



United Fresh Honors Fresh Produce Champions at WPPC



United Fresh Chairman Reggie Griffin, far left, and President Tom Stenzel, far right, present United's Fresh Produce Advocate of the Year Award to, from left, Brent Harrison and Bob Morrissey of the National Watermelon Association, and Dick Minor and Charles Hall of the Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association.

At the annual Washington Public Policy Conference in October, United Fresh honored two outstanding member organizations for their work in advocating for fresh fruits and vegetables on the national stage.

United Fresh presented the Fresh Produce Advocate of the Year Award to a national trade association and a state trade association as joint winners. They are the National Watermelon Association and the Georgia Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association. "Both the National Watermelon Association and the Georgia Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association are shining examples of how the produce industry can look at the issues in specific regions of the country and see how those issues play out on a national level," said United Fresh President and CEO Tom Stenzel. "Congratulations to the leadership and members of both of these outstanding organizations for their continued dedication to the important issues that affect our industry."

The NWA was recognized for our lobbying efforts for fruits & vegetables in numerous areas of interest including AG policies (Farm Bill, immigration reform and nutrition), support of the national school salad bar program, participation on the Government Relations Council and Food Safety Council, and partnership with United Fresh at the annual Public Policy conference with one of the largest groups each year. "This was a wonderful surprise, and quite unexpected", said Bob Morrissey, NWA Executive Director. "We do what we can and what we need to do in Washington; more than some groups do, but in the end it is our desire to influence Congress and agencies to help us rather than over-regulate us and hurt our efforts to profitably farm, pack, sell and ship. I was very glad to have Brent Harrison, current NWA Chairman, with me to accept the award. I was somewhat over-whelmed by the announcement, and left the comments to him. Thanks, pal."

Tom Stenzel presented the award along with United Fresh Chairman Reggie Griffin at the Washington Public Policy Conference Closing Luncheon Session on Wednesday, October 5th.

WTO ruling may spark a repeal of COOL

Sparkling calls from U.S. retailers to repeal the law, a World Trade Organization dispute panel has ruled that the U.S. country-of-origin labeling law is inconsistent with U.S. trade obligations.



The WTO dispute panel — which did not speak to the law's application to fresh produce — found the U.S. labeling law gives less favorable treatment to Canadian cattle and hogs in comparison with U.S. with domestic livestock and thus violates trade agreements. What's more, the WTO dispute panel said that mandatory country-of-origin labeling does not fulfill its objective of providing consumers with information on origin. The Food Marketing Institute issued a statement by the group's regulatory counsel Erik Lieberman that called for an end to the law.

"The World Trade Organization (WTO) recognized what the supermarket industry has known all along — that COOL is a protectionist law designed to make it more costly and difficult for retailers to sell imported foods," Lieberman said. "COOL has forced the industry to spend tens millions of dollars each year on unnecessary regulatory burdens all for little or no benefit to consumers."

Despite high rates of compliance with the law, Lieberman said that the COOL law has become more of a burden than ever, and makes it challenging for retailers to carry imported produce, meats and seafood. "The COOL law will need to be repealed or rewritten in order for the U.S. to meet its obligations to global trading partners," Lieberman said in the FMI statement. "We look forward to working with Congress and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to develop an alternative system, one that will provide useful information to consumers and put our nation in compliance with international trade agreements."

Country of origin labeling became law as part of the 2008 Farm Bill. Officials at the Newark, Del.-based Produce Marketing Association and the Washington, D.C.-based United Fresh Produce Association could not immediately be reached for comment. Although the panel disagreed with the how the U.S. implemented the law, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative said the WTO dispute panel affirmed the right to require country-of-origin labeling on meat products.

"We remain committed to providing consumers with accurate and relevant information with respect to the origin of meat products that they buy at the retail level," Andrea Mead, press secretary for the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative said in a statement. "In that regard we are considering all options, including appealing the panel's decision."

The USTR said the next step in the process is for the reports to be adopted by the WTO Dispute Settlement Body or appealed to the WTO Appellate Body.

Watermelon Treasury Note Sold for \$175,000

An 1890 \$100 "Watermelon" Treasury Note topped all other lots in Lyn Knight Currency Auctions' PCDA Auction between November 10-15 in Rosemont, Illinois, selling for a hammer price of \$175,000.

The rarity, which last sold at auction as part of the Levitan Collection, was part of Knight's auction of world and U.S. currency in conjunction with the Professional Currency Dealers Association's show at the Crowne Plaza O'Hare.

The price does not include the 15-18 percent buyer's premium.



Final Hours of Service Rule Announced

New work restrictions on commercial truck drivers will be enforced starting July 1 2013. The final rule retains the standard of 11 hours for the maximum workload for truckers in a day. However, the final rule cuts 12 hours from the maximum amount of hours a truck driver can work per week to 70 hours.

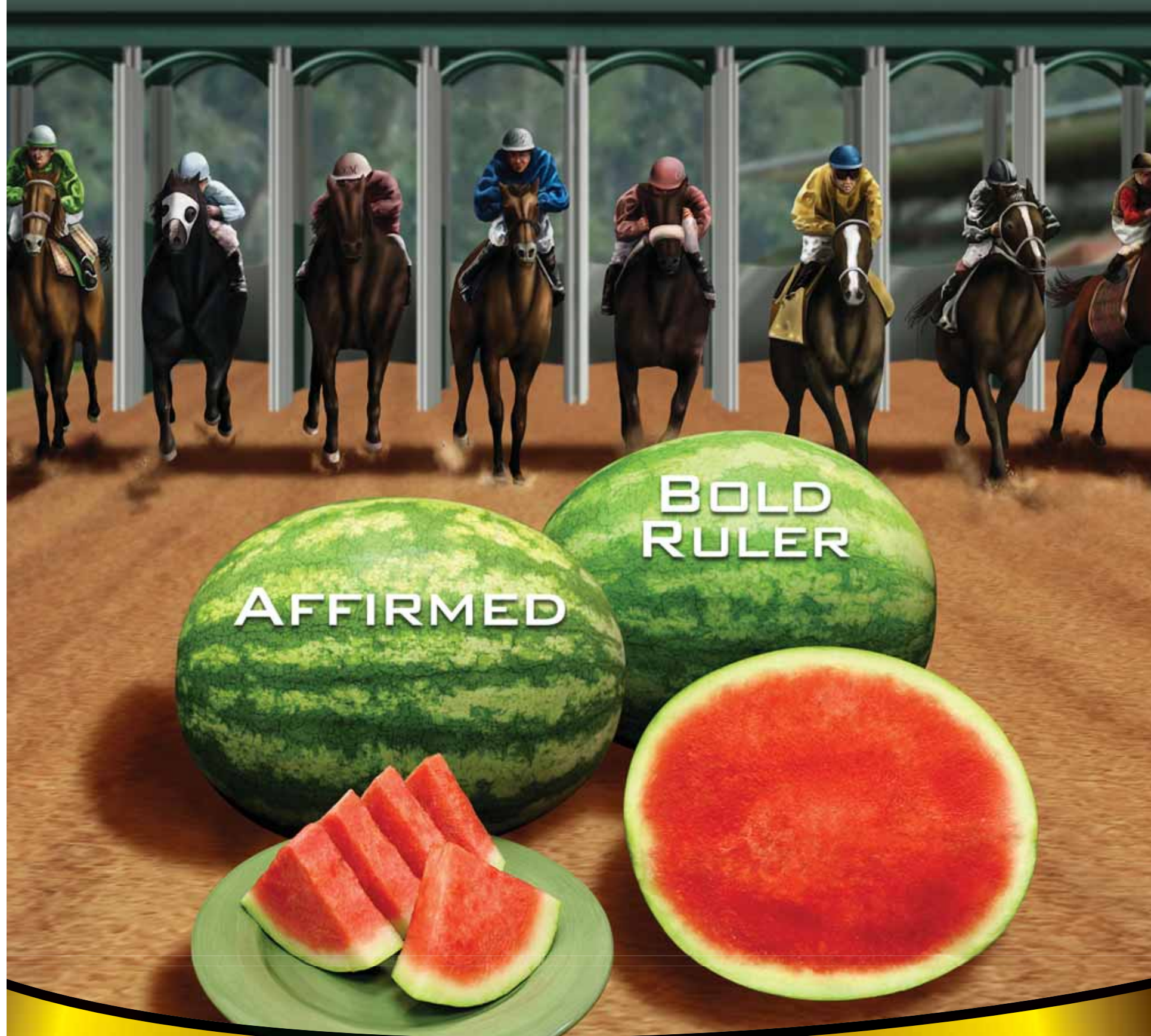
Drivers are required to take a break of at least 30 minutes after driving for 8 hours. The rule said drivers can take the 30-minute break whenever they need rest. The rule also requires drivers who maximize their weekly workload to take at least 2 nights rest from the 1 a.m. to 5 a.m. time period. That rest requirement is part of the rule's 34-hour restart, a provision that allows drivers to use the restart provision only once during the seven-day period.

The rule can be seen at the Department of Transportation web site.

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Florida Farmers Warn of Impending Crisis if Undocumented Workers Taken Away

Florida farmers, worried that lawmakers could strip them of their largely undocumented workforce, are warning of an impending crisis in their fields.

Those growers admit that at least 75 percent of their workers are in the U.S. illegally. Most of those workers buy fake Social Security cards and employers generally issue paychecks and deduct payroll taxes and Social Security taxes which they attribute to those false numbers. In that way employers fulfill their legal obligation. They are not obliged to check if the numbers are legitimate. But a bill now before the U.S. Congress, the Legal Workforce Act, sponsored by U.S. Rep. Lamar Smith, R-Texas, would require all employers to use a federal database called E-Verify to check the legitimacy of those numbers and not hire illegal workers.

Smith said his program would “provide growers who want to do the right thing with a reliable source of legal labor” and would also “protect the livelihoods of American workers and the rights of guest workers.” Agricultural interests nationwide and other business groups have opposed Smith’s bill, and chances of its passage are questionable.

But Florida farmers are still worried. In Alabama, farmers and tourism industry leaders opposed the adoption of E-Verify there, but it still passed a GOP-controlled legislature. Georgia passed statewide E-Verify, despite opposition by farmers. Many undocumented workers have abandoned both those states, causing losses of crops according to growers there.

Similar legislation failed in Florida last year, but state farmers fear that E-Verify will eventually be required in the Sunshine State too. Many fear that what they see as their only alternative, hiring foreigners through a federal guest worker visa program, would carry much higher costs and risks.

Florida Grower, a trade publication, alerted farmers to the legislative dangers and urged them to contact their lawmakers in Tallahassee and Washington. “E-Verify could create massive disruptions in labor supply,” the article says. The publication says there are 1.2 to 1.4 million farm-workers in the United States, with about 75 percent falsely documented. In Florida, there are an estimated 150,000 farm-workers with a similar rate of false documentation, although the rate among purely harvest workers is likely much higher, the article states.

In Georgia, just as in Alabama, it was largely Republican Party lawmakers who went against the interests of farmers, most of whom also traditionally support the GOP. Observers say that illustrates the anger in those states, and across the land, over the number of undocumented immigrants in the country.

“My biggest fear is people are so emotional on this issue and set in their opinion that we are going to have to have significant farm losses before legislators wake up,” said Mike Carlton, labor relations director for Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association.

“We don’t know how the consequences of what’s happening in Georgia and Alabama will impact labor here in Florida. We know farm-workers were avoiding driving through Georgia last year and likely will avoid Alabama. It almost blocks us off.”

When related jobs are added in, such as retail sales and transportation of produce, the state economy lost an estimated \$391 million, the FFVA said. “If approximately 75 percent of your work force disappears, what are you to do?” Florida Grower asked.

The publication said the only option growers have is to turn to the federal agricultural guest worker program,

Georgia Farm Labor Losses Confirmed

Surveys and studies conducted in Georgia have revealed farm labor shortages and negative economic impacts since the passage of a tough immigration law in the state.

Though none of the findings mention the law specifically, many farmers have complained that House Bill 87 has frightened away immigrant workers, resulting in some crops rotting in the field.

Georgia’s Republican-controlled General Assembly passed the law in the spring of 2011. Among other things, it empowers police to investigate the immigration status of certain suspects and sets new hiring requirements for certain employers, requiring many to start using the federal program called E-Verify to confirm that their newly hired employees are eligible to work in the United States.

In addition, the law penalizes people who transport or harbor illegal immigrants. Other states, including Alabama and Arizona, have passed similar laws.

Shortly after the legislation was signed into law by Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal, a survey conducted by Georgia Farm Bureau showed that farmers had 11,080 jobs open and waiting to be filled.

Another survey conducted this past summer by the Georgia Agribusiness Council (GAC) revealed that 46 percent of those responding were, at the time, experiencing a labor shortage. More than 130 employers from 61 counties across the state participated in the survey, representing different sectors of the agricultural industry, including crop, livestock, greenhouse, landscape and many AG input suppliers.

Of those who had jobs needing to be filled, 24 percent said that fewer workers were applying for the available jobs than in past years, 8.7 percent said that local law enforcement has increased enforcement action towards immigrants, 30.4 percent said the physical demand of the jobs were too difficult for those who seem interested, and 37 percent said that immigrants were concerned with Georgia’s new immigration reform law. Farmers and representatives of farm groups in Georgia have been especially critical of the provision in the law that requires many of them to use the federal E-Verify program. Legislation is pending in Congress to mandate E-Verify nationwide.

At the same time, farmers say the federal guest-worker programs that are designed to help them temporarily employ foreign workers are cumbersome and costly. “Georgia is the poster child for what can happen when mandatory E-Verify and enforcement legislation is passed without an adequate guest-worker program,” says Charles Hall, executive director of the Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association. Hall says that while most of the “mandatory E-Verify” legislation is promoted as a jobs creation bill, that’s not necessarily the case with agriculture.

known as the H-2A program, which allows the legal importation of temporary farm labor.

But Florida farmers say that program has many problems. The legal guest workers are more expensive than undocumented migrant workers because the federal government insisted they be guaranteed \$9.50 per hour, far above the state minimum wage of \$7.31. Their transportation must be paid to and from their native country every year and the grower must supply housing.

Carlton said commodities prices are set by what buyers are willing to pay, not by growers, so the difference in cost would likely come out of farmers’ pockets and not be passed on to consumers.



Outbreak dings all melon sales

The listeria outbreak that is linked to Colorado cantaloupe in September had a devastating effect on the entire U.S. melon category in October, statistics from the Perishables Group reveal.

“It certainly appears that a fair number of consumers reacted to the recall not just by avoiding cantaloupe but by reducing the purchases of all melons,” Steve Lutz, executive vice president of West Dundee, Ill.-based Perishables Group said in an e-mail.

Cantaloupes were the hardest hit of all melon categories measured in October, but all shared in the pain, retail data reveal. For the four weeks ending Oct. 29, the Perishables Group reported retail sales and retail volume of cantaloupe were off 53%.

The entire melon category showed a volume decline of 31% and a sales decline of 33% for the four-week period. Specialty melon volume was off 33%, honeydew volume was off 15% and watermelon volume was down 17% in October.

This news serves as verification of what we learned in late September from the Rose Research study that was commissioned by the NWPB. That is, when there is a cantaloupe outbreak, watermelon sales suffer also. The Food and Drug Administration, busy finalizing the produce food safety rule, is aware of this consumer reaction to outbreaks from recent meetings and communications with the National Watermelon Association. When FDA releases the new rule in early 2012 we will see what changes (if any) are included in the rule that may alter these situations from occurring again in the future.

“Field harvest work is skilled labor,” says Hall. “Anyone that has tried to pick blueberries, or cucumbers, or watermelons knows you have to have to have experience, plus be in top physical condition. These jobs are in the hot sun, high temperatures — 98 to 100 degrees, eight to 10 hours a day, and require lifting, bending and stooping. It is not something that the average citizen can do. For agriculture, E-Verify is not a job creating bill — it is job loss legislation.”

Hall’s organization, along with other major producer groups in Georgia, commissioned the University of Georgia’s Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development to analyze production data from the state’s spring and summer harvest.

Results of the study — released in October — show that farmers lost at least \$74.9 million in unpicked crops harvested by hand this past spring and summer because they

GEORGIA continued on page 17

Vegetable growers in Florida say another big problem is that importing workers involves considerable paperwork, and glitches with those documents often cause delays in workers arriving.

The H-2A program requires that workers only work for one employer and then go home. Unless vegetable growers in different areas can be allowed to share those workers and divide the costs, the workers will be too expensive.

Will Florida be the next Arizona, Utah, South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama? If farmers’ fears come true, which state will be next up? And the ultimate question is this - - When will Washington ‘finally’ do their jobs, put aside their partisanship and podium-pounding press



conferences, and create a viable guest worker program that will help the U.S. to maintain its status as the salad bowl and fruit bowl for the world?

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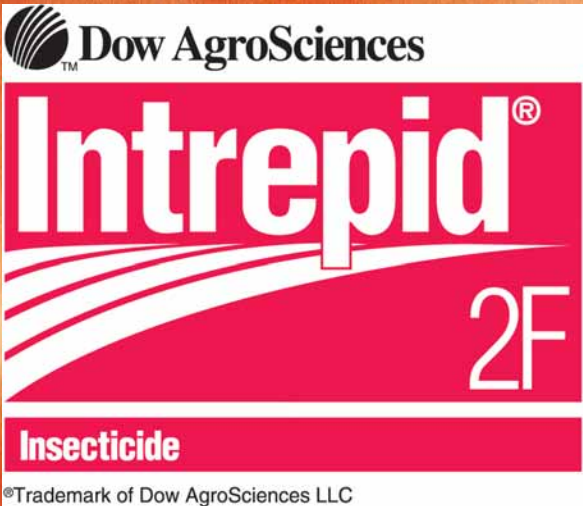
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Experts say Border is Impossible to Secure

GOP presidential candidates Mitt Romney and Newt Gingrich want a nearly 1,950-mile fence, while Michele Bachmann wants a double fence. Ron Paul has taken a by any means necessary approach to border security, and Texas Gov. Rick Perry says he can secure it without a fence and do so within a year of taking office as president.

But a border that is sealed off to all undocumented immigrants and drugs flowing north is a promise none of them could keep. “Securing the border is a wonderful slogan, but that’s pretty much all it is,” said Ted Galen Carpenter, a senior fellow at the libertarian Cato Institute. “Even to come close would require measures that would make legal commerce with Mexico impossible. That’s an enormous price for what would still be a very leaky system.” Perry, the longest-serving governor of a state that makes up roughly 65 percent of America’s border with Mexico, already knows that. What he’s actually pledging is achieving “operational control” of the border, defined by the U.S. Border Patrol as areas where it can detect, respond to and interdict illegal activity either at the border or after entry into the U.S.

The U.S. Border Patrol says 873 miles of the border, about 44 percent, have been brought under operational control. Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano has said that “the border is better now than it ever has been.”

Still, that means full control isn’t even half met. And even getting this far required bolstering the ranks of the Border Patrol to the highest levels ever, from about 9,500 along the border in 2004 to 18,152 today. Immigration and Customs Enforcement also has a record number of agents on the border, and five Predator drones now patrol strategic parts of it, with a sixth coming by the end of the year. About 650 miles of fencing has been constructed, and 1,200 National Guard soldiers dispatched last year to Texas, California, Arizona and New Mexico have had their deployment extended through the end of the year. Gingrich signed a pledge to build a fence stretching the length of the border by the end of 2013. That may help him recover from a statement that undocumented immigrants who have been established in the U.S. for many years should be allowed to remain in the country, a position his opponents have likened to amnesty.

Perry has opposed the fence, saying it would take 10 to 15 years to build, cost \$30 billion and wouldn’t work anyway. Instead, he wants to flood the border with more National Guard troops until the number of Border Patrol agents necessary to really secure the area are trained and deployed. He also wants to build strategic fencing in high-traffic areas and make better use of airborne surveillance. Perry claims that would mean full operational control by January 2014.

Romney, meanwhile, has publicly agreed with Perry that tackling larger immigration policy reform is impossible without first securing the border.

The Pew Hispanic Center says the number of undocumented immigrants in the United States peaked at 12 million in 2007, but then dropped by almost 1 million through 2009, and has largely held steady since then at about 11.1 million. Border Patrol apprehensions of undocumented immigrants have also fallen sharply. In fiscal year 2011 the Border Patrol captured 327,577 undocumented immigrants on the southwestern border, the lowest total in four decades.

The poor U.S. economy makes would-be undocumented immigrants less likely to come, and those who do must contend with Mexico’s drug war. The trip is now so risky that the number of undocumented immigrants using pricey people smugglers has spiked. It’s a lot harder physically to get across the border, and it’s also more expensive and more dangerous. And if they do get here they are faced with the prospect of having no job when they arrive.

Farmers skeptical as leaders pitch labor alternatives

The winter has brought a temporary lull in the farm labor shortage caused by Alabama’s tough immigration law, but the clock is ticking fast.

John McMillan, the commissioner of the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries presided over a conference designed to help farmers find workers for their fields. “I feel like I’m running the eHarmony show or something,” quipped McMillan, referring to the popular online dating service. McMillan said he chose to hold the event at the Jon Archer Agricultural Center in Mobile because as early as January, the nursery industry in Mobile and Baldwin counties will be looking for laborers as the sector’s growing season begins.

“Our success or lack of success here is going to determine whether we do this same thing later in other parts of the state,” he said. Farmers have voiced among the loudest complaints since the state’s immigration law took effect in October. Many growers have said that the law has scared away even legal immigrants who used to perform the manual labor in their fields.

This conference offered few new ideas, but leaders in several realms used the forum to push ideas that could expand the supply of workers available to the agriculture industry. Those include the use of current and former prisoners; foreign workers on temporary visas and the unemployed. A local minister even pledged to help organize churches in the black community to match out-of-work parishioners with agricultural businesses. “If we’re going to replace that labor force in Alabama, we have got to figure out a way to do it,” McMillan said. “I think the people we have up here are the best options.”

Several farmers expressed skepticism, however, that any of the initiatives would be sufficient. Jamie Holland, who owns a nursery in Lucedale, Mississippi, said political leaders seem to not appreciate the disconnect between a job and work. He said Americans are ill-suited to the type of work that migrant workers perform. Farmers need a reliable workforce, he said, not a constant

churn of workers who stick around only a few days. “We’re looking for a sustainable workforce,” he said. “The work ethic in the United States is the problem.” Holland is not affected by Alabama’s immigration law, but he attended the forum because he is worried the Mississippi Legislature might copy Alabama’s law. Holland said he uses a temporary work visa program to hire seasonal migrant workers. But he said the process is onerous and costly -- \$500 to \$700 per man each season, not including what he pays in wages and housing costs for the laborers. And he said he doubts the pool of available workers though the program is large enough to meet the needs of farmers in Alabama or Mississippi. Phillip Barnhill, who also owns a nursery in Lucedale, said American workers want jobs that are permanent and offer opportunities for promotion. Farm jobs tend to be seasonal and limited, he said. “There isn’t going to be any chance for any kind of advancement,” he said. Those drawbacks have not stopped Alabama officials from trying to fill the gap, however.

Bob Brantley, Alabama’s employment services director, said his agency has collected résumés since October from some 500 people who have expressed interest in temporary agricultural work. He said those résumés are on the agency’s website, www.joblink.alabama.gov, along with about 800 people who have expressed interest in agriculture work of any kind.

“It’s been a great while since we’ve reached out to the agricultural community,” he said. “We want to hear from you.” Jeff Williams, the deputy commissioner of the Alabama Department of Corrections, told several dozen people that the state has 2,600 inmates participating in work-release programs. He acknowledged, though, that few of them traditionally have been in agriculture.

The U.S attorney for the Southern District of Alabama, Kenyen Brown, used Tuesday as an opportunity to tout a program he launched this year to encourage employers to hire ex-cons. Brown said people coming out of prison, which is about 97 percent of the inmates who are incarcerated, need housing, drug treatment and jobs. Brown said if farmers and other employers give ex-cons a chance, they can help themselves and society at the same time. The vast majority of former prisoners who maintain steady jobs turn away from crime, he said. While Alabama’s immigration law has gained the most attention, changes in federal law will impact the agri-

***SKEPTICAL** continued on page 17*

Supreme Court to consider Arizona immigration law

The U.S. Supreme Court will hear a challenge to Arizona’s controversial immigration law, setting up another high-profile decision for the court’s coming term.

Arizona asked the court to allow the state to enforce legislation that has been blocked after being challenged by the Obama administration, including provisions that would enable police officers to question a person’s immigration status if they suspect they are in the country illegally. The law would also make it a crime to not carry proof of legal immigration status, make it against state law for an illegal immigrant to seek employment, and allow police to detain those suspected of being illegal immigrants without a warrant. The 9th Circuit Court

of Appeals blocked each of those provisions in April.

The Justice Department has contended that regulating immigration is a federal responsibility, and has fought the Arizona law and similar variations in Alabama, South Carolina, and Utah. Arizona has argued that the federal government hasn’t done enough to prevent illegal immigration, and that border states are experiencing higher crime and economic consequences.

“The decision to suspend portions of the immigration law has caused irreparable harm to the safety and well-being of Arizona’s citizens who continue to suffer every day that the federal government refuses to do its job,” Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer said in a statement earlier this year.

The decision by the court will be the second high-profile case expected to be decided in the heat of the 2012 presidential campaign. The court is also primed to consider the constitutional challenge to the individual mandate in President Obama’s healthcare reform act.

Juárez. U.S. intelligence officials know of no case in which a terrorist has sneaked across the border to plot actively against the U.S.

If the Presidential candidates don’t take a strong position on border security, then they leave themselves open to allegations that they’re soft on immigration or drugs. It is difficult to conceptualize a fully secure border since the Arizona desert presents different challenges than the millions of commercial trucks rumbling north into the border stations where pedestrians stream from Mexico into the U.S. every day.

Tracking would-be terrorists also has little to do with stopping migrant workers sneaking into the U.S., or coping with well-armed drug smugglers.

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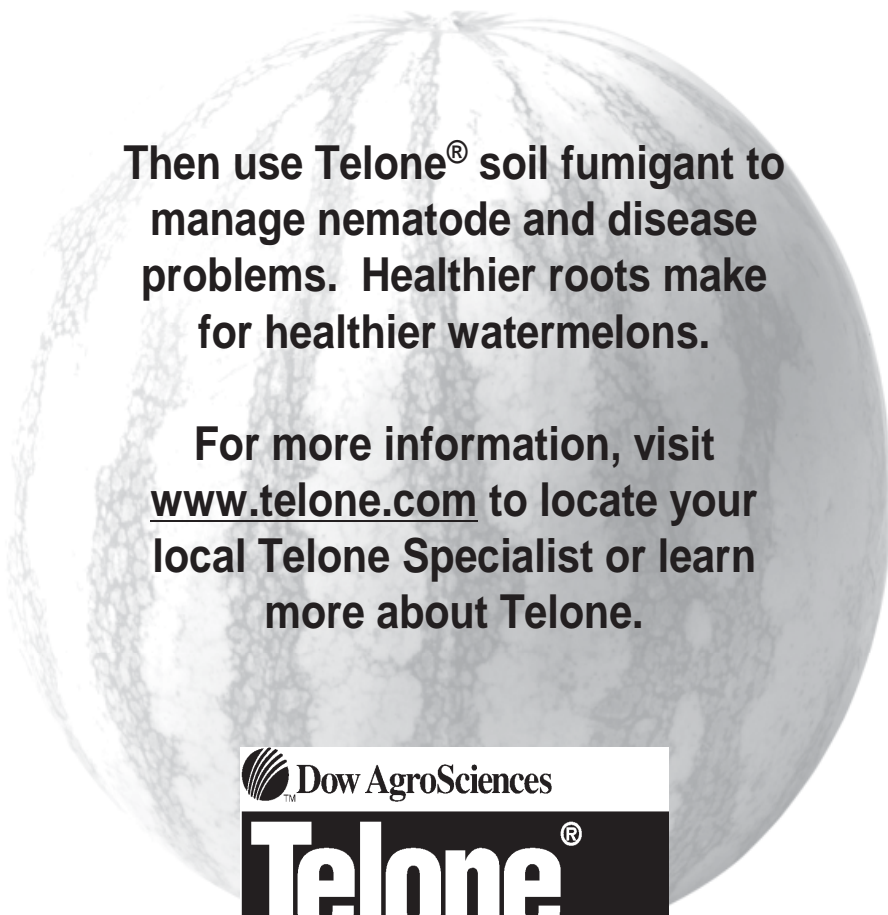
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National Report

Special thanks for all your prayers and concerns. I am doing very well! I really appreciate your cards, flowers, visits and calls! You are the best! I will be including the Japan photos that were omitted from the last printing in this winter edition. Space is tight.

NWPB Sponsors Calgary Alberta Canada Wal-Mart Stores

We were accompanied by Retail Rep Brad Brownsey, for Wal-Mart promotions were during Calgary's annual Stampede event. It was an awesome promotion, in two stores a day. The Canadians loved Whitney's Southern charm, her smiles, assistance and her delicious samples of watermelon. Thanks Brad for your gracious hospitality! Whitney and I took a short trip, to the Canadian Rockies, and what a beautiful sight it was! The most beautiful scenery ever! Special thanks to NWPB for all you do!

Illiana Sponsor Indy Race Events

Great to be back in Indianapolis for race week, we thank IWA for your sponsorship and for the great promotions. Whitney and I did in store promotions in area Kroger stores. We were joined by my 2009 National Queen, Maggie Bailey at the first store. Great! Friday evening WATERMELON ruled at the racetrack. Media, Watermelon Queens and Driver Ross Chastain with his watermelon sponsored truck, Melon 1, and NWPB! Ross placed in the top 10 at his first Nascar event! Congratulations Ross! The Nationwide Kroger event was a huge success on Saturday. Busy, busy and hot, they really turned out for this awesome promotion! IWA Thanks so much for sponsoring us!

Mar-Del Watermelon Association Sponsors

Whitney was thrilled to be in the Maryland and Delaware area with Dawn and Jordan, and they were very busy promoting those Mar Delicious watermelons! They took the word and melons to grocery stores, the beach, Baltimore, the Laurel Auction Block, with so much media coverage! Crabs at the Old Mill with the members, an awesome promotion! Thank you Dawn for filling in for me...I missed all of you!

Sun Fresh Farms, Jackson Farming, Nature's Choice, and Six L's Sponsor Carytown Festival

Thanks to Mr. James Carlton, Brent Jackson, Doug Dickerson, and Doug Miller for helping sponsor the Carytown Festival in Richmond this year. The Kroger sponsored event was another huge success, with over 100,000 people attending! Thanks to Whitney, Dawn and Jordan for doing a great job! Thanks to Rodney Brooks and his team for your hospitality!

Frontera Produce Sponsors King Sooper in Denver

Thanks to Claudie Berry of Frontera Produce, Edinburg, TX for sponsoring us to King Sooper and to Jeff Burns, with King Sooper for your hospitality and for welcoming Whitney to the Grand Opening at King Sooper! It was an awesome promotion! The store was so nice and the staff so helpful, Whitney was a real hit at King Sooper!

NWPB Sponsors Safeway Grand Opening in Vancouver, Washington

NWPB sponsor Safeway Grand opening in the beautiful Pacific Northwest. We enjoyed the promotion arranged by Katie Manetti retail rep for NWBP. The Safeway customers could not have been more receptive to our Queen, as they enjoyed their samples, recipes, stickers and chats, and tips, on how to pick a great melon from Our Queen. Whitney enjoyed Safeway and this beautiful area! Thanks NWPB!

Leger & Son and Melon 1 Sponsor Dirty Dancing Festival

Whitney and several of the State Queens joined Bob and Betsy Morrissey in Lake Lure, NC for their annual Dirty Dancing Festival. Lake Lure is where the movie Dirty Dancing was filmed. Among some of the events of the weekend were seed spit competition, watermelon carrying contest, dance contest, and plenty of delicious watermelon samples! NWA was a sponsor for some of the events. The movie, Dirty Dancing was shown to everyone on Friday night. A good time was had by all! The girls enjoyed a boat ride around beautiful Lake Lure! Thanks to Greg Leger and John Lapide!

Whitney attends Washington United Public Policy Conference

Whitney and all of our State Queens attended the United Fresh Policy Conference in Washington, DC. NWA was well represented, not only our Executive Director Bob Morrissey, NWA Chairman Brent Harrison, but NWA President, Jim Schmidt attended as well. Several other members were also in attendance this year. NWA was the recipient of the National Produce Industry Advocate of the year, along with Georgia Fruit and Vegetable. Congratulations! The annual event would not have been complete without the Capital Hill visits. The girls enjoyed the opportunity to be together, learn about the issues facing our industry, and talk to their Congressman and Senators on the subject. Thanks to Kathie Stafford for filling in for me!

NWPB Sponsors to Children's Healthcare of Atlanta

Whitney, Stephanie Simek, and Juliemar Rosado, aka J. Slice visited the Children's Hospital of Atlanta. It was an awesome day, just prior to PMA in Atlanta. Thanks Stephanie and Juliemar for including Whitney. The Children loved her and J Slice!

Until Next Time

Eleanor T Bullock

1606 Pine Acres Drive

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

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National Pictures

Whitney and
NWPB's Gordon
Hunt at the Seiyu
Store in Tokyo,
Japan



The Kids loved Whitney in Tokyo



US Embassy's Ambassador John Roo's wife Susan at their residence in Tokyo for the July 4, event



With Brad
Brownsey in
Calgary Canada



These kids at Walmart in Calgary love Whitney!



The Calgary Stampede!



Maggie Bailey 2009 National
Queen visits
Whitney in Indy



Now Nascar driver (truck) Ross Chastain also serves up Watermelon in Indy



IWA President
Carrie Smith
and Whitney
work hard at
the track



Jordan and Whitney at the Laurel Auction Block in Laurel, DE



Whitney and Jordan with MD Sec of Ag, Earl (Buddy) Hance and Deputy Sec Mary Ellen Setting at the Whole Food in Annapolis, MD



Whitney promoting the Mar Delicious Watermelon in Baltimore



Kroger's Rod Brooks
welcomes Jordan
and Whitney to the
Kroger booth at the
Carytown Festival



Whitney enjoyed the Garden of the Gods in Colorado Springs, CO



King Sooper
shoppers in
Denver!



King Sooper did a great job and so did Whitney!



Welcomed to
Safeway in
Vancouver, WA



Helping customers at Safeway



Beautiful Multnomah
in Oregon



NWA's Bob
Morrissey with
Whitney and
Jenna in Lake
Lure, NC



The girls are treated to a tour of Lake Lure



In Washington,
DC for the United
Fresh Public
Policy Conference



NWA President
Jim Schmidt
with Whitney
in DC



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Alabama Report

Happy New Year!

As we begin 2012, it is time to take a final look back at 2011. What a great year for Queen Anne-Marie as she represented the Alabama Watermelon Association with warmth, beauty, grace and that lovely smile!

The last few months of 2011 were full of fun for Queen Anne-Marie. In early October she attended the Washington DC Public Policy Conference. This is the produce industry’s most powerful public policy event. Queen Anne-Marie, along with former AWA and National Queen, Candice Hales took over DC! They met: Alabama Senator Richard Selby; Alabama Representatives Joe Bonner, Spencer Bachus and Martha Roby; Kentucky Senator and minority leader Mitch McConnell; and Senator John McCain! They also toured the Capitol and the White House. Later in the month, she attended the PMA (Produce Marketing Association) Fresh Summit International Convention & Exposition in Atlanta, GA. This was the last time all the queens were together. Queen Anne Marie was amazed at how large the PMA was! She passed out watermelon popsicles and salsa at the NWPB booth with Queen Whitney.

The final months of 2011 were a time of change and transition for the Alabama Watermelon Association, and for Queen Anne-Marie. The AWA Promotions Coordinator, Ali Rauch, decided to resign her position. In her absence, the Board of Directors asked for help from members of the Promotions Committee. And, as is always the case with the AWA, they came out in full force to help Queen Anne-Marie finish her reign. Mrs. Brenda Baker-Mack, Mrs. Jean Marinaro and Mrs. Bobbie Jo Garrett were appointed as interim Promotions Coordinators, with Mrs. Brenda chairing. Queen Anne-Marie had a lot of support as the year ended and she began to prepare for the upcoming state and national conventions.

Queen Anne-Marie enjoyed a happy and fun filled holiday with her family and friends. She hopes that each of you had a very happy holiday, too.

Going forward into this new year, the AWA is making preparations for their 32nd Annual Convention. The convention will be held February 10-11 at the Beau Rivage Resort and Casino in Biloxi, Mississippi. Our 2012 theme is “The Heart’s the Best”. Please plan to join us for a fun-filled weekend. You can go to our website to find all the information and forms you will need in order to attend.

Thank you to all of our members and supporters.

www.alwatermelon.org

Alabama Watermelon Association



Queen Anne-Marie in Washington, DC



Queen Anne-Marie with our friends at Abbott & Cobb



Queen Anne-Marie and Senator Richard Shelby (Alabama)



Queen Anne-Marie working at the NWPB booth



Queen Anne-Marie and Congressman Jo Bonner (Alabama)



Queen Anne-Marie with J. Slice, NWPB mascot



Queen Anne-Marie and Jim Schmidt, NWA president



Queen Anne-Marie with Jay Jones, Sakata Seeds



Queen Anne-Marie and Senator John McCain (Arizona)



Queen Anne-Marie with Brenda Baker-Mack and Arnold Mack, Mack Farms



Queen Anne-Marie and Senator Mitch McConnell (Kentucky)



Queen Anne-Marie with our friends at Temple-Inland



Queen Anne-Marie and Congressman Martha Roby (Alabama)





Queen Anne-Marie with Jim Mastropietro, International Paper



Queen Anne-Marie and Congressman Spencer Bachus (Alabama)




Queen Anne-Marie with Cheryl Hicks, AWA president



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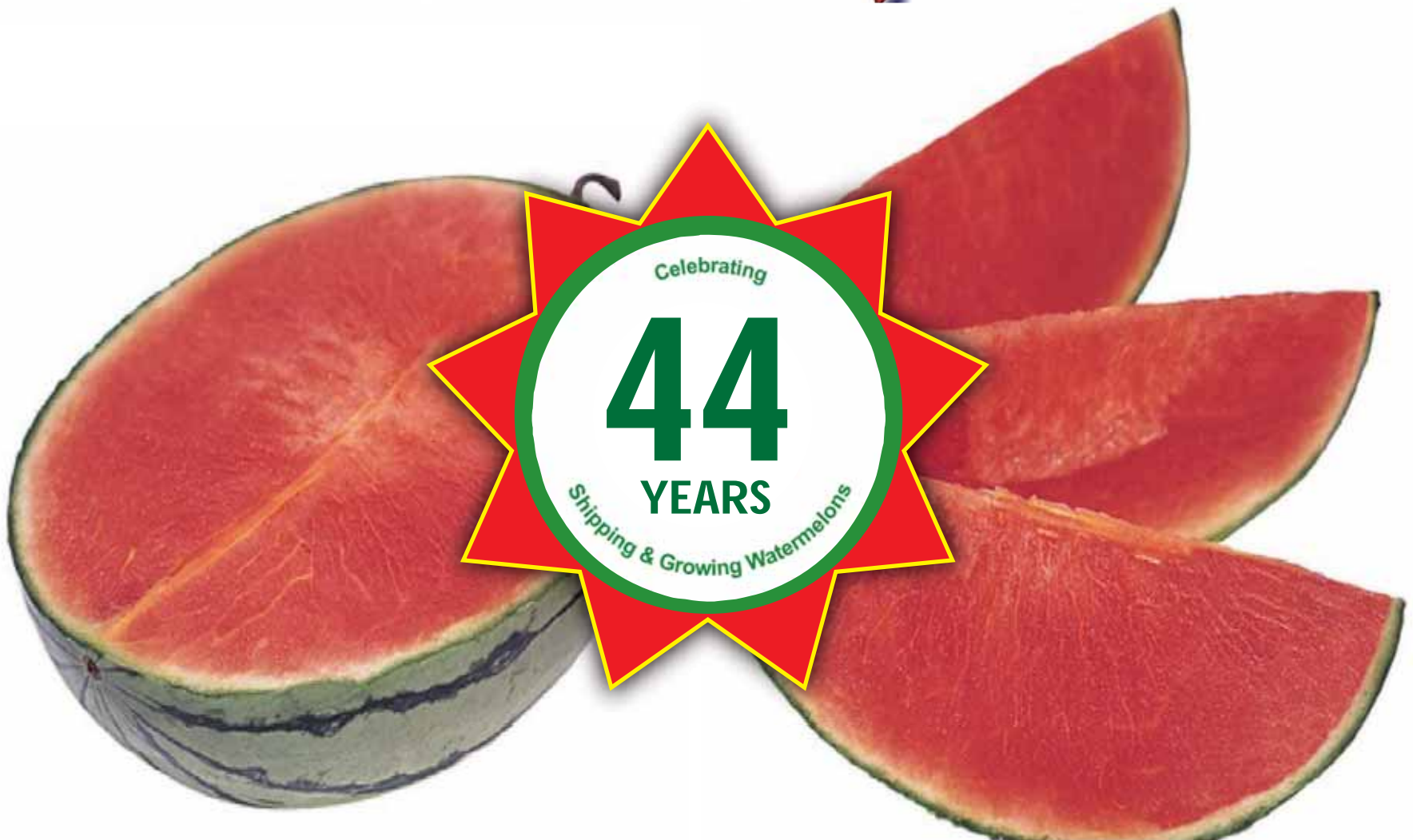




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Florida Report

Watermelon Greetings from the Sunshine State!

Hope everyone had a safe and wonderful holiday season.

Since the last issue, Katelyn and I have been from West Palm Beach, Florida to Washington DC to Atlanta, Georgia to Homestead, Florida promoting Florida watermelons!

In August we traveled to West Palm Beach for a two- day event along with J-Slice (Juliemar Rosado) and Stephanie Simek with NWPB passing out watermelon slices for their annual World Kids Festival. Thanks to Sol Group for donating the bins of watermelons.

Then we headed to North Carolina in September for the Dirty Dancing Festival in Lake Lure, North Carolina. Thanks to everyone that was so kind for helping Katelyn and I that weekend. We would also like to thank our sponsors Paul Sawyer, Global Produce, Hanshaw Farms, and Wolf Island.

In October, we traveled to Washington DC for the Washington Public Policy Conference. A two day event of traveling throughout the Capitol Hill lobbying agriculture bills such as Food Safety, Ag Workforce and Child Nutrition. Queen Katelyn enjoyed visiting with House of Representative Dennis Ross. Thanks Chandler for taking us to tour the Library of Congress in Washington. Everyone needs to visit and see the beautiful walls in the Library of Congress.

In the middle of October, we headed out to Atlanta for the PMA Fresh Summit Convention. What an amazing trip Queen Katelyn and I had! To be able to see all of our friends with Florida Dept of Agriculture was a treat along with Chef Justin and our watermelon friends and family. Katelyn enjoyed seeing and sampling some of the fresh fruits and vegetables from around the world. Thanks to Patty Swilley and Brenda Mack for giving us a helping hand at our FWA booth.

October ended with a promotion held in Orlando with the Children Safety Village Trunk or Treat. Children from around the area came out and enjoyed slices of watermelon and candy handed out by Queen Katelyn and J-Slice.

In November FWQ Katelyn, NWQ Whitney, and I headed to the 2011 Ford 200 NASCAR Truck Race held in Homestead, Florida to watch and cheer on Ross Chastain as he drove the #93 Truck. A little bit of spin into the race made our hearts stop, but we were very proud of Ross and can't wait till next year to watch him race again. The race was shortened due to the rain storm .Thanks to Melon 1, John and Richie for sponsoring us for this awesome event.

A cold Thanksgiving Morning, Queen Katelyn and I were with the Florida Dept. of Agriculture for their 36th Annual Tallahassee Turkey Trot Run. Over 5,000 runners came out for this event where the proceeds go toward GWTC, The Refuge House, the Shelter and the Boys and Girls Club.

The month of December ended with a promotion with the Suwannee Valley Watermelon Institute Dinner held in Branford, Florida where watermelon farmers learned about watermelon food safety – protect your farm, watermelon weed management and Managing Foliar & Soil-Borne Disease. Queen Katelyn spoke to the watermelon growers to use these resources to their fullest potential.

This year Queen Katelyn has traveled all over the world promoting Florida watermelons. We have been blessed through our wonderful sponsors to travel not only in the state of Florida but all the way to Canada promoting watermelons. Queen Katelyn has done over 150 plus promotions throughout her reign and has represented our association with great pride, dignity, and dedication, always willing to go and promote that watermelon product. I am personally proud of Katelyn this year for all that she has done for the watermelon association and also managing to take 21 hours of credits this fall with the University of Florida where she will be graduating in May 2012. FWA wishes you the best of luck as you compete in February 2012 for the national title being held in our home state of Amelia Island, Florida. We are very proud of what you have done for FWA this year.

Mark your calendar for the 44nd Annual Florida Watermelon Convention, March 23-25, 2012 at The Renaissance International Plaza in Tampa, Florida. Check out the details on the Florida Watermelon Association's website at www.flfwa.com. Hope to see you there!

Debra Harrison
Florida Watermelon Promotions Coordinator
Email: debral@flfwa.com
Home Phone: 863-494-1163
Cell Phone 863-633-8306



NCQ Alicia, Queen Katelyn, Bob Morrissey, MDQ Jordan, and SCQ Holly enjoying the beautiful scene on Lake Lure in North Carolina



Always good to see & visit Paul Sawyer of Seigers Seeds.



Thanks Katelyn for all the great memories and fun times "Good luck at Nationals!"



Queen Katelyn and J-Slice.



One of Queen Katelyn favorite people are "The Kennedy's".



FWQ Katelyn handed out stickers at the Children's Safety Village Trunk or Treat.



"Look here's Florida!"



Queen Katelyn with Driver #93 Ross Chastain at the NASCAR Truck Ford 200 Race.



FWQ Katelyn at the Arlington National Cemetery.



Thanks "Melon 1"Ralph, Richie and John!



Our Florida team visiting with Karen Williams at Representative Steve Southerland's office.



5, 000 Runners plus getting ready for the Turkey Trot Run on Thanksgiving morning.



What a pleasure it was to visit with House of Representative Dennis Ross in Washington DC.



Queen Katelyn with the Florida Dept. of Agriculture team.



Queen Katelyn and Richard Wojciak at PMA in Atlanta.



"Glamalicious" Event in Branford, Florida.



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Watermelon Retail Display Contest Winners Announced

After a record-breaking year of submissions, NWA and NWPB announce the Grand Prize winner from...

Celebrate the summer with the sweet taste of watermelon – and a fun display! That is what we encouraged retailers and commissaries in the United States and Canada to do during National Watermelon Month in July. And they did not disappoint, delivering everything from creativity to bins of watermelons as far as the eye can see.

2011 in particular was a great year for this building contest, with the addition of The Kroger Company and Giant Eagle grocery chains participating for the first time.



1st-Place-Shaw-afb-Shaw-afb-SC

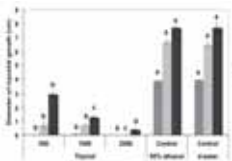


1st-Place-NAS-Jacksonville-Jacksonville-FL

Management of Gummy Stem Blight using Thymol, a Natural Antimicrobial Compound.

Principal Investigator: Mathews L. Paret, Plant Pathology, NFREC, University of Florida; Stephen M. Olson, Horticulture, NFREC, University of Florida; David B. Langston, Plant Pathology, University of Georgia

Summary of findings: Thymol, the antimicrobial active ingredient in many plant essential oils were tested against *Didymella bryoniae* in vitro and against gummy stem blight, the disease caused by this fungal pathogen on watermelon. In vitro studies showed that thymol have good antimicrobial potential as indicated by the significant reduction on growth of a *Didymella bryoniae* isolate in culture compared to the control (Figure 1). However, only one of the three field trials conducted in Florida had lesser disease incidence compared to the untreated plots due to the application of thymol (Table 1). This findings points out that even though thymol is an effective antimicrobial compound against *Didymella bryoniae*, it is has high volatility during field application. In order to address this issue, a very small quantity of kaolin, a naturally derived particle film, which is a white, hydrophilic aluminosilicate mineral (Al₂Si₂O₇(OH)₄; 1lb/A) was added to thymol to possibly reduce the volatility. This did not benefit in reducing the volatile nature of thymol possibility to the low quantity (1 lb/A) of kaolin used. Interestingly kaolin by itself showed some indication towards disease reduction in the study conducted in Fall 2011 in Florida (Table 2). There was no significant difference in yield and number of fruits per hectare between thymol treatments and the chlorothalonil (Echo 720) control in all the trials.



Grand-Prize-Maceys-Worlds-Largest-Display-Lehi-UT

The National Watermelon Display Contest Grand Prize winner is Macey’s Supermarket in Lehi, UT. This retail store displayed watermelons in a big way, showcasing the world’s largest watermelon display with over 188 bins of fresh watermelons available for sale at the store’s grand opening event. “All 188 bins of melons were sold in just 4 days!” states Heidi Thomas, the produce manager for Macey’s. “We had to procure an additional 40 bins to get us through the remainder of our event.”

The Grand prize winner receives \$1,000 and the opportunity to attend the National Watermelon Association convention in Amelia Island, FL on February 22-26, 2012



1st-Place-Kroger-J907-Martinsville-IN



1st-Place-Giant-Eagle-Latrobe-PA



1st-Place-Colemans-Stephenville-Newfoundland-Canada



1st-Place-Fort-Hood-Commissary-Fort-Hood-TX



1st-Place-Giant-Eagle-Frederick-MD



1st-Place-Gunter-afb-Gunter-Annex-Maxwell-afb-AL



1st-Place-Buy-Low-Foods-Athabasca-Canada

Figure 1: Effects of thymol on *Didymella bryoniae* isolate R-106-1-1 isolated from watermelon in Tifton, GA in vitro. The error bars represents standard error of the mean. Means indicated for a specific time with the same letters are not significantly different ($P \leq 0.05$) based on Student-Newman-Keuls Test.

Table 1: Gummy stem blight incidence indicated as Area Under the Disease Progression Curve (AUDPC), and yield of watermelon treated with thymol in a field trial conducted at Quincy, FL in Spring 2011.

Treatment	AUDPC ¹	Yield (kg/ha) ³	Fruits/ha
Thymol (0.1 g/L)	901.7 ab ²	58,764.3	7,468.0
Thymol (0.5 g/L)	798.4 bc	58,762.5	8,413.3
Thymol (1.0 g/L)	741.6 c	58,974.3	7,940.6
Echo 720 (2.0 pt/A) - control	375.8 d	69,121.0	8,413.3
Untreated	963.4 a	64,288.4	7,940.6
LSD (0.05)	146.6	ns	ns
$P > F$	< 0.0001	0.1718	0.4528

¹Disease severities were rated using the Horsfall-Barratt scale, a non-dimensional 12-point scale, to assess the percentage of canopy affected by gummy stem blight. Values were converted to mid-percentages and used to generate AUDPC.

²Column means indicated with the same letters are not significantly different ($P \leq 0.05$) based on Least Significance Test. ns= not significant
³The watermelon variety used for the study was ‘Starbrite’. Each treatment plot was 36 feet long and the plants were spaced 3 feet apart. Each treatment had 4 replications. The experiment was arranged as a randomized complete block design

Table 2: Gummy stem blight incidence indicated as Area Under the Disease Progression Curve (AUDPC), and yield of watermelon treated with thymol in a field trial conducted at Quincy, FL in Fall 2011.

Treatment	AUDPC ¹	Yield (kg/ha) ³	Fruits/ha
Thymol (1.0 g/L)	753.4 ab ²	60,259.9	5,577.3
Thymol (2.0 g/L)	821.6 ab	51,297.8	5,104.7
Thymol (5.0 g/L)	799.8 ab	64,733.1	6,333.6
Thymol (1.0 g/L) + Surround (1 lb/A)	735.0 ab	49,560.8	4,726.6
Thymol (2.0 g/L) + Surround (1 lb/A)	784.0 ab	63,061.8	5,671.9
Thymol (5.0 g/L) + Surround (1 lb/A)	805.0 ab	44,148.0	4,064.8
Surround (1.0 lb/A)	679.9 b	48,558.8	4,726.6
Echo 720 (2.0 pt/A) - control	452.4 c	64,113.0	5,860.9
Untreated	871.9 a	51,781.4	5,293.8
LSD (0.05)	189.9	ns	ns
$P > F$	0.0067	0.4549	0.4210

¹Disease severities were rated using the Horsfall-Barratt scale, a non-dimensional 12-point scale, to assess the percentage of canopy affected by gummy stem blight. Values were converted to mid-percentages and used to generate AUDPC

²Column means indicated with the same letters are not significantly different ($P \leq 0.05$) based on Least Significance Test. ns= not significant

³The watermelon variety used for the study was Starbrite. The plot was 36 feet long and the plants were spaced 3 feet apart. Each treatment plot had 4 replications. The experiment was arranged as a randomized complete block design.

GEORGIA continued from page 5

didn’t have enough labor. The farmers said they lacked 40 percent of the total work force they needed. The numbers come from self-reported surveys completed by 189 farmers of onions, watermelons, bell peppers, cucumbers, squash, blueberries and blackberries, says John McKissick, director of the Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development and one of the study’s authors. The study analyzed data from seven crops that represented more than 46 percent of the acreage available for harvest this past spring. The seven crops studied represented a total farm gate value of more than \$578 million, according to the 2009 UGA Farm Gate Survey.

Researchers identified a shortage of 5,244 farm laborers from the seven crops. Farmers’ direct losses resulted in an extra \$106.5 million loss in other goods and services in Georgia plus 1,282 fewer jobs across the state, the report projected. Using these numbers and assuming the

farmers they surveyed are representative of all Georgia farmers with the same crops, the researchers projected the state’s total yearly losses could be \$391 million and 3,260 full-time jobs.

In an effort to determine what the longer term or full-year impacts may be, the study asked how farmers’ 2012 production may be impacted by the labor situation experienced in 2011. While most respondents to the question indicated they would try to maintain production, a significant number of vegetable producers planned cuts.

“Yearly planted annual crops such as vegetables can more easily be altered than can perennial, multi-year crops such as those produced from berry bushes. However, even berry producers indicated planned changes in production and harvest/packing methods if the labor experience of 2011 is likely repeated in 2012,” states the report.

SKEPTICAL continued from page 7

culture and related industries, as well. Soon, employers across the country will be required to use the federal E-Verify system and maintain detailed records to ensure that their employees are citizens or legal immigrants. Chris Francis, who owns Chris Francis Landscapes in Daphne, said he has few immigrants on staff and does not use temporary labor, so the state immigration law is mostly a non-issue. But he said the E-Verify requirements mean more red tape. “My mom and my dad work for me, and I’m going to have to E-Verify both of them,” he said.

As for the Alabama law, one person in the audience asked McMillan what the cost will be if the state cannot figure out a workable way to address the labor shortages it has caused. McMillan answered that he does not have a figure. “It’s going to be a substantial economic impact in Alabama,” he said.

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Georgia Report

Season Greeting's from Georgia!

We wish you all a Happy New Year! We are looking forward to an exciting Annual Convention in Lake Balckshear Golf and Resort in Cordele, GA. January 27th- 29, 2012. The Georgia Watermelon Association has announced the most informative educational sessions available. We will host a Fusarium Wilt and Bacterial Fruit Blotch Update, Crisis Communication and Preparedness, and Labor Issues. In addition to the educational sessions, the weekend offers exhibits, networking and recreational opportunities designed to bring the most up to date information to the watermelon industry.

Other special events are planned for the conference such as golf, bird hunting, or simple relaxing at the resort. Our convention is family friendly and we invite each of you to join us! We offer more information and ability to register online. Please visit our website, or feel free to call our office with more questions. To call the Lake Blackshear Resort directly for hotel reservations, please call (229) 276-1004.

We are extremely proud of our Queen Jenna Saxon and our 2011 Queen Tour. Every year we appreciate and enjoy our annual promotions. We have also appreciated and enjoyed the new and exciting promotions we've endured this year. Our program is spreading across the state of Georgia and Queen Jenna has worked extremely hard spreading the nutritional benefits of watermelon.

Thank you Chris and Leslie Bloebaum for hosting GWA's Sponsor Appreciation Reception at their home in Tifton. Each year, our annual convention, and Queen tour is sponsored by our gracious members. We wouldn't have near the success without the generosity of our sponsors. WE appreciate each of you.

We appreciate The Leger's with Leger and Son, as well as, The Jackson's with Jackson Farms for having Queen Jenna attend their booths during PMA in Atlanta. We also appreciate NWPB for the once again fabulous party that we all enjoy attending. It is apparent our watermelon family and industry continues to grow, and it is due to the partnership between Associations and NWPB.

The 2011 Washington Public Policy Conference in D.C. on Capitol Hill was yet again the most powerful public policy. The entire fresh produce industry united and made a presentation on Capitol Hill. We joined together to address key issues with food safety, farm labor, nutrition and The Farm Bill. Miss Jenna did a great job with her strong public relation skills talking about the year round benefits of our product. Jenna never meets a stranger, and shines through events such as United.

We do not look forward to ending the year with our Queen Jenna, but we look forward supporting Jenna in Amelia Island at the NWA Convention. Jenna, you have made GWA very proud and we appreciate your time, dedication and HARD work you have given us this entire year.

As many of you know, our Associations across the country share a unique strength and closeness as a watermelon family. GWA would like to take the time to share our thoughts, prayers and love to two of our strong backbones~ Wanda Letson and her grandson, as well as Eleanor Bullock. These two ladies are best friends and mothers to many of us. We can get through anything together~

Sincerely,

Julie Akins
Promotion Coordinator
Akinsjulie1@windstream.net
770-842-3309



National Queen Whitney and Georgia Queen Jenna in North Carolina.



Queen Jenna and The Autry's at the Atlanta Braves Game in Atlanta.



After a days work in Lake Lure, the queens enjoyed dinner with The Morrissey's.



Nick and Adam take time out from handing out slices of watermelon for a picture with Jenna in Atlanta at our Atlanta Braves promotion.



Whitney and Jenna stop for a visit at The Biltmore on the trip home from the Dirty Dancing Festival.



Our Queens in Lake Lure serving watermelon to the Dirty Dancing





Miss Jenna with Bob and Betsy Morrissey in Lake Lure, N. C. at the Dirty Dancing Festival.



. Fun with a watermelon race at the Watermelon Festival at the site where the movie Dirty Dancing was filmed






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Illiana Report

Happy New Year everyone!

As 2011 came to a close Queen Sabra was busy promoting watermelon. Sabra attended the Brownstown Melonfest on September 9-10. Thank You to Kamman’s Market for sponsoring her. She helped with events ranging from little miss contests, to the corn-hole tournament, to watermelon relays. Sabra was featured in the parade and really enjoyed sampling those yummy Jackson County melons.

October 3-5 she joined the other queens in Washington D.C. at the United Fresh Public Policy Conference. Sabra met with several Indiana and Illinois representatives and spoke with them about the agricultural issues that face our farmers. Chef Joe Poon joined all of the queens at the Fresh Festival on Capitol Hill where they served watermelon samples. We also took a tour of Washington D.C. by night. It was beautiful.

Atlanta Georgia was Queen Sabra’s destination as she took in the sights at the Produce Marketing Association’s Annual Fresh Summit trade show. It was amazing! Thank You to all the Temple Inland guys for inviting Sabra to their dinner. Thanks also to Brad Johnston and Jane Jennings at Multicorr. Sabra had a blast at the Watermelon Promotion Board party, too.

The Illiana Watermelon Association decorated the float for the Knox County Watermelon Festival Queens and helped advertise upcoming New Year’s Eve Watermelon Drop in the Knox County Festival of Lights Parade on November 18.

December went out with a splat! Queen Sabra spent the last two weeks of December promoting the fourth annual New Year’s Eve Watermelon Drop held in downtown Vincennes. There was music, refreshments, heaters (this is important!), and many, many people. Brad Toney and Tim Dunn grilled delicious pork chops for IWA members and friends. 2011 culminated with the raising of the huge lit watermelon and the dropping of the real melons. Sabra counted it down to 2012 and fireworks brought the event to a close.

The Illiana Watermelon Association would also like to wish Sabra the best of luck at Nationals. She has represented our association with pride and elegance. Thank you so much for your time and effort Sabra, we are so proud of you!

Mark your calendars for March 9-10 and join us at the Illiana Watermelon Association 23rd annual convention. It is being held in Evansville IN at the Casino Aztar Hotel. Reservations can be made at 1-800-544-0120. Come enjoy the Hoosier hospitality!

Sweet Watermelon Wishes for 2012!
Beth Frey
Promotions Coordinator
Illiana Watermelon Association
loveshallmark@hotmail.com
812-886-5409



Picking out a great watermelon!



Sabra with the Richmond Kroger produce manager....one of our display winners!



Sabra touring Caito Foods fresh cut processing plant



Knox County Watermelon Festival melon eating contest.



Thanks Sun State Produce for sponsoring Sabra at Marsh supermarkets.



Seeing the sights in Washington D.C.



Jim Schmidt and Brent Harrison with the ladies in D.C.



Queen Sabra with Indiana Representative Larry Buschon



Sabra with J Slice at PMA





Illiana Watermelon Assoc booth at PMA



Thank You Kamman’s for sponsoring Sabra to Brownstown Melonfest




Corn Hole champions at Brownstown Melonfest



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Commodity Roundtable Meeting

The Commodity Roundtable held a meeting in Orlando, Florida on October 18th. Pictured (please see image) from left to right, are four members of the Commodity Roundtable: Richard Waycott, President & CEO of the Almond Board of California, Bart Minor, President, Mushroom Council, Mark Arney, Executive Director, National Watermelon Promotion Board and William Watson, Executive Director, National Mango Board.



Waycott is the current chair of the Commodity Roundtable, while Arney and Watson are past chairs of this group.

The Commodity Roundtable is an informal group of national research and promotion boards that meets twice a year. They convene to identify opportunities, to share resources and talk through issues that impact these programs as a whole.

Latin Flavors, American Kitchens

Also in October, the NWPB sponsored the Culinary Institute of America’s “Latin Flavors, American Kitchens” event held at their San Antonio Campus. Executive Director Mark Arney (pictured) was in attendance.



And the Winner is...

The National Watermelon Display Contest Grand Prize winner is Macey’s Supermarket in Lehi, UT. This retail store displayed watermelons in a big way, showcasing the world’s largest watermelon display with over 188 bins of fresh watermelons available for sale at the store’s grand opening event. “All 188 bins of melons were sold in just 4 days!” states Heidi Thomas, the produce manager for Macey’s. “We had to procure an additional 40 bins to get us through the remainder of our event.”

The Grand prizewinner receives \$1,000 and the opportunity to attend the National Watermelon Association convention in Amelia Island, FL on February 22-26, 2012. Thomas also adds, “We, as a store team, wish to thank the National Watermelon Promotion Board for having this contest.”



National Watermelon Queen Whitney Conner and Former Macey's Supermarket President Dave Worthen

Crisis Communication Training Returns!

The National Watermelon Promotion Board is once again proud to offer a communications and crisis training seminar held by expert coach Carmine Gallo.

This free training will cover topics such as understanding the media, how to tell your company story and how to command presence in a crisis.

Be prepared! In case a crisis occurs at YOUR operation and you have not had time to contact the NWPB, know what to do: what to say and not to say, and what to do next.

The NWPB is here for you. We will also cover the industry’s Crisis Communication Plan and inform you of our roles, obligations and responsibilities to the watermelon industry!

The seminar will cover:

- Mock interviews conducted on camera – How are you under pressure?
 - Pointers for distinguishing yourself from a Media “Bomb”
 - Using tools like message mapping to stay on target
 - Communicating with the “Rule of Three”
- Please feel free to contact our office for any additional information!



Carmine Gallo writes the weekly leadership & communication column for businessweek.com. He is the communications skills coach for some of the world's most admired brands and works closely with the Alliance for Food and Farming.

EPCOT and Watermelon

NWPB staff visited with the one-of-a-kind USDA Agriculture Research Station lab at Epcot following Mark Arney’s presentation on activities of the NWPB to lead scientist Delores Lomberg (see picture), and over 20 Disney agriculture employees and interns. Many of the interns give the “Behind the Seeds” tour that attracts millions of visitors a year.



Pictured left to right: Rebekah Dossett, Delores Lomberg, Mark Arney, Andrea Smith, Juliemar Rosado

NWPB Meets Dr. Oz!

Executive Director Mark Arney recently had the pleasure of attending a taping of the Dr. Oz show in early December while in New York City. Mark presented a plaque to Dr. Oz for all the good things he is saying about watermelon. Dr. Oz loved it!

He came up during the show and told him how watermelon remains part of his diet to help maintain a healthy lifestyle. Mark told him how much the industry appreciated his message on watermelon nutrition to the millions of people who watch his show and read his articles. His show is ranked number 1 in daytime talk shows.





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Mar-Del Report

Greetings from the Mar-Del Association!

Our season has come to a close but there were so many promotions that we were unable to tell you about in the last vineline. After the Mar-Del National Queen Tour we served slices and smiles at the Acme Market in Pike Creek, De.. Then Jordan attended the Watermelon Ball in Laurel. This event is a chance for growers, brokers and industry personnel to wind down and enjoy each other's company and good food. The next day we went to Evans Farm Market. Kevin and Katey Evans were so hospitable. The weather did not cooperate but Jordan tried to sell everyone that braved the weather a watermelon. Thank you Kevin and Katey! Then we went to the Sharptown Carnival. There Jordan hosted a live televised watermelon eating contest with WMDT. Jordan then went to her Elementary School where she served watermelon during lunch and talked to the kids while they ate about the health benefits of watermelon. Local TV and newspapers captured Jordan promoting watermelon and the Maryland Farm to School Program. Jordan's former teachers were thrilled to have her return in her new role. A big thank you to Jordan's family, Calloway Brothers for supplying the watermelons for this event. The next weekend we helped the NWA promote watermelon at the Dirty Dancing Festival in Lake Lure, N. C. . Baby carried a watermelon in the movie and so did Jordan. We served slices and helped with different events during the festival. The Delaware Ag Museum in Dover, De. hosted a Harvest Festival where we handed out stickers and recipes. Then we were off the races.... Dover Speedway that is! We were blessed to have the help from Bob and Betsey Morrissey. What a great time! We served slices to the visitors of the race and the Fun Zone and after our work was done we were treated to a bird's eye view of the race from inside the skybox owned by Melvin Joseph Construction (Ken and Tracy Adams). Thank you so much Tracy and Ken – what a treat! Great view, company & food! The next day we traveled to Washington, D. C. for Capital Hill visits. Jordan did such an amazing job speaking to our government officials about the issues that we in the industry face. Capitol Hill was an amazing trip! The Mar-Del Association was asked to take part in an Internet Grocery Sweepstakes program called Farmers Feed Us. Jordan was taped explaining the planting, harvesting process & the nutritional value of watermelons. Our last stop was PMA in Atlanta. Jordan helped the Maryland Dept. of Ag and NWPB with their booths by talking with attendees and serving watermelon. Thank you Md. Dept. of Ag and NWPB for everything!

A special thank you to all our sponsors this year. We appreciate your support and Jordan has done an exceptional job promoting our product. I would also like to thank Cherie Vincent for coordinating and attending 2 promotions with our first runner up Terra Tatman. Thank you Cherie!

Upcoming events include the Texas Convention, Delaware Ag. Dinner and the Md. Ag Dinner.

We would like to invite all of you to our convention at the beautiful Hyatt Regency in Cambridge, Maryland. This will take place February 3rd. & 4th, 2012.

Watermelon Wishes,
Dawn Collins Promotions Coordinator



Evans Farms Produce was a wonderful promotion during our season. Thank you Kevin and Katey Evans



Jordan was able to go back to her Elementary School to promote watermelon and the Maryland Farm to School Program



Jordan serving slices to the participants of the watermelon seed spitting contest at the Dirty Dancing Festival.



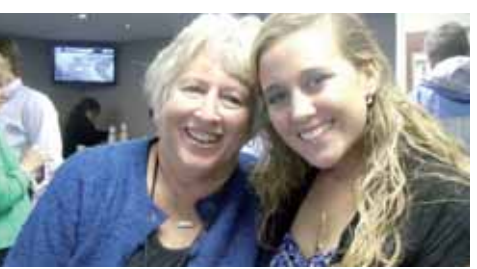
The lovely state Queens in front of the giant watermelon at the Dirty Dancing Festival



Handing out recipes and healthy aspects of watermelon at the Harvest Festival



Thank you NWA Bob and Betsy Morrissey for all your help at the Dover Speedway. It was a ton of fun having you with us!



Always a treat to be with Pat Hastings



The beautiful Jordan in front of the Capitol Building. Ready to talk about farm issues with our government officials.



At the United Fresh reception Jordan stopped for some fun conversation with NWA Bob Morrissey.



When arriving at John Carney's office we noticed he had a watermelon – it was a Mar-Delicious watermelon!



Jordan and National Queen Whitney Conner taking a hug break at the United Fresh Reception.



Having fun with J. Slice is always a treat!



At PMA J. Slice got to hang out with all our lovely state Queens.





Working with Md. Dept. of Ag. Mark Powell and Stone Slade at PMA



Atlanta was shining a little brighter the night of the NWPB party with all these beautiful ladies




I treated Jordan on a carriage ride around Atlanta on our last night. This was a beautiful night.



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- Average fruit weight is 14 to 17 lb with good shipping ability

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North Carolina Report

Greetings Watermelon Family!!

I hope this fall has been a great one for all! Queen Alycia and I began our fall promoting our favorite agricultural commodity... Watermelon!!! We had the pleasure to travel to Southern Pines to a beautiful new Harris Teeter Store. We were made to feel special by everyone there. We met many people who also had a love for watermelon. We hope that some chose to carve a watermelon, not a pumpkin this Halloween!!!

The very next week we found ourselves at the annual Food Lion Picnic in Salisbury, N.C. We met so many wonderful North Carolinians - people who work hard to provide us with well-stocked, well-run markets that bring safe, fresh food for all of us to enjoy, especially watermelon!! Even though fall had begun, the weather was beautiful and warm, and watermelon could be enjoyed.

Queen Alycia and I continued our watermelon adventure in October by traveling to Washinton,D.C. for the United Fresh Washington Public Policy Conference. We joined the National Watermelon Queen, as well as the other state queens, to learn about the negative and/or positive effects that pending legislation might have upon our growers, and to communicate with those with the ability to help our growers. Queen Alycia did a great job for N.C.!

October 13th, 14th, and 15th found Queen Alycia and I in Atlanta, Georgia for the PMA's. This was my first and I was amazed at how large the facility was, the creativity used in setting up the exhibits, and the huge number of items being exhibited! Watermelon made an impact with the individual states exhibits, along with the National Watermelon Board's exhibit. Our state queens worked with their state's exhibits, as well as spending time at the NWA's booth. Chef Poon worked wonders with his watermelon carvings, and J. Slice was full of fun and antics!! People were given the chance to taste some tasty watermelon treats.

November and December find us reflecting on the previous year, and looking forward to what lies ahead. The National Convention is racing toward us. With the holidays upon us, I hope all will find peace and joy with family and close friends.

Until next time,
Sue Jenkins
N.C.W.A. Queen's Promotion Coordinator
jenkinsbb@yahoo.com.
910-827-6561



#1 Watermelon Queens at the NWA reception in Atlanta.



Queen Alycia showing the many exhibitors during PMA in Atlanta.



Queen Alycia and J. Slice celebrating watermelon!!!!



All the Watermelon Queens and J. Slice.



Queen Alycia with an exhibitor from Mexico.



Queen Alycia at the N.C. exhibition area with a staff member for the Jackson Farms Exhibit.



Chef Poon and J. Slice.



Queen Alycia and the Coca Cola Polar Bear at "The World of Coke".



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South Carolina Report

Another year is quickly coming to a close. It has been a very busy year for our S.C. Queen , Holly Whatley. Holly has done an outstanding job for South Carolina and she has made us very proud. All of us here at the S.C. Association are wishing Holly well as she prepares to compete at Nationals and also in all of her future endeavors.

Our year closed with some very special events. On September 16th-18th, we joined several of the other state queens and coordinators along with Bob and Betsy Morrissey for a fun filled weekend at the Dirty Dancing Festival in Lake Lure, NC. The girls enjoyed everything from watermelon races to watermelon lifts in the lake as depicted in the movie, Dirty Dancing. Everyone also enjoyed a chilly, but fun several hours touring the breathtaking Lake Lure by water. We would like to thank Hami Dicks and Melon 1 for supplying the melons as well as Brad Boozer for delivering the melons to Lake Lure.

Holly did a wonderful job at the Saluda Elementary School in Saluda, South Carolina meeting and greeting students and parents at “Parents Night”. The promotional materials were flying off of the tables along with all of the watermelon slices. Thanks again to Brad Boozer for bringing and preparing the melon slices.

On October 2nd, we headed out for Washington, DC and the Washington Public Policy Conference. Holly did a great job of representing us with our state legislators and enjoyed meeting and spending time with everyone at the Capitol reception. Chef Joe Poon was there and did his usual magic with carvings and presenting our product to the public. Our friends from W.P. Rawl, Charles Wingard, Jim Griffin and Tim Rabon were on hand to escort us through the Capitol again this year. Also in the group was Carter McEntire of McEntire Produce who also spoke on behalf of our industry.

PMA in Atlanta on October 14th-16th, was another big trip for Holly. Sonny Dickinson of the S.C. Department of Agriculture did a great job with the South Carolina booth and we enjoyed spending time with all of the folks there. The National Promotion Board booth stayed busy passing out salsa samples and other promotional materials. Again, Chef Poon made the day with his carvings and preparation of salsa for the crowds.

The State Fair in Columbia, S.C. had Holly preparing a Black Bean & Corn Salsa that was a true crowd pleaser. Again, Holly was a hit meeting/ greeting and passing out promotional materials.

I would like to take this time to thank all of our association members for making this year possible and for being so supportive of both Holly and I during our travels.

We hope that all of you will be able to join us on January 13th-15th in Columbia, S.C. for our annual State Convention. See you all at Nationals.

Warmest Regards from S.C.
Ann Bryant
SC Promotions Coordinator
864-303-3995
abryant028@charter.net
ann.bryant@furman.edu



Bob and the girls at Lake Lure, NC.



Riding the metro in Washington.



The beautiful views of Lake Lure.



S.C. tour group to the Capitol.



Holly serving melons on a cool morning .



Watermelon Queens at PMA in Atlanta, GA.



The girls enjoying a boat ride along Lake Lure.



Holly serving salsa with Jason Hanselman.



Holly preparing for Parents Night at Saluda Elementary School in Saluda, SC.



Angela O'Neal-Chappell and Holly at PMA.



Talking to parents and students at Saluda Elementary School.



Making a presentation at the S.C. State Fair.



Holly at the Capitol in Washington, DC.





Working the crowds at the State Fair.



The girls enjoying dinner at FOGO DE CHAO.




S.C. Watermelon Queen, Holly Whatley.



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 **M.E.I.**
L A B E L S

Texas Report

Greetings to everyone in the Watermelon family! Texas Watermelon Queen, Veronica Kraemer and I have had a good time traveling and getting to know one another. Our first trip was to Washington D.C. to the United Fresh Public Policy Conference where Veronica addressed the concerns of the produce industry with congressional aides on issues like the need for a guest worker program, food safety, child nutrition, and protecting specialty crop programs. We also got to take a little time to sight-see and visit some of our nation’s treasures. It was a wonderful trip that I highly recommend to anyone who has not been to Washington, D.C. Just give yourselves time to see it all and make sure to take the kids!

Next, we went to the PMA convention in Atlanta, Georgia where we met many wonderful people within the agri-culture community. It was quite an experience to take in all the sights and tastes of the Produce Marketing Association. Thank you NWPB for the great reception at Der Biergarten. It was a fun evening for the girls and all those who attended. We also got to enjoy a delicious dinner with many other guests at Ruth’s Chris Steakhouse courtesy of Temple Inland. Thank you, Myron Harrison and all the Inland folks, for a wonderful dinner. Our final night was spent with Arnold and Brenda Mack. We had a very enjoyable evening getting to know this wonderful couple during dinner at Morton’s Steakhouse.

Soon after PMA, Veronica did a promotion called the Healthy Living Expo in San Antonio, Texas where she was impressed by the sheer number of people that came through. She was told that because of the terrific attendance by the community they hope to make the watermelon booth more prominent next year and potentially include a seed spitting contest as part of it.

In November, Veronica had a promotion in Austin with an HEB store that was working on building a sense of community. There was a holiday theme and all the shoppers sampled a Cranberry Watermelon Sauce along with the many other foods that day.

Veronica and I look forward to our state convention in January where we hope to see many of you in Austin beginning on January 19th. After that, Veronica looks forward to competing in the National Watermelon Queen Pageant in February in Amelia Island, Florida.

I would like to end by saying “Thank You” to all the wonderful people I have met in the National Watermelon Association. Everyone I have come in contact with has been friendly and ready to help whenever I have needed it. All of the state coordinators and their queens have been a joy to get to know and I am so appreciative of their offers of help, which, by the way, I have already had to take them up on. I realize I have some very big and well-loved shoes to fill with Wanda retiring, but I am so grateful for the opportunity to be the Texas coordinator and I hope I will make you all proud.
Barbara Duda

Bcduda62@yahoo.com
Texas Watermelon Association Queen Coordinator
1805 Sundance St.
Palmhurst, TX 78573



Holly, Katelyn, Jordan, and Veronica on an evening tour of D.C.



Our Nation’s beautiful capitol.



Veronica visits the White House.



An awesome light effect with the Washington Monument in the background.



A beautiful and fun bunch of Watermelon Queens.



Another day to be thankful for our country’s many heros.



Jenna, Whitney, and Veronica waiting on their cupcakes.



Jimmy Henderson, Veronica, and new Texas coordinator, Barbara Duda, ready for the United Fresh March on Washington.



Veronica made a few friends from Italy, where she hopes to visit someday.



Veronica had a nice visit with the congressman from her home district, Congressman Francisco Canseco.



Queens Holly, Alycia, Veronica, Whitney, Anne-Marie, Jordan, and Sabra at the reception on Capitol Hill.



Texas Watermelon Association President, Jimmy Henderson, and queens Veronica, Whitney, and Jenna.



Jeff Fawcett, Queen Veronica, Ward Thomas, and a couple of the Atlanta Falcons cheerleaders at the PMA in Georgia.



Veronica and one of our favorite people, Chef Poon in front of one of his creations.



J Slice and the Queens



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Western Report





The Western Watermelon Association rang in the New Year with their annual convention in Las Vegas. The convention was held January 14th at the Monte Carlo Resort and Casino. This year’s program featured a presentation by James Bogard, President and General Counsel of the Grower-Shipper Association of Central California. Another topic for discussion was the produce traceability initiative and a workshop was held on crisis management. This annual convention is a great way to bring together growers, shippers, distributors and related service providers in a relaxed environment.

Although the weather has been chilly in the Western states, things are heating up south of the border and production is in full swing coming out of Mexico. Fortunately because of our diverse climates in the West, watermelons are available 365 days a year!

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






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Americans Are Expected To Get Fatter

In case you haven’t noticed, we’re fat, and getting fatter. If Americans stay on this path, 83 percent of men will be overweight or obese by 2020. Women are right behind them, with 72 percent projected to be overweight or obese by then.

The implications go far beyond tight pants and groaning sofas. Obesity is a big risk factor for cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Imagining an America of overweight, unhealthy people gives public health officials the willies.

And it should be frightening to us, too.

Current rates for cardiovascular risk factors include smoking, lack of exercise, diet, weight, blood pressure and cholesterol. Reductions in smoking, high cholesterol and high blood pressure since 1988 have been offset by weight gain, diabetes, and pre-diabetes.

Increases in weight, diabetes, and pre-diabetes all add to the prediction in the next two decades that more than three-quarters of Americans will become overweight. That’s especially true because we aren’t exemplars of healthy living right now. Currently, 32 percent of men and 34 percent of women are obese. Those numbers are projected to rise to 43 and 42 percent in 2020, nudging up toward half of all people.

The number of people who have diabetes or are pre-diabetic is also projected to increase, from 6.3 percent and 37 percent of women to 8.3 percent and 44 percent.

Clearly we need some help. Just about everybody knows they need to eat well and exercise more, but just knowing that isn’t doing the trick.



Doctors often avoid talking with patients about their weight. And patients will quit going to the doctor if they feel they’re going to be told they’re not doing enough to lose weight. Experts are saying that people need help on the individual level, but changes are also needed that affect large groups of people, like easier access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and more physical education.

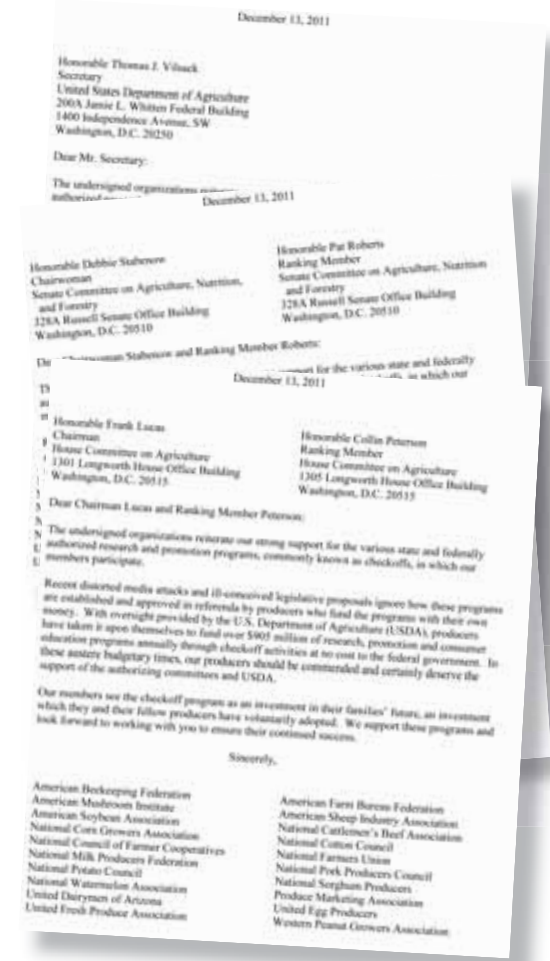
NWA Supports NWPB in Washington

A couple of months ago a Senator prepared a bill that he was going to float in the U.S. Senate that intended to eliminate check-off programs, otherwise known as grower self-tax assessments that fund marketing and research groups like the NWPB.

The effort, which suffered a quick death after many groups including the NWA objected, was a reaction by Senator Jim DeMint (SC) from news that President Obama supported a Christmas tree tax. In fact, the tax idea was originated around the idea to the create a marketing organization that represented the Christmas Tree industry.

In order to re-emphasize our support for groups like the NWPB, numerous associations sent letters to the U.S. Senate, U.S. House of Representatives and AG Secretary Tom Vilsack that speak to the need, desire and positive contributions that these groups bring to those industries.

The NWA continues to monitor the situation, and will alert you if the issue arises from the ashes.



Legislators say tomato sauce counts as a vegetable

Pizza is apparently safe from efforts to reform nutrition standards for school meals, but some critics say classifying pizza as a vegetable is the same as President Ronald Reagan’s attempt to classify ketchup as a vegetable.

Lawmakers who wrote the conference report for fiscal year 2012 U.S. Department of Agriculture and Food and Drug Administration appropriations also reaffirmed their support for potatoes (french fries) and prohibited limits on servings of any vegetable.

The legislation, which passed the House and the Senate on November 17th, increases funding for the Women Infants and Children nutrition program to \$6.6 billion, \$570 million above the House-passed level and \$36 million more than the Senate.

“We’re happy about the WIC increase,” said Lorelei DiSogra, vice president of nutrition and health for United Fresh Produce Association. Ray Gilmer, vice president of communications for United Fresh, said November 17th it was unknown if counting tomato paste, even on pizza, as a vegetable would decrease mandates for inclusion of fresh vegetables.

“At the end of the day, we believe that we are going to have more fruits and vegetables served to kids,” he said. “If there is a little more tomato paste or a little more pizza crust involved, that’s part of the bargain you make to create greater access,” he said. The conference legislation contains provisions that restrict funding to the USDA if it tries to implement any final rule that sets maximum limits on the servings of vegetables in school meal programs.

“I think that Congress pushed USDA toward some common-sense changes in the meal plan,” said John Keeling, president of the National Potato Council, Washington, D.C. The updated school nutrition standards will still be positive for fruits and vegetables, but not as good as they could have been.

With almost all legislation, there is give-and-take. In the end our kids and grandkids will have more access to fruits and vegetables, albeit it for some in the form of pizza and French fries. One step at a time. We’re making progress.



259 USDA Offices to Close

The U.S. Agriculture Department announced it will close 259 offices nationwide, a move that will cut costs. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said the goal was to save \$150 million annually. About \$90 million had already been saved by reducing travel and supplies, and the closures were expected to save another \$60 million, he said.

The plan calls for 259 offices, labs and other facilities to be closed, affecting the USDA headquarters in Washington and operations in 46 states. Seven foreign offices also will be shut. The USDA said last year it would shut down 10 agricultural research stations.

Vilsack said he didn’t anticipate widespread layoffs, in part because 7,000 USDA employees took early retirements over the past year. He said the agency is trying to do more with less in light of federal cutbacks, and many of the offices to be closed had few employees or were near other offices.

“Our workload is at record highs, we have less money and fewer people and work to do and we tried to address how do you do that without interrupting service,” Vilsack said.

Vilsack said public hearings will be held in counties where Farm Service Agency offices are to be closed. That department handles disaster assistance, farm loans and crop subsidies, among other programs. The USDA plans to shut 131 FSA offices in 32 states, with largest number of closures in Arkansas, Tennessee and Texas.

Vilsack said the closures and other cost-cutting measures will allow the agency to keep investing in programs that make agriculture more productive, including maintaining credit to farmers, providing aid to beginning farmers and scientific research.

“Over the long haul, we believe farmers and ranchers across the country will be better served by the choices we made,” he said.

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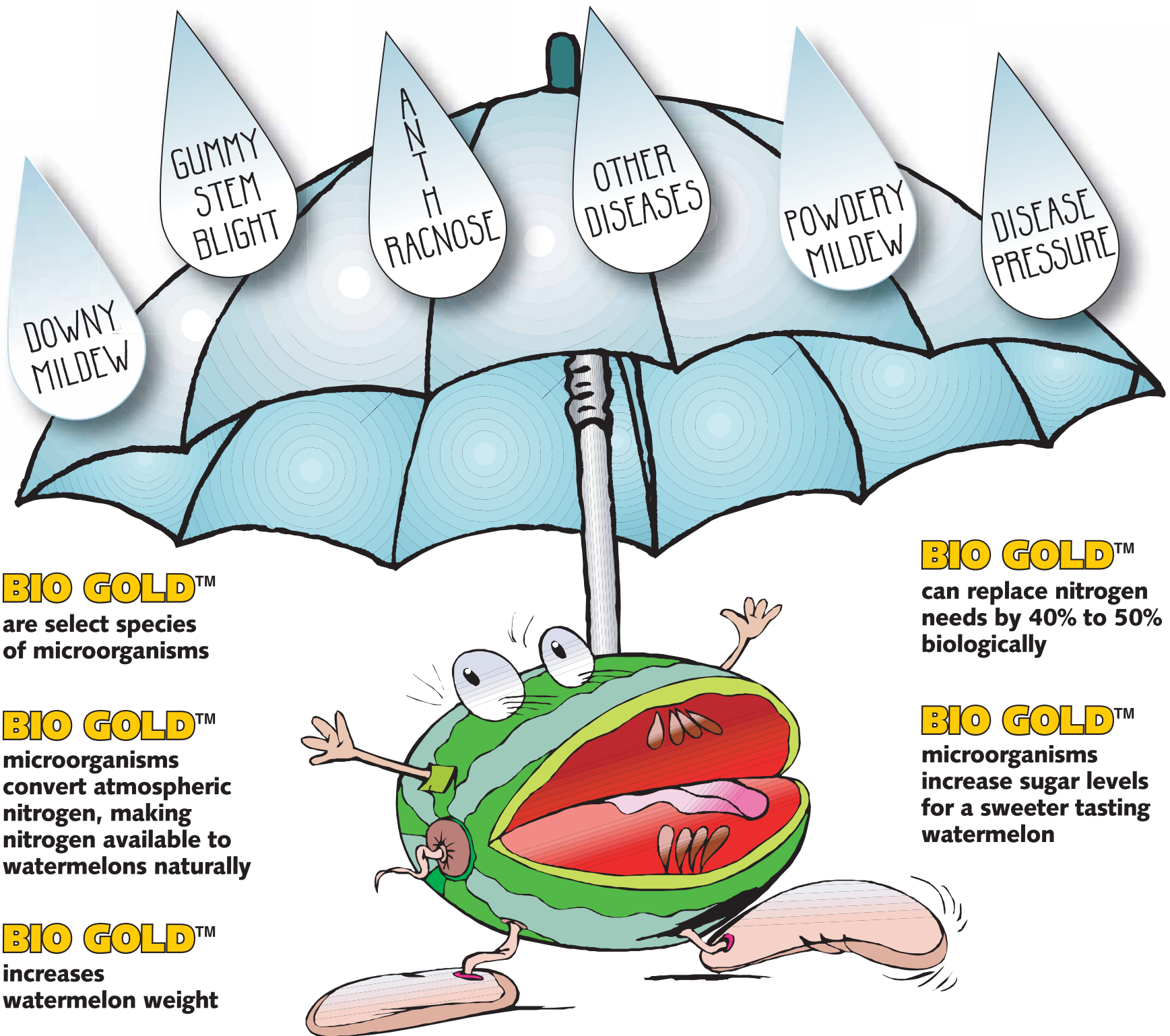
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