Park Hospital in Fort Myers. Thanks to Jim Barfield – Wolf Island for sponsoring this event and Patty Swilley for chaperoning.

Then our year started off right when we traveled to the Georgia Watermelon Convention held in Cordele, Georgia sponsored by Melon 1 at the Lake Blackshear Resort. Thanks to the Georgia Watermelon Association for your hospitality and Dan King and Julie Atkins for a wonderful convention. Thanks to Josh Moore with First Choice Melons for a wonderful breakfast on Sunday morning as we headed back home. Congratulations to Jenna Brooke Saxon for being selected as the new 2011 Georgia Watermelon Queen.

February started off exciting when Queen Shelley and Dixie Rou traveled to the Mar-Del Watermelon Convention held in Cambridge, Maryland at the Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay Resort sponsored by Melon 1. Thanks Dixie Rou for chaperoning this event. Congratulations go to Jordon Holloway as their newly crowned queen.

Our next stop was my home town for the Alabama Watermelon Convention held in Biloxi, Mississippi which was sponsored by Myron Harrison – Temple Inland, Jeff Garrett – Clifton Seed Company, Josh Moore – First Choice Melons, Kelly Marino – Sunny Fresh Farms. Thanks to the Alabama Watermelon Association for a wonderful convention. Congratulations to Anne- Marie Urrutia for being selected as the new Alabama Watermelon Queen.

Then it was off to San Diego, California for the 97th National Watermelon Convention. Queen Shelley represented Florida very well! We are all very proud of you! Shelley took home the second- runner-up title. We would like to thank everyone from Florida that went to California and supported Queen Shelley and I. We would also like to thank Shelley’s grandmother (Me-Maw), Shirley Allen for coming and helping us out. The Florida Watermelon Association is very proud of Shelley for the job that she has done this year.

If you are ever in Tampa, Florida during the first two weeks of February please stop by Tampa State Fair and visit our Florida Watermelon Association Booth. We are in the Agri-Business building. We would like to thank Smurfit-Stone for donating bins this year for our fair booth.

What an amazing year Queen Shelley and I have had this year. We would like to thank all of our sponsors for making this a wonderful and memorable year. We would also like to thank Shelley’s family for sharing her with us this past year and providing lots of support!

Wishing everyone a successful 2011 watermelon season.... until next time

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



Congratulations to Mar-Del Watermelon Queen Jordon Holloway



Visiting with FWA Chairman of the Board Paul Sawyer and his wife Jackie

Queen Shelley and Dixie Rou at the Mar-Del Watermelon Convention



“Congratulations Shelley” We are all proud of you!!



NWQ Jessica, IWQ Sylvia and FWQ Shelley making a wish!



Queen Shelley and Vice-President Chandler Mack



FWQ Shelley having fun at the National Watermelon Festival



Visiting with Cheryl Hicks at the Georgia Watermelon Convention



Thanks FWA for the beautiful arrangement of flowers



Josh Moore with First Choice Melons and Queen Shelly



2010 State Chapter Queens in California



Queen Shelley with the Lapide and Chastain Family in Cordele, Georgia.

Queen Shelley and Shirley Allen (Me-Maw) in San Diego, California



Thanks FWA President Billy Smith and his wife Corliss for the beautiful Watermelon bracelet



“Welcome to Cordele the Watermelon Capital”.



Thanks to Kelly and Jean Marino for the beautiful watermelon beach towel.



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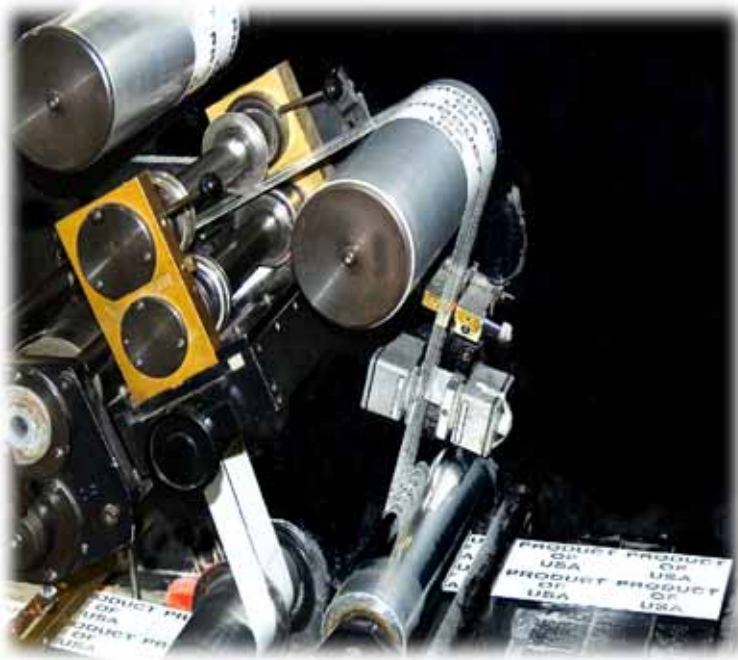
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Georgia Report

Hello GWA Friends,

We are proud to deliver good news to you on our 2011 Annual Watermelon Convention held in Cordele January 28-30, 2011 at The Lake Blackshear Resort. We had a variety of special events planned for our guests. We began the weekend with a choice of a round of golf, bird hunt or day of relaxation by the lake. Later that evening we gathered for The President's Reception and Bar-B-Que that was held at a Lakeside Pavillion. Following the educational sessions on Saturday, we held the traditional Seed Spitting Contest by the Queen Contestants and Members. Saturday afternoon wrapped up with a lunch buffet, live and silent auction. We ended the day with the much anticipated Watermelon Queen competition, dinner and awards ceremony.

We are proud to introduce our 2011 Georgia Watermelon Queen, Miss Jenna Brooke Saxon. Miss Jenna is a student at The University of Georgia majoring in Agriculture Communications. Miss Jenna is a resident of Carlton, GA. She is the 21 year old daughter of Mr. Mike and Mrs. Tina Saxon. After graduation Miss Jenna plans to pursue a career in Public Relations or Marketing in the Agriculture Industry. Miss Jenna has an agriculture history, and is eager to get the promotions rolling!

We had seven wonderful contestants competing this year for our Public Relations Representative role. Our first runner-up is Miss Laura Lyn McLeod of Cordele, GA., and second runner-up Miss Jennifer Eadie from Ashburn, GA. Each contestant was very helpful during our Annual Auction. We appreciate the hard work from each of the contestants. Thank you to our Queen Contestant sponsors for helping make this weekend experience possible for each contestant. Our contestant sponsors were: Albany Pallet Exchange, Joey Faison, Leger and Son, Darren and Tammy Deal, Midwest Marketing, Terry Gerrald's and Craig Mathis. A big thank you to our judges: Steven Vandermeid/Harris Moran Seed Co., Judy Bennett/Coleman's, Fallon Garrett/Past GA Queen and Scott Davis/Military Produce Group. Thank you to our Queen Scholarship Sponsors: Ms. Sue Childers, Anonymous Donor in honor of Mr. Oren Childers, Arthur Ben Morris and Multicorr.

GWA would like to thank each of our sponsors that helped make the convention the success it was:

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*Our Auction was a success, with over \$100,000 worth of items were donated, making this our most successful auction ever. Thank you to all our donors and buyers for your continued support.

A SPECIAL Congratulations to our 2010 Georgia Queen Miss Whitney Conner for becoming our 2011 National Watermelon Queen. Miss Whitney will be an asset to NWA. Whitney is hard worker, and 100% dedicated. I have no doubt she will do a fantastic job for us all! Congrats Whitney, your Georgia family is proud of you.

We appreciate the hard work and time our out-going President Dan King contributed to GWA. We welcome our 2011 President Jamey Adams. A special thanks to our GWA Board of Directors for the hard work, and passion put toward building our successful association.

Thanks to all of YOU, our Association continues to grow. Our organization looks forward to 2011 being another great year, thanks to YOU!

Let's get the watermelon season going! Blessings to you this upcoming season.

Sincerely,
Julie Akins
Promotion Coordinator
akinsjulie1@windstream.net
770.842.3309



2011 GWA Winners Winner Miss Jenna Saxon, 1st Runner-up Miss Laura Lyn McLeod, 2nd Runner-up Miss Jennifer Eadie.



Brenda Mack and Jenna enjoying the show at the 2011 Southern Exposure



GA Queen Jenna Saxon and National Queen Whitney Conner with C & L Packing sharing memories at the SE Produce show in Orlando, FL.



Miss Jenna Saxon our 2011 Georgia Watermelon Queen



Miss Jenna's First Seed Spit!
Many more to come in her future



Mr. Buddy with his two GA girls Whitney and Jenna in Orlando



Our 2011 GWA Queen introducing herself at our Annual Convention in Cordele



Thank you Mr. Buddy and Greg for sponsoring Miss Jenna to the SE Produce Show in Orlando, FL.



THE 3 NWA WINNERS. We had the most intelligent, beautiful and sincere group of girls from each state representing us all.



Whitney and Jenna enjoy Michael Jackson while in Orlando.



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Watermelon and the American Enterprise exhibition.

The National Watermelon Promotion Board is advising the National Museum of American History on the agricultural aspects of the American Enterprise exhibition. Here is the link for details:

<http://americanenterprise.si.edu/collaborations/associations/>

According to the Smithsonian, the American Enterprise will convey the drama, breadth, and diversity of America’s business heritage along with its benefits, failures, and unanticipated consequences. More than 4.5 million people visit the National Museum of American History each year.

We have been asked by the museum to solicit the industry for artifacts. They would like to know if anyone has the following that they would be willing to donate:

* Antique knife used to cut watermelon vines during harvesting. They would like to have a knife that goes back generations and has a documented history.

* Antique watermelon seed sack with documented history.

If anyone would like to make a donation of one of the two items described, please email us with a brief description and picture, so I can forward the submissions on the museum and let them make the final selection. You can email jrosado@watermelon.org.



Mark Arney visited with Peter Liebhold of the Smithsonian Institute to discuss the placement of watermelon artifacts in their upcoming American Enterprise exhibit.



Mark Arney also presented Dr. Koh, Assistant Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services with an award for the official acknowledgement of watermelon’s health benefits in their Small Step kids program.



Rockstar Nutritionist “Jump with Jill” Promotes Watermelon

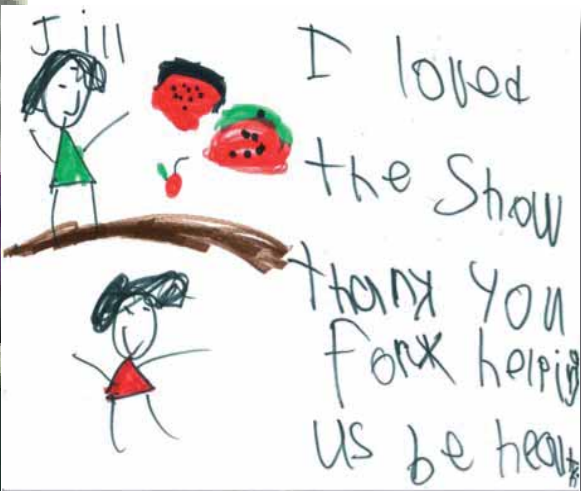
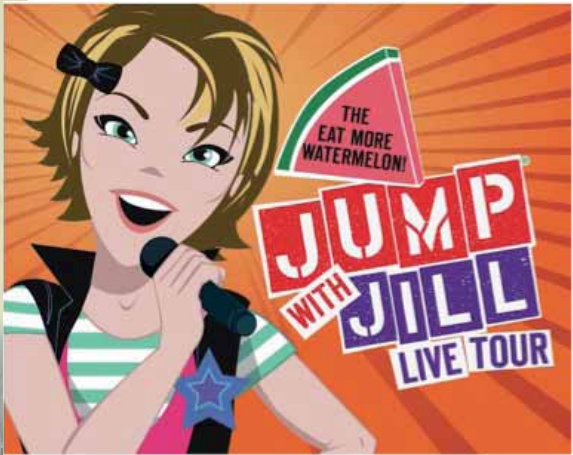
The “Eat More Watermelon! Jump with Jill Tour” kicked off National Nutrition Month in March. This rock ‘n roll nutrition tour sings to the tasty tune of watermelon throughout elementary schools nationwide. From California to New Jersey, and Nebraska to Texas, the tour will run from March through September 2011 and is expected to reach over 30,000 kids. The show’s educational, movement-inducing tunes are an innovative way to teach kids the benefits of enjoying fruit like watermelon over soda or candy.

“Watermelon is nature’s candy; it’s naturally sweet and nutritious,” says show creator Jill Jayne, a registered dietitian and musician. “It’s high in vitamins A and C, and fun to eat. There is no food I’d rather sing about!”

Better known as the Rockstar Nutritionist, Jill Jayne has created a reputation of healthy rock since 2006. Her unique approach to nutrition addresses the childhood obesity crisis in a way that today’s media-savvy kids can digest. Using music, dance, and interactive learning, the show improves retention of healthy habits by using the

same tools used by mass media marketers to sell junk food. Jill teaches entire schools about healthy eating and staying active. Jill’s work has been performed for over 100,000 kids across the United States and has been featured in national media outlets including NPR, PBS, The Washington Post, and industry trade publications.

To learn more about the Jump with Jill program, and to see if she’s coming to a school near you, visit her website at www.jumpwithjill.com or contact Stephanie Simek at ssimek@watermelon.org.



One of the many thank you letters Jump with Jill has received while on tour.



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Canada adopts new inspection protocols

Beginning May 16, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency will collect inspection fees in a new way.



Fees will be collected based on an hourly rate, not through a weight-based system, according to a news release from the Ottawa-based Dispute Resolution Corporation.

The change paves the way for the agency’s Destination Inspection Service to implement full cost recovery, a multi-phase process expected to take three years. Changes in how the Canadian government handles inspections of fruits and vegetables were spurred by industry demands for a better system.

The revamped Destination Inspection Service will feature fees based on a \$99-per-hour rate; dedicated staff for destination inspections; service on weekends; and new service standards.

EPA Chief Grilled by House Ag Committee

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lisa Jackson was questioned by both Republican and Democrat members in a hearing before the House Agriculture Committee. The committee sought information and explanation about the agency’s enforcement and regulation of federal laws like the Clean Water Act and its impact on farming operations and businesses. Ag Committee Chairman Frank Lucas (R-OK), accused the EPA of having an agenda that did not consider the consequences of its actions on agriculture, and characterized EPA’s rules and regulations as “overreaching, burdensome” and having a negative effect on job creation.

Ranking committee member Collin Peterson (D-MN) was equally critical saying he has met with producer groups from across the country and EPA regulations are almost always on the top of farmers’ agendas. In his opening statement he said, “We’ve watched organizations use the courts to twist laws against American farmers and agricultural production. More and more we are seeing important policy decisions that impact agriculture arise not from the legislative process, but from a litigation process where court decisions or secret lawsuit settlement negotiations result in poor policy decisions. If we don’t work together to find a solution, producers will likely continue being told how to operate by bureaucrats, lawyers and judges who don’t understand agriculture. This is not the way to make agriculture policy.”

Rep. Dennis Cardoza (D-CA) stated, “I believe your agency is the most unpopular with farmers from sea-to-shining-sea.” He asked Jackson if the EPA operated as “agency activists,” and if she or her agency had ever deliberately sought out a lawsuit. Jackson answered, “Not to my knowledge.”

Cardoza also questioned Jackson about the Pesticide Data Program, stating “we would like your office to begin defending both the robust process which generates this report and the findings which demonstrate the safety of the food supply,” mentioning that this data is continually misconstrued by groups claiming harm

House proposal slashes WIC, other programs

The House of Representatives passed legislation to fund federal agencies through the end of fiscal year 2011, cutting the Women Infant and Children budget by \$750 million, jeopardizing fruit and vegetable vouchers in that program.

The legislative wrangling over discretionary funds in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Drug Administration and other federal agency budgets isn’t over, however. The Senate must produce their own budget bill and reconcile it with the House version.

Rep. Hal Rogers, R-Ky., House Appropriations chairman, said H.R. 1 includes the largest single discretionary spending cut in the history of the nation, eliminating \$100 billion compared with the White House budget. More than \$5 billion was pared from the USDA and FDA alone, including more than \$1 billion from USDA nutrition programs.

Lorelei DiSogra, vice president of nutrition and health for the Washington, D.C.-based United Fresh Produce Association, said the proposed cuts to WIC could threaten fresh produce vouchers, which were approved in 2009. The total WIC budget in fiscal year 2010 was close to \$8 billion, USDA reports indicate.

Republican lawmakers said the cuts were only the beginning. “This will mark the beginning of a new

trend of reductions that will take place throughout the next year,” Rogers said in a news release.

Lawmakers passed 67 of more than 580 amendments to H.R.1. Though produce advocates were concerned about an amendment that would eliminate export promotion dollars in the Market Access Program, that was left intact. An amendment the industry had rallied against that would have shut down seeking an expansion of cross-border trucking with Mexico was withdrawn.

The Environmental Protection Agency’s Greenhouse Gas Registry, which collects data on industrial greenhouse gas emissions, lost \$8.4 million through a successful amendment. The House also approved an amendment blocking EPA funding to impose Florida water quality standards. Nine amendments taking away funding for President Obama’s health care reform law also passed.

It’s uncertain how Congress will deal with the fiscal year 2011 budget. The friction about the 2011 budget means more conflict ahead. It is anticipated that it will get much harder when Congress begins the debate over the fiscal year 2012 budget.

Cuts made in H.R. 1 to the energy and conservation programs from the 2008 farm bill suggest that the entire farm bill could be up for debate when the fiscal year 2012 budget is considered.

Mexico and U.S. Agree to Solve Cross-Border

The governments of Mexico and the United States reached an agreement in principle for a permanent solution to the cross-border trucking dispute.

The agreement will allow Mexican and U.S. long-haul carriers that operate safely to obtain permanent operating authority to deliver international cargo across both countries, as long as they comply with the pertinent rules and regulations.

The agreement will recognize and credit the experience and safety record of Mexican carriers that participated in the previous demonstration program of 2009. Mexican carriers that receive full operating authority in the United States will be able to retain it definitively.

Trade sanctions imposed on U.S. products will be

suspended in a phased manner in compliance with the agreed terms. Mexico preserves its rights to reinstall them if the United States fails to comply with the agreement.

The agreement allows for door-to-door delivery of international goods across the border, an additional option for the safe transport of goods between our countries. It also offers the possibility of eliminating significant inefficiencies in our trade transport – a move that will lead to more jobs, safer roads, and greater competitiveness for both nations and the North American region as a whole.

Resolving the cross-border trucking issue moves us toward a more efficient 21st century border between the United States and Mexico.

In 2010 bilateral trade between Mexico and the United States was valued at nearly \$400 billion annually, and 70% of that trade moves by truck. At a time when our economies are in the midst of recovery, it is imperative that we remove any obstacles to growth and prosperity.

Membership – Why should you join?

In the late 1700s when the U.S. became a nation, about 90% of the country was made up of farmers. In the late 1800s, about 30% of the country’s population was employed in farming. Today, less than 2% of all Americans work in agriculture.

How does that have anything to do with ‘Membership’? Take a look at your advocate on the front lines, the National Watermelon Association, and see what it means.

We have federal legislators that debate bills and pass laws that affect you, your business and your future. Over 96% of those legislators are far removed from farming and your way of life. You have an advocate that is front and center with the goal to ensure that those regulations, policies and laws will not impede your ability to grow your business and succeed. Your NWA membership guarantees that your voice will be heard.

We invest tens of thousands each year into production research with Universities and USDA labs that seek solutions to grower problems. Whether they be disease pressures, cosmetic issues (i.e. hollow heart) or potential uses of culls (i.e. ethanol), we are making a difference to help

MEMBER continued on page 27





Many thanks to the growers, marketers, and other industry professionals who made the **“2nd International Watermelon Conference: Americas Summit”** a tremendous success. Thanks to your participation, the event provided a rare opportunity to both learn the latest developments and connect with others in our industry. **Thank you.**



See event photos and conference highlights at **www.internationalwatermelon.com**.

For more information on Nunhems watermelon varieties, please contact your local sales specialist, call Nunhems Customer Service at **(800) 733-9505**, or visit **www.nunhemsusa.com**.





Feds Target Illegal Hires

The federal government is requiring as many as 1,000 companies to turn over their employment records for inspection, part of an expanding crackdown on businesses suspected of hiring illegal immigrants, according to people close to the Department of Homeland Security.

The audits, which the government is expected to make public in the next few days, represent the biggest such operation since 2009. At that time, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, a DHS unit, conducted an auditing sweep of businesses working in public safety and national security.

ICE recently established an employment compliance inspection center to beef up coordination across states instead of having agents follow only local leads. The latest round of audits targets at least a few regional fast-food chains, according to people with knowledge of the operation.

Federal agents are expected to visit the companies to notify them of the requirement. The required documents include I-9 forms, used to verify an employee’s identity and eligibility for employment in the U.S. ICE declined to comment.

The big new sweep comes as state and federal lawmakers who champion tough immigration enforcement are pushing to mandate that all U.S. companies use a government-run electronic database to verify whether their new hires are legal workers. Currently, only federal contractors are required by law to use the program, called E-Verify.

The enforcement approach allows both Democrats and Republicans to argue that they’re tackling illegal immigration even in the absence of major new legislation on the issue. Both sides can tout enforcement as an effort to protect American workers from illegal immigrants, perceived as creating unfair competition for scarce jobs.

That helps explain the push to expand the database system, which can weed out undocumented workers, and a recent surge of immigration enforcement by the Obama administration, which is stepping up its use of “silent raids,” or audits of employee records that can lead businesses to dismiss hundreds of workers.

ICE isn’t expected to name the companies it is auditing but may identify the sectors in which they operate. Historically, agriculture and the food-processing and hospitality

industries are the most vulnerable to enforcement actions, because they rely heavily on low-skilled workers. Audits last year ensnared the fast-growing burrito chain Chipotle Mexican Grill Inc., which in recent months was forced to dismiss hundreds of illegal workers in Minnesota. An ongoing investigation of 60 Chipotle restaurants in Virginia and Washington, D.C., will likely force the company to shed more workers, according to immigration authorities.

Thousands of workers have been caught in the net by the Obama administration. Among other companies hit by the program are Abercrombie & Fitch Co., hip-clothing maker American Apparel Inc. and Gebbers Farms, a big apple grower in Washington state.

Experts say the audits are more effective than the work-site sweeps of the Bush era because they make employers let go of every suspected illegal immigrant on the books, not only those present when a raid occurs. Companies are highly unlikely to hire replacements who are illegal immigrants.

Julie Myers Wood, who headed ICE in the Bush administration, said the Chipotle audit and the possible expansion of E-Verify at the federal or local level has companies on edge. “These developments show that it’s not wise to turn a blind eye” to unauthorized workers.

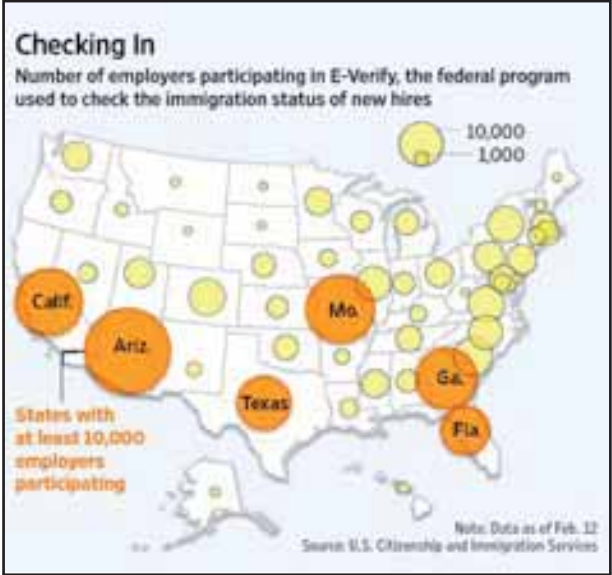
The AFL-CIO said its position hadn’t changed since April 2009, when it forged a position supporting legalization of immigrants, coupled with a more efficient worker system to make sure new workers were legal. The AFL-CIO doesn’t support E-Verify without legalization. It is opposed to the I-9 audits and maintains that enforcement doesn’t work without a comprehensive solution to the problem.

“We are in favor of comprehensive immigration reform, and we see that legalization is actually the strongest possible worker protection,” said a spokeswoman for the AFL-CIO, an umbrella organization for 57 unions representing 12.3 million workers.

E-Verify grew out of a pilot program introduced in 1997 in six states with large illegal-immigrant populations. In 2003, Congress extended the pilot to all 50 states. But it was adopted by fewer than 6,000 employers until about 2005, when the Bush administration began promoting it, among other measures, to tighten immigration enforcement.

Today, the free Web-based program allows businesses to check information provided by new hires on an I-9 form against Social Security Administration, State Department and Homeland Security databases. Federal contractors must use it; three states require all employers operating within their boundaries to use it. In addition, about a dozen other states require its use by government agencies and public contractors.

Though E-Verify’s use has grown in recent years, only about 11% of 7.7 million employers nationwide use the



program, either voluntarily or as a condition for doing business with the government. In recent weeks, Republican promoters of E-Verify have begun pushing for an expansion of the program in Congress and in several states.

“With 26 million Americans unemployed or underemployed, expanding E-Verify would help open up jobs that they need,” Rep. Lamar Smith (R., Texas) said at the first hearing of the immigration subcommittee of the House Judiciary committee. His view was echoed by Rep. Elton Gallegly (R., Calif.), who chairs the subcommittee and is also a key proponent of mandatory use.

Tennessee, Florida and Georgia are among several states where lawmakers are seeking to mandate E-Verify use for all employers among other measures to combat illegal immigration.

Any expansion of the program would require changing federal law and would likely face opposition. After Arizona made E-Verify mandatory for all companies operating in the state in 2008, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce joined civil-liberties groups to challenge it in the U.S. Supreme Court. The Court is expected to rule in the coming months on whether a state can require employers to participate in a program that federal law currently specifies is voluntary. The ruling is expected to influence the states where lawmakers have proposed making E-Verify mandatory.

At the House Judiciary Committee meeting, Zoe Lofgren, (D., Calif.), a ranking member of the immigration subcommittee, said mandatory E-Verify use would “encourage businesses and workers to enter the underground economy by working off the books.” She said it would “decimate” the agriculture sector, where illegal workers fill 75% of the jobs.

At Stanley Farms, a 1,000-acre onion grower in Georgia, workers are overwhelmingly Hispanic immigrants, who co-owner Brian Stanley says he assumes are legal workers unless he is told otherwise. The closely held grower has tested equipment to replace manual labor during the April-to-June harvest, with little success. Vidalia onions, which tend to be softer than other onions, are easily bruised, says co-owner Brian Stanley.

“There’s nothing out there to replace hand labor, and we don’t have American people applying for these jobs,” said Brian Stanley, a third-generation onion farmer. “Using E-Verify would cut our work force and hurt our business,” he says.

An evaluation of the program carried out for the government last year found that it might be failing to detect one out of two illegal workers, specifically those who obtained employment by borrowing or stealing someone else’s identity. A government spokesman said it is working to improve the program’s ability to detect identity fraud.

“In states where E-Verify is mandatory, there are still illegal workers,” said Mr. Cerda, the immigration attorney. He argues that E-Verify must be linked to a biometric identity system to be effective.

“E-Verify is a no-brainer for employers,” said Mark Reed, a former immigration agent who runs Border Management Strategies, a consulting firm. “For employers attempting to build immigration compliance, it’s a fundamental component. For employers who continue to hire illegals, it provides some protection against adverse government action.”

MEMBER continued from page 25

growers produce a crop and make a profit. Your NWA membership provides a forum for you to help guide future research initiatives.

We are on the forefront of food safety and state-of-the-art traceability by authoring our own food safety program called the “Commodity Specific Food Safety Guidelines for the Fresh Watermelon Supply Chain”. We recommended a state-of-the-art traceability program that far exceeds PTI requirements, and will track each individual watermelon from farm to consumer. And, we have advocated for federal legislation with Congress and FDA that will be commodity-specific and risk-based.

Our National Watermelon Queen is well trained to be a spokesperson and ambassador in promoting the health benefits and consumption of watermelon, and participates in many promotions throughout the U.S., and in recent years has reached out to Canada, Mexico and Japan. The program is complimented by eight (8) Chapter Queens who compete for the National position at our annual convention. If you have a promotion need, we have the expertise to make it successful.

We publish three communications programs that keep our membership up to date on our programs and news that is key to the watermelon industry. The Vineline is our quarterly

member magazine that is sought by all of our members. The Off The Vine newsletter is issued via email quarterly to our members and supplements the magazine. And, our web site, www.nationalwatermelonassociation.com includes all NWA programs and services.

And last but certainly not least, we hold one of the most fun-filled industry conventions every year. Crisscrossing the country over 450 industry members gather to learn about new trends, locate suppliers, determine policy and programs for the coming year, raise funds through the auction to finance those programs, share fellowship, and have a lot of fun.

The complex and integrated nature of the industry is making membership more valuable than ever before. The services provided by the association are becoming more important because we are in a world that is moving quicker.

The NWA was organized by the commodity itself in 1914 to provide a focused and direct benefit to the industry, while businesses joined forces with their colleagues to make a difference. The extent of services provided is dependent on one thing – the members. The best associations are dynamically member-driven and tailor their programs to what the members want and need. That tells you what we are all about -- the NWA. Join us.

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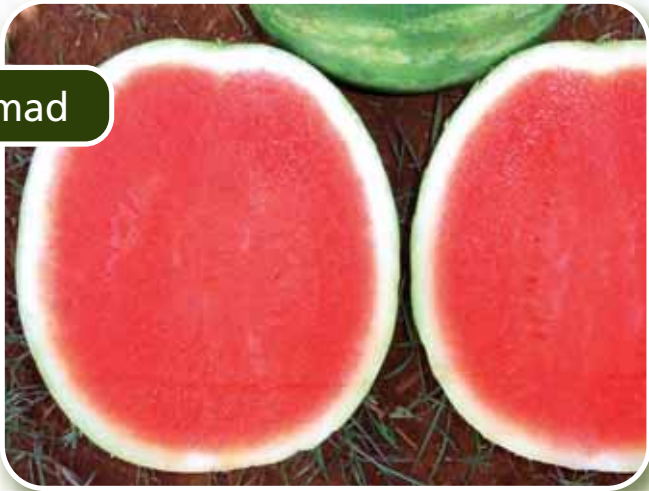


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New to Harris Moran's seedless watermelon line-up, Troubadour offers high sugars with excellent interior appearance, deep red flesh color, and excellent overall eating quality. A strong vine habit and mid-early relative maturity provides high yield potential. Blocky fruit shape coupled with 14 to 17 lb average fruit weight allows for higher bin count. Rind color is medium-green with dark green stripes.

Nomad features high Brix with red flesh color, medium green stripes, and good firmness. This watermelon delivers large size in the early season. It has vigorous vine, providing good fruit protection. It is well adapted to both cool and warm growing seasons. Fruit weighs between 16 and 21 pounds.

Nomad



Accomplish - HMX 8920

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Illiana Report

It's time to grow some watermelon!
Happy Spring, everyone.

Sylvia wrapped up her year with trips to the Texas and Georgia conventions. She had a great time visiting with members of the other watermelon associations. Thanks to JRT, Inc., Freyco, Brandt Consolidated, and Agri-Technologies for sponsoring her to the Georgia convention. Melon Acres sponsored the Illiana booth at the Indiana Ag-Hort Congress. Illiana Association sponsored the Knox County Chamber Breakfast Bandwagon on January 26 where Sylvia presented her speech for Nationals. She also gave her speech at the Kiwanis meeting on February 3. Thanks to Farm Credit Services for sponsoring her.

Next up, we traveled to San Diego California, site of the National Watermelon convention. We appreciate NWA and the Western Watermelon Association for hosting this fabulous convention. We enjoyed the sunset cruise, the fair, the panel discussion, and everything else. Sylvia wants to thank Wabash Valley Growers, Midwest Marketing, Melon Acres, Double T, Mouzin Brothers and IWA for her watermelon necklace and pendant. She loves it! Sylvia's very last promotion was Knox County Ag Night held March 10---the night before our convention! Thanks to Double T for sponsoring Sylvia and to Mike Yochum of WCI Produce for providing the watermelons. Everyone visiting our booth said the juicy watermelon put them in the mood for springtime.

March 11-12 Casino Aztar was transformed into Mardi Gras for the 22nd Annual Illiana Watermelon Convention. IWA was honored to welcome National Queen Whitney and new NWA President Jim Schmidt to Indiana. As Sylvia prepared to give up her crown, she was presented with an additional scholarship from Kemper CPA group.

Our 2011 Illiana Watermelon Queen is Sabra Boyd of Lincoln, Illinois. She is the daughter of Mike and Shari Boyd. Sabra is a student at University of Illinois-Champaign. Sabra receives a \$1000 scholarship from International Paper and Multicorr.

Haeli Denton of Cayuga, Indiana is 1st runner up and receives a \$500 scholarship from International Paper and Multicorr. 2nd runner up is Madison Duncan of Attica Indiana. Her \$200 scholarship is sponsored by John Nowaskie Melons. Miss Jubilee is Whitney Horrall who receives a \$100 award from Double T.

Finally, we'd like to express our gratitude to all participants in the 2011 convention, especially our load donors and sponsors.

Beth Frey
Promotions Coordinator-Illiana Watermelon Association
loveshallmark@hotmail.com
812-886-5409 * 812-890-0620



2011 Queen Sabra and Little Miss Watermelon Kaelee, granddaughter of Brad & Angie Toney.



Ag Day sponsored by Double T.



IWA President Carrie Smith welcomes Queen Sabra to our watermelon family.



Kiwanis Meeting with Randy Smith of Midwest Marketing
Thanks Farm Credit Services.



Queen Sabra with former IWA Queens Johnna Thompson and Ali Vice Rauch. All three hail from Illinois.



Queen Sylvia chats with Myron Harrison of Temple-Inland at the Georgia Convention.



Sylvia enjoys the cruise on San Diego Bay.



Sylvia, Mariana, and Jessica visit with Susan and Brent Harrison in Texas.



The Queen candidates model their hats purchased for them by IWA.



Will McCormick of Bestway Express purchased one of many auction items for Queen Sylvia.



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JUDGE continued from page 1

This formulation provoked a flurry of conflicting interpretations from lawyers for both sides as well as among legal scholars. Republican governors and attorneys general of three states party to the suit - Alaska, Florida and Wisconsin - immediately declared that in their states, at least, the law is now “dead.”

In the weeks since, they have also returned some state planning funds provided through the law. But they have kept other funds, and they did not take steps to undo provisions of the law that had already taken effect. By contrast, governors of several other states that are also part of the challenge said they believed that until the appeals process is completed, the statute remains in effect and they must comply with it.

In his opinion Thursday, Vinson rebuked the administration for suggesting that his original order was ambiguous, writing that he clearly meant for it to have the “practical” effect

of an injunction that could only be lifted if the government requested a stay.

“It was not expected that [the government] would effectively ignore the order and declaratory judgement for two-and-one-half weeks, continue to implement the Act, and only then file a belated motion to ‘clarify,’ “the judge wrote. In an example of scathing language he employed throughout the decision, Vinson added that the administration’s claim that its delay was due to the need for careful analysis, “seems contradictory to media reports that the White House declared within hours after entry of my order that ‘implementation will proceed apace.’ “ And, at another point he wrote that one of the administration’s arguments “borders on misrepresentation.”

Still, since administration lawyers had made clear that if the judge responded that they needed a stay, they intended to request one, Vinson said he would “save time” by treating the government’s motion for clarification as one also requesting a stay.

In granting it, the judge pointed to the other cases pending against the law and the conflicting opinions from other courts. Alaska Gov. Sean Parnell (R) issued a statement saying that although he now considers the law back in effect, he would still be reluctant to apply for federal implementation funds.

“I continue to strongly prefer to use state resources for state-based health-care solutions to increase access and improve affordability, rather than become more entangled,” he said.

DRIVE continued from page 1

markets.” He added that “the cost of goods at each point in the supply chain is going to increase.”

“If the reduction in driving hours and the restrictions on restart periods result in more deliveries and at different times, the receiving business will have to rearrange its own receiving personnel shifts or add individuals to handle the new scheduled,” Satagaj wrote, adding that early deliveries help avoid traffic, which saves time, fuel and money.

As of Feb. 15, about 7,600 written comments were filed with FMCSA regarding the proposed rule change.

VIRUS continued from page 9

developing a resistant melon that growers in the southwestern United States could plant.

McCreight’s field tests showed that disease resistance can only be effective in the desert southwest when whitefly populations are controlled. According to McCreight, hundreds of whiteflies constantly feeding on the plants assure high frequency of infection by the virus. Continued feeding by the whiteflies, particularly in summer-planted melons grown in high temperatures (more than 100 degrees Fahrenheit in the daytime), further weakens the plants. The result is often complete loss of fruit yield and quality or plant death.

Melons from plants infected with CYSDV may appear normal, but often have reduced sugar levels, resulting in poor marketability. The virus is spread by the whitefly, Bemisia tabaci, a small, sap-sucking insect that carries the virus from plant-to-plant as it feeds.

Several local weeds and important alternate crops such as alfalfa and lettuce were identified as hosts of CYSDV. However, unlike cucurbits, these newly identified crop hosts were symptomless carriers of the virus and their yield was unaffected. Wintermantel and his colleagues found the virus is capable of infecting plants in seven plant families in addition to the Cucurbitaceae family.

American Harvest movie DVDs available.

The NWA has a small inventory of the 100-minute documentary, American Harvest, available to you for your home, family, social group or use with local, state or federal legislators.

The film has received rave reviews from many trade groups and media outlets in recent years.

The documentary film was produced by Angelo Mancuso, an independent film producer, to depict the true life story of migrant life in the produce industry, featuring our watermelon industry. This is a must see film for anyone

that enjoys watermelon, and should especially be viewed by everyone to fully and truly understand the importance of migrant labor in the produce industry.

Single copies of the DVD can be purchased for \$12.00 (includes postage), or 5 or more for \$10.00 each (includes postage).

Please contact the NWA at (813) 754-7575 or email at nwa@tampabay.rr.com.





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Mar-Del Report

Greetings from the Mar-Del Association!
To start off the New Year Parris and I were happy to attend both the Delaware and the Maryland Agriculture Dinners. Parris was able to speak to Secretary of Agriculture from both states and Legislators. We are so proud to be associated with such supportive state agriculture departments.

As we start a new and successful year of promoting watermelons we close a year by saying thank you for the hard work and support from our Queen, Parris Travers, our Board, State Agriculture Departments and Sponsors. Parris did an outstanding job for us in 2010 and all of us in the association are extremely proud of the job Parris did at the National Convention. We love you Parris and welcome you to our watermelon family.

The 2011 Mar-Del Convention was a huge success and was held in memory of a dear man and friend to all, Mr. Wallace” Wally” Luffman. Being held at the beautiful Hyatt Regency in Cambridge, Md. a wonderful time was had by all in attendance. The educational seminars, Band at the Presidents Reception, live auction and the Queen Pageant held during our convention was very successful. Miss Jordan Calloway was crowned the 2011 Mar-Del Watermelon Queen. Jordan is the 19 year old daughter of Edward and Dayle Calloway from Mardela Springs, Md. Jordan is a student at Wor-Wic Community College with a major in Nuclear Medicine Technology and is a certified Nursing Assistant. Miss Terra Tatman was the 1st runner up and Miss Haley Wyatt was 2nd runner up. Two scholarships were given to Collan VanEss of Hebron, Md. and Clarence “Joe” Tatman of Harrington, De. The Lifetime Achievement Award was given to the 1st President of the Mar-Del Assoc., Board Member of NWA & NWPB and a friend to all that knew him, Mr. Wallace Luffman. Although, due to his passing Wallace wasn’t able to be with us, the association presented his award to his loving family. Our convention would not have been such a success with out the hard work of our board but especially Mr. Jay Rider our convention organizer. Jay we all want to thank you for all your hard work & dedication. Also, a big thank you to all the buyers at the auction, load donors & sponsors. Without you we would not be able to promote our product.

Queen Jordan only held her crown for 3 days when she was on the morning news doing 3 live interviews. She did an outstanding job! We can see that we are going to have a great year ahead. If anyone is interested in sponsoring the Mar-Del Queen Jordan to promote watermelons please contact me.

We hope everyone has a blessed spring for planting! Remember to visit us at mardelwatermelon.org and on Facebook for more pictures.

Watermelon Wishes,
Dawn Collins Promotions Coordinator
We are “Mar-Del-icious!!!!



Queen Parris visiting with the Delaware Secretary of Agriculture, Ed Kee @ the Delaware Agriculture Dinner



Parris visited with Board Member and Former President Willis Robinson, 2002 Mar-Del Watermelon Queen Amanda Brown Clougherty and brother Ben Brown



Contestant Jordan Calloway, National Queen Jessica Southard, Mar-Del Queen Parris Travers, Florida Watermelon Queen Shelley Allen, Contestant Haley Wyatt and Terra Tatman. The lovely ladies getting ready to work hard at our live auction.

For the love of watermelon and our association, Mr. Kevin Evans had his head shaved. In return he raised \$ 5500 for the Association! Justin Beiber no more!!!



Scholarship winners Collan VanEss from Hebron, Maryland and Clarence “Joe” Tatman from Harrington, Delaware presented by Richard Wojciak.



Mr. Donald Hales presented the family of Wallace Luffman with the Lifetime Achievement Award.



2011 Mar-Del Watermelon Queen Jordan Calloway



2011 Mar-Del Watermelon Queen Jordan Calloway and 1st runner up Terra Tatman



The Crowning of the Queen, 1987 Mar-Del Queen & 1988 1st runner up National Queen Arlette Kelley Bright, 2004 Mar-Del Queen Lani Kennedy Harmon, 2007 Mar-Del Queen Stephanie Abt Brohawn, 2009 Mar-Del Queen Jessica Haden, 2010 Mar-Del Queen Parris Travers, 2011 Mar-Del Queen Jordan Calloway.



Taking a break during the auction to say Hi and thanks to Board Member and former President Ray Vincent.



With her arms full of gifts from the auction Parris poses with Mar-Del President Mark Collins



Thank you Kevin and Katey Evans for all your support!



Special friendships have formed throughout the year! This wonderful bond with Outgoing National Queen Jessica Southard and Mar-Del Queen Parris Travers.



Isn't she lovely!!!!
Parris ready for the evening gown competition.



Thank you Parris for a job well done.



With only 3 days into being Queen, Jordan Calloway did 3 live interviews with Lacey Griffith on WBOC-TV.



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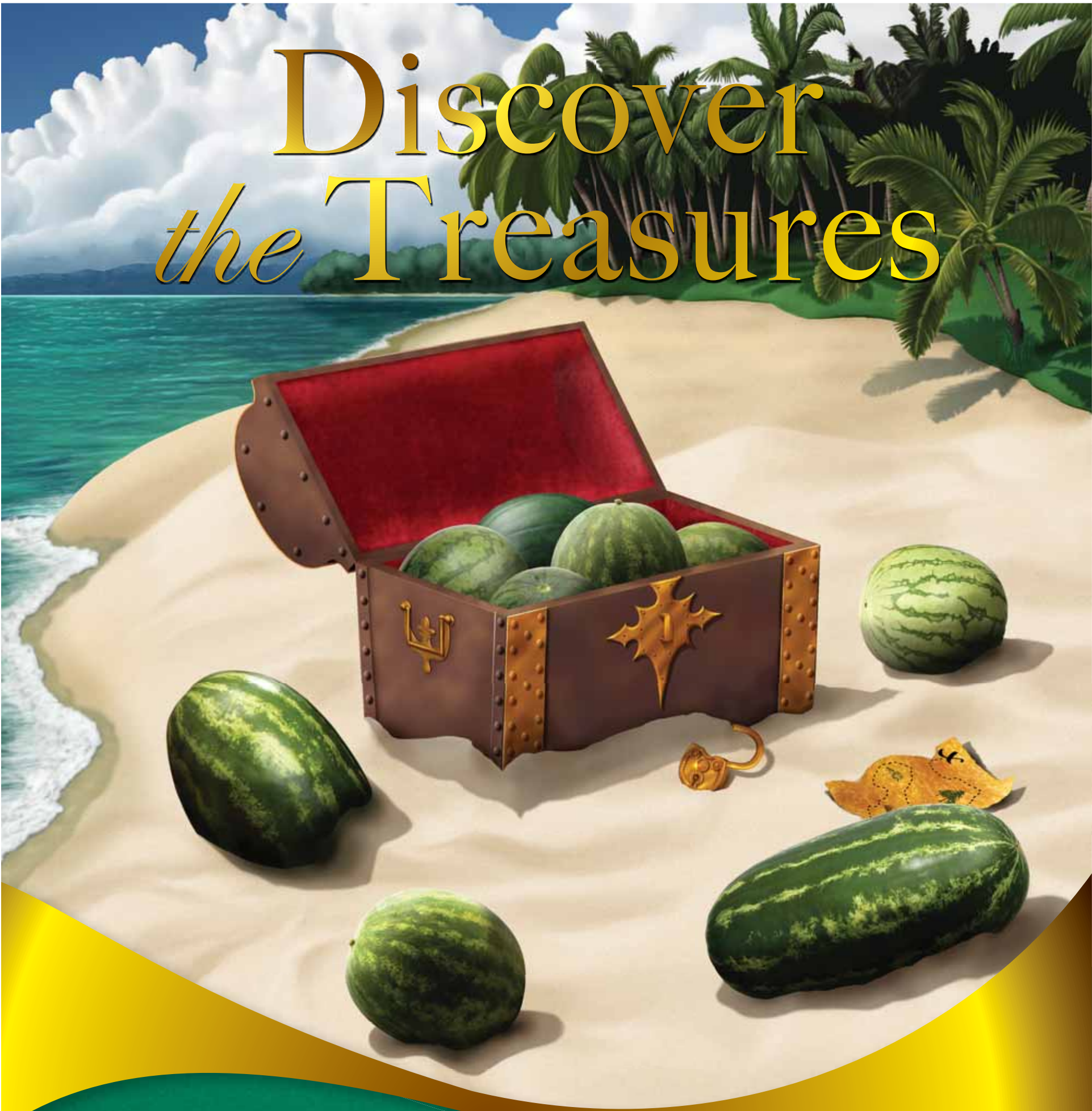
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North Carolina Report

Greetings from the North Carolina Watermelon Association.

Fresh from our 30th Annual Convention held in Durham, N.C. at the beautiful Sheraton Imperial Hotel on March 11th and 12th . There was a lot of new knowledge imparted, sweet reunions and new friendships forged, and FUN!!!! The Craig Woolard band had everyone dancing, or tapping toes, or swaying to the beat on Friday night!! The food was delicious! It was a very successful convention indeed!

I am Sue Jenkins, the New NCWA Promotions Coordinator. I met many of you when I traveled with our 2010 queen, Madelyn Varner, to San Diego for Nationals. I am looking forward to seeing you at training in Miami in April, and meeting all the new state queens. I will be traveling with our newly crowned queen, Alycia McLamb.

Alycia is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Paul McLamb of Clinton, N.C., and is currently a freshman at N.C. State University studying to become a teacher of agriculture. She is also a state FFA officer. She and I are both excited about the year of adventure, learning, and new experiences ahead of us!! Miami here we come!!!

Sue Jenkins
NCWA Promotions Coordinator
Ph: 910-827-6561
jenkinsbb@yahoo.com

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2010 NCWA Queen Madelyn crowning our 2011 NCWA Scholarship Queen Alycia Ann McLamb



Alycia McLamb, Mary Ashton Strickland and Hayley Thornton. Later Mary Ashton was crown 2nd Runner Up and Hayley was the 1st Runner- Up. GOOD JOB LADIES.



Congratulations to the 2010 King Load Buyer Ingles Markets, Inc. of Black Mountain, NC. Don Hiller, NCWA Chairman, Jim Ray, VP Produce at Ingles and Joe Jones, NCWA President.



Minta Wade, Queen Alycia and Mrs. Frances Bunch.



NC Senator Brent Jackson was guest speaker at our convention.



Queen Alycia trying to spit the longest seed.



Queen Alycia with her sponsors Gordon Etheridge and Gloria Richardson, Etheridge Produce, Inc.



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Study Vindicates Tomatoes in 2008 Salmonella Outbreak

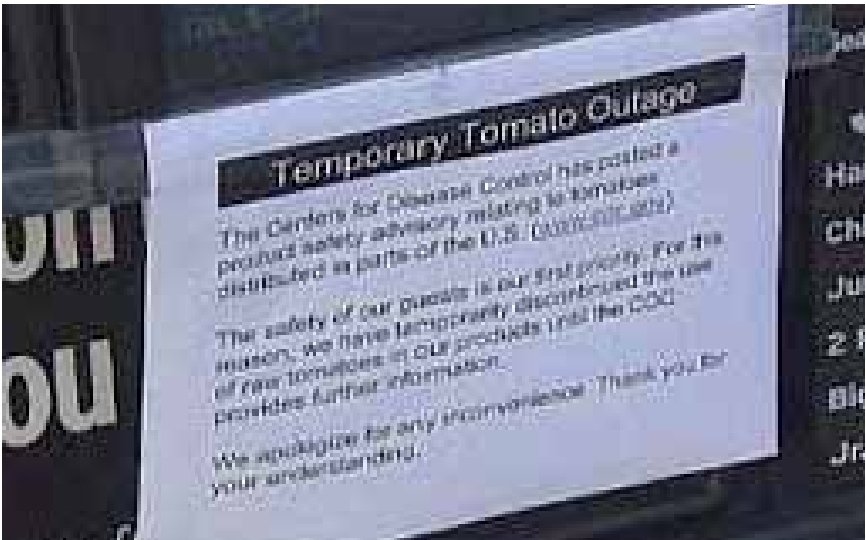
In a study released in the New England Journal of Medicine, scientists from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provided detailed evidence linking a nationwide outbreak of Salmonella Saintpaul in 2008 to jalapeño and serrano peppers, and explained how tomatoes were initially blamed tomatoes for the outbreak and mistakenly implicated in the early stages of the investigation. The nationwide outbreak erroneously blamed tomatoes because of incomplete information gathered from consumers.

The study is released more than two years after the incident and after tomato growers lost millions, thanks to having their commodity falsely accused of being the source of a foodborne illness outbreak.

Tom Stenzel, United Fresh Produce Association said, “Members of the produce industry and consumers alike should be both relieved and encouraged to see this information confirming the source of the outbreak of Salmonella Saintpaul in 2008. The study underscores the fact that temporal associations based on memories of what someone has eaten weeks earlier can be useful, but not definitive, in these investigations. It’s clear from the study that many sick individuals recalled eating a salsa product, but failed to recognize the peppers that were contained as an ingredient. By prematurely jumping to the conclusion that tomatoes were causing the outbreak, officials may have unwittingly allowed the outbreak to continue.

“We credit the CDC and FDA now for reporting these findings, as an important lesson to be learned in

outbreak investigations. The fresh produce industry is 100% committed to doing all we can to prevent any contamination of any commodity from ever occurring. But these are natural products grown outside in nature, often eaten without cooking. In the rare case in which a problem does occur, we stand ready to work with local, state, and federal officials to bring the most rapid identification, trace back, and removal of a product from the marketplace.



FEDS continued from page 27

The Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency has said it is expanding worksite audits of employers in a big way.

“U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement issued notices of inspection to 1,000 employers across the country today to alert those businesses that ICE will be inspecting their hiring records,” Ross Feinstein, public affairs officer for the ICE, said in an e-mail.

The inspections, which Feinstein said will determine if employers audited are violating the law by hiring illegal workers, will touch on employers of all sizes and in every state. “No one industry is being targeted nor is any one industry immune from scrutiny,” he said. ICE will not reveal names or locations of the businesses, he said.

Audits will include agricultural employers, said Frank Gasperini, executive vice president of the National Council of Agricultural Employers, Washington, D.C.

ICE became aggressive with employer audits in July 2009, when it announced more 650 firms were being investigated. Another 1,000 notices were issued in November 2009, press accounts reveal, with 200 more

in March and an additional 500 notices of inspection in September 2010.

“Agriculture makes such an easy target because we don’t move around,” Gasperini said. “We expect this to be very serious.”

An enforcement-only approach to farm labor, including I-9 audits by ICE, could deprive agriculture of its work force, said Craig Regelbrugge, vice president of government relations for the American Nursery and Landscaping Association, Washington, D.C.

Gasperini said the U.S. needs a better guest worker program for agriculture to bridge the gap between stiffer immigration enforcement and the pressing need for legal workers. “It is not physically possible for the H-2A program to supply enough workers for our farms,” he said.

ICE employer audits audit have caused major disruptions for some agricultural employers, he said. One well-publicized case was an I-9 audit in late 2009 of Brewster, Wash.-based Gebbers Farms. That audit resulted in the dismissal of several hundred workers and an adverse effect on the local economy, Gasperini said.

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Weight (lbs)	Shape	Count	Rind
16-20		Mostly 45	Medium green
Days to Harvest		Planting Season	
85		SP, SUM, AU	

SUGAR COAT > Vigorous plant / High yield / High brix / Excellent uniformity / Very firm flesh / Good crispy texture / Red flesh color / Large fruits / Hollow heart tolerance



Weight (lbs)	Shape	Count	Rind
16-20		45's and 36's	Medium green
Days to Harvest		Planting Season	
90		SP, SUM, FL	

SUGARED > Vigorous plant / High yield / High brix / Excellent shape uniformity / Very firm fruit / Very sweet taste / Good crispy texture / Red flesh color / Medium-large fruit / Hollow heart tolerance



Weight (lbs)	Shape	Count	Rind
8-10		Mostly 45	Medium green
Days to Harvest		Planting Season	
85		SP, SUM, AU	

A SENSE OF TASTE

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South Carolina Report

On January 14th-16th, the SCWA hosted their annual state convention in Columbia, SC. Mark Williams turned over the gavel to Hami Dicks and our new 2011 S.C. Watermelon Queen was crowned. Blair Boozer passed the crown to new queen, Holly Whatley of Travelers Rest, S.C. Holly is the daughter of MaryEllen Wilkinson and Max Whatley, Jr., and is a 2010 graduate of Presbyterian College. Our 1st runner-up was Jessica Silvaggio and 2nd runner-up was Courtney Helms. We are looking forward to another very productive and fun-filled year with Holly.

New Queen, Holly, along with Blair Boozer attended the 2011 Georgia Convention in Cordele, Georgia on January 28th-30th. As always it was a wonderful convention and Lake Blackshear Resort is a beautiful setting. The girls enjoyed getting to spend time with some of the other state queens and also getting to meet the new Georgia Queen, Jenna Saxon.

Everyone was excited about attending the National Watermelon Association annual convention on February 22nd-27th in San Diego, California. Not only did we get to see beautiful San Diego, but we were also able to tour La Jolla Cove in breathtaking La Jolla where Louise O'Neal and the other state queens joined us for a fun day of watching sea lions, eating a delicious lunch overlooking the sea and shopping in the historic town. On another day, Brad Boozer and Hami Dicks joined Blair and me for a whirlwind tour of Hollywood, Beverly Hills, and Rodeo Drive. We were actually able to see all of the preparations going on for the famous Oscar Awards. All of the state queens did an outstanding job at Nationals and we look forward to working with the new 2011 National Queen, Whitney Conner, in the coming year.

I, along with the S.C. Watermelon Association, would like to thank Blair for the outstanding job that she did for South Carolina during her year as the 2010 S.C. Watermelon Queen and also as she represented us at the National Convention. She made the association very proud and she will always be a very special part of our watermelon family.

As most of you know, Julie Murdock has stepped down as the S.C. Queen Coordinator due to her overwhelming responsibilities with a new baby and a three year old. She will continue to help out as needed and will stay an active part of our association. I am looking forward to the coming year and wish everyone a very successful watermelon season.

Warmest Wishes from S.C.,
Ann Bryant
S.C. Queen Coordinator
864-303-3995
abryant028@charter.net
ann.bryant@furman.edu



2011 S.C. Watermelon Queen Contestants.



The Has-Beens, Blair, Summers and Julie show Holly how it is done.



Blair, Jessica and Kimberly working the auction.



Queens at the Georgia Convention.

Miss Holly Whatley, 2011 S.C. Watermelon Queen.



Newly crowned Georgia Queen, Jenna Saxon, getting congratulations from Holly.



Visiting queens, runners-up, Holly and Julie



Blair enjoying LA with Brad Boozer and Hami Dicks.



Queen Holly with her proud mother, MaryEllen.



Louise O'Neal and Blair at LaJolla Cove in LaJolla, CA.



Martin Eubanks and Commissioner Hugh Weathers congratulate our new queen.



National Interview Competition in San Diego, CA.



S.C. Watermelon Association Board Members after crowning.



Blair looking lovely in Evening Gown Competition.



Sponsor, Scotty Sandifer is proud of his girl.



All the lovely contestants anticipating the big moment.



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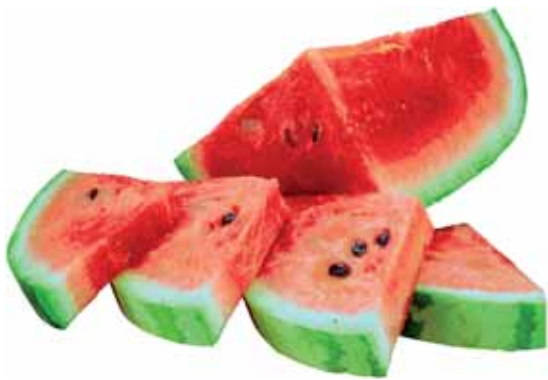
Texas Report

Oh, where do we begin, it is now a new year for all the State Watermelon queens, time to get out and promote watermelons, but first of all I must say a big thanks to my 2010 Texas Queen, Marianna Perez. She has done a great job promoting watermelons in 2010, THANK YOU MARIANNA, and congratulations on the Miss Jubilee award at the National Watermelon Convention, we are all very proud to have had you as our queen. The 2011 Texas Watermelon Queen is Veronica Kraemer, she attends Texas A&M University in Bryan, Texas, her major, International Studies, winning many awards for her endeavors. Veronica grew up in a small farming town in Texas, enjoys life to the fullest and plans on having a successful career being a public relations representative for a International Corporation. Also she plans some day to start an endowment scholarship that assists young women to achieve their dreams of higher education. Veronica will be attending the NWPB Queen training in Miami, Florida in April, thank you NWPB for this training program for all the new state queens, it is a great program....

Congratulations to 2011 National Watermelon Queen, Miss Whitney Conner, she will do every one proud as the NWA Queen. Again this year we are excited about working with the the Texas Department of Agriculture, Commissioner Todd Staples, State Marketing coordinator for Horticulture, Produce, and Forestry, Richard De Los Santos. We thank the Texas Department of Agriculture for their many many promotions in 2010 and looking forward to another great year in 2011.....

Thanks to the National Watermelon Association again for another great annual convention held in San Diego, California in February.

Wanda Letson
texaswatermelons.com
melonred@sbcglobal.net



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2010 Queen Marianna with our 2011 contestants.



Mrs. Jeannine Wiggins wins \$100 from Jim Williams, Monsanto Vegetable Seeds.



2011 Queen Veronica Kraemer and 1st, 2nd runners up Courtney McLarty and Baylee Becker.



Our contestants who makes this pageant so beautiful.



A beautiful group of ladies at the reception in their favorite football jerseys.



Our contestants with Ranell Borders, who makes the pageant so beautiful.



A Beautiful Queen someday



Paul Teague will do almost anything to make a sale at the auction.



A fine group of Texans proud of 2010 Queen Marianna and 2011 Queen Veronica Kraemer.



Ranell welcomes the queen and her family to the association.



Congratulations Marianna, Miss Jubilee and Whitney, 2011 NWA Queen.



Steve Crowder from MultiCorr presents a check to our runner up.



Irv Willman, Mike Key and Mark Dickerson visit with Queen Marianna at Texas convention.



Thank you ladies for joining us in Texas.jpg



Ken Mears with International Paper presents a check to our runner up.



Thanks Brent and Susan Harrison for attending our 2010 convention.

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Western Report



It's the time of year when the warm weather starts chasing away the cold, the sun starts heating up our days, and our beloved watermelon is in high-demand for a refreshing treat. The National Watermelon Association kicked off the 2011 season at the National Watermelon Convention in San Diego, California! The convention, co-hosted by the Western Watermelon Association, was a success in every aspect. With the auction making a record amount of money, beautiful weather, and events like a dinner cruise, watermelon auction, watermelon fair, and golf at Torrey Pines, it was hard to go wrong.

We'd like to extend a big thank you to Western Watermelon Association's president, Tashi Zouras, for the amount of work that he put into the convention. The WWA's presence was hard to miss due to his efforts. Tashi handed out light blue colored shirts fashioned after our website to 60 members of the Western Watermelon Association. They were worn through out the Introduction Reception and the Watermelon fair and truly brought together our association as a team. A video presentation put together by the Western Watermelon Association was played at the reception dinner, causing quite a few laughs while giving guests a brief look into the WWA's conference.

A few of our Western Watermelon Association members were also recognized during the convention. The WWA's Jim Schmidt was sworn in as the new president of the National Watermelon Association at the convention, taking the place of former president, Brent Harrison. We would like to congratulate Jim Schmidt and welcome him into his new year of service as president of the NWA. We'd also like to thank Brent Harrison for a job well done during his term as President. John Cosaro was named Second Vice President of the NWA and will be in line to be President in a couple of years. Congratulations John. We are excited to see what the future will hold. Art Perry, also of the WWA, won the Outstanding Service Award for his efforts and role in the national watermelon association. Congratulations Art Perry on your many years of service. Lastly, we'd also like to congratulate Mark Beoshanz for winning the watermelon seed spitting contest. Way to go Mark! We are proud of our Western Watermelon Association team and want to thank everyone for participating this year.

Summer is almost here and we are looking forward to getting our delicious fruit into the hands of watermelon lovers everywhere. Cheers to another wonderful watermelon season!

To learn more about the Western Watermelon Association, please mail inquire: 85628 or visit us on our website at www.westernwatermelon.com



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Obama offers states more flexibility in health-care law



President Obama sought to defuse criticism of the new health-care overhaul by saying he is willing to give states an earlier opportunity to opt out of certain key requirements, but only if they can find their own ways to accomplish the law’s goals.

The announcement was met with skepticism by many Republican governors who said they need to learn more about it.

“The devil’s in the details,” said Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour, who appeared on Capitol Hill recently along with Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick (D) for a previously scheduled hearing on complying with Medicaid eligibility under the new health-care law.

If Congress approves a change along the lines of what President Obama offered, states could gain exemption by 2014 rather than 2017 from some central and controversial elements of the law: that most Americans carry health insurance, that many employers offer their workers coverage, and that states create insurance marketplaces to help individuals and small businesses buy health plans that meet federal rules.

To win that freedom, though, Obama reminded the governors at a White House meeting that states would have to prove to federal officials that they could still achieve the law’s objectives. Specifically, they would need to demonstrate that insurance benefits would be as affordable and as comprehensive, that the same number of residents would gain coverage, and that the alternate approach would not deepen the federal deficit.

With a majority of states trying to overturn the law in the federal courts and Republican governors complaining that it gives federal regulators too heavy a hand, the president sought to move the debate onto new ground by forcing the law’s critics to prove that their vision for the nation’s health-care system could work.

“Many of these states contend they can do more with less if they get the flexibility to be more creative,” said Drew Altman, president of the Kaiser Family Foundation, a nonpartisan health policy group. “This puts the onus back on them and calls that into question.”

In taking this new tack, the White House is endorsing a proposal introduced late last year by a bipartisan trio of senators. The bill, sponsored by Sens. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), Scott Brown (R-Mass.) and Mary Landrieu (D-La.), would accelerate a provision in the law that would allow states to ask federal health officials for “innovation waivers” starting in 2017 that would free them to devise ways to improve health care. The legislation would move up the date to 2014.

The change in timing is significant, because 2014 is when the provisions in question are to go into effect, so states could - in theory, at least - get permission early enough to avoid the requirements.

“I think that’s a reasonable proposal. I support it,” Obama told the governors who convened at the White House on Monday as part of the National Governors Association’s semi-annual meetings. “It will give you more flexibility more quickly, while still guaranteeing the American people reform. If your state can create a plan that covers as many people as affordably and comprehensively as the Affordable Care Act does - without increasing the deficit - you can implement that plan. And we’ll work with you to do it.”

Although the president has endorsed the idea, Congress would still have to approve the change for states to get relief by 2014. If it did, Health and Human Services officials would then need to write rules defining specifically how states could meet criteria for a waiver.

The immediate reaction - among the governors and on Capitol Hill - was mixed. The governors said Obama’s willingness to release them earlier from some of the law’s requirements was welcome. But most stopped short of embracing the idea fully, with Republicans sounding especially wary.

“A number of our fellow governors would be very interested in supporting this,” said Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire (D), the NGA’s chairman. “We need to talk to them to see if we can put our support behind that bill as the National Governors Association.”

Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback, who opposed the health-care legislation as a member of the Senate, said Obama’s proposal doesn’t negate what he and other Republicans consider a fatally flawed law that they will continue to challenge in the courts. “This offers a little bit of flexibility, which I think is a positive thing,” he said, “but it doesn’t change the overall objection to the bill.” Other Republicans were equally cautious. Sen. Orrin G. Hatch (Utah) called Obama’s new timetable a “gimmick” that would not provide genuine relief.

Governors’ more immediate focus was on the potentially crushing burden of rising Medicaid costs. Gregoire said the NGA would accept the president’s challenge to develop a bipartisan set of recommendations that would give states more flexibility to curb Medicaid spending. But Republicans, some of whom favor converting the health insurance system for the poor from an entitlement program to a block grant, remained skeptical that Obama will authorize real changes. New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie said that on the question of Medicaid flexibility, the president “said some very nice things and he says them really nicely.” But, he added, “I didn’t hear any real substance” that would suggest the governors will get what they want.

The proposal to give states greater freedom from the health-care law would not specifically allow governors to deviate from Medicaid’s rules for who must be covered and what medical services they must be able to receive. The proposal would, however, let states send HHS officials a combined request to alter Medicaid and their approach to health-care reform.

On Capitol Hill, a spokesman for Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid (D-Nev.) said: “The date was set at 2017 because that was the earliest experts thought these measures could be implemented, but we are open to hearing the administration’s reasons for concluding that they can be implemented earlier.”

Mike Leavitt, a former Utah governor, called Obama’s announcement “sort of a hollow victory.” Leavitt, who was a major proponent of state experimentation with health care when he led the Department of Health and Human Services under President George W. Bush, said that Obama was essentially telling states, “ ‘We’ll give you permission to ask for permission sooner rather than later.’ What Republicans are saying is that we don’t want to have to ask for permission at all, because we can’t afford to build the system that you’ve laid out for us.” An aide to Wyden, a liberal who also has long favored giving states more freedom to devise their own health-care approaches, said that officials from the White House and HHS have been conferring with the senator since shortly after he and Brown introduced the legislation in late November.

“It was a process of persuasion,” the aide said. “They’ve been coming around for a while and just kind of came to fruition recently.” So far, the aide added, Oregon, Vermont and Massachusetts - which developed its own health exchange before the federal law was enacted - are the only states that have said they will pursue a waiver.



White House favors new food safety fees

Finding money to fund the Food and Drug Administration’s new produce safety oversight responsibilities and other industry priorities may be easier proposed than accomplished.

With the release of the fiscal year 2012 budget proposal, the White House said it intends to work with Congress to enact additional food safety fees to implement key provisions of the Food Safety Modernization Act.

While it increased the FDA budget substantially, the White House decreased the budget for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety Inspection Service, which regulates meat and poultry safety.

The White House does not specify what the FDA fees will be, and any new fees are expected to meet resistance in the Republican-controlled House of Representatives.

The detailed discretionary budget spending for the Food and Drug Administration is \$2.74 billion in fiscal year 2012, up 5% from fiscal year 2010. No final budget numbers have been established for the fiscal year 2011 budget. Total program resources were estimated at \$4.3 billion for fiscal year 2012, up 33% from fiscal year 2010.

The FDA’s budget requests an increase of \$218 million for the Transforming Food Safety and Nutrition Initiative, which the agency said will allow it to implement the Food Safety Modernization Act.

The agency said the fiscal year 2012 budget does not include legislative proposals for new food safety user fees. However, the White House said the FDA plans to work with Congress during fiscal year 2013 to enact additional food safety fees to support the full implementation of the new food safety law.

Because details were not provided in the budget about what kind of fees are being considered by the White House, it is too early to make a judgment about them.

A proposal for any new fee is something that we take with the utmost seriousness and scrutiny. We also know that FDA needs the funds to accomplish its mission.

“The president’s budget is giving us a good start in getting the food safety legislation implemented,” said David Plunkett of the Center for Science in the Public Interest. The budget gains at FDA and the reduction at USDA-FSIS merely reflect the added duties the FDA is absorbing effort to cut budgets where possible, he said. “You would expect a sizeable increase at FDA and their mission is changed and now they are supposed to be in the position of preventing outbreaks,” Plunkett said.

While the food safety law includes punitive fees for re-inspection, CSPI believes FDA should be funded with fees for facility registrations. “Companies benefit from a competent food safety system because it makes sure they don’t have to compete against bad actors,” Plunkett said.

Plunkett said the Obama administration envisions about \$60 million raised by the Voluntary Qualified Importer Program, which is an expedited import process provided for in the new law. Export food safety certifications will also be a fee-for-service program under the President’s budget, he said.

He said registration fees also are needed to help ensure safe food for Americans. “We are talking about \$70 billion to \$100 billion of costs that consumers bear because of food safety failures,” he said.





U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR - 2011 Adverse Effect Wage Rates

Labor Certification Process for the Temporary Employment of Aliens in Agriculture in the United States: 2011 Adverse Effect Wage Rates, Allowable Charges for Agricultural Workers’ Meals, and Maximum Travel Subsistence Reimbursement

The 2011 Adverse Effect Wage Rates (AEWRs) for employers seeking to employ temporary or seasonal nonim-migrant foreign workers to perform agricultural labor or services (H-2A workers); (2) the allowable maximum amount for 2011 that employers may charge their H-2A workers for providing them with three meals a day; and (3) the maximum travel subsistence reimbursement which a worker with receipts may claim in 2011.

DATES: Effective Date: March 1, 2011.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The United States (U.S.) Citizenship and Immigration Services of the Department of Homeland Security may not approve an employer’s petition for the admission of H-2A nonim-migrant temporary agricultural workers in the U.S. unless the petitioner has received from the Department of Labor (Department) an H-2A labor certification. Approved labor certifications attest that: (1) There are not sufficient U.S. workers who are able, willing, and qualified and who will be available at the time and place needed to perform the labor or services involved in the petition; and (2) the em-ployment of the foreign worker in such labor or services will not adversely affect the wages and working condi-tions of workers in the U.S. similarly employed. 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(H)(ii)(a), 1101(a)(15)(H)(ii)(b), 1184(c)(1), and 1188(a); and 8 CFR 214.2(h)(5) and (6).The Depart-ment’s regulations for the H-2A program require employ-ers to offer and pay their U.S. and H-2A workers no less than the appropriate hourly AEWR in effect at the time the work is performed. 20 CFR 655.122(l).

A. Adverse Effect Wage Rates for 2011
Employers of H-2A workers must pay the highest of (i) the AEWR, in effect, at the time the work is performed; (ii) the applicable prevailing wage; or (iii) the statutory minimum wage, as specified in the regulations. 20 CFR 655.120(a). Except as otherwise provided in 20 CFR part 655, Subpart B, the region-wide AEWR for all agricul-tural employment (except those occupations which are exempted under the special procedure provisions of 20 CFR 655.102) for which temporary H-

2A certification is being sought is equal to the annual weighted average hourly wage rate for field and livestock workers (combined) for the region as published annually by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) based on its quarterly wage survey. Pursuant to 20 CFR 655.120(c), the Administrator of the Office of Foreign La-bor Certification must publish USDA field and livestock worker (combined) wage data as AEWRs in a Federal Register Notice. Accordingly, the 2011 AEWRs for agri-cultural work performed by U.S. and H-2A workers on or after the effective date of this Notice are set forth in the table below:

2011 Adverse Effect Wage Rates:

Alabama	9.12	Nebraska	11.52
Arizona	9.60	Nevada	10.48
Arkansas	8.97	New Hampshire	10.25
California	10.31	New Jersey	10.60
Colorado	10.48	New Mexico	9.60
Connecticut	10.25	New York	10.25
Delaware	10.60	North Carolina	9.30
Florida	9.50	North Dakota	11.52
Georgia	9.12	Ohio	10.84
Hawaii	12.01	Oklahoma	9.65
Idaho	9.90	Oregon	10.60
Illinois	10.84	Pennsylvania	10.60
Indiana	10.84	Rhode Island	10.25
Iowa	11.03	South Carolina	9.12
Kansas	11.52	South Dakota	11.52
Kentucky	9.48	Tennessee	9.48

Louisiana	8.97	Texas	9.65
Maine	10.25	Utah	10.48
Maryland	10.60	Vermont	10.25
Massachusetts	10.25	Virginia	9.30
Michigan	10.62	Washington	10.60
Minnesota	10.62	West Virginia	9.48
Mississippi	8.97	Wisconsin	10.62
Missouri	11.03	Wyoming	9.90
Montana	9.90		

B. Allowable Meal Charges
Among the minimum benefits and working conditions which the Department requires employers to offer their U.S. and H-2A workers are Three meals a day or free and convenient cooking and kitchen facilities. 20 CFR 655.122(g). When the employer provides meals, the job offer must state the charge, if any, to the worker for such meals. 20 CFR 655.122(g).

The Department has published at 20 CFR 655.173(a) the methodology for determining the maximum amounts that H-2A agricultural employers may charge their U.S. and foreign workers for meals. These rules provide for annual adjustments of the previous year’s allowable charges based upon Consumer Price Index (CPI) data. 20 CFR 655.173(a).

Each year, the maximum charges allowed by 20 CFR 655.122(g) are adjusted by the same percentage as the 12-month percent change for the CPI for all Urban Consumers for Food (CPI-U for Food). The Department may permit an employer to charge workers no more than the higher maximum amount set forth in 20 CFR 655.173(b), as applicable, for providing them with three meals a day, if justified and sufficiently documented. The H-2A program’s regulations require the Department to make the annual adjustments and to publish a Notice in the Federal Register each calendar year, announcing an-nual adjustments in allowable charges that may be made by agricultural and logging employers for providing three meals daily to their U.S. and foreign workers. The 2010 rates were published in the Federal Register at 75 FR 7293, Feb. 18, 2010.

The Department has determined the percentage change between December of 2009 and December of 2010 for the CPI-U for Food was .8 percent. Accordingly, the maximum allowable charges under 20 CFR 655.122(g) were adjusted using this percentage change, and the new permissible charges for 2011 shall be no more than \$10.73 per day, unless the Department has approved a higher charge pursuant to 20 CFR 655.173(b).

C. Maximum Travel Subsistence Expense
The regulations at 20 CFR 655.122(h) establish that the minimum daily travel subsistence expense, for which a worker is entitled to reimbursement, is at least as much as the employer would charge the worker for providing the worker with three meals a day during employment (if applicable), but in no event less than the amount permitted under 20 CFR 655.173(a). The regulation is silent about the maximum amount to which a qualifying worker is entitled.

The Department based the maximum meals component on the standard Continental United States (CONUS) per diem rate established by the General Services Adminis-tration (GSA), published at 41 CFR Part 301, Appendix A. The CONUS meal component is now \$46.00 per day.

Workers who qualify for travel reimbursement are entitled to reimbursement up to the CONUS meal rate

Three Viruses Threaten Cucurbits

Agricultural Research Service (ARS) scientists in Florida have made recommendations to help growers deal with several whitefly-transmitted viruses that threaten cucurbits and other crops in that state.

In recent years, the number of whitefly-transmitted viruses in cucurbit fields, home to crops like cucumbers, squash-es, pumpkins, melons and watermelons, has increased to almost epidemic proportions in Florida.

Researchers led by plant pathologists Scott Adkins and Bill Turechek at the ARS Subtropical Plant Pathology Re-search Unit in Fort Pierce, Fla., are dealing with a “triple threat” to cucurbits: three major viruses, all transmitted by silverleaf whitefly, Bemisia tabaci. The host range is simi-lar—mostly cucurbits—but the symptoms differ. And the researchers have discovered a new host for the whiteflies: green beans.

In January 2008, Adkins and Turechek released a re-port that revealed that the Cucurbit Leaf Crumple Virus (CuLCrV) has been detected in green beans in southwest Florida, the first report of CuLCrV infecting any host other than cucurbits in Florida. Symptoms on green bean plants included leaf deformation, especially of younger leaves, and a mild or chlorotic mosaic, a blotching of the plant’s skin.

The discovery of CuLCrV on green bean plants in Hendry County in southwest Florida in mid-December 2007 sug-gests that CuLCrV may be more widely distributed than previously known in Florida, and that green beans, and po-tentially other legumes, may become an important reservoir host of CuLCrV in the state. Previous reports of CuLCrV affecting non-cucurbit plants include beans and tobacco in the late 1990s in California, Arizona, Texas and Mexico.

Another of the ‘triple threats’ is Squash Vein Yellowing Virus (SqVYV), whose hosts include cucurbits, especially squash and watermelon. SqVYV causes death in young watermelon plants, death of vines of older plants and other problems. Trials of SqVYV resistance are currently being conducted by grafting watermelon germplasm onto gourd rootstock and evaluating the watermelon scions for symptoms.

The third of the threats is Cucurbit Yellow Stunting Disor-der Virus (CYSDV), which was first seen in Florida in 2007 and infects melons, cucumbers, gourds and squash, with symptoms including yellowing of the leaf veins and leaves.

The recommendations the ARS researchers made for con-trolling these viruses include selecting the most vigorous and well-adapted varieties; using whitefly- and patho-gen-free transplants; using reflective mulches that repel aphids; and maintaining a host-free period between spring and fall crops.

for related subsistence when they provide receipts. In determining the appropriate amount of subsistence reimbursement, the employer may use the GSA system under which a traveler qualifies for meal expense reim-bursement at 75 percent of the subsistence for the first partial day of travel and 75 percent of the subsistence for the last partial day per quarter of a day. If a worker has no receipts, the employer is not obligated to reim-burse above the minimum stated at 20 CFR 65

Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance Takes Strides

With significant congressional action on Farm Bill reauthorization set for the coming summer and fall, the members of the Steering Committee of the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance (SCFBA) met for two days this week in Washington to hear updates on the work of nine work groups focused on reviewing and developing policy recommendations for the upcoming reauthorization of the key agricultural legislation.

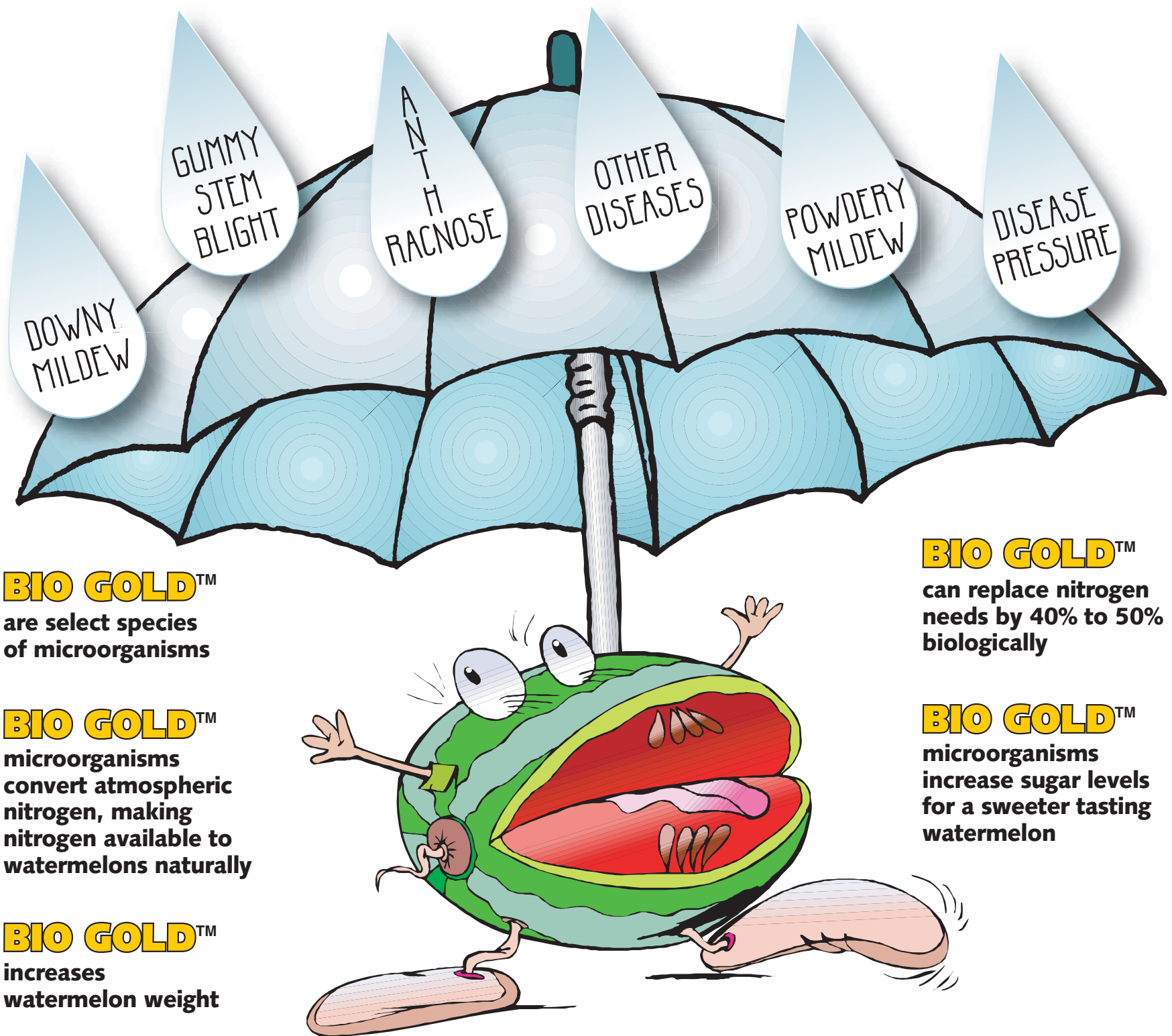
Each work group provided a report to the committee, followed by discussion and feedback from the committee on each report. Finalized recommendations will serve as the basis for a united produce industry advocacy effort on issues such as research, nutrition and risk management. “We made significant progress toward a full slate of final-ized recommendations,” said Robert Guenther, senior vice president of public policy at United Fresh and the

SCFBA’s Steering Committee Secretariat. “The SCFBA was very successful in the last Farm Bill in getting key needs of the produce industry met, but we can’t take anything for granted in this next reauthorization. A com-prehensive and robust examination of our priorities, like we had in these meetings, is critical to developing a suc-cessful strategy for working with policymakers to make sure that the priorities of the specialty crop industry are appropriately addressed as the next Farm Bill is written.”

In addition to its Farm Bill discussions, members of the SCFBA met with majority and minority staff of the House of Representatives Agriculture Committee, re-ceiving an update on the Farm Bill reauthorization time-line and discussing the need for education and outreach with new members of Congress who are beginning to address agriculture issues.

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