



Forecast For 2013 Hurricane Season

According to Colorado State University climatologists, those living in hurricane zones along the East Coast and Gulf Coast are in for another long year. The extended range Atlantic Basin hurricane forecast indicates “enhanced activity” compared with recent (1981-2010) historical climate data.



2013 Atlantic Basin Seasonal Hurricane Forecast Models suggest:

- Named Storms: 18
- Hurricanes: 9
- Major Hurricanes (Category 3 or higher): 4

Probabilities For At Least One Major Hurricane To Make Landfall On The Following Coastal Areas

- Entire U.S. coastline: 72% (average for last century is 52%)
- U.S. East Coast Including Florida Peninsula: 48% (average for last century is 31%)
- Gulf Coast from the Florida Panhandle westward to Brownsville, TX: 47% (average for last century is 30%)

The above estimates are markedly higher when compared to the 2012 extended range outlook. Though the forecast initially calls for a below-average season, devastating storms like Sandy and Isaac made 2012 one for the meteorological record books.

According to the 2013 report, the prediction for an above-average hurricane season is due to the combination of an anomalously warm tropical Atlantic and a relatively low likelihood of an El Niño climate pattern.

THE WORLD’S LARGEST BOWL OF WATERMELON



Farm Bill Passes in Senate



The U.S. Senate passed the Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act of 2013, also known as the Farm Bill this past spring.

Both bills address many priorities critical to the NWA and our members, including programs supporting essential research, market promotion, and nutrition, and continue their support of specialty crops that was established in the 2008 Farm Bill.

The NWA, a member of the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance, worked closely with senators and produce industry stakeholders to secure support for several programs of particular importance to the fresh fruit and vegetable industry.

Highlights of the bills include:

- Specialty Crop Block Grants funded at \$70 million per year
- Specialty Crop Research Initiative funded at \$25 million (fiscal year 2014); \$30 million (fiscal year 2015-16); \$65 million (fiscal year 2017); \$50 million (fiscal year 2018)
- Coordinated Plant Management Program funded at \$60 million (fiscal year 2014-17) and \$65 million (fiscal year 2018)
- Market Access Program and Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops fully funded at 2008 Farm Bill levels
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program fully funded at 2008 Farm Bill levels
- Section 32 specialty crop purchases funded at 2008 Farm Bill levels
- Department of Defense Fresh program fully funded at \$50 million per year consistent with 2008 levels

The looming issue that could derail the farm bill deals with the SNAP program (previously called food stamps). Republicans are pushing to reduce the significant investment in this particular feeding program; some Democrats are against it; other Democrats in AG Districts are caught in between, wanting to support Ag yet not wanting to see cuts as dramatic as are being suggested (and passed in the AG committees). Recently President Obama indicated that he would veto the farm bill if the cuts to the SNAP program were not to his liking.

The U.S. House failed to pass their version in June. We may be in for a long summer and fall.

A professional skateboarder performs on the watermelon bowl in Argentina. The bowl was painted by artist Patricio Pascale.

Fresh produce prices increase above inflation in 2013

Updated government retail price forecasts for fresh produce predict 3.5% to 4.5% inflation this year for the category.



That compares to 2% price deflation in 2012 for all fresh produce, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported in May.

The USDA’s Economic Research Service said that retail fresh fruit prices for 2013 are forecast to rise 3% to 4% in 2013, after 1% inflation in 2012 and 3.3% higher prices in 2011. With fresh fruit prices decreasing 0.5% in April, the USDA report said the fresh fruit index is up 1.4% from the same time a year ago.

Fresh vegetable retail prices are estimated to climb 4% to 5% in 2013. Fresh vegetable prices were up 4.6% in April compared with the same time last year.

The consumer price of all food consumed at home in 2013 is forecast to climb 2.5% to 3.5%, the same forecast range as food consumed away from home.

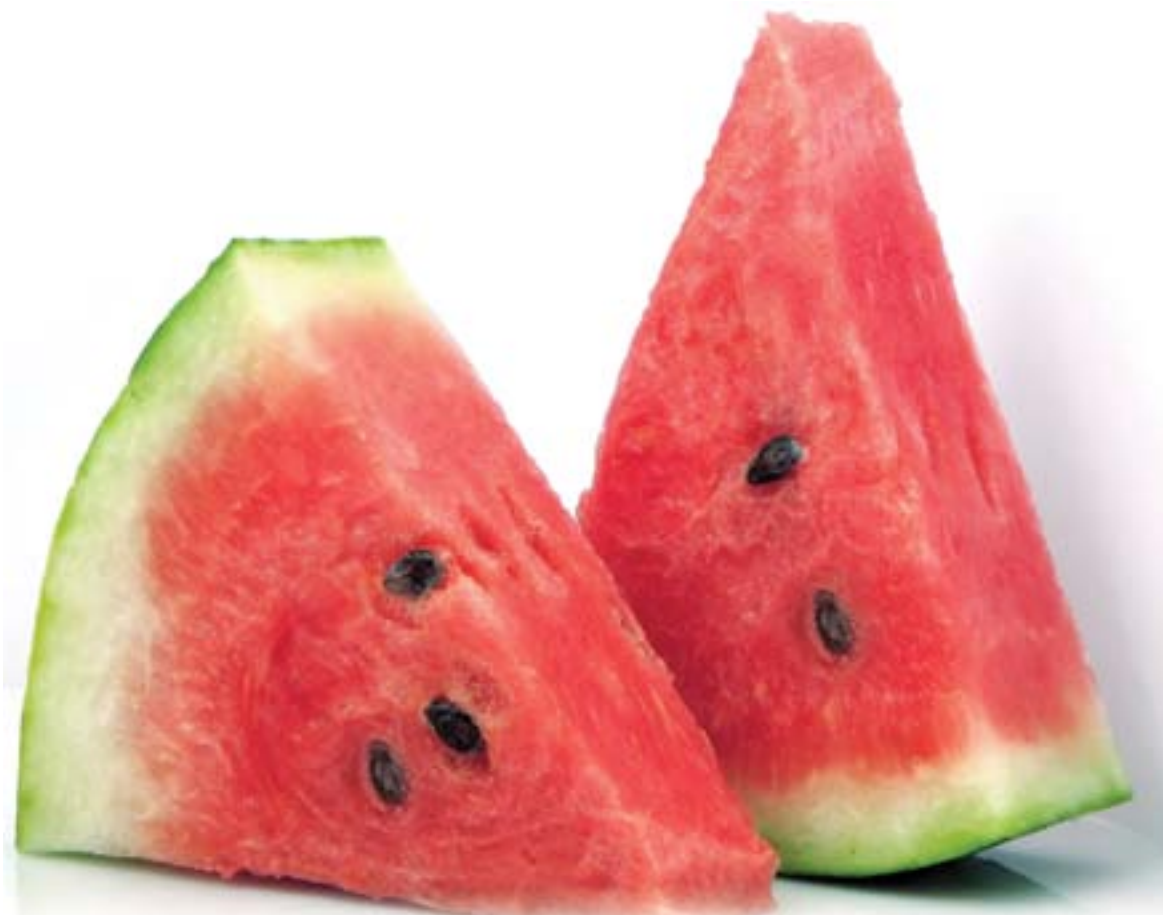
Black Japan watermelon sells for \$3,200

HOKKAIDO, Japan (CNN/AVN/NHK) - Talk about an expensive watermelon. Someone bought one of these for more than \$3,000 at an auction in Japan. Watermelons from Toma are popular as gifts in the country. They have darker skins than other watermelons, and they also have a sweeter taste. The broker who spent \$3,200 on his watermelon says he offered a high price, hoping the taste will further improve toward the summer.



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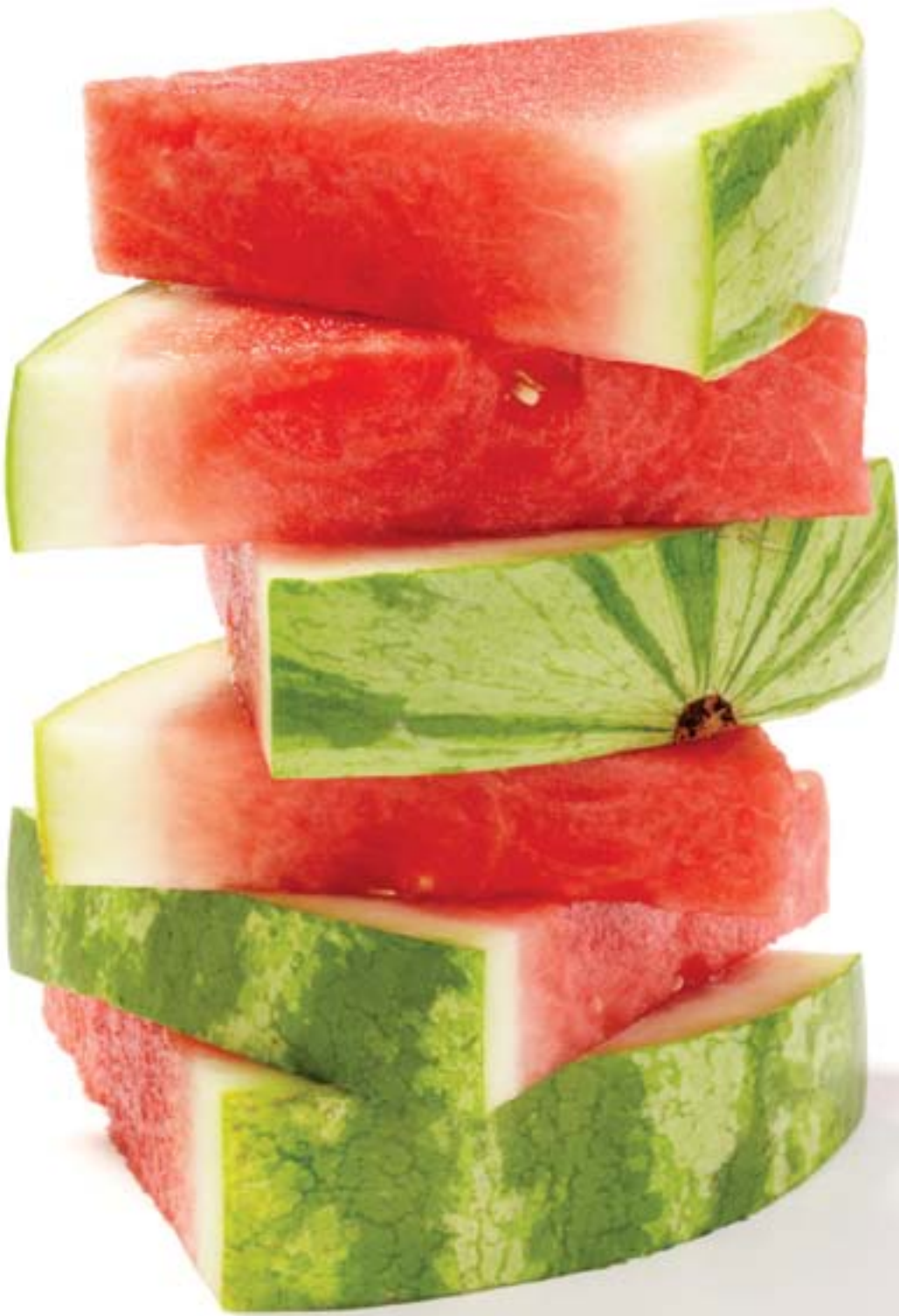


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Bill would replace H-2A and E-Verify programs



Tom Nassif, President of Western Growers, at the National Press Club Immigration reforms that would replace H-2A visas with an agricultural guest worker program under the USDA would provide growers with a stable, legal work force for the first time in decades, produce leaders say.

A new group called the Ag Workforce Coalition negotiated with the Gang of Eight in the U.S. Senate to create the AG portion of the Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013.

Tom Nassif, President of Western Growers, said the coalition is “behind something truly historic for agriculture and comprehensive immigration reform.” He said the United Farm Workers’ move to join the coalition is a rare example of labor and employers joining efforts. Blue cards in, H-2A out

To address the problem of an estimated 1.2 million undocumented foreign workers in the agricultural sector, the bill would create a “blue card” system that would be in effect for five years. Having a blue card would not entitle workers to public benefits.

Undocumented employees will be required to pay a penalty of \$100 and prove they worked in the AG sector before Dec. 31, 2012, would be issued a blue card to start them on the road to a traditional green card. All current agricultural workers would be eligible to apply for blue cards. Workers will immediately have legal status, which will be a benefit to growers by providing a stable work force.

Arturo Rodriquez, president of the United Farm Workers, said the bill and the coalition’s work on it are unprecedented. “With this (legislation) farm workers would no longer have to fear deportation ... and the compromises on wage rates that were reached should create stability for farmers and workers alike.”

The bill also includes an agricultural guest worker program under the jurisdiction of the USDA. That program would go into effect one year after the bill is signed into law and would replace the H-2A visa program. Farmers will be able to work better with the USDA instead of the Department of Labor because it is more concerned about their businesses and understands them.

With new agricultural guest worker program, 112,000 new workers could gain legal entry during each of the first three years of the program. In years four and five the number would be capped at a cumulative total of 337,000. After the fifth year the Secretary of Agriculture would set the cap for the guest AG workers, depending on the needs of U.S. producers.

When the new AG guest worker program under USDA gets rolling, foreign workers could apply for three-year visas to work on at-will or on a contract basis.

E-Verify replacement

Agricultural employers would have to register with USDA and meet documentation requirements to use the guest workers. Among the requirements would be a beefed-up version of the E-Verify program. If enacted, the bill would

Senate Creates Immigration Reform Bill

In May 2013, the Senate Judiciary Committee approved S.744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Economic Modernization Act, which the Senate considered in June. While the path to immigration reform becoming law may be long with no guarantees, many agricultural industry employers may want to begin to communicate with their employees about what a new law might mean. Most of the points below are applicable to agricultural employers and workers. The points are provided in English and Spanish for your use with employees or contractors, if you wish.

What does Immigration Reform mean for you? Legislation is making its way through the United States Congress that would reform the immigration system in a historic way.

In April, the Agriculture Workforce Coalition and the United Farm Workers Union negotiated an agreement that will provide long term solutions for agricultural employers and employees.

What does this Agreement accomplish for you? You cannot have been convicted of a felony or 3 or more misdemeanors, and you will need to pay a \$100 fine to receive a Blue Card (i.e., “work permit”).

You will need to have worked in agriculture for at least 100 total days during the years 2011 and 2012. If you are eligible, your employer will help to demonstrate that you have been working for the past 2 years. After receiving a Blue Card, you can live, work, and travel to and from your home country without threat of deportation or imprisonment.

If you work under a Blue Card for at least 150 days per year for an agricultural employer and pay a \$400 fine, you can apply for a green card (permanent residence in the United States) after 5 years.

If you work under a Blue Card for 100 days per year for an agricultural employer and pay a \$400 fine, you can apply for a green card (permanent residence in the United States) after 7 years.

Spouses and children would be able to receive adjusted status in addition to the worker.

What will the agreement do in the future? The Agricultural Worker Visa Program will ensure agriculture’s future legal workforce needs are met. This new program offers both employer and employee choice and flexibility through two different work options: a Portable (“At-Will”) visa and a Contract visa. These three-year visas would be valid for employment with agricultural employers.

Portable “At-Will” Visa employees have the freedom to move from employer to employer without any contractual commitment, replicating the current labor market.

Contract Visa employees commit to work for an employer for a fixed period of time, giving both parties increased stability where it is mutually preferred. These future workers are subject to higher minimum wage rates so as not to negatively affect U.S. and Blue Card workers.

What About H-2A Visa Workers? We emphatically recommend that you respect the current legal work status you have in the country for your own benefit. As a worker who legally entered the United States with an H-2A visa, it is a very bad idea to violate the terms of your visa and leave the job you legally occupy. If Congress does pass a bill containing the agricultural programs currently contained in the Senate bill, current H-2A workers who have worked at least 100 days in agriculture in the two years prior to December 31, 2012, will have an opportunity if they wish to enter into the “earned legalization” for farm workers.

repeal E-Verify and replace it with an employment verification system yet to be developed, the proposed legislation states.

Under the new electronic job verification system, every states’ driver license photo databases would be incorporated into a national photo database.

However, it is possible that Congress will fail to pass reform, or that the reform will be much more limited than the Senate legislation. If you violate the terms of your H-2A visa, you may be deportable, and you are at risk of not qualifying for whatever new programs Congress creates.

SPANISH VERSION

¿Sabe en qué le afecta la reforma de inmigración? La legislación que se está abriendo camino a través del Congreso de los Estados Unidos reformaría el sistema de inmigración de una manera histórica. En abril, la Confederación de la fuerza laboral agrícola y la Unión de Campesinos negociaron un acuerdo, que ofrecerá soluciones a largo plazo para los empresarios agrícolas y los empleados.

¿ Sabe en qué le beneficia este acuerdo? No puede haber sido condenado por un delito grave ó 3 o más delitos menores, y tendrá que pagar una multa de 100 dólares para recibir una tarjeta azul (es decir, “permiso de trabajo”).

Tendrá que haber trabajado en el sector agrícola por al menos 100 días en total durante los años 2011 y 2012. Si reúne los requisitos, su empleador le ayudará a demostrar que ha estado trabajando durante los últimos 2 años.

Después de recibir una tarjeta azul, usted puede vivir, trabajar y viajar hacia y desde su país de origen sin la amenaza de la deportación o encarcelamiento.

Si usted trabaja con una tarjeta azul por al menos 150 días al año para una compañía agrícola, y paga una multa de 400 dólares, usted puede solicitar una tarjeta verde (residencia permanente en los Estados Unidos) después de 5 años.

Si usted trabaja con una tarjeta azul por al menos 100 días al año para una compañía agrícola, y paga una multa de 400 dólares, usted podría solicitar una tarjeta verde (residencia permanente en los Estados Unidos) después de 7 años.

Además, las esposas e hijos de trabajadores agrícolas tendrán la posibilidad de ajustar su estatus.

¿ En qué va a impactar el acuerdo en el futuro? El programa de visas de trabajadores agrícolas asegurará que se cumplan las necesidades futuras de mano de obra legal en la agricultura. Este nuevo programa les ofrece al empleador y al empleado opciones y flexibilidad a través de dos opciones de trabajo diferentes: una visa al portador (“a voluntad”) y una visa por contrato. Estas visas de tres años serían válidas para trabajar con compañías agrícolas. Los empleados con visas al portado “a voluntad” tendrían la libertad de moverse de un empleador a otro sin ningún tipo de compromiso contractual, duplicando el mercado laboral actual. Los empleado con visas por contrato se comprometen a trabajar para un empleador durante un período fijo de tiempo, fomentando la estabilidad para ambas partes cuando así se prefiera mutuamente. Estos potenciales trabajadores estarán sujetos a tasas más altas que el salario mínimo, esto con el fin de no afectar negativamente a los trabajadores en Estados Unidos y los portadores de la tarjeta azul.

Trabajadores activos con la visa H-2A: Así que se les exhorta a respetar el estatus legal de trabajo en el que se encuentran actualmente en el país para su propio beneficio. Como trabajador que ingresó a los Estados Unidos a través de la visa temporal de trabajo H-2A, no se le recomienda, y es una pésima idea, violar los términos de esta visa y abandonar el empleo que usted ha obtenido legalmente. Si el Congreso americano aprueba la legislación que contiene los programas agrícolas que son parte de la propuesta de ley del Senado, trabajadores activos con la visa H-2A que han laborado por lo menos 100 días en la industria agrícola en los dos años anteriores al 31 de diciembre del 2012, tendrán la oportunidad, si así lo desean de ser parte del proceso de “legalización adquirida” para trabajadores agrícolas.

Sin embargo, es posible que el Congreso no obtenga los suficientes votos para aprobar dicha legislación o que la reforma propuesta sea mucho más limitada que la del Senado. Si usted viola los términos de su visa H-2A, usted podría ser deportado (a) y estaría en riesgo de no calificar para cualesquiera de los programas que el Congreso pueda crear.

Fines for employers who hire unauthorized workers would begin at \$3,500 per violation and reach \$25,000 per violation for repeated offenses. Employers who failed to keep required records of employees’ verified status would face fines beginning at \$500 per incident and increasing to \$8,000 per incident for repeated offenses.



Produce GAPs Harmonization: The Goal Is in Sight

By David E. Gombas, Ph.D., is senior vice president, food safety and technology, at the United Fresh Produce Association.

“One audit by any credible third party, acceptable to all buyers” was the goal of fresh produce growers and buyers alike in 2009, when the Produce Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) Harmonization Initiative began. Led by a Steering Committee of over 30 major fresh produce buying companies, growers and produce trade associations, the industry came together to reduce the audit burden that it had enabled by accepting and supporting a wide variety of food safety audit standards, many of which were the same, adding cost but not improving food safety, and some so contradictory that a grower could pass a food safety audit today and fail tomorrow.

For the initiative to be successful, the Steering Committee established that the “Harmonized Standards” should be focused on food safety and pre-farm gate operations, consistent with the scope of the FDA GAPs Guide, and identified the following parameters:

- Clearly defined requirements that minimize opportunity for misunderstanding, misinterpretation and “standards creep” by operations and auditors
- A standard that is globally recognized, but specifically applicable to North American operations
- Requirements that are risk-based, science-based, attainable, auditable and verifiable
- Requirements that consider all microbiological, chemical and physical hazards reasonably likely to occur, consistent

- with potential hazards addressed in FDA regulatory guidances
- A standard that is scalable to fresh produce operations of all sizes
 - Requirements that recognize and take into account regional- and commodity-specific food safety needs
 - A standard that is sufficiently non-prescriptive to accept equivalent food safety practices
 - Requirements that are acceptable to a critical mass of customers requiring general produce food safety audits
 - A standard that is freely accessible for nonproprietary use by any producer, buyer or auditor
 - A standard that is flexible enough to adapt as science reveals better practices and limits

A Technical Working Group (TWG) was formed, comprising over 150 experts in the areas of food safety and growing and handling practices for a wide variety of commodities and regions. In meetings over 5 months, the TWG reviewed 13 commonly accepted fresh produce food safety standards, identified the commonalities and selected the words from each that best suited a common standard, without sacrificing any food safety considerations. Recognizing that GAPs audits can extend from the field through on-farm processes like cooling, storage and transportation, the TWG split the standard into two. The results were the Field Operations and Harvesting Harmonized Food Safety Standard, applicable to all field operations and greenhouses, and the Post-harvest Harmonized Food Safety Standard, applicable only to those growing operations that have such facilities on-site.

Once the standards were drafted, teams of auditors and buyers field-tested them at over a dozen operations, many of which had not been involved in drafting the standards, ranging from large operations to the smallest family operations, and for a list of diverse commodities. These “pilot audits” resulted in a few changes to the draft standards, but everyone involved agreed that the Harmonized Standards achieved the parameters of the Steering Committee and could replace all of the GAPs food safety audit checklists currently in use.

The Steering Committee recognized that completion of the Harmonized Standards would not be sufficient. To be sustainable beyond their initial use, policies and procedures would need to be established for how the standards would be managed and maintained. To that end,

they commissioned an “Operations Committee.” Led by Wegmans VP of Produce Dave Corsi, the Operations Committee was charged with recommending responsibilities for ownership of the standards, how audit organizations would access and be trained on the standards, how disputes about the interpretation of the standards would be managed and how revisions to the standards would be managed. The Ops Committee completed its charge in five short meetings, concluding that ‘The Harmonized Standards will continue to be “owned” by the industry and represented by the TWG’. United Fresh serves as Secretariat for management of the Harmonized Standards.

Official versions of the Harmonized Standards continue to be freely accessible and downloadable from the United Fresh website. Audit organizations that choose to offer audits using the Harmonized Standards will sign no-cost licensing agreements with United Fresh, confirming that 1) they will use the Harmonized Standards verbatim, 2) all auditors performing audits to the Harmonized Standards will be trained using official, uniform training materials and 3) any unresolved disputes between auditors and auditees of how the standards are to be interpreted will be brought to a “Calibration Committee” for resolution.

The Operations Committee agreed with the TWG not to restrict the audit process used by an audit organization, that is, how the organization chooses, trains and manages its auditors, how it performs the audits, how it decides “pass/fail” certification or scoring of an operation and how it manages corrective actions and audit reports. While the TWG was successful in achieving the Harmonized Standards, most agreed that achieving the same success in harmonizing audit processes was not possible at this time, and decided to leave judgment on the “right” audit process to individual audit customers.

Recommendations for changes to the Harmonized Standards can be submitted by anyone at anytime to United Fresh, which will coordinate first with the Calibration Committee, then with the full TWG to determine whether the recommendation would be best considered through on-site frequently asked questions, or by formally changing the standards.

The Operations Committee considered whether riders (those additional items added to audit checklists, usually unique to and at the request of specific buyers) should be prohibited when using the Harmonized Standards.



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After all, the buyers, growers and auditors had all agreed to what was required to assess whether an operation had implemented an effective food safety program; why add more to the checklist and risk going back to multiple standards? However, the committee realized that the initiative did not have the authority to tell buyers what they could and could not require in an audit, and trying to do so would only serve as a barrier to the use of the Harmonized Standards. So ultimately riders were permitted, with the recommendation that anyone requiring a rider submit it to the TWG for consideration; if the rider is necessary for food safety, then it should be incorporated into the Harmonized Standards.

With the Harmonized Standards finalized and published, and the operating policies and continuous improvement established, members of the Steering Committee were asked, “Will you endorse audits using the Harmonized Standards?” Many had no conditions, but some did: Some buyers required the audits to be done by specific organizations, for example, a government auditor; some buyers required the audit to be performed under a GFSI-benchmarked scheme and some had riders. All of these were audit process conditions, and all of the produce-buying companies on the Steering Committee agreed to accept audits using the Harmonized Standards under their conditions.

Other major produce buyers, not on the original Steering Committee, were also asked whether they would accept audits using the Harmonized Standards. Invariably, upon being informed of how the standards were created and tested, and seeing them for themselves, every produce-buying company approached has said ‘yes’. Again, some have conditions to their acceptance, the same as mentioned above, so operations are encouraged to talk with buyers before scheduling an audit. But the extent of acceptance among buyers means that an operation should already be able to reduce its audit burden to only a few and, in some cases, one per year (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Buyer acceptance: These produce-buying companies, and more, endorse audits using the Harmonized Standards. Some conditions may apply; please check with your customer/buyer.

All major audit organizations identified by the TWG as performing GAPs audits in the U.S. were approached early in the harmonization initiative to become involved and provide their audit checklists. Almost all agreed and have been supporters of the Harmonized Standards. (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Auditing organizations: These audit organizations, and others, are using or plan to use the Harmonized Standards for GAPs audits. Audit organizations listed are for identification purposes only. The United Fresh Produce Association and the Produce GAPs Harmonization Initiative do not endorse or warrant the services of any particular entity.

GFSI was created in 2000 as a harmonization initiative. Like the produce industry in the U.S., European retailers were being criticized by their processed food suppliers for creating an audit burden: multiple, redundant and often conflicting audit requirements. In order to accept audits from organizations they didn’t know, the retailers created GFSI to establish a set of guidelines for audits and audit organizations, and to serve as an independent “benchmarking” authority. The retailers’ view: If an audit organization is managed to these guidelines, we can accept their food safety certifications with confidence. The strength of GFSI is its guidelines for how audit organizations manage their audit process, particularly in how auditors are overseen. GFSI decided to establish guidelines for food safety standards for “Farming of Plants.” Aware of this, the TWG evaluated

the Harmonized Standards against the GFSI guidelines and concluded that, although the words were different, the two were consistent in their expectations, perhaps requiring a few “GFSI riders” to the Harmonized Standards.

Ironically, this is where the two harmonization initiatives came into conflict. U.S. retailers, trying to reduce the audit burden on their suppliers, endorsed GFSI, some requiring all of their suppliers to become certified to a GFSI-benchmarked standard. This created a dilemma for a number of produce companies that had already been audited to the Harmonized Standards, only to be told those standards weren’t going to be accepted because they had not been certified by a GFSI-benchmarked organization to a GFSI-benchmarked standard. Meanwhile, GFSI benchmarking evaluates both the audit standard and the audit process, so the Harmonized Standards, being just an audit standard, cannot be benchmarked without an associated audit process.

The solution was to pair the Harmonized Standards with an already-benchmarked audit process. Three of the audit organizations that had been benchmarked to the GFSI Guidance Document 5 were asked about adopting the Harmonized Standards, and two responded.

The fly in this ointment, however, is that the GFSI guidelines don’t appear to allow for government auditors to be certification bodies, as the GFSI guidelines require private sector oversight by an accreditation body like ANSI. At this writing, USDA and several state departments of agriculture are exploring ways around this obstacle. If successful, then operations torn between buyers requiring GFSI and government-performed audits can do both with one audit using the Harmonized Standards.

A key aspect of the harmonization process was to use the words from established food safety standards to write the Requirements and Procedures of the Harmonized Standards without change. While some editing was done

to remove redundancies, the TWG was largely successful in keeping to this process. Additional words and columns (i.e., Verification and Corrective Actions) were included to clarify what was being required and minimize opportunities for “audit creep.” For example,

the TWG carefully stated when policies, procedures and records were required to be written, allowing for verbal policies and procedures to suffice when not critical for safe practices, particularly to reduce the paperwork burden at small operations. However, the Operations Committee recognized that misinterpretation and disputes in interpretation of these requirements would still happen and recommended formation of a committee that would be responsible for ongoing review of disputes and interpretation of the intent of the standards.

Therefore, a Calibration Committee was formed, comprising representatives of various audit organizations that intended to use the Harmonized Standards and representatives of various commodity growers and buyers (Figure 3). By bringing as many audit organizations as possible

to the table and adding subject matter experts in different growing and handling practices, the goal is to further harmonize auditors’ interpretations of what is expected at an audited operation: what practices are “compliant” with the intent of the Harmonized Standards; what practices are not; and how auditors are to react when they see practices they believe may represent a public health risk. The committee’s responsibilities are to 1) develop the official training materials for auditors on how to interpret the intent of the standards and 2) participate to resolve real-time disputes in interpretation of the standards. Importantly, it is not the committee’s responsibility to train auditors how to audit; that task remains the responsibility of the individual audit organizations.

The Calibration Committee has evaluated dozens of dispute questions and developed consensus responses to each; they developed training slides for each requirement in the Field Operations and Harvesting standards, including hundreds of possible scenarios of what an auditor might see, often drawn from the dispute questions, and how the auditor should react to and judge what he or she sees; and they offered two Train-the-Trainer workshops in 2012 for auditors and auditees alike. The participating audit organizations, including USDA, Equicert and some who are Global G.A.P. and SQF certification bodies, subsequently began training their auditors, increasing the capacity for operations to have an audit performed to the Harmonized Standards.

At this writing, FDA had just published its proposed rules for Produce Safety and Preventive Controls for Human Food. While there may be substantial changes to both rules before they’re finalized by FDA some months from now, a quick read reveals that operations in compliance with the Harmonized Standards will largely be in compliance with the requirements of the Produce Safety proposed rule.

Experience has shown that produce customers are requiring audits of their suppliers, and that customers are realizing the costs of redundant audits are adding to their own costs, regardless of who pays for the actual audit. The broad acceptance of the Harmonized Standards by major produce buyers seems to show a road forward to meeting the industry’s objective of reducing the audit burden without sacrificing safe produce growing and handling practices. Even while some buyers have restrictions on who can do the audits, having one checklist for all audits has to reduce the audit burden of differing standards. Further, the expectation is that buyers, seeing the same audit results from different audit organizations, will eventually accept an operation’s existing audit results without requiring another, thereby further reducing the audit burden. When they see different audit results for the same operation, using the same standards, from different audit organizations, questions will come back to where they rightfully belong—the audit process—and the marketplace will begin to weed out the poor performers.

However, we’re not there yet. Several suppliers have complained that the Harmonized Standards just added another audit to the list. Why? In some cases, the problem has been with the customer, when the customer’s food safety department, which decides which audits to accept, is disconnected from the produce buyer, who has only a tick box of which audits are acceptable. In other cases, the problem has been with the supplier that is unwilling to ask whether the customer would be willing to accept its existing audit using the Harmonized Standards. In both cases, suppliers are encouraged to talk with their customers. If a supplier has a customer unwilling to accept audits using the Harmonized Standards, the supplier is encouraged to contact United Fresh to assist in working with the customer. Wisely handled, a supplier already should be able to reduce the number of audits it needs to endure to just a few, if not one.

In still other cases, the supplier is comfortable with its existing audit company that doesn’t use the Harmonized Standards, and all its customers already accept the single audit it has. The objective of the Produce GAPs Harmonization Initiative has always been to reduce the audit burden, not add to it, and these were not the types of operations that the Harmonized Standards were developed to help. If all of a supplier’s customers have been satisfied with a single audit performed to a different standard, then we see no advantage to the operation’s changing the audit it uses. But this is not the norm. As operations grow and diversify their customer base, experience has demonstrated that customers’ audit requirements will be different. For them, the Harmonized Standards offer a solution.

For more information about the Produce GAPs Harmonization Initiative and the Harmonized Standards, please visit www.unitedfresh.org/gap_harmonization or contact Dr. David Gombas, coordinator for the initiative, at dgombas@unitedfresh.org.



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National Report

What busy time our National Queen Amber Nolin, NWA’s Promotion Ambassador has enjoyed since last printing. Amber has had promotions in several states and a wide variety of venues. Many thanks to Kendra Tomlinson Kennedy for the fantastic job she done covering for me. Special thanks to the following for all your support and sponsorship. We will again let the pictures tell the story for our promotions.

Bell Elementary School; sponsored by Diamond 99 Watermelons, Carrie and Dan Thomas
C&S Wholesale Grocers Food Show; sponsored by Melon 1
Florida Watermelon Association; FWA Convention
NWA for the NWPB Media Training
Canadian Produce Marketing Sponsored by; NWPB
Commissary Grand Opening; Arnold Mack, Mack Farms
Race for the Cure; Warren Produce
Newberry Watermelon Festival; Sponsored by Josh Moore, Diamond 99, and Billy Smith Watermelons
Greenville, SC Promotions, Media & Aloft Festival; sponsored by Rusty Kinard, Mark Williams, Ray Vincent and Balloon Ride by Syngenta
Thank You!



Amber reads to the Children at Bell Elementary



The Thomas Girls love Amber, Thanks Carrie and Dan!



Great Group thanks Diamond 99 Watermelon



The Melon 1 team sponsor Amber to the C&S Wholesale Food Show in Connecticut



Thanks Melon 1!



Working the food show booth



Thanks Melon 1!



Amber visits with Brenda and Arnold Mack during the FWA convention



And with Raymon and Annette Land



Congratulations Brandi Harrison!



Thank You Craig Mathis, also for the Balloon ride!



The AWA honors Amber with a dinner! Thank You!



Communication training with Carmine Gallo, the girls and NWPB group



Kendra and Amber visit with NWPB's Stephanie Barlow!



And Brenda Mack thanks for all you do!



And Mrs. Jean Marinaro, thanks Jean



Thanks to the Staff at NWPB for all you do



Cece, Amber and Juliemar at the CPMA in Toronto



Great looking booth



Gordon, Juliemar and Amber during the reception prior to the banquet



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Juliemar, Amber and Kendra all looking great for the closing banquet



Keith Hogan and Randy Brittan Director of Procurement at Grand Opening of Portsmouth, VA Commissary



CEO of DECA presents Amber with this special coin



Stickers for the kids, notice the long line of people waiting to get in



What a fantastic day!



On the air in Greenville at "Your Carolina" WSPA



Thank You Josh and Amanda Moore for helping sponsor Newberry



News Channel 4 WYFF in Greenville



Amber's Mom Renea and Nana, Billy, Corliss, Trey and family



Sponsor Rusty Kinard joins us in Greenville, thank you Rusty!



Brandi, Amber, and Jordan congratulate the 2013 Newberry Queen



Joe, J Slice and the girls at the Bi Lo promotion



This little cutie, Brenda and Jimmy Henderson's daughter at the Race for the Cure



All the girls in beautiful downtown Greenville... thank you Ann it was awesome!



Chief Joe works his magic in Minneapolis



Amber before the hot air balloon ride at the Aloft Festival, thank you Syngenta & Craig



Amber and Kendall with the eating contest at the Race for the Cure



The girls visit the Shriner's Hospital in Greenville



Kendall and Amber with Jimmy and Brenda Henderson and their family...thank you Warren Produce!



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Alabama Report

Greetings from Alabama,

Watermelon season is here and Queen Jordan has been busy learning about the industry and spreading the watermelon message. The year started with visiting the Florida Watermelon Association Convention at the beautiful Gaylord Resort in Orlando, FL. Queen Jordan had an amazing trip and was very excited to spend time with some of our Alabama Watermelon Association members. In April, we returned to Orlando to the Disney Boardwalk Inn for queen training. Queen Jordan and our 1st runner up Courtney left training prepared and ready to start their promotions. Queen Training was a success and would not have been possible without some very special people. Thank you Kelly and Jean Marinaro with Sunny Fresh Farms; Arnold and Brenda Mack with Mack Farms, Jane Jennings with Multicorr; Bob Gibson with Gibson Farms; and Nunhems.

So far Queen Jordan visited six schools in Southeast Alabama. She has enjoyed reading, serving watermelon, and teaching students about watermelon. After visiting over 1,000 students and many teachers Queen Jordan is certain she is on the right career path of becoming a teacher.

With watermelon season in full swing comes watermelon festivals. Queen Jordan attended the Newberry Watermelon Festival and Chiefland Watermelon Festival. She attended the festivals, rode in the parades, and welcomed the newly crowned festival queens. A special thank you to our sponsors for these great weekend: Mr. Billy and Mrs. Corliss Smith with Billy Smith Watermelons, Mr. Rantz Smith with Smith Farms of Bell, Mr. Jeff and Bobbie Jo Garrett with Clifton Seed, and Mr. Josh Moore with Glory Produce. During the Chiefland Festival, Mr. Rantz Smith made it possible for us to stay at the beautiful Gilchrist Club. This was such a special treat for Queen Jordan and me, as well as, the Florida Watermelon Queen 1st runner up Kaitlin Jackson and her coordinator Mrs. Anna Kelley and National Watermelon Queen, Amber Nolin and her coordinator Mrs. Eleanor Bullock.

Queen Jordan was invited to speak at the annual Alabama Ag in the Classroom convention about how to use watermelon in the classroom to more than 100 teachers. Alabama Ag in the Classroom provides teachers with the tools needed to educate students on the importance of agriculture and how it affects their daily lives. Queen Jordan shared a power point on the health benefits and versatility of watermelon, instructions on selecting and cutting watermelon, and samples of watermelon. The teachers loved her visit.

We have covered a lot of ground already and have much more to cover. The next few months will be filled with farm tours, grocery store promotions, watermelon festivals visits, farmers' market visits, and media interviews. We hope to see you soon in our travels!

Sincerely,
Katie Eubanks
Promotions Coordinator
Alabama Watermelon Association
Cell:334-237-0600
Email:Katie.eubanks2@gmail.com



Congratulations 2013 Florida Queen Miss Brandi Harrison.



3rd graders at Ashford Elementary love the book Peter Spat a Seed at Sue



Queen Jordan was so excited to spend time with Mr. Kelly and Mrs. Jean at the FL Convention.



These teachers are ready to use their teacher tool-kits and tips from Queen Jordan in their classrooms.



All the new Watermelon Queens with the NWPB Crew and Mr. Carmine Gallo



National Queen Amber and Queen Jordan enjoying the Newberry Watermelon Festival with some sweet little girls.

Queen Jordan and 1st runner up Courtney with Ms. Mary Jones at Disney after Queen Training.



A quick visit with Mr. Murray Tills and Mr. Bob Gibson, thank you for sending us home with plenty of watermelon.



We helped move a lot of watermelons at the Commissary at Maxwell Airforce Base. Thank you Mr. Scott Davis with Military Produce Group for inviting us to Montgomery.



Learning all about watermelon first hand from the fields of Glory Produce.

Once a watermelon queen always a watermelon queen. Queen Jordan with Little Miss Alabama Woodlands Kayden. Kayden's mom was the 2001 Alabama Watermelon Queen.



Thank you Josh Moore of Glory Produce for the tour of your new packing shed.



All the students from Maxwell Elementary got to tour the Commissary, learn all about produce, and eat watermelon!



The girls loved staying at the Gilchrist Lodge. Such a beautiful place to relax and spend time with our watermelon family.



5th graders at Hillcrest Elementary in Enterprise had a Watermelon Day which included a visit from the Watermelon Queen.



Congratulations to the Chiefland Watermelon Queen, Miss Shelby Crews.



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Florida Report

Greetings from the Sunshine State of Florida

Watermelon season has arrived and with that I have been very busy as your Florida Watermelon Queen promoting the Florida watermelon industry. My first promotion was the Flower and Garden Festival at Epcot in Disney, which proved to be the perfect venue to celebrate our Florida farmers as well as talk with the authors of “Field to Feast” about the local recipes show cased in their cookbook. Educating adults and children about the benefits of watermelons was my focus during the Kids Festival in West Palm Beach, Florida. I was also invited to attend the National Migrant Education Convention in Orlando Florida where I talked with educators all around the country about the importance of our watermelon industry.

As the month rolled on, I had the pleasure of attending the Desoto County and Newberry Watermelon Festivals. Each of these festivals served as a wonderful example of communities coming together and celebrating their local farmers and the watermelon harvest. In Desoto County, I had the honor of emceeing the Sugar Baby and Crimson Sweet pageant. While in Newberry I had the chance to be a part of the seed spitting and hog-calling contest. Both of these festivals did a great job promoting their hometown watermelons and communities.

In Charlotte, North Carolina and Dover, Delaware I teamed up with the Georgia Watermelon Queen to promote watermelons as well as cheer on racecar driver Ross Chastain in the Nascar Camping World Truck Series. It was an exciting experience and the fans loved the watermelon slices. During the Nascar promotion Ross joined us at local grocery stores to meet fans and help us hand out watermelon samples along with promoting the Florida Watermelon Association.

Throughout the past three months I have had the chance to be a guest on the Fox 4 Morning Blend in southwest Florida. During my first appearance I shared a recipe and also talked about how the watermelon season was in full swing. Carr Hussy from Sweet Mama produce joined me during my second visit to the Morning Blend where we had a lot of fun challenging the host to a seed-spitting contest. Both shows we pressed how important it was to buy Florida watermelons.

Lastly, I had the amazing opportunity to tour several farms. This was not only an excellent opportunity to learn about the production and industrial side of the watermelon industry but a chance to get to know the amazing families and people involved. Going to each of the farms and listening to the history and legacies involved in farming left me feeling grateful to even have a small part of something as grand and historical as farming.

Special thanks to the board members for allowing Miss Debra and I to promote this incredible association by creating a Facebook page. I encourage everyone to like and share our Florida Watermelon Association page by doing this you continue to support our Florida watermelon industry. Serving as the Florida Watermelon Queen has been more than I could have ever imagined. I feel blessed to be part of this incredible Florida watermelon family.

2013 Florida Watermelon Queen Brandi Harrison

Congratulations to Brandi Harrison for being crowned our 2013 Florida Watermelon Queen. What an awesome convention we had being held at the Gaylord Palms Resort in Orlando, Florida. Thanks to our President Chandler Mack for putting a wonderful, fun and special 45th Annual Florida Watermelon Convention. Congratulation also goes out to Kaitlin Jackson first runner-up, Joelle Perkins second Runner-up and Jubilee Award Winner Cassie Land. Our President, Chandler Mack is already started working on our next year convention being held at the Renaissance Tampa International Plaza January 17-19, 2014. Please plan to attend.

Until next time!
Debra Harrison – Florida Watermelon Promotions Coordinator
Email: debra@ffwa.com Cellular number (863) 633-8306.



Thanks to National Watermelon Promotion Board, Ms. Jean Marino and Ms. Brenda Mack for all you do for the Watermelon Queen Training.



Visiting at the office with “Sweet Mama Produce”.



A day in the field with Jim Barfield.



Celebrating Florida Agriculture at Epcot International Flower and Garden Festival with Department of Ag Melissa Hunt and Yolanda.



A family tradition in Arcadia carry's on with “The Turner” family. Brad, Phil Sr. and Phil Jr.



Queen Brandi and Harry Vaughn chatting about those Gators and Eagles.



Queen Brandi visiting with Steve and Heidi Singletary & sons at their packing shed.



A hot day at the race handed out watermelon slices with Nascar Truck Driver Ross Chastain.



President Chandler Mack presenting “Life Time Achievement Award” to Mr. Kelly Marino.



The “June Smith Memorial Award” being presented to Shirley Turner by Jean Marino, Cheryl Hicks and Annette Land.



Congratulations to Cassie Land “Miss Jubilee” Award Winner.



Our dearest “has beens” welcoming our 2013 Florida Watermelon Queen Brandi Harrison.



Our 2013 Florida Watermelon Queen Court Joelle Perkins – Second Runner up, Brandi Harrison 2013 Florida Watermelon Queen and Kaitlin Jackson First – Runner up.



Queen Brandi with the “Gator Boys” in West Palm Beach at Our World Kids Festival.



Sharing watermelon recipes on Fox 4 Morning Blend Show.



A fun day with the “Melon 1” Gang. Thanks for lunch John and Katelyn.



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Georgia Report

Greetings from Georgia!

Georgia’s harvest season is about to kick off, and your association and Georgia Queen Carol Anne Mitchell have been busy building consumer anticipation about the coming watermelon crop and its nutritious, DELICIOUS benefits! In March, we attended the Florida Watermelon Association’s annual convention in Kissimmee, Florida to support our fellow state association and coordinator Debra Harrison. In April, Carol Anne joined the other state queens, runner ups and coordinators for a fantastic weekend with the National Watermelon Promotion Board and their training seminar. Training was held at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla. and featured a session with expert communicator Carmine Gallo on tips and tricks to interviewing on behalf of the watermelon industry.

THANK YOU SYNGENTA for sponsoring this fun and insightful weekend and THANK YOU NWPB for putting in the time and effort to equip our promotional programs with tools to best market for the industry. This is a great way to start the promotional year!

In May, we promoted our watermelon growers at the annual Sutherland Food Service Show in Atlanta, and read to pre-schoolers about J-Slice in Athens. Queen Carol Anne was generously sponsored by MELON 1 to attend two Nascar Truck series races that month in Charlotte, NC and Dover, Del. alongside Florida Queen Brandi Harrison. Ross Chastain (#19) and his watermelon truck are well recognized among race goers, and they loved having a fresh slice of watermelon to keep them cool during the day! Following both races, your Georgia and Florida Queens did in-store promotions at local Food Lion stores to increase sales. THANKS AGAIN, MELON 1 and to the Chastain family for having us and for your hospitality!

Also in May we joined the South Carolina Association for 3 jam-packed days of promotions in Greenville, SC. This included a trip to Shriner’s Hospital, Bi-Lo In-store promotions, and participation in the Aloft Festival. We gave out more than 4 bins of watermelons to festival attendees! In June, Queen Carol Anne completed a 2-day commissary blitz with in-store promotions at Robins Air Force Base in Warner Robins, GA and at Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia. These promotions were a huge success, moving more than 10 bins of watermelons at each promotion and further increasing sales of our favorite fruit. These two promotions were also generously sponsored by MELON 1. THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Still on our schedule to complete this summer: Cordele Watermelon Parade and Festival, the 4th of July Festival and Parade in Lake Park, multiple watermelon field/technology tours sponsored by SAKATA and SEMINIS Seed companies, a promotion with the Braves on July 2nd, an 11 Alive Atlanta and Company special, and two incredible Canada trips!

Stay up-to-date with how GWA is promoting the watermelon industry with our calendar located at www.georgiawatermelonassociation.org. You can also follow Queen Carol Anne and our tour through her blog and our face book page. All of these links can be found on the website.

We look forward to updating you again in the next edition!
Sincerely,
Samantha Tankersley
GWA Promotions Coordinator
706-845-8575
stankersley@asginfo.net



A trip to Ft. Benning commissary meant passing out lots of stickers and watermelon!



watermelon queens with a little girl in a watermelon outfit at Aloft Festival!



A trip to Ft. Benning commissary meant passing out lots of stickers and watermelon!



It was so fun to have Queen Training Seminar at Disney!



Watermelon Slices are popular at the speedway!



Showing Robins AFB customers how to pick out a good watermelon!



Watermelon Slices are popular at the speedway!



Looks like a great one!



having fun with Chef Poon and the NWPB Crew in Greenville SC



cutting up watermelon for grocery shoppers in Charlotte NC



interviewing on WSPA “Your Carolina” in Greenville, SC



#19 Truck outside Food Lion in Charlotte NC!



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FDA says it needs more money for FSMA



The FDA reported on its progress with food safety initiatives, stopping short of saying many requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act are unfunded mandates for the agency and its state and local counterparts.

In a statement accompanying a report to Congress, FDA deputy commissioner for foods Michael Taylor said the FSMA cannot be implemented without additional funding. Taylor reminded lawmakers that the Congressional Budget Office estimated the first five years would require at least \$583 million more than FDA’s 2010 base budget by 2015. That estimate did not include investments in technology, federal-state integration and a new import system. “Rules can be written but they can’t be implemented effectively and efficiently with current funding,” Taylor wrote in his preamble to the report, acknowledging that Congress added \$100 million to the FDA’s base budget in fiscal years 2011 and 2012.

“We estimate that FDA will need an additional \$400 million to \$450 million in funds added to its FY 2012 base to make FSMA a fully successful initiative. The President’s 2014 budget proposal, if enacted, would make a significant contribution to funding FSMA implementation.” Budget increases in recent years have “almost permitted FDA to return to its inspection level of a decade ago domestically,” according to the report, but to meet the FSMA mandates for inspections of foreign food facilities “substantial additional funds will be necessary.”

The number of required inspections and the lack of modern technology to analyze data make it impossible for FDA to meet the FSMA requirements, especially when foreign facilities are included, according to the report. The FDA estimates there are 22,325 high-risk food manufacturing facilities in the U.S., which include some fresh produce operations. The agency estimates there are 150,000 produce growers in the U.S.

FSMA requires FDA to inspect all high-risk operations at least once in the first five years after the 2011 enactment of the Act. According to the report the FDA will have completed those domestic high-risk inspections in three years. However, reaching the goal of 19,200 foreign inspections mandated by FSMA would “require hundreds of millions of dollars in new funding, which the agency cannot realistically expect to receive,” according to the report. The FDA says 50% of fresh fruits and 20% of fresh vegetables consumed in the U.S. are imported.

Traceability mandates will also be impossible to meet without more money, according to the FDA report. “FDA cannot be in the position of requiring or approving a specific tracing system or systems,” according to the report. “The produce industry has appropriately taken a leadership role with instituting several initiatives to improve tracing produce through the supply chain; however, there is inconsistent adoption by industry.”

Those initiatives have improved response times during produce-related outbreaks, according to the report, but data collected during outbreaks cannot be used efficiently because of antiquated information technology at the federal, state and local levels. “Significant challenges exist in tracing produce and other foods in an outbreak,” according to the report. “There are several reasons for this including drastic cuts in state and local budgets.”

Even if the FDA and state and local agencies had enough money for current technology, there are other roadblocks. “FDA is limited by statute in its ability to share certain types of information even with our state and local partners. ... legislative changes to our ability to share critical information during an emergency may be necessary” the report states.

Senate approves immigration bill 68-32

The Senate voted to pass comprehensive immigration legislation which sets up a battle with the House. Senators took a rare step of voting from their desks to mark the occasion.

Sen. Chuck Schumer (NY), the lead Democratic sponsor, predicted it would become law, despite widespread skepticism among House Republicans. “Make no mistake about it, the support this bill has generated here in the Senate will be impossible to ignore.”

Republican Sens. John McCain (AZ), Lindsey Graham (SC), Marco Rubio (FL), Jeff Flake (AZ), Bob Corker (TN), Kelly Ayotte (NH), Jeffery Chiesa (NJ), Susan Collins (ME), Orrin Hatch (UT), Dean Heller (NV), Mark Kirk (IL), John Hoeven (ND), Lisa Murkowski (AL) and Lamar Alexander (TN) voted for the 1,200-page bill.

Rubio, who is widely considered a possible front-runner for the GOP presidential nomination in 2016, split with the chamber’s two other likely presidential candidates, Tea Party-favorite Sens. Rand Paul (KY) and Ted Cruz (TX), who voted no.

Thirty-two Republicans voted against the measure, including every single member of the leadership. The legislation still has a tough road if it is to become law. Many House Republicans oppose granting legal status to millions of immigrants who came to the country illegally.

Speaker John Boehner said “For any legislation, including a conference report, to pass the House, it’s going to have to be a bill that has the support of a majority of our members.” He reiterated that the House would not simply take up and vote on the Senate bill.

How to Submit Public Comments to FDA

As you are aware, the Food & Drug Administration earlier this year released two of five ‘proposed’ food safety rules that have long ranging effects on fruits & vegetables, as well as other foods. The NWA has been heavily involved in this review process, and is prepared to recommend public comments for submission this month.

It is vitally important to have each and every one of you (including your employees and other business constituents) to submit comments. The proposed rules are far-reaching and all-encompassing, and can be quite confusing as well.

Look to the NWA website (www.nationalwatermelonassociation.com) for our recommended comments, and PLEASE SUBMIT your comments AS SOON AS POSSIBLE! The deadline is September 16th, but time is of the essence. Please, by any means possible, take five minutes or whatever it takes to submit your comments. Every comment submitted will be considered in the next year of reviews by FDA, and your voice will be heard.

FDA Public Comments from Watermelon Industry should be on two rules:

Docket ID: FDA-2011-N-0921
Standards for the Growing, Harvesting, Packing and Holding of Produce for Human Consumption
<http://www.regulations.gov/#!submitComment;D=FDA-2011-N-0921-0087>

Preventive Controls for Fresh Produce; Request for Comments Docket ID: FDA-2011-N-0920-0017
<http://www.regulations.gov/#!submitComment;D=FDA-2011-N-0920-0017>

Step 1: Log on the links above:

Step 2: Click, “Submit Comments”

Step 3: Fill out your information as required

Step 4: Copy and paste comments from file

Step 5: Click, ‘Submit’



Proponents say the legislation is a long-needed fix of the nation’s “broken” immigration system and argue that failure to act ensures a “de facto amnesty” for millions of people already living and working in the country illegally.

The sweeping bill would put an estimated 8 million illegal immigrants on a path to citizenship and spend \$46 billion to tighten the nation’s borders.

It would also increase the number of visas for high-skilled and agricultural workers and give more weight to educational and employment factors in granting visas.

The bill authorizes 20,000 additional border patrol agents and the construction of 700 miles of fencing along the southern border. The amendment also ensured that immigrants could not claim Social Security benefits for the time they worked in the country illegally.

The legislation received a huge boost when the Congressional Budget Office estimated it would reduce the deficit by \$197 billion over the next decade and by \$700 billion between 2024 and 2033.

House farm bill fails to pass

The 2013 farm bill came to an abrupt standstill on June 20 when the House of Representatives voted it down, with 195 for; 234 against.

While some lawmakers had predicted narrow approval earlier in the day, the outcome of the afternoon vote was altered by a late dairy program amendment opposed by some House AG Committee members, and an amendment by Republicans that would have placed additional requirements on food stamp recipients, and opposition to federal premiums to crop insurance.

House Agriculture Committee Chairman Frank Lucas, R-Okla., promised to continue work on the farm bill in wake of the decisive defeat. “We are assessing all of our options, but I have no doubt that we will finish our work in the near future and provide the certainty that our farmers, ranchers, and rural constituents need,” Lucas said in a statement.

Calling the vote a “tremendous disappointment for all Americans,” Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement that House Republican leadership failed for the second year in a row to deliver consensus on a farm bill because of its intent to cut food stamps. “Unfortunately, the House version of this bill would have unfairly denied food assistance for millions of struggling families and their children, while failing to achieve needed reforms or critical investments to continue economic growth in rural America,” he said.

There are a various number of options that the House can pursue including another extension of the 2008 farm bill, taking up the Senate’s version (highly unlikely), or going back to the drawing board altogether.



NWNPB UPDATE

Summer 2013



watermelon.org



Way to Rock it Out America! Nature's Candy Dance Contest

The Jump with Jill tour has been soaring this year, with the three casts covering schools across dozens of states. The Nature's Party dance con- test winner was chosen in May and the winning school from Marshfield, Wisconsin enjoyed a rocking watermelon day party! Visit this webpage to learn the video for yourself!

To watch the winning video from Washington Elementary, visit www.youtube.com/rockstarnutritionist and watch the "And the winner is.." video!



Tell your retailers the heart-check mark can boost sales!



The American Heart Association (AHA) heart-check mark helps consumers take a simple step towards healthy eating. Shoppers want clear, simple purchase guidance from a trusted source. The AHA heart-check mark increases product sales because seeing the mark on a package assures shoppers they are making a smart choice. Shoppers associate both "heart health" and "overall health" with the heart-check mark.

The heart-check mark drives purchase decisions. According to a recent study of shoppers:

- 85% find the mark "helpful" or "very helpful"
- 75% say the presence of the heart-check mark improves likelihood to buy
- 60% are positively influenced to purchase between a choice of similar products when the heart-check is shown

The bottom line is that primary shoppers find the heart-check mark to be credible and relevant. And your customers, your retailers, can use the heart-check mark on ads, in-store materials, and more for any watermelon promotion. Approval of heart-check mark ads is quick and easy so let your retailers know to contact us today!

An AHA study of in-store promotions found that products with the heart-check mark logo showed increased sales of the certified products by 5%.

Aloft Weekend Recap

4-day festival in South Carolina

- 200,000+ in attendance
- 7 watermelon queens
- 2 NWPB staffers lending a hand
- 1 Chef Joe and his amazing watermelon carvings
- 80 hot air balloons
- 2 media spots
- 1 visit to Shriner's Hospital
- 4 bins of watermelon handed out
- 3 Bi-Lo in-store promotions (one featuring J. Slice)

Do you know DEXAS?

A Texas-based designer and manufacturer of cutting boards and kitchen tools, DEXAS is now a leading designer and largest manufacturer of cutting boards in the U.S. NWPB has partnered with DEXAS in support of our summer promotional programs, including the National Retail Watermelon Display Contest and Carving Contest. DEXAS has provided all of the watermelon queens and Chef Joe Poon with in-store promotional kits to use this season. Thank you DEXAS for all of your support! We've tested your product and approve!

School Nutrition Association— Summer Feeding Toolkit & Annual Nutrition Conference (ANC)

After that last bell of the school year rings, many of the children who rely on National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs are left at serious risk of going hungry. The federal Summer Food Service Program helps to bridge that gap. NWPB is a proud sponsor once again of the Summer Feeding Toolkit, a free resource for K-12 foodservice to help create or improve summer feeding programs. The toolkit helps school foodservice administrators understand the fundamentals, learn best practices of various successful programs, promote their own programs with local media and to discover new menu ideas. Watermelon is clearly a natural partner both for its nutritious and delicious taste that kids do not leave on the tray but also for this program running the length of domestic watermelon season.

SNA's ANC is the can't-miss school nutrition event of the year. Every July at ANC, over the course of four days, thousands of professionals representing the school nutrition community and hundreds of industry partners come together to shape the future of healthy school meals and good nutrition for all children. We're talking 90 education sessions, 800+ exhibit booths, 3 general sessions and numerous external events, all designed to provide the school nutrition community with the information they need to meet new challenges and seize new opportunities. Representing watermelon on "Produce Row," NWPB shares the abundance of free resources and participates in the exchange of ideas, the inspiration, the camaraderie and the energy of more than 3,000 school nutrition professionals gathering in one place.



Summertime Watermelon Coverage Soars

The traditional and digital mix of watermelon in the media is in high gear. Everyday there are more and more watermelon recipes, health messages, and photos being shared in newspapers, magazines, news blogs and in social media. The watermelon press kit focusing on a celebration theme encompasses Mother's Day, Father's Day and an All-American Summer party was very well received and our channels are growing by the day. Watermelon how-to videos can be seen embedded on news websites such as The Huffington Post and AOL.com. And summer is just beginning!

July kicks off **National Watermelon Month** during which NWPB hosts two promotions concurrently: the retail-focused National Display Contest and the consumer-oriented Watermelon Carving Contest. Each year these promotions' participation rates multiply as the enthusiasm for watermelon and summertime rise! For program details, entry rules and winners, please visit watermelon.org.



NEW! Retail Dietician Toolkit Launches Online

Grocery chains have long had dietitians at the corporate level, but a growing number are now positioned in specific stores. According to a recent survey by the Food Marketing Institute that represents food retailers (86% of which employ RDs at the corporate level), one-third of stores now have a registered dietitian at retail. There are 500-600 retail dietitians who are emerging as a major force in supermarkets. Once confined to hospitals and offices, the dietitians are a marketing weapon for retail chains bringing them aboard to aid shoppers seeking the best foods to drop weight, battle diseases or avoid allergic reactions. The trend is another sign that consumers are demanding more from their food providers in preventative health care. To help these retail dietitians create a fun, in-store program, NWPB created the Retail Dietitians Toolkit featuring watermelon but encompassing the entire perimeter of the grocery store. To make it easy and fun to share the benefits of watermelon with customers, the toolkit includes reproducible materials for in-store tours, recipe demonstrations, social media graphics and J. Slice kid's activities. The kit lives online at this link:

<http://www.watermelon.org/HealthProfessionals/Retail-Dietitians.aspx>



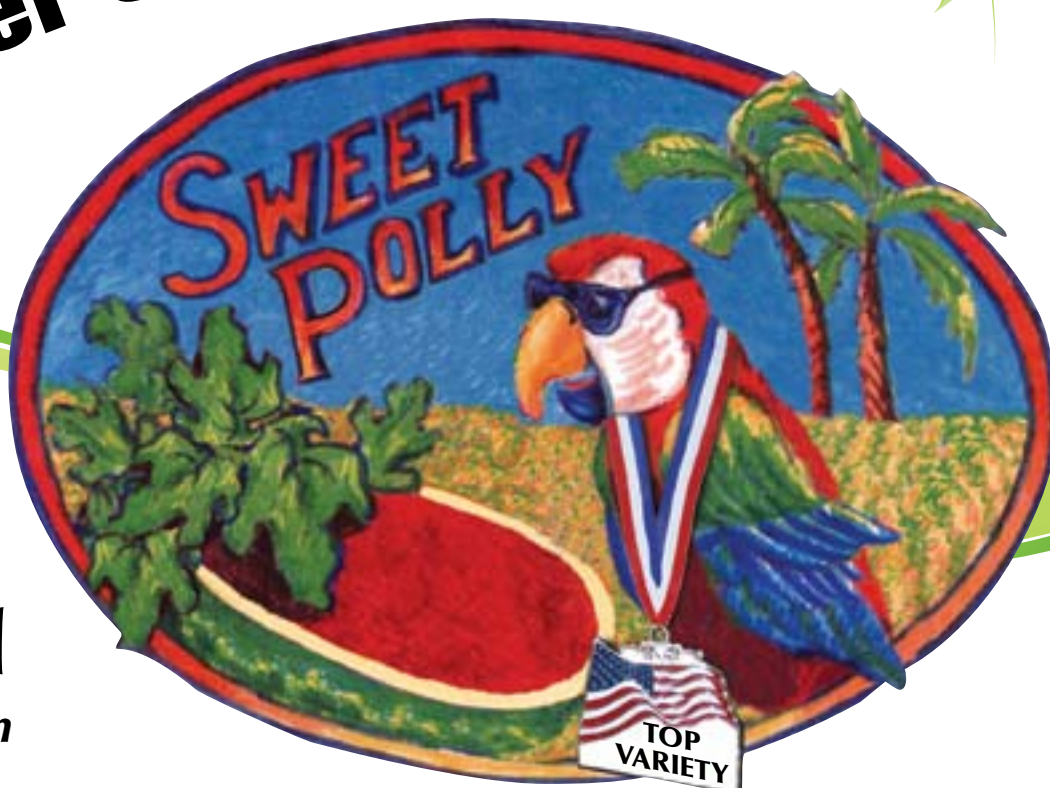


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Illiana Report

It’s watermelon time somewhere! That’s been our motto since 2013 IWA Queen Briston Anderson was crowned at our convention in mid-March. A short time after that, we joined the Florida association at their convention, thanks to sponsor Melon Acres. April events were highlighted by a farm tour hosted by Lori Toth at the Indian Hills packing shed in central Florida and included one of their nearby farms. Thanks, Lori and your wonderful team/family for showing Briston how it’s done in your neck of the woods!

Queen training was completed just in time for our first watermelon promotion at Carie Busey Elementary School in Champaign, IL. This event, sponsored by Frey Farms, allowed Briston to serve watermelon to every classroom in grades K-5 and to demonstrate her jump-roping skills. She was a big hit at the school, switching from crown and heels to athletic garb and tennis shoes and back again, to help the American Cancer Society drive home their message of fitness during the week-long Jump with Jill program at the school. Thanks, Renee Mattingly and your team at Frey Farms, for sponsoring this event!

South Knox Elementary School was Briston’s next stop, where she visited all of the 2nd grade classrooms, sharing fun facts about our favorite fruit/vegetable. Thanks Freyco for sponsoring this event.

Southwest Purdue Ag Center annually hosts all Knox County 3rd graders at its site for a “Day on the Farm,” where the kids get to see all kinds of animals and plants. Queen Briston talked to each group about how to grow watermelon plants, and she gave each child a watermelon seedling to take home. Kent Williams’ farm sponsored this stop for us. Thanks, Kent!

The Horrall family at Melon Acres sponsored Briston for a second time at the Knox County Relay for Life. Briston made her first trip to South Carolina as part of our national team helping the SCWA at the annual “Aloft” event, which lasted several days and included television interviews, grocery store promotions, the Aloft festival, and a Shriner’s Hospital tour. Thank you, Rich Novak, for sponsoring the hot air balloon ride!

Memorial Day weekend found IWA serving watermelon at the annual Spirit of Vincennes Rendezvous. This 2-day festival draws some 30,000 people, and our representatives Kaley Decker (subbing as coordinator) and Kristin Anderson (1st runner up) dressed up as pioneer ladies while serving watermelons provided by sponsors Caito Foods and Schmieding Produce. Thanks to all who helped make this event another success!

Other events included the Knox County Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting, the Indiana Military Museum Fund Raising Dinner, the Red Skelton Festival, a live radio show, several radio interviews, and the recording of public service announcements. Thanks to Vincennes Beauty Bar for sponsoring us at the Red Skelton Festival of Clowns!

Best Watermelon Wishes,
Carrie L. Smith, CPA
Interim Promotions Coordinator



Queen Briston with Sunstate’s Danny Jones and International Paper’s Rich Novak at the Florida convention.



Farm tour hosted by Indian Hills Produce



Epcot Center was the destination for Queen Training and an outing for these bicyclers.



Briston’s favorite food at Epcot was this salad available at the Florida Fresh site.



Kids loved the watermelon at our elementary school visits!



Carie Busey Elementary School was the first promotion of our year.



Briston answered many questions about watermelons!



Knox County Relay for Life allows us to reach consumers with our health message.



Briston at Bi-Lo store promotion in South Carolina.



Aloft festival-goers were happy to receive watermelon slices served up by Queen Briston.



Enjoying fresh watermelon is the best fringe benefit ever!



The Freshest Way to Market

To learn more about how the Transportation Program can benefit your bottom line, contact: Shannon Leigh at 866.771.1270 or shannon.leigh@chrobinson.com

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USDA proposing new Canada-US border fees

Canadians fear even more fees may be looming at the U.S. border as the USDA recommends revenue-generating measures that could result in higher costs. In a presentation to stakeholders in D.C., the department suggested new border fees because some federal agencies, including U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CPB), are currently providing free services at America’s borders.

CPB works in collaboration with the USDA’s agriculture quarantine and inspection program, which provides checks of imported agricultural goods and commercial aircraft, rail cars, ships and even passenger baggage to prevent harmful pests, diseases and materials from entering the U.S.

“Approximately \$191 million in CPB costs are associated with services for which no fee is currently charged,” the department’s presentation stated. U.S. federal agencies “need to recover all costs associated with fee services and have fee revenue from each fee service cover the associated costs.” In conclusion, it said: “Consider establishing new fees.” The spectre of increased costs at the border comes as the much-ballyhooed Canada-U.S. Beyond the Border initiatives are supposed to be resulting in precisely the opposite state of affairs.

Ed Fast, Canada’s international trade minister, called the prospect of new border fees from the USDA “another protectionist measure” — and one his government would vigorously oppose. “We don’t know exactly what it’s going to look like, but certainly we’ll be contacting my counterpart in the United States to press upon them that this is not helpful at all,” Fast told reporters on Parliament Hill. “If they want to drive economic growth in the U.S. — we want to do so in Canada — it’s not going to happen by raising new barriers at the border. It’s going to be by opening up trade, freeing up trade, so that we can drive prosperity in both of our countries.”

The Canadian government vowed to lobby against the fee, and members of Congress suggest that it is unlikely the border crossing levy will ever come to pass given opposition to the idea by both Republicans and Democrats in Congress. The early indications are that both Democrats and Republicans oppose it and any new fee would have to get by both the House and the Senate.

New USDA fees would not, however, require a congressional green light, says Birgit Matthiesen, the D.C.-based point person for the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME) organization. “The border crossing fee would need authority from Congress because Homeland Security is actually proposing lifting exemptions that currently cover passengers and pedestrations,” she said. “But there is no talk of lifting exemptions with the USDA proposals, according to the initial information we’re getting.” That means they’d be easier to establish. In an email to members, the CME raised the alarm about the notion of USDA fee increases, which would be charged to carriers — trucking and shipping companies, airlines and railways. “Given the volume, nature and immediacy of our cross-border trade, this new fee analysis is troubling,” the email read. It pointed out that the USDA recommendations made no distinction for country of origin, meaning Canada once again could get lumped in with myriad other nations despite the integration of the U.S. and Canadian economies.

The next step will involve the USDA submitting its proposals to the Office of Management and Budget, and then to move forward with formal recommendations in the weeks to come.



What Will The Affordable Care Act Mean To Agriculture?

As the new law begins to take shape in advance of the launch of health care exchanges on Oct. 1 and full implementation in 2014, the ACA is hitting the headlines as the scale of the program unfolds. It is considered by experts to be the biggest legislation passed by Congress in decades.

The original bill passed by Congress came in at 2,700 pages. Now that the regulations are being put to paper, the ACA has surpassed 20,000 pages. What rules and regulations are in those pages are still being sorted out and its impact may take years to fully realize. There are two mandates under the ACA that are important to understand. The first is the individual mandate, which states everyone must have health insurance. Those who fail to buy coverage will be subject to a penalty paid to the federal government.

The penalty the first year is only \$95 per individual, but will increase significantly in 2015 and beyond. Some cite that many young people will opt to pay the penalty because it will be much cheaper than paying for coverage. That’s problematic because the whole intention of the mandate is to broaden the pool of insured persons to spread risk and hopefully reduce premiums. Individuals can obtain private insurance or seek coverage in newly established health care exchanges. Florida is one of a number of states that decided not to establish its own exchange, so it will default to the exchange set up by the federal government. While the exchange is meant to be a marketplace of insurance providers competing thereby keeping costs down, it appears initially there may only be one insurance provider to choose from when it opens in October.

The other key mandate of the ACA is for employers to offer health insurance coverage to full-time employees and their dependents, if they are above a certain size. The important number to remember for the employer mandate is 50. If an employer has on average 50 full-time employees or full-time equivalents, the company must offer minimum essential health coverage to them and their dependents. A full-time employee is one who works on average 30 hours per week or 130 hours per month. Full-time equivalents are determined by dividing the total hours worked by part-time employees by 120. (Note ... in Florida the part-time component begins at 25 hours.)

The coverage offered must be “affordable.” According to the law, that means the cost of coverage must not exceed 9.5% of an employee’s household income. The IRS has established several safe harbors, one of which would allow the employer to make this affordability determination based upon wage income on the employee’s W-2 statement. In addition, the employer is required to pay at least 60% of the cost of providing health coverage. Coverage also is required to be offered to the dependents (children) of employees up to the age of 26. For some companies that will be subject to the “pay or play” rules of ACA, it might make economic sense to pay the penalty for not providing coverage, which is \$2,000 per employee after the first 30.

While the vast majority of farms will fall below 50 full-time employees, the picture gets a little more complicated when seasonal workers are involved. Those who employ large numbers of people for jobs like harvesting will need to evaluate if special seasonal worker rules apply, and determine if they are going to be caught by these rules. The test (rather the key questions) is this did you average 50 full-time employees in the prior year? If you did not, then you are not required to offer coverage. Congress provided limited relief to farmers and retailers who have to ramp up the number of employees to accommodate seasonal harvests or holiday shopping. Under this special rule, if the employer averages more than 50 full-time employees for 120 days or less, and if this excess consists solely of seasonal workers, the employer will not be required to offer health care coverage.

The health care law could highlight problems with undocumented workers harvesting crops. If you hire a non-resident alien, you don’t have to count their hours or cover them. It could flush out a number of situations if you are paying people but not offering them health cover-

Tell Congress What Needs to be Done

As a citizen of our country, you have every right to communicate with your federal leaders and tell them what they need to do to help (not hurt) your livelihood). That is what we call ‘entry-level lobbying.’ To convince you of how it works, let’s step back to September of 2007, the last time that the U.S. Senate took up an immigration bill along with the old AgJobs bill.



Then Florida Senator Mel Martinez was one of the co-sponsors of that bill, and endured pressure like we have never experienced before. For example, every call that was received by his office in favor of the bill was countered by over 10 calls against the bill. The bill failed in committee, and shortly thereafter, Mr. Martinez resigned from the Senate to rejoin the private sector.

What that example says is this Every phone call counts! Every email counts! And most importantly, YOU COUNT! That is how many bills in Congress become successful, or unsuccessful. What are their constituents wanting them to do? Support a bill? Not support a bill? It is a matter of lobbying, and lobbying hard!

This is where you must come in. Please do not make the mistakes that so many people have made in the past by leaving the email or the clals up to others. Take five minutes and tell your legislators what you need them to do. And in reality, they work for you 9for us) because they represent us after they are elected. So, let’s hold them accountable.

When the time comes, and we alert you to the need to communicate, please follow these steps to get your message to your legislators:

- Step 1: Access link, <http://capwiz.com/unitedfresh/dbq/officials/>
- Step 2: Put in your zip code
- Step 3: Click ‘e-mail’ for each Senator and your Representative
- Step 4: Select a Message, and click on ‘Next Step’
- Step 5: Compose your message, and click on ‘Send Message’

Congratulations. You just successfully lobbied one of your legislators. Now, do the same for the other two.

There is power in numbers, and with the Farm Bill, Immigration reform and FDA proposed Food Safety rules on the current horizon, your input (and the input from your families and employees) is all VITAL to our success. Together, We can make a difference!

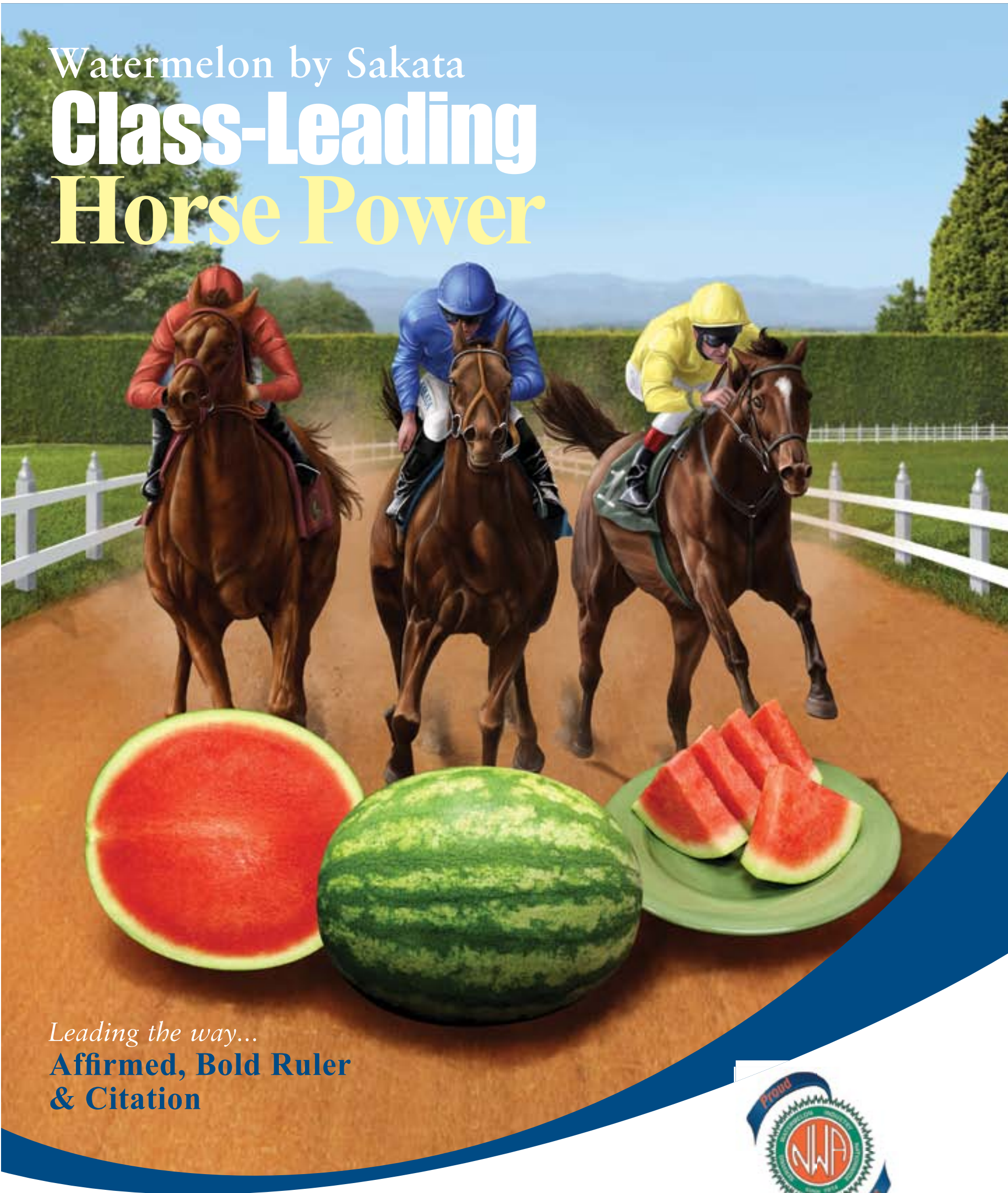
age. If your answer to that is they are non-resident aliens, then the question becomes have you violated any rules by hiring them?

The full implementation of the ACA is fast approaching, so the time is now to get up to speed on how the law will affect you personally or your business, especially if your business is close to the edge of 50 full-time employees or you are not sure how your seasonal workers figure into the scheme. By October 1st, you have to be committed and have coverage lined up, so working on those decisions now is very important. You will have to figure out what the costs are going to be and make business decisions the best that you can.



Watermelon by Sakata

Class-Leading
Horse Power

An illustration of three jockeys on brown horses racing on a dirt track. The jockeys are wearing red, blue, and yellow silks. In the foreground, there are three watermelons: a whole one, a half-cut one showing the red flesh, and a plate with several slices. The background shows a green hedge and distant mountains under a blue sky.

Leading the way...

Affirmed, Bold Ruler
& Citation

Don't be left in the dust! Lead the way with new Affirmed, Bold Ruler and Citation seedless watermelons and enjoy best-in-class performance. Money-saving features like earliness, cold-setting ability, plant vigor, high yield, fruit uniformity and excellent interior quality combine to make these watermelons the leading choice for you and your customers.

We recommend using **Ace** as a pollenizer due to its early and prolonged flowering.

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Mar-Del Report

Greetings from the Mar-Del Association!!

Queen Chelsey started promoting watermelons as soon as she was crowned with the MD. Ag. Dinner, meeting and chatting with MD. Governor Martin O’Malley. Then we visited the FWA Convention in Orlando. Thank you FWA for all your hospitality and a wonderful time. Chelsey then learned how watermelons are germinated at Vincent Farms. Thank you Ray and Clay Vincent as well as the entire staff of Vincent Farms for all your knowledgeable help. Then we headed back to Orlando for a wonderful Queen Training weekend at Epcot Flower and Garden Festival. Thank you NWPB for putting together a very informative weekend for all our new queens! A job well done! Back in DE. We served watermelon to 8,000 plus people during the Delaware Ag Day at University of Delaware. They loved their first taste of watermelon for the year. Thank you Melon1 for supplying the watermelons for this promotion. Our 1st runner up Emily Eskridge filled in for Chelsey at the Nemours Healthy Kids Day at Trap Pond. Emily taught 1100 plus children how healthy watermelon is and the watermelon crawl. Then the heavens opened up with tons of rain but the 4 steps riding festival was still a go. We had a slice of watermelon for all that braved the weather. As the skies cleared we headed to Greenville, S.C. for grocery store promotions, Shriner’s Children’s Hospital Visits, TV interviews and the Aloft Festival. Thank you S. C. Assoc. and Ann Bryant for all your hospitality and a well-planned weekend! Back in MD. we attended the MS Bike a Thon and did we ever feel loved. What a refreshing treat after a long hot ride. Thank you again Melon 1 for supplying our watermelons for the event. Chelsey then learned how to plant watermelons @ DMC Farms. She did an awesome job! We then traveled to Baltimore to tape Mar-Del’s new radio commercial.

We have a busy summer season ahead and we are excited about reaching out and touching people’s lives with a watermelon smile!

Good luck to everyone with their watermelon season – until next time!

Watermelon Wishes,

Dawn Collins
Promotions Coordinator
Mar-Del Watermelon Association

Chelsey with Maryland Governor Martin O’Malley at the Md. Ag Dinner



Chelsey at the Florida Convention with a sign that says it all!!

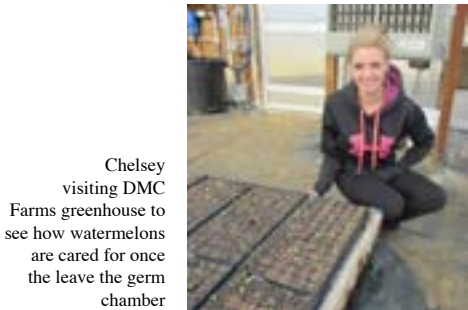
The lovely state Queens with Mrs. Jean Marinaro



A big thank you to Jay Jones and Josh Moore for the beautiful earrings purchased for Chelsey at the FWA Auction



Thank Ray and Clay Vincent and the staff of Vincent Farms for teaching Chelsey how watermelons are germinated.



Chelsey visiting DMC Farms greenhouse to see how watermelons are cared for once they leave the germ chamber



Chelsey thanking Carmine Gallo for all his valuable instruction @ Queen Training in Orlando.



Friends from the start – Alabama Queen Jordan and Chelsey



Thank you NWPB for all your wonderful planning of a valuable Queen Training Program



While attending Queen Training we were able to attend the Flower and Garden Show at EPCOT



Delaware Ag Day @ University of Delaware – 8,000 plus people received their 1st taste of summer



Chelsey planted watermelons at DMC Farms. She did a wonderful job! Shown here with the crew of DMC Farms



1st runner up Emily Eskridge attended Nemours Healthy Kids Day for Chelsey. There Emily taught 1100 plus kids healthy benefits of watermelon and the watermelon crawl



The Queens found the playground @ the Shriner’s Children’s Hospital, Greenville, SC



After an early morning interview A WYFF the girls clowned around with Chef Poon



Chelsey having fun with Chef Poon at the Aloft Festival, Greenville, SC



The bikers at MS Bike a Thon loved the refreshing watermelon!



Chelsey in front of CBS Radio Studio in Baltimore, MD after taping her new radio commercial.



Looking forward to a busy season promoting summers sweet treat!!

Proud partner with NWA for 6 years.

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Troubadour is a Crimson Sweet variety that 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 14-17lb average fruit weight allows for higher bin count.

HM.CLAUSE



Auburn Project to Study Food Safeness

Studies show that consumers often think that locally grown food must be safer and healthier than food from farms across the state or country. A team of researchers from Auburn and Tuskegee universities plans to find out.

Christy Butcher, an animal sciences professor at Auburn and leader of the research team said, “I by no means want to disprove the fact that local food may be safer, but I think that people are confused about what local and regional foods are.” Over the next five years and using a \$4.8 million USDA grant, the researchers will survey consumers, inspect farms, improve safety protocols and train producers in those processes.

By the end of the project, farmers in North Florida, South Georgia and South Alabama should have a better idea of what consumers think about their food and a set of standards they can follow to show those consumers that they take necessary steps to ensure a safe product.

Locally sourced food has become more and more popular as consumers demand to know who grew their food and where. That’s good news for many farmers, but if the belief isn’t backed up by facts, the trend could fall off. As an expert in red meat, Bratcher is astounded when she hears people claim that meat raised or processed in the same county is safer. “It doesn’t mean that the cattle have less bacteria because they were grown 30 miles from where you live,” she said.

Researchers started this past spring to survey consumers and farmers, conduct on-site tests for bacteria on troughs, barns and equipment, and sample creeks and streams near farms for water quality. Based on what they find, researchers will develop guidelines and practices aimed at improving food safety and delivering the information to the farm operators in the study. An AG economist will help assess the costs of improvements. Finally, the project will get that information and techniques to farmers across the Southeast and perhaps further.

“Nobody wants to see new regulations,” she said, “and you can’t put a blanket over every operation. Hopefully, the information we collect will help tailor those best practices. “I think that farmers will be more interested in seeing that they can do things in their operations to market it as a safe food.”

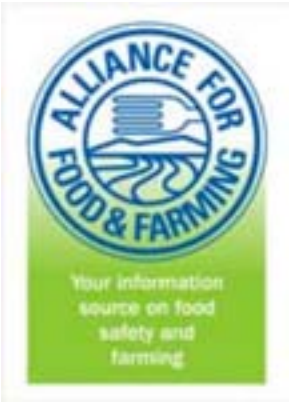
Dirty Dozen list issued and refuted

Despite the USDA report earlier this year that said fresh produce from the U.S. does not pose a safety concern based on pesticide residues, the Environmental Working Group again released its Dirty Dozen produce shopping guide.

In its ninth year, the guide ranks pesticide residues on 48 fruits and vegetables based on thousands of samples tested by the USDA and the FDA, according to a news release from the group.

The EWG reported that apples again topped its annual list of the most pesticide-contaminated produce, followed by strawberries, grapes and celery. The remaining fresh produce items on the Dirty Dozen list were peaches, spinach, sweet bell peppers, imported nectarines, cucumbers, potatoes, cherry tomatoes and hot peppers.

The EWG also issued what it calls the “Clean 15” list, produce the group says has the lowest pesticide residue levels, The Clean 15 list includes corn, onions, pineapples, avocados, cabbage, frozen sweet peas, papayas, mangoes,



Bull Riding and BFB Seed Disinfection

What does bull riding have to do with BFB Seed Disinfection?

Former PRCA World Champion Bull Rider, Gary Lefew often teaches what he learned in the Rodeo arenas to real life situations at his bull riding school. The first lesson is that when you get knocked to the ground, you dust yourself off and get back on again.

In the seed business, most of not all seed companies have run up against BFB at one time or another, and also seed germination problems. That’s when you may get knocked in to the dirt in the seed business, and that’s just when you need to dust yourself off and get back in the saddle.

Over 3 years ago, Eliezer Zuckerbraun set out to conquer both the BFB problem and seed germination issues. The first step with any scientific investigation is to find about everything that has been done until today so as not to redo something that has already failed. Then one needs to figure out where the shortcomings are of current methods and then start to develop new ideas. The seed germination issue was solved first with a new seed priming system, as well as seed upgrading. The BFB issue was much more difficult, as there were many road blocks, but perseverance prevailed. Finally a new disinfection system was mastered that disinfects seeds internally, totally eliminating BFB bacteria from the seed. Even a heavily infected seed lot can be totally cleaned. The best part about it is that seed vigor and often seed germination percentages are improved.

Seed companies are showing a great deal of interest in this as this is surely a “game changer” for the seed industry. To be able to consistently supply clean seed to the industry is a dream come true. Eliezer has already started research for other crops to apply the same process to enable the supply of disease free seed for the entire crop production industry. This just shows you what you can accomplish if you get back up in a hurry after a fall.

Defusing the Myths of Produce Safety

Last year the Center for Disease Control issued a report tracking the number of annual illnesses and deaths caused by different foods.

Although the report wagged a disapproving finger at leafy vegetables as sickening more consumers than any other commodity, the report did conclude that pound-for-pound, produce is among the safest foods to eat.

When illnesses are considered together with consumption rates, meats, poultry and seafood are far more likely to cause illness than produce.

asparagus, eggplant, kiwi, grapefruit, cantaloupe, sweet potatoes and mushrooms.

The Alliance for Food and Farming countered the Dirty Dozen with a dozen reasons why consumers should eat more conventional and organic produce commodities. One of the reasons is the USDA’s statement on food and pesticide residues. Health professionals and nutritionists agree that eating more of both conventional and organic fruits and vegetables will improve health, according to the alliance.

“Scientists who have reviewed so-called ‘shoppers guides’ and ‘good produce/bad produce’ lists targeted toward consumers have found the methodology used to re-interpret government data did not follow any established scientific procedures, that risk was not examined and therefore these lists/guides should not be used when making purchasing decisions,” according to the alliance news release. “The amount of pesticide residues that an average person ingests throughout an entire year is even less than the amount of those ‘harmful’ substances in one cup of coffee,” Bruce Ames, professor of biochemistry and molecular biology at the University of California-Berkeley, said in the alliance release.

Import process looks bleak

Because of budgetary constraints, there is no reason to expect anything but increased delays at ports of entry when trying to import fresh produce into the U.S.

A tremendous increase in imports over the last decade has not led to a corresponding increase in inspectors, facilities or even efficiencies to handle the increase. In addition, new federal regulations, including the yet-to-be-released import rules associated with the Food Safety Modernization Act, have led to what seems sure to be an unfunded mandate. That probably means increasing delays at the border, increased cost and greater shrink.

Statistics show that fruit imports have doubled in the past decade and are continuing to grow at a very fast rate. Currently fruit imports account for almost 50 percent of U.S. fruit consumption, and they will surpass the halfway mark in the next couple of years. That increase has not been met by an increase in the number of inspectors, but it has been met by an increase in delays at the border.

It is assumed that when import rules are released for FSMA, they will most likely call for increased inspections, yet there are no funds to pay for it. As an example of this dilemma, there are about 150,000 trucks loaded with produce that will cross the border at the Rio Grande Valley port of entry this year, yet there are only eight inspectors charged with examining those trucks. A simple math calculation reveals that the task is impossible.

A new border crossing facility is about to open in Nogales, and if properly staffed, could allow trucks, cars and people to cross the border very efficiently. But, ICE will fall at least 500 people short of staffing the facility properly. Another issue at the port is that the inspectors do not schedule their work shifts to coincide with the heaviest traffic period, with a tendency by inspectors to shut down by about 3:30 p.m..

The produce industry may want to prepare itself for increased costs as the main provisions of FSMA shift the burden of food safety from the government to industry. Facility registration fees as well as inspection charges might well be the government’s answer.

Player Wins \$7.5 Million Jackpot Playing Melon Madness

A 49 year old man was stunned when a pop-up notification on his video slot game told him he had won a \$7,525,851 jackpot. The player had bet \$3 on the 5 reel, 30 pay-line progressive jackpot game Melon Madness.

Melon Madness is linked to five progressive jackpots which grow whenever a player bets on the game, or another game connected to the jackpots. The casino house automatically adds to the current cash prize with every spin made by a player.

Each of the five jackpots is reset to a different size when they have been hit; the “Big One Colossal Cash Jackpot” is the biggest and is resets to \$1,500,000. This guarantees that it will always payout a huge amount to players lucky enough to win it.

The player who won the jackpot is an aspiring online poker player who was trying to qualify for the Montreal World Poker Tour at PartyPoker. He randomly decided to play Melon Madness at PartyCasino while taking a break from poker when he won the largest jackpot every paid out by the online casino.



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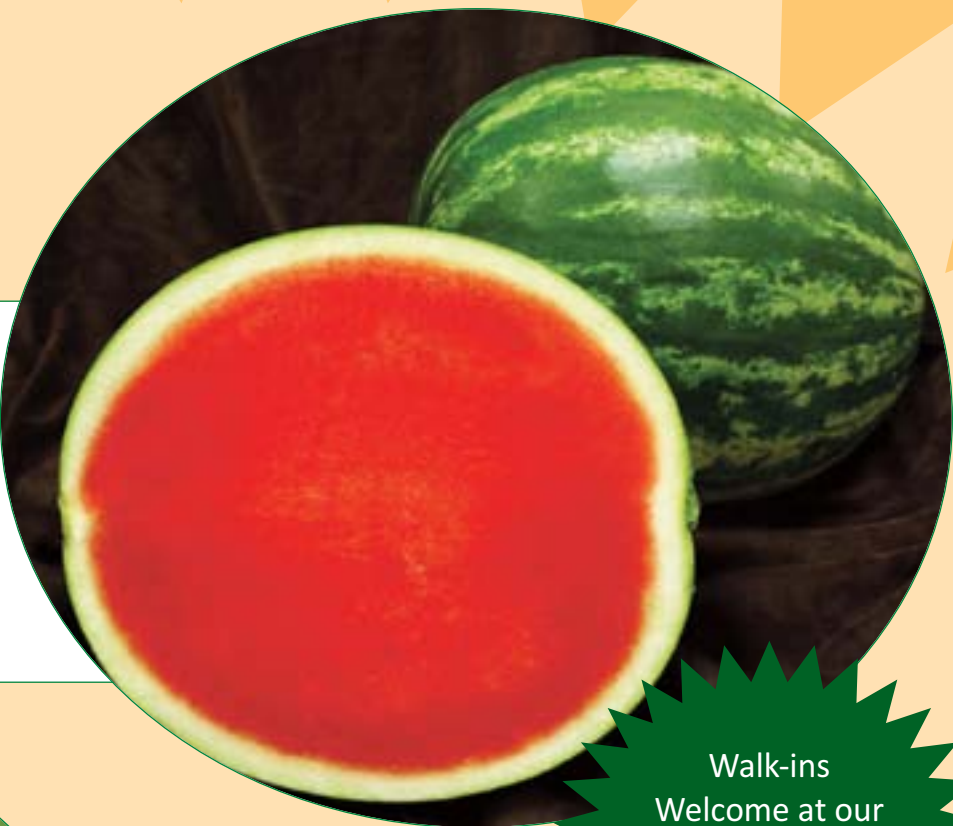


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North Carolina Report

Greetings from North Carolina,

Our spring has been a bit rainy but it hasn't dampened our enthusiasm for promoting watermelon across our state. Queen Allyson Brake has been busy with activities and events in North Carolina and beyond.

Queen Allyson began her rein by participating in the NWPB Queen Media & Image Training held in Orlando, Florida. Allyson enjoyed the opportunity to meet all the other Watermelon Queens from across the southeast. The young ladies had the opportunity to take part in some extensive trainings to help them better promote watermelon in their states. Mock media interviews were conducted by Carmine Gallo during which time he gave all the young ladies tips to improve their presentations. Also during the event queens were treated to an informative session by Jean Marinaro and Brenda Mack on presenting their best image. Later in the weekend everyone was treated to a guided tour of Disney's Epcot International Flower and Garden Festival. The North Carolina Ag Products Dinner was a highlight of our spring. Mr. Joe Jones, Chairman of the Board for the NC Watermelon Association and Queen Allyson attended the event to promote NC watermelon. During the dinner they were able to interact with many members of the NC agriculture community and NC legislators. North Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture, Steve Troxler stressed the importance of the \$72 billion agriculture and agribusiness industry in our state to all in attendance.


Retail partners are a very important part of our watermelon promotions. Queen Allyson participated in a store grand opening for an Ingles Market in Mills River, NC. At the promotion she distributed lots of watermelon samples and information to customers. Allyson also assisted Food Lion in a corporate promotion to help introduce their new "Wounded Warrior" bins for the 2013 growing season in which a portion of their watermelon sales will be donated to the fund.

Tourism is vital to the NC economy just like agriculture. So to help promote both industries the NC Watermelon Association and Queen Allyson participated in North Carolina Tourism Appreciation Day events at two welcome centers. The I-95 and I-85 Welcome Centers are on major north-south corridors. During the events Frances Bunch and Allyson served watermelon samples and had the opportunity to interact with many families crossing into our state.

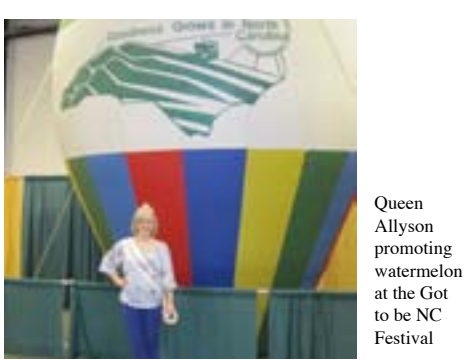
Another highpoint of our spring promotions was Queen Allyson's trip to Greenville, SC to participate in the Aloft Weekend events. South Carolina coordinate Ann Bryant and Queen Katherine Wooditch welcomed all the queens to a fun filled weekend of promoting watermelons. Two television appearances had all the queens on hand to participate with Chef Joe Poon, the National Watermelon Queen Amber Nolin and SC Queen Katherine to promote the healthful qualities of watermelon. Queen Allyson worked with the Mar-Del Queen Chelsey Procino and Georgia Queen Carol Anne Mitchell for a retail promotion in BI-LO. The queen's enjoyed their time with the Shriners learned a lot from their tour of the Shriners Children's Hospital. One of the best parts of the weekend was participating in the Aloft Festival. All of the queens had the opportunity to interact with festival attendees to promote watermelon through sampling and providing recipes. At the conclusion of the festival many of the queens rode in hot air balloons across SC.

Summer is upon us so Queen Allyson will be busy with many Watermelon Festivals and retail promotions. If you are interested in having Allyson attend one of your events please give us a call.

Sharon Rogers
Promotions Coordinator
336-583-9630
ncwatermelonqueen@gmail.com



National Watermelon Promotion Board Queen Media Training – Orlando, FL



Queen Allyson promoting watermelon at the Got to be NC Festival



Queen Allyson enjoying the Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival



Queen Allyson with watermelon producer's, Mike and Melinda Page of Godwin, NC at the Got to be NC Festival



NC Agriculture Products Dinner – Queen Allyson Brake with NC FFA Officers




Queen Allyson with Food Lion's Kenneth Todd, Produce Category Manager and Jimmy Hyde, Buyer with the new "Wounded Warrior" bins.



NC Agriculture Products Dinner – Queen Allyson with Mr. Joe Jones, Chairman NC Watermelon Association and Senator Brent Jackson




Food Lion employees enjoy the watermelon




NC Agriculture Products Dinner – Queen Allyson with NC Commissioner of Agriculture Steve Troxler



All the queens along with Chef Joe Poon enjoyed touring the Michelin Store and having their pictures with the Michelin Man




Queens spent time at the Shriners Children's Hospital in Greenville, SC



Mr. Jim Ray, VP Produce Operations with Ingles Markets with Queen Allyson at the new Mills River store grand opening



Mrs. Frances Bunch and Queen Allyson provide watermelon samples to tourist at Welcome Center tourism day



Queen Allyson and many of the other queens greet Aloft Festival attendees with tasty watermelon samples.



Queen Allyson with the staff of the I-85 Welcome Center



Queen Allyson shows off the watermelon carvings made by Chef Poon



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South Carolina Report

WOW, what a great start to our watermelon season!

The Florida Convention was a huge success in Orlando on March 22-24. The 2013 Queens were able to meet and spend some time together getting to know each other before the busy season started. Congratulations to new Florida Queen, Brandi Harrison.

Next Catherine attended Queen Training in Orlando on April 5-7. Carmine Gallo gave another great training session with the girls. Following Carmine was a very insightful and fun filled few hours with Jean Marinaro and Brenda Mack. Many thanks to the NWPB for another very successful year at queen training.

Former S.C. Queen, Summers Slaton McBride, invited Catherine to Bookman Elementary School in Elgin, S.C., on May 17. Catherine spoke to the children in Summer's class as well as other elementary classes on the health and nutritional value of watermelon. Later, slices of melon were served and everyone was able to get a picture with the queen as well as an autograph. The children all said that they were going to go home and ask their parents to go out and buy a watermelon. What a fun way to promote and sell our product!

The South Carolina Watermelon Association sponsored the Aloft Festival again this year in Simpsonville, S.C. , on May 23-26. Those attending were Eleanor Bullock and Amber Nolan, Nationals; Debra Harrison and Brandi Harrison, Florida; Dawn Collins and Chelsey Procino, MarDel; Carrie Smith and Briston Anderson, Illiana; Sharon Rogers and Allyson Brake, North Carolina; and Samantha Tankersly and Carol Ann Mitchell, Georgia. Others who attended and helped with the weekend were Stephanie Barlow and Juliemar Rosado, NWPB; Sonny Dickinson, Connie Garvey, Michael Garvey, and Katie Eisenhower, SCDA; and Rusty Kinard, SCWA. The weekend began early Friday morning with the queens and Chef Joe Poon making an appearance on WSPA, Your Carolina, with Jack & Kimberly. The afternoon was spent with in-store promotions for Bi-Lo's with the queens and Chef Poon appearing at different locations. Saturday morning began with an early 6:00am appearance on WYFF, News 4 for Chef Poon and the queens. Immediately after this television appearance the group proceeded to Shriners Hospital for Children where they were given a tour and made a short visit before heading to Heritage Park and the Aloft Festival. From 11:00am until 5:00pm, 4 bins of watermelons were sliced and passed out to the public. Many thanks go out to Hami Dicks at Melon 1 for providing the melons for this function.

The hit of the day came when the queens and coordinators climbed into hot air balloons and went for the ride of their life. It is such a spectacular sight to see a hundred or more hot air balloons ascending in the sky all at once. I, along with the SCWA and Catherine, would like to thank everyone who attended and helped us to make this such a successful promotion. It would have been impossible without you and we hope you all will join us again next year.

On June 4th, Catherine appeared on ETV, Making It Grow, in Sumter , S.C. She did a wonderful job of preparing watermelon recipes and talking about our industry. This was excellent experience for all of the media that she has ahead in the next few months.

June, July and August are filling up quickly on our calendar. Queen Catherine is looking forward to a very busy and informative summer. We wish you all a very prosperous season . Now let's get out and sell those melons!!

Until next time,
Ann Bryant
S.C. Promotions Coordinator
abryant028@charter.net
864-303-3995



Catherine enjoying the auction at the Florida Convention.



The crew at WYFF News 4 in Greenville, S.C.



Congratulations Brandi Harrison, new 2013 Florida Watermelon Queen.



Amber and Catherine preparing for their interview with Myra Ruiz.



Carmine Gallo posing with the girls after queen training.



Shriners Hospital for Children in Greenville, S.C.



Learning the appropriate way to handle the media with Carmine.



Coordinators preparing the melons at Aloft Festival.



Catherine and Summers Slaton McBride at Bookman Elementary School in Elgin, S.C.



Queens serving melons to the crowd.



WSPA, Your Carolina, in Greenville, S.C.



Katie, Connie, Rusty and Michael, taking a well deserved lunch break.



Joe Poon and the Queens having fun with the Michelin Man.



Balloons ascending over Heritage Park.



Catherine, Amber, and J-Slice at a Bi-Lo promotion in Simpsonville, S.C.



Catherine preparing recipes on ETV-Making It Grow.



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Texas Report

Summer greetings to all of our watermelon family! Kendall and I have been getting to know one another and have had some wonderful trips so far. We are also getting ready for a couple of exciting new events here in south Texas in late June and early July. But first I will tell you about what has happened so far.

In April, Kendall had queen training with all of the other state queens in the beautiful Disney resort, the Boardwalk Inn. The training began with communications and media training coach, Mr. Carmine Gallo. Mr. Gallo went over the aspects of how the queens are expected to represent themselves and their associations in dealing with the media. He spoke about the importance of being prepared and about the necessity of knowing the key messages of the health benefits, the value, and the versatility of watermelon. He also had each queen practice an on camera interview. The young ladies also had an insightful presentation about appearance and etiquette given by Mrs. Brenda Baker Mack and Mrs. Jean Marinaro on how to make sure they present themselves in the best possible light at all times. The next day the ladies heard a motivational speaker, Mr. Ronald Weber. Mr. Weber talked to them about achieving their goals and not listening to negativity. At the end of the visit to Disney, the queens got to tour the Epcot International Flower and Garden Festival and Disney World. It was a wonderful, memorable time. Thanks to all of those at the NWPB and to the sponsors, Sunny Fresh Farms, Mack Farms, Multicorr, Gibson Farms, Melon 1, Nunhems, and Dexas.

In May, Kendall went on a trip to the Minneapolis Race for the Cure with Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Henderson and their sweet children. Though the weather was chilly, the day was a memorable one. Kendall said, “There were nearly 50,000 people there for the race. Our booth was located in the health expo center outside. It was very hard to miss us with the huge Cub trailer in the back! We handed out pre-cut cups of watermelon supplied by Cub. The crowd absolutely enjoyed the delicious treat, especially to hydrate them before and after the big race! This was a great promotion and it was so wonderful to see everyone there for such a great cause.”

Also in May, Kendall visited a school in Yantis, Texas where one of the teachers, Mrs. Kenda Armstrong, entered and won a contest that was put on by the National Watermelon Promotion Board. The teachers and students enjoyed a seed spit contest, a watermelon eating contest, and a watermelon relay where they pushed the watermelon down a lane with a broom. Of course, the best part for the children was getting to eat a lot of watermelon and seeing Queen Kendall, who won the hearts of the children with her sweet smile and personality.

Finally, we want everyone to know about the first annual Alamo Watermelon Festival here in south Texas on June 29th. Then on July 6th we will have the Texas Cook ‘Em, a barbeque competition where the Texas Watermelon Association will have a tent and an area to hand out watermelon and have various games. People will get to see the talented and entertaining Chef Joe Poon, along with our beautiful Queen Kendall.

Until next time, I wish everyone a wonderful summer.

Fondly,
Barbara Duda TWA Queen Coordinator/Secretary
bcduda62@gmail.com



Kendall is getting ready for her on camera mock interview with Carmine Gallo.



The lovely queens and the NWPB team with Mr. Gallo.



Queen Kendall enjoyed getting to know some of the other state queens, Mar-Del Queen, Chelsey Georgia Queen, Carol Anne, and Alabama Queen, Jordan.



Miss Brenda and Miss Jean look just as beautiful as the queens!



Miss Eleanor got a birthday hug from Stephanie Barlow.



The girls enjoyed the beautiful Flower and Garden Show at Epcot.



Kendall passed out lots of watermelon to the happy Yantis school children.



Yummy!



A relay of push the watermelon with a broom



The kids had a great time trying to do the seed spit contest.



Kendall and another watermelon lover



Queen Kendall, Mrs. Armstrong, and Stephanie Barlow



WE LOVE WATERMELON!



Kendall with Jimmy and Brenda Henderson and their children at the Race for the Cure in Minneapolis



You will always smile around Chef Poon!



Colton Henderson gets a kiss from Queen Kendall and Queen Amber.



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Western Report



The summer is here and watermelon season is back in full-effect. It's the time of year that our beloved picnic treat is in high demand and we, the Western Watermelon Association, are working hard to get this juicy commodity into the hands of watermelon lovers everywhere!

As we dive into July, one of the busiest months of the summer, we also dive into National Watermelon month. According to research and data that was collected, July is one of the largest harvest times for watermelons during our domestic season. Watermelons have become a staple in the Americana culture of the summer months with holidays and celebrations like the Fourth of July putting them in high demand. They have been ingrained in the hearts of Americans as a "summertime must-have" and can usually be found at picnics and other summer events across the United States. We are using this declared month as a key promotional point to get watermelons to our consumers.

In celebration of the hot summer months and watermelon's highest consumption period, the Western Watermelon Association's website is featuring delicious summer recipes which incorporate watermelon as well as fun and exciting watermelon trivia! Not only are watermelons delicious, good for you, and a great American tradition, but they are fun too and we are getting the word out! Plus, the website now has a link which features a slideshow of pictures where you can see our members of the Western Watermelon Association expanding their watermelon industry knowledge.

It's a busy and exciting time of the year and we are ready to enjoy it with a refreshing slice of watermelon. Hoping everyone has a successful and prosperous watermelon season!

For more information on the Western Watermelon Association, please visit our website at www.westernwatermelon.org



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2013 Public Policy Conference in a Crucial Political Time for Us!

The Washington Public Policy Conference (WPPC) hosted by United Fresh Produce Association has never been more important that it appears to be this coming fall. With the Farm Bill, Immigration Reform and FDA Produce Food Safety Rules all in play at the same time, 2013 has become the key period in our political futures for our members, our crop and even the industry.



Congress will be in session this time around, and with the anticipated record attendance from throughout the entire produce industry, this year's events will draw the biggest speakers and opportunities for all attendees and participants.

As my good friend Reggie Griffin (retired VP Produce & Floral – The Kroger Company) has said in the past, ‘Lobbying is not a spectator sport. Every one of us needs to play, and play hard.’ Please consider getting involved with the NWA’s political affairs efforts by joining the Watermelon Team in Washington, D.C. from October 1-3, 2013. There is power in numbers, and your voice does count.

Meet your legislators on Capitol Hill. Hear from federal leaders about policies that can make or break your business, and will have long term effects on the industry. They can only craft laws that make sense for us if we tell them what works, and what does not. This is your opportunity. Embrace it; Take it, and run with it. We will be there to guide you along the path. No Kool-Aid to drink - - - simply a common sense approach toward good agricultural policies. We hope to see you in D.C.

PMA comes to New Orleans

Got your room yet?

As another PMA Fresh Summit approaches, the NWA will again have a modest room block available to our Executive Committee members and some members (based on availability).

However, being in New Orleans, and considering the popularity of the city, our room block is smaller than normal. Once the rooms are gone, they are all gone. And unfortunately, we do not have the possibility of increasing our room block.

Our host hotel this year is the Hyatt Regency New Orleans, located next to the Mercedes Benz Superdome, close to all of the New Orleans action, and on the PMA Fresh Summit bus line. The resort, rebuilt in the years following Hurricane Katrina’s wrath on the property, is a first class hotel, and will also be host to the NWA’s national convention in February 2016. Our group rate is set at \$249 per night.

The NWA committee meetings will run on Wednesday (budget and research) and Thursday (promotion-queen, liaison and executive committee), October 16-17, followed by PMA workshops on Friday and the Fresh Summit trade show on Saturday - Sunday, October 19-20.

Through the first two weeks of August, we will offer the rooms to our Executive Committee. Then in last two weeks of August, we will open up the remaining rooms to our members. We have sent e-blasts announcing the room block to our email database. All rooms will be offered on a first come-first served basis.

Make your plans now for the NWA’s committee meetings, PMA Fresh Summit and the Annual Watermelon Party. New Orleans will be alive with excitement. We hope to see you there.

NWA Issues Membership Certificates

For the first time in recent memory, the National Watermelon Association created and mailed a certificate that recognizes our members for their decision to support their trade association, the NWA.

“We have wanted to pursue this effort for quite some time, and worked with our chapters’ membership roles to create the recognition and issue them based on the roles that we have received from our nine chapters”, says Bob Morrissey - NWA Executive Director. “The NWA serves our members each and every day in key areas of expertise to the benefit of our members (stakeholders), and it is important that we provide them at a minimum with a token of our appreciation that they can display in their offices, if they wish to.”

Now, we move to those members that may not have received a certificate. If you did not receive a membership certificate, and believe that you are a paid member of one of our nine chapters, please contact the NWA office. We will work with our chapters to research your membership, make any corrective actions needed, and issue your certificate soon after. Thank you all for supporting the NWA, Your Association.



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- mindy@nwawatermelon.com

On May 1st, our old email addresses ending in "tampabay.rr.com" will end. All emails will have to come through our new domain, so please update accordingly!

863-619-7575
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Salad Bars in schools providing benefits to Kids and Industry

For the third year in a row, the NWA joined with numerous companies and other associations through United Fresh and donated a salad bar that was installed into a high school in Southern California. Previous salad bars are in use in New Orleans and Dallas.

Some of the feedback from the New Orleans and Dallas school districts indicate that the kids ask for watermelon as one of their top 5 most wanted items on the salad bars.

Each district is able to take advantage of the federal school lunch and Fruit & Vegetable snack programs while

Got Watermelon Archives? We need them.

Those of you that joined the record crowd in San Antonio, Texas last February at the NWA national watermelon convention witnessed the first ever exhibition of our Watermelon Archives. Archives are a living legacy of the past within an organization, and the NWA has so much of that history to share with you.



Once again, and by popular demand, the NWA will display the Archives in Savannah next February when we gather to celebrate the National Watermelon Association’s 100th Birthday in the State where the NWA began in 1914.

There is so much history that we have to share, yet so much that we are missing. Possibly many of you have items put away that we can borrow for the convention week, or copy to make it a part of our living archives?

If you would, please look to see what you have put away, and let us know if you can help us to expand our archives and build on the living legacy that we are assembling to honor the history of your NWA. Thank you for your help.

NWA Website has a Lot to Offer to You



When was the last time that you logged on to the NWA website and took a look around? Wow, there is lot happening in your association.

The site is www.nationalwatermelonassociation.com and is provided for the express purpose of our members to share results, initiatives and insights with you.

In addition to public affairs, food safety, The Vineline magazine and national Queen programs, new opportunities include Industry research, NWPB research, a Photo library, and a store that now sells limited quantities of NWA Centennial tee-shirts and Gallagher final tour tee-shirts.

Log on; Take a look; Visit often to keep updated to today’s events. After all, this is your web site. Use it; take advantage of it.



providing fresh foods like watermelon to their students. In turn, they are helping us to build our consumers of the future from the largest generation that we have ever seen in our nation’s history.

When asked, ‘Got Watermelon?’ the schools respond resoundingly with a huge smile and a determined ‘YES’. Keep it coming. The schools want it; the kids love it!



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