



# Inaugural Class of 2016

The National Watermelon Association has a long history of remarkable leaders from the watermelon industry that have contributed their time, energy, and expertise to the Association and its members.

The National Watermelon Association's Hall of Fame has been created to honor the lives and contributions of these members, both past and present.

We will inaugurate the Hall of Fame and recognize the first class of inductees during the National Convention in New Orleans on February 27th, 2016.

The following is the inaugural class of 2016!

B.G. Anderson  
Eustis, Florida

John Cooper  
Centre, Alabama

Al Harrison  
Nogales, Arizona

J.D. Lowe, Jr.  
Henderson, Texas

Tom Ayoob  
Pittsburgh, PA

F.H. Dicks, Jr.  
Barnwell, South Carolina

Vern Highley  
Fresno, California

Wallace Luffman  
Salisbury, Maryland

Bob Bloebaum  
Clermont, Florida

Bob Deitz  
Chicago, Illinois

Josephine Hughes  
Houston, Texas

Ralph Meitin  
Zellwood, Florida

Percy Bunch  
Murfreesboro, N C

J. B. Easterlin  
Montezuma, Georgia

Dallas Jones  
Clermont, Florida

Howard Sorrells  
Arcadia, Florida

John Campbell  
Lakeland, Florida

Gordon Etheridge  
Raleigh, North Carolina

Bill Knowles  
Leesburg, Florida

Vincent 'Jim' Vitale  
Detroit, Michigan

Nancy Childers  
Morven, Georgia

Gerald Funderburk  
Jefferson, South Carolina

Harmon R. Lawson  
Morven, Georgia

C.C. Winkler  
Vincennes, Indiana


Oren Childers  
Cordele, Georgia

W.W. 'Coonbottom' Glenn  
Marianna, Florida

Buddy Leger  
Cordele, Georgia

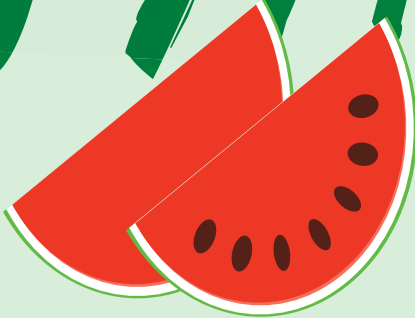
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190 Fitzgerald Road • Suite #3 • Lakeland, Florida 33813  
(863) 619-7575 office • (863) 619-7577 fax  
[www.watermelon.org](http://www.watermelon.org)

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# Class of 2016 Bios

## B. G. Anderson

The B. G Anderson Company of Eustis, Florida was established in 1968. Mr. Anderson developed his own watermelon brand called ‘Old Dobbin Watermelons’, from a special select variety (51-27) that was expressly grown and packaged for B G Anderson by the Simpson Nursery Company of Monticello, Florida, the world’s largest growers of watermelons for seed at that time. According to historical records of Altoona, Florida, the Grand Island Packing House, built in the 1920s, became the property of B. G. Anderson. In the 1940s, it became known as the Grand Island Packing House. In the ‘60s, the packing operation was moved to Umatilla, Florida and became known as Golden Gem. B.G. Anderson was known to ship a lot of watermelons in boxcars.

## Tom Ayoob Jr (1933-2003)

Tom Ayoob, Inc. was founded by H.K. Ayoob (Tom’s father) in 1902 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Tom was known for his integrity and willingness to help others. He never hesitated to donate his time or money to the industry. He was known as the Watermelon King of Pittsburgh, and coined the phrase, ‘eats like sugar.’ “No one ate more fruits and vegetables than Tom,” said his wife, Doris. “He was his best customer.” Ayoob was usually one of the top contributors at the Watermelon Association auctions. Tom served on the executive committee of the National Watermelon Association. Graduated from Duquesne University in 1955, Tom spent two years in the Army where he coached a softball team. He attended law school at Georgetown University for 1 ½ years, until his father asked him to come and take over the family business. Shortly after doing so, he updated the company, improved technology, and expanded the product line. He was also the President of the Pittsburgh Wholesale Produce Association.

## Bob Bloebaum (1946 - 2001)

Bob Bloebaum was born and raised in the Midwest. He moved from Vincennes, Indiana to Winter Garden, Florida in 1961. In 1968 Bob graduated from the University of Florida. He served several terms on the church council and was President of the congregation at the Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Clermont. He was the co-owner of Dal-Don Produce Inc (brokerage and shipping) in Clermont, Florida which was founded in 1966 by Bob’s father (Don Bloebaum) and Dallas Jones, and operated for over 40 years. The company shipped more than 3,000 truckloads of watermelon during its peak years. Dal-Don handled products from about 2,500 acres in several states in the South and the Midwest. Bob served on the Executive Committee of the National Watermelon Association

## Percy Bunch

Percy Bunch began growing watermelons as a hobby farmer in the late 1950s, little did he know at the time that his watermelon growing career would span over 50 years! His watermelon wholesale business, Murfreesboro Farms Inc., officially opened seasonally in 1973 on Union Market in Washington, DC. Percy and Frances moved the business back to their hometown, Murfreesboro, North Carolina, in 1984. Percy was president and general manager of the company until he retired in 2009 at which time his son, Michael Bunch, took over the operation and continues to do so today. Throughout his career in the watermelon industry, Percy and the Bunch family have been active members of the National Watermelon Association. Percy served as President, started and led the North Carolina Watermelon Association, and presided over the National Watermelon Promotion Board. Percy and Frances Bunch never missed a convention throughout their watermelon years and were actively involved in the North Carolina Queen Program. Frances worked alongside her husband and served as the secretary of the North Carolina Watermelon Association for 20 years. Percy and Frances Bunch started the North Carolina Watermelon Festival 29 years ago and it has become an annual tradition in Murfreesboro every August drawing crowds of 10,000 visitors.

## John Campbell (1893-1965)

John Campbell opened the Growers Marketing Service, originally based in Leesburg, Florida. He served in leadership with the National Watermelon Association, serving as President prior to 1947. He also served as Chairman of the Executive Committee and Chairman of the Executive Council. In 1945, three counties of watermelon growers (Lake, Marion, and Sumter counties) organized and formed the Watermelon Growers Association. Mr. Campbell was the first President of the association. John was one of the ten (10) original committee members that established the original Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association in 1943. Mr. Campbell was the second vice president of the Melon Distributors Association in 1937-38. He was known for his dedication to the Association, as well as his generosity.

## Nancy Childers

Nancy Childers served as the executive secretary-treasurer of the National Watermelon Association from 1976-1991, when it was based in Morven, Georgia. She was always willing to go the extra mile with her support, hard work and selfless interest in the watermelon business. When she left, the association’s membership stood at about 600, with great potential to pursue. After leaving the NWA, Nancy remained entrenched in her Georgia roots by helping growers from multiple crop industries to organize the Georgia Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association in August 1996, where she remained for a number of years as the organization’s secretary-treasurer. To this day, the GFVGA serves its constituents in addressing common issues with and for the industry that it serves.

## Oren Childers (1943-2001)

Oren Childers owner and operated Cedar Creek Melons in Crisp County, just outside of Cordele, Georgia. He served as the President of the National Watermelon Association from 1986-87, as well as a respected member of the Executive Council. Oren farmed over 3,000 acres and raised watermelon on about 1,000 of those acres in Crisp County. Mr. Childers was known for his contributions of leadership, time, and money to support the national association and the Georgia Watermelon Association. He is a legend in the watermelon business in Georgia.

## John Cooper

John Cooper Produce, Inc. was founded in the early 1950’s in Vincennes, Indiana. In 1971, John Cooper moved his operation to Centre, Alabama where he formed Hi C Transportation and Hi C Produce & Truck Brokers. John served as a member of the Executive Committee of the National Watermelon Association. He was an active member in the 50s though the 70s – with over 30 years of involvement in the NWA. “John was the person responsible for the transition from transporting melons in boxcars to trucks” – Buddy Leger. Mr. Cooper was a pioneer in the transportation of watermelon to market.

## F. Hamilton Dicks, Jr.

The F.H. Dicks Company of Barnwell, South Carolina began growing and selling watermelon in 1935. During the same period, Mr. Dicks operated as the merchant of the General Store of Dunbarton, South Carolina, and was elected to serve as Mayor of the town in 1951. F.H. Dicks, Jr. served as the President of the National Watermelon Association from 1962-3, and also served for several years on the Executive Committee of the NWA. He also served in leadership capacities (and as President) of the South Carolina Watermelon Association. His company stands today in Barnwell, South Carolina as one of the largest watermelon growers, shippers and greenhouse operators in South Carolina.

## Bob Dietz

The company known as R. H. Dietz and Sons, Inc. was established in 1967 in Chicago, Illinois. Bob Dietz was known as the “Watermelon King of Chicago”, largely for his promotions, exuberance and passion for watermelon. He displayed his generosity to the Association by being the Auction Watermelon King Buyer in 1976, 1977, and 1984. Bob proudly and deservedly held the world record for watermelon large seed spitting at 66 feet and 3 inches for many years! He served for 24 years on the Executive Committee and Council of the National Watermelon Association.

## J. B. Easterlin (1890-1970)

J.B. Easterlin of Montezuma, Georgia was a watermelon broker and pecan grower. Founder of the Easterlin Pecan Co., Inc. (which still operates today), he was known as a trustworthy man that did what he said - - an honest man of his word. Mr. Easterlin was one of three founders of Southern Frozen Foods, Inc. According to historical records, J.B. Easterlin was one of the oldest members of the National Watermelon Association and served as its President. He served on the Executive Committee and Executive Council of the National Watermelon Association.

## Gordon Etheridge

Lifetime Council member, Gordon Etheridge, has been a member of the National Watermelon Association for over 40 years. He has served on many committees in that time as well as President. He also served as the President of the North Carolina Watermelon Association at its onset. Owner of Etheridge Produce LLC, Gordon began in 1958 as a watermelon broker, he worked his way up the east coast and is now ‘at home’ in Raleigh, North Carolina. Gordon is still in business today and is a faithful member of the Association. Known for being honest, hard working, and ‘hands-on’ has given Gordon a reputation that precedes him. Michael Bunch has known him most of his life and describes Gordon as, ‘the Grandfather of the watermelon business.’ Michael goes on to say, “Gordon is a good friend of ours; he’s always honest.”

## Gerald Funderburk (1929-2014)

Mr. Funderburk took the reins of his father’s cotton gin company, called F.A. Funderburk Company, upon his father’s death. He then expanded the company’s product offerings to include lawn and garden supplies, sprinklers, and a new division - - wholesale watermelon sales. With the company based in his home town of Jefferson, South Carolina, it was re-established as the G.A. Funderburk Company in 1950. Gerald served as the President of the National Watermelon Association from 1982-83. He was passionate about promoting watermelons, once purchasing a display and watermelons to cut and serve at a United Fresh convention to the huge crowd on the trade show floor. Mr. Funderburk was honored posthumously with the NWA’s Outstanding Service Award in 2012. He is a lifetime member of the Georgia Watermelon Association.

## Woodrow ‘Coon Bottom’ Glenn (1918-2007)

Coon Bottom Glenn of Marianna, Florida was a co-founder of the Florida Watermelon Association, and also served as its secretary and treasurer for many years. He was an active member of the National Watermelon Association for over 31 years. He was elected to the NWA’s Lifetime Council in 1973. Mr. Glenn attended and graduated from the University of Florida with a Masters in Agriculture, and took a job in Jackson County, Florida as a county extension agent, eventually rising up to become the County Extension Director. He worked there for 30 years, and retired in 1991.

## Al Harrison (- 1984)

The Harrison Brothers Company was established in Los Angeles, California in the early 1930s as a wholesale produce company by brothers Al and Robert Harrison. Al Harrison bought out his brother, moved the company to Nogales, Arizona and renamed the operation - Al Harrison Produce Co. Distributor, Inc. He handled melon and hard squash production, packaging and established an internal transportation department. In the 1970’s, Harrison had captured nearly 90% of the watermelon market in the region and soon became known as the ‘Watermelon King.’ Al Harrison was also a promoter. He created the Mile Long Railroad Freight of Watermelons as a promotion for a Canadian chain store that was met by a large amount of fanfare in the early seventies. That was the largest single commodity train load in the history of the country at the time.





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# National Report

Mark your calendars and make your plans to attend the National Watermelon Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana February 25-27, 2016. Great food, fun and fellowship. We will look for you there!

In an effort to utilize our space and to get as many of our National Watermelon Queen’s amazing promotions in as possible, I will showcase our great sponsors and the photos only this issue. We would like to thank Emily Brown, our National Queen for the fantastic job she has done for us this year so far, we are looking forward to several more promotions before convention. To our faithful and fantastic sponsors that make the tour possible, Emily and I thank you for making it possible.

Special thanks to the following sponsors for these successful promotions;

**Thrifty Foods, Victoria, British Columbia; NWPB**

**Maryland & Delaware areas, Mar-Del Watermelon Association**

**Carytown Watermelon Festival, Jackson Farming and Sun Fresh Farms;**

**Kroger Grand Opening Germantown, Tennessee; Land Watermelon Sales, Midwest Marketing, Graham Farms, Leger & Son**

**Kroger Leadership Summit, Cincinnati, Ohio; the Kroger Company**

**Marine Corp Marathon, Washington DC; NWA**

**Fresh Produce of the America’s, Nogales, Arizona; North County Fruit Sales, Cactus Melon, Big Chuy, and Giumarra Nogales**

Thank you to each of you!

Eleanor T Bullock  
National Watermelon  
Promotion Coordinator  
229.322.9933,  
etb.nwa@gmail.com



Emily and a happy Thrifty Foods shopper in Victoria, BC



Emily was welcomed warmly



Another happy Thrifty shopper



Michael Mockler, Produce Merchandiser for Thrifty Foods was our escort for the day



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Bringing Smiles to beautiful Victoria



On the air at Froggy 99



Boardwalk promotion at Rehoboth Beach Delaware



The ladies enjoy visits with these cute guys Nate and Ben Oesterle



Courtney and Emily at The Crab Feast in Annapolis, Maryland



Thanks to the Delaware Department of Ag, and the these girls, SUCCESS!



Next Stop Giant in Rehoboth, where Watermelon Ruled



Courtney and Emily , On the air at ABC's WMDT channel 47 in Salisbury



Interviews for both ladies, what a busy event!



Scot and Caitlin proudly show off little Miss Kendall, thank you both for an excellent promotion



The girls at Whole Foods in Annapolis, Maryland, thank you Mar-Del!



All the girls at the Laurel Auction Market in Laurel, DE



With our Kroger team at the Carytown Watermelon Festival



Emily enjoys the handsome Chastain twins at the Melon 1 office



Watermelon Rules in Carytown



Thanks to Melon1 for the delicious lunch and visits



Back with our NC Watermelon and Mar-Del Watermelon friends in Carytown



Special thanks to this group for your support at the annual auction at the block!



Sheila Carden, NWPB Retail Rep visits our booth in Richmond for Carytown



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# National Pictures



Emily and Martha Fuller, Produce Merchandiser for the Kroger Memphis Division at the pre opening party for the Germantown Kroger



Special thanks to Breck Veatch, Kroger General Office Produce Merchandising



Emily shows us the "W" for "Watermelon For the Win" as she prepares to start the Kids Race at the Pentagon Fun Run



Mr. Robert Peggs, Kroger District Manager at the Pre Opening event



Joe and Emily with Team Kroger at the Leadership Summit, thanks to The Kroger Company for sponsoring us



Free Watermelon , J Slice and all our beautiful girls!



Kroger Leaders welcome Emily



5,200 Kroger Leaders during the 3 day event



MCM Healthy Kids Fun Run Huge Success



Chef Joe and Emily both were a hit at the Germantown Kroger



Emily has Watermelon for all the Kroger Leaders attending



Chairman of the Board for NWA, Don Hiller and Emily slightly damp from the rain at the beginning of the Marathon Day



One of our dear Watermelon friends, Lee Harbor drops by for a visit



More with the team



Emily and Juliemar hard at work at the MCM



What a busy fantastic Grand Opening



The Marine Corp Marathon Healthy Kids Fun Run at the Pentagon in DC, thank you Stephanie!



A busy happy girl



Next Stop Cincinnati, Ohio for the Kroger Leadership Summit



All Our Girls at the Fun Run with the Marines



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# Alabama Report

## Greetings from Alabama!

On the Boardwalk we'll be having some watermelon fun! We would like to invite you to join us at the 2016 Alabama Watermelon Association Convention on February 12th & 13th. This year's convention will be held at the beautiful Beau Rivage Resort and Casino in Biloxi, Mississippi. For more information please contact Marti Smith at 352-463-6925 or [marti\\_s\\_63@hotmail.com](mailto:marti_s_63@hotmail.com).

The 2015 Queen Tour has been very successful and full of watermelon excitement! This fall Queen Lenze volunteered with the Pine Hills Literacy Project in Auburn. She was able to read and work with children in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade that are working to increase their proficiency in reading.

Lastly, we headed to Washington, DC for the Marine Corp Marathon. During the race weekend we are able to tour The United States Capitol Building, visit with Alabama Representative Martha Roby, join the USDA at the USDA Farmer's Market, work at the Health & Fitness Expo, and hand out watermelon at the Kids Fun Run and Marine Corp Marathon. This was one of the busiest and most successful weekends of promotions. There were approximately 30,000 runners and we handed out thousands of cups filled watermelon. I would like to thank the National Watermelon Promotion Board for organizing such a terrific promotion. In addition, I would like to thank our sponsors for this promotion: National Watermelon Association, NWPB, and Mr. Don Hiller-The Class Produce Group.

Queen Lenze and I look forward to seeing you all at conventions and of course the National Watermelon Association Convention in New Orleans.

See you all soon,  
Katie Eubanks  
Alabama Watermelon Association  
Promotions Coordinator  
[Katie.eubanks2@gmail.com](mailto:Katie.eubanks2@gmail.com)  
334-237-0600



Queen Lenze visiting with Representative Martha Roby.



Queen Lenze in front of The United States Capitol Building



Texas Queen Kristin, Queen Lenze, and National Queen Emily with the USDA runners team at the USDA Farmers Market



These ladies got to greet many of the runners at the Health and Fitness Exop.



These Marines and Queens were ready to start the Kid's Fun Run Race!



Queen Lenze sharing her account of the day on a local TV station interview.



J Slice and Queen Lenze excited about watermelon!



Illianna Queen Lindsey and Queen Lenze won't let the rain stop them from handing out watermelon at the race.



Florida Queen Kelli, Queen Lenze, and Texas Queen Kristin working hard at the finish line.



What a wonderful opportunity to thank these Marines for their service.



Queen Lenze, J Slice, and runners at the Kid's Fun Run.



These two little girls at the Pine Hills Literacy Project were so excited to meet the Alabama Watermelon Queen.



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# Florida Report

Watermelon Greetings from Florida!

Hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving and Christmas! Queen Kelli and I have been busy these last few months in the fall promoting our Florida Watermelons. In August, we attended the Mar-Del National Queen Tour, a week full of promoting watermelons from local grocery stores, packing houses, the Laurel auction market, Rehoboth Board Walk, radio stations, and the 71st Annual Annapolis Rotary Crab Festival. Thanks to Bob Gibson with Gibson Produce & Watermelon Sales for sponsoring us and the Mar-Del Watermelon Association for having us at the National Queen Tour promotion.

For the month of October, Queen Kelli and I went to Marine Corp. Marathon in Washington D.C. along with other state chapter Queens, Coordinators and National Watermelon Queen Emily and Eleanor. Thanks to the staff at the NWPB for helping and setting up this event. Also thanks to Don Hilliard with Class Produce Group for packaging the watermelons. A special thank you to the National Watermelon Association for helping sponsor this event. Special thank you to our Past Queen’s Brandi and Meagan for filling in on a double promotion, this month at PMA in Atlanta. Thank you to Jim Rash, Inc. for sponsoring us and letting them be a part of your booth at PMA.

A busy month of November was filled with watermelon events starting off by serving slices of watermelons at the Florida/Vanderbilt football game with Chef Justin with the Dept. of Agriculture. Thanks to our incoming President Laura Land and our Past Queen Meagan Morgan for helping in this huge event and Melon 1for donating the watermelons. From there, that evening, Queen Kelli and I traveled south to Desoto Speedway to cut and pass out watermelons slices at the race track. Congratulations to #36 Driver Chad Chastain for winning the Pro Truck Championship race. Then, on the next weekend, Queen Kelli and I were on the road to the FSU/North Carolina State football game along with Chef Justin handing out slices of watermelons to all the football fans. Thanks to Four Star Watermelons for donating watermelons! Then, the following weekend Queen Kelli and I were off to Homestead Miami Speedway along with National Watermelon Queen Emily and National Coordinator Eleanor Bullock supporting our Infinity Driver #4 Ross Chastain. All the race car fans enjoyed eating a slice of watermelon from our home State of Florida. The watermelons for this promotion were donated by C & L Packing. We are very proud of Ross this season not only being a Nascar Infinity Driver but also promoting Florida watermelons on the race track. We want to wish Ross and Chad good luck next year on the track. On behalf of The Florida Watermelon Association and the board members we would like to wish Queen Kelli good luck as she competes for the 2016 National Watermelon Queen Title in February in New Orleans, Louisiana. Queen Kelli has represented our association with over 100 plus promotions this year. In the next Vineline issue I will be covering more promotions that Queen Kelli has been busy doing this year.

Until next time!  
Debra Harrison - Florida Watermelon Promotion Coordinator  
Cellular: (863) 633-8306 email: [debra@flfwa.com](mailto:debra@flfwa.com)

This year as the Florida Watermelon Queen has been an amazing experience full of opportunities I would never experienced otherwise. I’m so thankful I was blessed with this opportunity this year and I would like to thank my association and wonderful sponsors for making all of this possible. As Ms. Debra and I take the next step in my journey towards National we go with full hearts and happy minds for the good year we have had together.

Love,  
2015 Florida Watermelon Queen Kelli Wilder

Queen Kelli serving slices of watermelon at “Rehoboth Beach” in Delaware!



Gator football fans enjoying slices of watermelons.



Thanks Bob Gibson for sponsoring us. FWA #3 A fun day at the Marine Corp Marathon Expo!



Congratulations #36 Chad Chastain for bringing home the championship.



A fun day at the Marine Corp Marathon Expo!



Tailgate with the Dept. of Ag at the FSU game.



our beautiful queens with the Marines at the Marine Corp Marathon.



Queen Kelli and Ross visiting at his final race of the season in Homestead!



Kelli, Lindsey, Carla enjoying the sights of Washington D.C.



Thanks Kim Coker with the Dept. of Ag for all you do.



at the starting line at the “Marine Corp Marathon 2015”.



Queen Kelli visiting with Bobby Barton at the New York Produce Show.



2014 Past Queen Meagan Morgan having fun at PMA in Atlantic. Thanks Jim Rash, Inc.



Queen Kelli and Commissioner of Agriculture Adam Putnam visiting at the airport.



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# Class of 2016 Bios Part 2

**Vernon Highley (1933-2006)**

Vern Highley began his career in agriculture marketing and later joined the USDA where he became the Special Assistant to the Secretary of Agriculture, and later served as the Deputy Chief of Staff.

He returned to the private sector in 1975 to join the Plains Cotton Cooperative Association in Lubbock, Texas. In 1982, Vern was persuaded to return to Washington to serve as Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service. He went on to become Executive Director of the Farmers and Ranchers organization for the Reagan-Bush and Bush-Quayle Presidential campaigns. Vern went on to head USDA operations in the Western states and the Pacific Trust Territories before opening his own firm, Highley Associates. He represented various organizations including the Cotton Growers Warehouse Association, National Watermelon Association, Imperial County California, and the Imperial Valley Conservation Research Center.

Highley Associates, a federal relations firm founded in 1985, relocated from Washington to Fresno, CA in 2000. Vern was honored twice with the National Watermelon Association's Outstanding Service Award.

**Josephine Hughes (1926-2012)**

Josephine Hughes was instrumental in starting the Canino Produce Company in 1958 on Airline Drive in Houston, Texas. She worked tirelessly as the co-founder and co-owner of the company for over 25 years.

She was chairwoman of Vegetable Day Celebrations that the Farmers Market held for many years. Josephine was an active member (and later was honored as a lifetime member) of the Texas Watermelon Association, and the National Watermelon Association. She was the first female leader in the history of the National Watermelon Association. Josephine won many first place ribbons for pecans that she and her husband Charlie harvested on their property in the Texas hill country. "She was one of the hardest working women that God ever put on this earth," said her daughter.

**Dallas Jones (1924-2010)**

Dallas Jones (and Don Bloebaum) co-founded and co-owned Dal-Don Produce of Clermont, Florida – established in 1966.

Mr. Jones was a member of the National Watermelon Association throughout his career. Generous and honest, his son said, "Everybody loved him." – Danny Jones  
Born in Washington, Indiana, Dallas moved to Clermont, Florida where he partnered with long-time friend Don Bloebaum. Over more than 40 years, Dal-Don Produce grew into a substantial fruit-distribution venture nationwide.

Dallas was a pioneer in the produce industry and a man of unwavering character. Dallas embodied the most beautiful and enduring qualities of his generation; achievement through hard work, service to those in need, and a deep commitment to provide for, love and cherish his family. Dallas retired in 2002. His sons, Danny, Billy, and Bobby all continued in the watermelon business forming Sun State Produce Sales, Inc, and Jones & Jones Enterprises, Inc.

**Bill Knowles**

Bill Knowles was one of the original eighteen (18) members that met in Atlanta, Georgia in March 1914 and created what we now call the 'National Watermelon Association.

His company, Knowles and Co., operated for many years in Leesburg, Florida. His son would years later serve as the Mayor of Leesburg.

He also owned the Foremost Fertilizer Company, which was established in 1947. Mr. Knowles served as the Sergeant At Arms of the Melon Distributors Association (the original name of the NWA) from 1937-1938.

"He was a registering agent for the National Watermelon Association – until the Association changed its name" – Buddy Leger.

**Harmon Roy Lawson (1916-2011)**

Mr. H.R. Lawson served in numerous leadership roles in the National Watermelon Association, and across many years of service. He operated the H. R. Lawson Farm Supply Company in Morven, Georgia for many years, as his commitment to the association grew.

He serves as President of the National Watermelon Association from 1966-1967. He served on the Executive Committee for 25 years – and as a proud member of the NWA for over 40 years. H.R. Lawson served as Executive Secretary-Treasurer for the NWA from 1968-1991, and was bestowed the title of Executive Secretary Emeritus upon his retirement.

**C.M. Buddy Leger**

Charles M. 'Buddy' Leger of Leger & Son, Inc. was honored in Georgia's Agricultural Hall of Fame in 2012. His outstanding history in produce and specifically, watermelon, has also made him a renowned member of the National Watermelon Association.

Buddy's career began in the early 1950's when he worked for the Federal State Inspection Service grading fruits and vegetables. In the '60s, he managed Cordele's Farmers Market operated by the Georgia Department of Agriculture, but it was in 1964 that he set foot in the watermelon business for himself. In the late 1970s, Mr. Buddy Leger recognized the need for watermelon producers and shippers to come together to support watermelon promotion and research. It was this forward-thinking that made Buddy the perfect person to lead the newly formed National Watermelon Promotion Board in its early years. The result of the promotion board has been a marked increase in research and watermelon consumption nation-wide. His 60+ years in the produce industry has given Buddy the background he draws from in his current capacity as consultant for Leger & Son, Inc as well as Greg Leger Farms.

Perhaps what makes Buddy Leger a trustworthy consultant are his strong personal convictions, his strategic thinking, and his dedication. He has been called a 'straight shooter' with a 'servant's heart.' He has held leadership positions in Georgia's Watermelon Association as well as serving as President and Chairman of the National Association. Today Mr. Leger serves on the National Watermelon Association's Lifetime Council.

**J. D. 'Johnny' Lowe, Jr. (-1996)**

Johnny Lowe owned and operated the J.D. Lowe Jr. Co, Inc. of Henderson, Texas - a wholesale distributor of fresh fruit and vegetables. He trade-marked the HIGH – LOWE brand of watermelon.

Mr. Lowe helped to found the Texas Watermelon Growers and Shippers Association (known today as the Texas Watermelon Association), and served as its President.

He served as President of the National Watermelon Association from 1970-71, and as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the NWA in 1971...

He was recognized at the 1971 Convention for outstanding contributions and devotion to the NWA (National Watermelon Growers and Distributors Association at the time)

"Very well respected in the industry, he started trucking his own watermelons in old tin wheel trucks to the Dallas and Kansas City Markets. He only sold quality watermelons to establish a great brand." – Jimmy Henderson

**Wallace Luffman (1925-2010)**

Wallace Luffman of Salisbury, Maryland was a lifelong farmer and innovator, adopting new farm practices influential in the agricultural industry in Delmarva. In 1972 he was awarded the Certificate of Merit by the Governor for agricultural achievements. In 1990, he represented the U.S. Dept of Agriculture in Armenia to assess that country's ability to grow and distribute vegetables.

He served as the president of the Mar-Del Watermelon Growers (precursor to the Association), and was a member of the executive committee of the National Watermelon Association. Mr. Luffman served as a board member of the National Watermelon Promotion Board.

He was a recipient of the lifetime achievement award from the National Watermelon Growers and Distributors Association (precursor to the NWA).

**Ralph Meitin (1914-2004)**

Ralph Meitin was the President of Zellwood Fruit Distributors in Zellwood, Florida, established December 1943, and operating for 71 years in business. Ralph served on the Executive Council of the NWA in 1969. He eventually became a Lifetime Council member of the NWA after being actively engaged for over 30 years.

Mr. Meitin helped to found the Tangerine Bowl, an annual college football tradition in Orlando, which supported the Elk's Harry-Anna Crippled Children's Hospital in Umatilla. Meitin's children said they were inspired by their father's involvement in philanthropy. "Because of the example he set, we followed in a direction that made him proud. You follow by example, and you couldn't want for a better example," Judy Cope said.

With Meitin's long history of involvement in the community, he knew many people around town and was well respected. "He was a great guy – he was a lawyer – he was big into box cars." – Buddy Leger

**Howard Sorrells (1926-2014)**

Born in Hiram, Georgia, Howard Sorrells moved to Arcadia Florida in his childhood years. He would later graduate from the University of Florida with a B.A. in business administration in 1951. He moved to Atlanta, Georgia to open and operate Sorrells & Chapman (a wholesale business that sold citrus and watermelon in the off-season) for six (6) years; returning to the family packing house in Arcadia, Florida in 1957.

Howard Sorrells grew watermelon and citrus, and he served in leadership positions in both the Florida Watermelon Association and the National Watermelon Association. From 1968-1980, Mr. Sorrells served on the School Board of DeSoto County, and its chairman from 1971-1973. He was appointed to the Florida Citrus Commission from 1991-1998, and was inducted into the Florida Citrus Hall of Fame in 2010. In 2008, he was honored with the NWA Lifetime Achievement Award.

**Vincent 'Jim' Vitale (1926-2007)**

Faro Vitale established his company, Faro Vitale and Sons, with his sons in the 1940s. Jim joined his father's business after World War II. Later called Vitale Terminal Sales, the company was moved to the Eastern Market of Detroit, Michigan and transitioned to produce. Jim Vitale soon became known as the 'Watermelon Man' of the Eastern Market by the 1980s for selling over 24 million pounds of watermelon each year.

Mr. Vitale served as President of the National Watermelon Association from 1980-81. He was honored as an inductee to the Lifetime Council member of the National Watermelon Association.

**C.C. Winkler**

C.C. Winkler, at the 7th annual meeting of the National Watermelon Association in 1921, was recognized among the Executive Committee members in attendance of the Melon Distributors Association in Vincennes, Indiana.

In April of 1926 at the 12th annual meeting, CC Winkler was Chairman of the Executive Committee and was elected President of the Association.

At the opening of one of the earliest Knox County Watermelon Festivals, C.C. Winkler - aka "Mr. Watermelon" - gave away slices of watermelon with the Mayor. He also acted as the Grand Marshall of the watermelon festival parade. (The Knox County Watermelon Festival was inaugurated in 1957, ceased for a short time in 1961, and began again in 1963. It continues to this day as an annual tradition.)

**Ernie Zaferis (1921-1990)**

Ernie Zaferis got his start in the produce business with Zaferis Brothers Produce, where he initially sold produce door to door. He later became a produce wholesaler and established United Melon Distributors in Los Angeles, California, which operates today under the leadership of his son, Jim.

Ernie was an active member of the NWA from 1965-1990. He was an active participant in the auctions and was devoted to the watermelon association. Touched a lot of people at his funeral there was standing room only at St Sophia's (1500+ people) – where he was a member of the Board of Trustees. "He was a unique guy, loved life and loved people." – Jim Zaferis





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# Georgia Report

Happy Holidays from everyone at the Georgia Watermelon Association! This year has been a blast! The 2016 GWA Convention is returning to St. Simons Island, GA and will be held at the King & Prince Golf Resort January 29-31! This weekend will be packed with exciting opportunities including educational sessions, receptions and a live and silent auction! Join us to kick off the 2016 watermelon season with food and fellowship! For more information about the weekend's events, call our office at 706-845-8575.

Our Georgia Watermelon Queen Carla Penney was busy this fall attending several industry events and giving testimony to the goodness of watermelon! Queen Carla was honored to attend and participate in the Marine Corp Marathon promotional weekend in Washington D.C. with the National Watermelon Promotion Board, the NWA and several other state queens for a jam packed and successful promotion! This amazing team handed out more than 38,000 cups of watermelon to marathon runners! Thank you to NWA for the travel sponsorships and the NWPB for their coordination. While Queen Carla was working hard in Washington, D.C., the GWA 2015 Runner up Queen Andi Dickerson represented Georgia's industry at PMA Fresh Summit in Atlanta, Georgia. Thank you Queen Andi for representing us well!

Also this fall, Queen Carla has been very active in visiting schools and spreading the word about nutritious and delicious watermelon! She attended an Ag Day in Bleckley County, and spoke to kids ages 5-15 at Fullington Academy in Cordele, Georgia about what it meant to be the watermelon queen and represent agriculture. These kids loved learning how to pick out a watermelon in the store!

Queen Carla is looking forward to representing the Georgia Watermelon Association at the National Watermelon Association 2016 meeting in February in New Orleans, Louisiana She will do an outstanding job for us there, as she has all year long! Queen Carla is passionate about watermelon and the people within this industry and has worked very hard to be a great representative for us all year long! GWA is very proud of all she has done for us, and we look forward to supporting her in February!

**As the year closes, we want to issue a special thanks to all of our donors and sponsors for the 2015 promotional tour. Without your support, the association and queen program would not continue to be the success that it is today!**

Sincerely,  
Samantha T. Kilgore  
GWA Promotions Coordinator  
skilgore@asginfo.net  
706-845-8575

Thanks to 2015 Runner up Andi Dickerson for representing GWA at the PMA Fresh Summit event in Atlanta, GA!



Queen Carla talks to students at Fullington Academy about the benefits of watermelon.



Having a great time with the kids!



Queen Carla with Representative Buddy Harden (R-Cordele) at the Cordele Christmas Parade!



Showing middle schoolers at Bleckley County schools how to pick out the perfect watermelon!



Bleckley County Students #eatmorewatermelon!



Queen Carla with Marines at the Marine Corp Marathon!



With the other state queen as the Marine Corp Marathon Kids Fun Run!



Excited to be at the Marine Corp Marathon



Runners love watermelon



With the NWPB folks at the Fitness Festival in Washington DC!



Coloring watermelon at the Kids Fun run!

## A Winning Line-up!

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# NWPB UPDATE



## NWPB Invests in Cutting, Yield & Shelf Life Study

To better understand cutting, yield and shelf life of watermelon, the NWPB conducted a cutting, yield, and storability study throughout summer 2015. The Board worked with the Food Innovation Center, a part of Oregon State University, to conduct the research. Fruit was sourced from industry members in Oregon.

First, six chefs and retail food handlers were selected. The six included representatives from Sheridan Fruit Company, Whole Foods, Moberi, Pale's Place, Oregon Health & Science University and Oregon Convention Center. Those representatives were then observed cutting watermelon.

Lastly, they took part in an interview about using watermelon. Some key takeaways from the interviews included:

- All but one organization use watermelon year-round.
- Between the six interviewees, there are many different uses for watermelon:
  - Most use watermelon in beverages in addition to fresh.
  - Other primary usage included fresh cut, salads, garnish, protein accompaniment, fruit plate or bowl, etc.
- After watermelon is cut the rind is composted or pickled – great food waste message for the industry.

Between the six organizations, they used four different cutting methods. The cutting methods were evaluated in the lab based on time to cut and yield. Once the best method was defined, there were 50 watermelons from three key sizes analyzed: 36, 45, and 60.

This is the cutting method to receive the yield as stated below.

### Cutting Method

1. Wash hands and watermelon
2. Set up work station, sanitizing work area
3. Put on gloves
4. Start by cutting the watermelon ends off
5. Set watermelon on one of the cut ends, giving the melon a base of support
6. Take a large sharp knife at an angle, set it where the white rind meets the red flesh on the top of the cut watermelon, begin to cut the rind off
7. Use the rind as a guideline, continue to cut off until the watermelon is rind free
8. Trim any excess rind off the watermelon
9. Cut the whole watermelon into one inch thick disks, width ways
10. Lay half of the disks face down
11. Again, cut one-inch strips; try to push the smaller melon disks to one side to increase the amount of cubes that are similar in size and shape
12. Then lengthwise cut more one-inch strips
13. Break apart with hands and cubes will form



### Shelf Life

Once cut, the fruit was tested for shelf life. The 36-count watermelon was still edible at day 7 and had a 7-day shelf life. The 45- and 60-count watermelon sampling and microbial study showed that the watermelon was still edible at day 4 and had a 4-day shelf life. Food Innovation Center researchers suggested further shelf life research due to the 36-count being received refrigerated and the 45- and 60-count received at ambient temperatures, which could explain the shelf life discrepancy. Additionally, researchers stressed the need for education about washing the outside of the watermelon before cutting the fruit.

	Yield		
Size	36	45	60
Time (min)	3.05	2.58	2.5
Flesh (lbs)	10.67	9.54	8.61
Skin (lbs)	7.17	4.24	3.61
Flesh (%)	59.8%	69.2%	70.5%





# Retail Display Contest Winner

NWPB received over 100 display contest entries from all over the United States and Canada. Entries are judged components such as shopability, creativity, and use of POS, to name a few. This year did not disappoint in entries and creativity!

This year's National Watermelon Display Contest Grand prize was awarded to the **Key West NAS Commissary in Florida**. Their display entry featured an excellent use of patriotism and included an area that highlighted watermelon's versatility. The Grand prizewinner received \$1,000 and the opportunity to attend the National Watermelon Association convention in New Orleans, LA in February 2016. Congratulations to all participants on a job well done! For a complete list of winners or more information on how retailers can enter next year's contest, please contact Juliemar Rosado at [jrosado@watermelon.org](mailto:jrosado@watermelon.org) or (407) 657-0261 ext. 208.

## 2016 Media Kit — New Recipes and Carvings

Every January, NWPB releases a new batch of watermelon recipes and carvings on its website, [watermelon.org](http://watermelon.org), as well as via the annual media kit mailing. In 2016 we are packaging these new watermelon inspirations for media in a magazine style format. We are making watermelon famous, embracing celebrity-style status and universal intrigue, pitching watermelon packaged like the wildly popular gossip magazines we see at the checkout lanes of grocery stores. As Americans' intense fascination with fame increases, and the foodie culture cements its place among the ranks of consumers and media alike, watermelon steps into the spotlight as a trendsetter, style icon and perfect pairing partner with a tongue-in-cheek delivery of story-starters and new recipe and carving releases.







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# Illiana Report

Season’s greeting from Illiana.

Watermelon season may officially be over in Illiana but that hasn’t stopped Lindsey from promoting watermelons.

Labor day weekend was spent at the Indiana Military Museum. Free watermelons were welcomed by all on these hot but busy days. Lindsey was able to interact with many veterans and she loved talking with them as they told her about their experiences protecting our great country. She was also able to explore the life and times of our brave military including their uniforms, weapons and vehicles. A must see if your ever in Vincennes, Indiana. Our beloved Anita Fields was our sponsor and co-worker for this event.

Lindsey welcomed another chance to work and learn from Chef Poon. Kroger’s at Southside Indianapolis had a spectacular grand opening. They both entertained and educated customers on the health benefits of watermelons. Patrons could not get enough of Chef Poon’s famous ‘watermelon salsa’. He even carved pumpkins for Halloween.

A fun filled weekend in our Nation’s Capital was a big hit. Watermelon Queens from all over came together to serve the community with their encouragement, smiles and watermelons. They promoted watermelons at the Armory Health Expo, interacted with kids of all ages at the Pentagon Kid’s Fun Run and passed out watermelons to the dedicated marathon runners. Lindsey loves getting together with her fellow queens and working with NWA staff.

It may have been cold outside but it didn’t stop the ‘Parade of Lights’ from warming hearts all down historical Main Street in Knox County. Lindsey was driven by IWA board member Brad Toney (who looked a lot like Santa) and we were happy to have National Watermelon Queen, Emily Brown, with us being driven by IWA board member Kelly Tyner. Thank you Hoosier Fresh for your Christmas spirit and sponsorship.

On behalf of the Illiana Watermelon Association we would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Joyous New Year:)

Thank You,  
Lorrinda Ellermann  
IWA Promotions Coordinator  
812-887-8400



Lindsey in the Military parade



Lindsey touring the Indiana Military Museum



Lindsey getting some one on one time with an honorable vet



Chef Poon and Lindsey with Riley hero Braeden



Chef Poon and Lindsey showing off some art work at Kroger's grand opening



Having fun promoting watermelons at the Armory Health Expo



World War II Memorial



Queens at Pentagon Kid's Fun Run



Passing out refreshing-hydrating watermelon at the for marathon runners



Knox County Parade of Lights



The Most Wonderful Time of the Year



Queens at the Marine Corps Marathon in D.C.



Lindsey with United States Marines



High 5's at the finish line



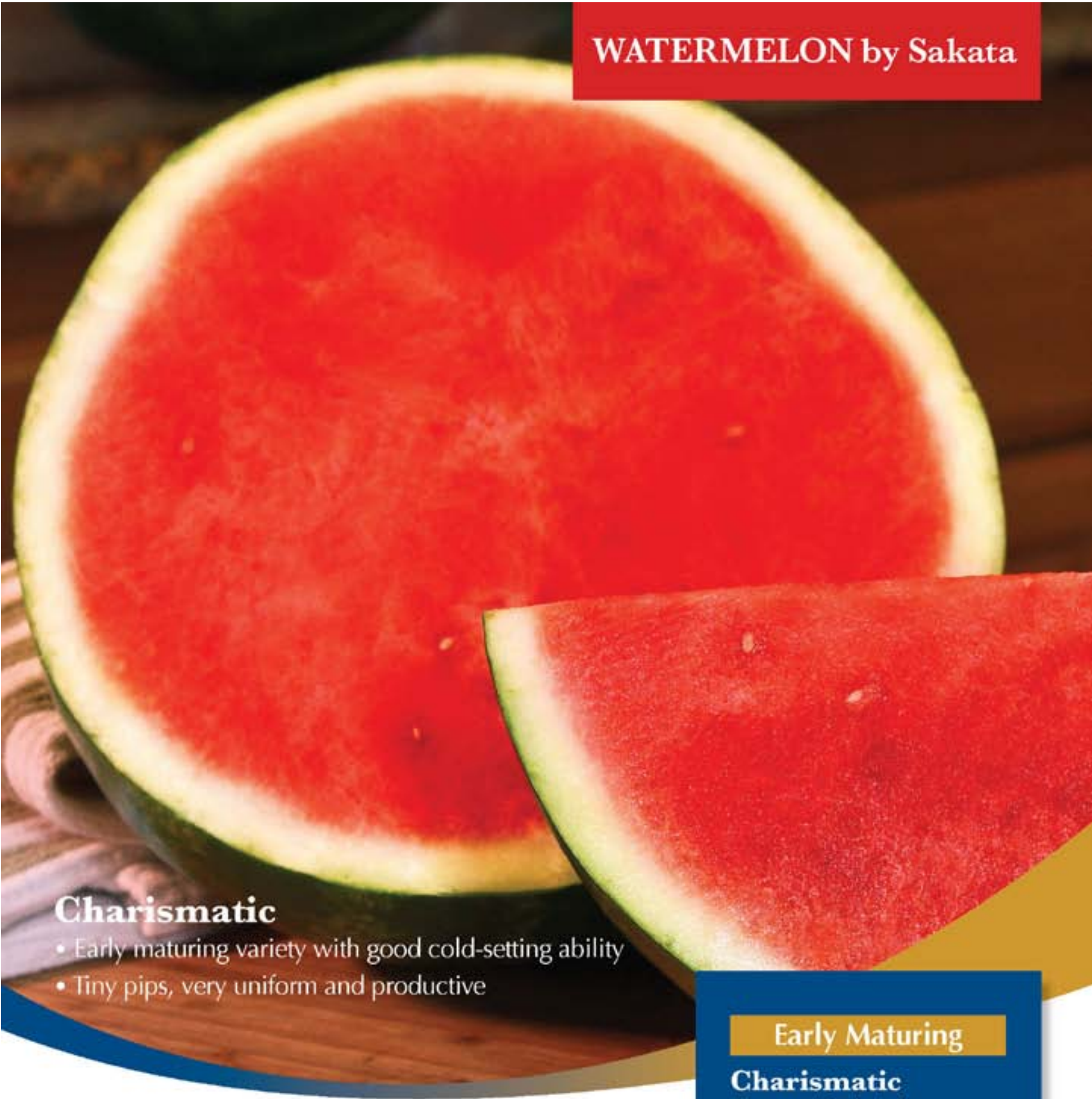
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For best results, use a Sakata early pollenizer – Ace or Wild Card.

**Early Maturing**

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**Secretariat**  
45-count / Traditional rind

**Mid Maturing**

**Belmont NEW**  
Mini / Dark rind

**Kingman**  
36/45-count / Traditional rind

**Unbridled**  
36/45-count / Dark rind

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# Mar-Del Report

Greetings from the Mar-Del Watermelon Association!

We had a busy late summer and early fall and boy what a great season it was! We left you with our Orioles promotion at Camden Yards in the last edition, so we will start off there. Queen Courtney enjoyed the Maryland State Fair, where she and past queen, Terra Tatman got to take part in their ULearn Farm center for an entire day. They painted watermelon slices on children’s faces, watched the movie “Watermelon Magic” with fairgoers, and even handed out stickers and promotional material.

We participated in the Farmer and the Chef again this summer too, where we paired up with a local chef, who made a dish using our Mar-DELicious watermelons and attendees could vote on their favorite dish. This event supports the March of Dimes.

When schools started back, we were invited to a Farm to School Kickoff event at Preston Elementary School in Maryland, where we joined Maryland Department of Ag, including the Secretary of Agriculture, and students had the opportunity to taste food used from local farmers. We also participated in another Farm to School Kickoff in Delaware, where students enjoyed slices of watermelon every Wednesday in September! Queen Courtney got to speak to them about the health benefits of watermelons and introduced them to J.Slice!

In October we traveled to Washington D.C., where we were reunited again with our watermelon friends for the Marine Corps Marathon! We will let all our pictures from our three days there tell our story.

Thank you to all our sponsors, including the National Watermelon Association and the National Watermelon Promotion Board! We appreciate everything you do! We wish everyone a successful season and we invite you to join us for the Mar-Del Convention February 5th & 6th, 2016 at the beautiful Hyatt Regency Resort in Cambridge, Maryland.

Watermelon Wishes,

Caitlin Givens  
Promotions Coordinator  
Mar-Del Watermelon Association



Courtney at the MD State Fair ULearn Farm. They had an actual combine INSIDE!



The Queen and her apple!



A sand sculpture of a Baltimore Ravens football player in the ULEARN center.



The Watermelon Queen visits Dunbar Elementary School and explains how students can stay hydrated, especially by eating watermelon!



Courtney posing as a “face of a Maryland farmer.”



Kindergarten and 1st graders enjoyed watching the movie, “Watermelon Magic.”



We found The Frozen Farmer truck and Mar-Del Watermelon Association members, the Evans family, at the March of Dimes Farmer and the Chef.



Queen Courtney made this little girl’s day after she ran in the Marine Corps Kid’s Run.



Courtney with our chef from “Off the Hook” restaurant in Delaware.



Courtney and AL Watermelon Queen, Lindsey at the Kid’s Run in Washington D.C.



Students at Preston Elementary enjoy tasting food made with local produce.



J.Slice even joined in on the fun run!



Courtney found these boys at Preston Elementary, who had just finished up eating corn on the cob, a slice of watermelon, and a fresh garden salad.



All smiles handing out containers of watermelon pieces to marathon runners.



Maryland Homegrown School Lunch Week at Preston Elementary School.



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<sup>1</sup> In trials conducted in Clayton, NC, Blackville, SC, and Tifton, GA in 2014.  
<sup>2</sup> A particular variety's Brix content will vary depending upon many factors, including genetics, agronomic, environmental and other conditions.  
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# North Carolina Report

The cooler temperatures of the season here in North Carolina have not stopped Queen Carmen from promoting watermelon at many events across the state and nation.

We had a great time at the Marine Corp Marathon and once again it was a huge success for watermelon. Thanks so much to the NWPB, the NWA and Class Produce for making it happen. All of the state queen enjoyed seeing the sights and promoting watermelon in Washington, DC. Our promotions at the marathon kicked off with the MCM Health & Fitness Expo. All the queens were on deck sharing the positive watermelon message with the runners and distributing watermelon recipes and nutritional information. Saturday was the Kids Fun Run. Queen Carmen had the opportunity to interact with hundreds of kids and even cheer them on as they ran in the races. Then lots of the kids and their families came by our tent for watermelon slices and coloring. All the queens and J Slice were very popular at this event. Sunday was the big marathon day which started with few scattered showers, but team watermelon was not bothered by a little rain! Thanks to Stephanie we all had matching t-shirts so we made a huge positive statement for watermelon from the moment we left the hotel. Everyone worked very hard throughout the day to distribute the thousands of samples to the marathon runners and they loved them. I can't imagine a more impactful promotion for watermelon!

Ingles Market opened a brand new store in Candler, NC and Queen Shelby was on hand to meet customers and answer their questions about watermelon. It was a wonderful event with lots of consumers coming to shop in the beautiful new store. Thanks to Mr. Jim Ray and all the Ingles family for having us be a part of the event.

The NC State Fair is one of the largest agriculture fairs in the country, so Queen Carmen was invited to help represent NC Agriculture during the Opening Ceremony of the 2015 NC State Fair. Also in attendance was Senator Brent Jackson, NCWA board member and watermelon grower from eastern NC. The ceremony kicked off twelve days of one of the most successful fairs in history.

A fun event we do each year is the Food Lion Family picnic in Salisbury, NC. Thousands of Food Lion employees come together for the day to enjoy the food and fun of the festival. Despite the rain, Carmen had a great day sampling watermelon and meeting everyone.

Queen Carmen and I would like to congratulate Mr. Percy Bunch and Mr. Gordon Etheridge on their induction into the NWA Hall of Fame. We look forward to seeing everyone in New Orleans at the convention.

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



Queen Carmen enjoying making new friends at the Winterville Watermelon Festival in Winterville, NC



Future watermelon buyer at the MCM Health & Fitness Expo



This large watermelon slice welcomes everyone to the Winterville Watermelon Festival



MCM Kids Fun Run at the Pentagon



Queen Shelby along with Ingles Markets Owner Robert Ingles and President Jim Lanning at the store Grand Opening in Candler, NC



Watermelon Queens and Marines at the MCM Kids Fun Run



Shelby sharing watermelon with Ingles shoppers.



J Slice and Carmen enjoyed meeting all the kids at the MCM Kids Fun Run



Fun Day at the Food Lion Family Picnic in Salisbury, NC despite the rain.



Queens getting psyched up for the MCM Kids Fun Run.



2015 NC State Fair Opening Ceremony. Queen Carmen and NC Commissioner of Agriculture Steve Troxler cutting the ribbon.



Florida Queen Kelli and Carmen distributing watermelon at the Marine Corp Marathon



NC Senator Brent Jackson and Queen Carmen at the NC State Fair. Flat Stanley was also on hand for the event.



Queen Carmen, Kenneth Todd and Don Hiller at the MCM. We were excited to see our watermelon friend Kenneth Todd of Food Lion competing in the marathon!



National Queen Emily, Carmen and Texas Queen Kristin at the MCM Health & Fitness Expo



MCM runners were glad to have our watermelon to help them rehydrate after the race.



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# NWA Partner Programs – 2016

This year the National Watermelon Association will continue its partnerships with three supply chain providers in pallets, trucking and seed.

We know that you have a great many choices to run your business. If you choose to purchase services/products from these companies, you will also contribute to the success of your Association. Thank you for your consideration.



The National Watermelon Association (NWA) and CHEP, the global leader in pallet and container pooling, have expanded their multi-year partnership to improve the way watermelons are transported from the grower to the retailer. CHEP has taken a vested interest in the trade group’s many activities as CHEP customers in the NWA continue to see the value and benefits of the CHEP pallet pooling solution.

“Since our partnership began in 2008, CHEP’s service and our members’ support has generated in excess of \$100,000 in revenue. This mutual association has changed the way business is done for many of our members, and it has shown benefits for the Associa-

tion,” says NWA’s Bob Morrissey. It is a unique and revolutionary arrangement that has and will continue to provide major benefits to our stakeholders’ organization. If you are looking for a pallet provider, and you choose CHEP, your business with CHEP will ultimately benefit your Association -- the NWA.” The CHEP pallet pooling program provides growers with durable shipping platforms that improve productivity and lower product damage. CHEP’s global reach also ensures a reliable supply of pallets.

“By becoming more involved with customers and their trade groups, like the NWA, CHEP will gain a better understanding of our customers’ needs and concerns. We expect this to act as a template for the creation of partnerships with other trade groups in the USA and overseas,” a CHEP spokesman said. Look nowhere else except to CHEP to provide your pallet needs.



Now entering its third year, the National Watermelon Association announces an expansion agreement with Allen Lund Company. The Allen Lund Company is a national 3rd party freight broker with nationwide offices and over 400 employees. They work with shippers providing transport (specializing in produce). Additionally, the Allen Lund Company has a Logistics & Software division, ALC Logistics, as well as an International division, which operates from Orlando.

Established in 1976, the Allen Lund Company has always maintained an exceptional reputation among shippers and carriers as a premiere freight brokerage, exceeding expectations on even the most challenging

projects. The company consistently earns a Four-X rating with Blue Book and a Four-Star rating with Red Book Credit Services. These are the highest ratings a company can receive for business ethics, financial strength, and credit practices. A further indication of ALC’s dependability and reliability is the company’s membership and adherence to a strict code of ethics established by TIA (Transportation Intermediaries Association).

This partnership is available for your use immediately should you choose to participate. Should you have a need for the transportation of your produce or other products, please contact Allen Lund Company at 800.799.5863. Every shipment will provide you with excellent service while supporting your Association.



Since February 2013, Sakata has been partnered with the National Watermelon Association in continual support of the promotion of its triploid watermelon program. Now entering its fourth year, and as grower support of Sakata triploid watermelon increases, future donations to the NWA will increase incrementally.

For the last 60 years, Sakata has been supplying premium watermelon hybrids to growers around the world. Our broad-based watermelon program offers a wide variety of triploids, diploids and pollenizers. In recent years, a renewed R&D effort has led to a resurgence of outstanding new hybrids including Affirmed, Bold Ruler, Citation, Kingman, Secretariat, Unbridled, Charismatic and Wild Card.

Take advantage of the excellent varieties that Sakata has to offer. Contact your supplier today to review the varieties that they offer, and watch the results yield profits for you in the coming season.

# Future Watermelon Farm Leaders program

The United States has a rich agricultural history, with watermelon farmers serving as a shining example of the American Farmer. Family farms once employed nearly half of the country’s work force, but that has changed to



about 2% of today’s workers, with an average farmer’s age now exceeding 58.

There are numerous benefits to experienced leadership in every business, especially in our storied National Watermelon Association. Furthermore, it is our responsibility to sustain the future of our industry by creating a pathway that will encourage a consistent influx of new leaders with fresh perspectives with energy and ideas to pursue new opportunities.

The Future Watermelon Farm Leaders (FWFL) program recognizes and celebrates the next generation of growers who will lead the industry (and this great Association) into the future. They represent the generation that will meet the demands of a growing global population, sustain family farms, and provide the nutritious food that will feed the world.

Congratulations to the First Class of the FWFL program:

**Joshua Moore . . . Turkey, NC . . . Moore’s Farms**  
“I have grown up in and around the watermelon business, following in my father’s footsteps to learn everything I can about growing, buying & selling watermelons. I also have an entrepreneur mindset starting my own farm in 2011.”

**Matthew Singletary . . . Alva, FL . . . MSS Farms, Inc.**  
“I am a third generation watermelon farmer and started my own farm at the age of 21. I have been a part of the farming industry since birth. I have experience in all aspects of farming, and managing harvesting & packing operations.”

**Jesse Wiggins . . . Center, TX . . . Jesse Wiggins Farms**  
“Being a fifth generation watermelon farmer, I have discovered that farming is not just a job; it is a way of life. This program will allow me to take what I enjoy the most and make it better with a group of young adults who share the same dreams as I do.”

**Kevin Page . . . Godwin, NC . . . M and M Produce**  
“My generation has matured in a world of technology that has become ever-present and necessary in our lives. This has helped us to become more connected and informed. I would savor the opportunity to help the NWA evolve and succeed.”

The future of watermelon farming, and of the National Watermelon Association, will be in the hands of young farmers like these young men soon to come. While they experience the NWA convention, they will begin to build the future of their Association while continuing the respected trade of a watermelon farmer.

# Coming Soon!



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# South Carolina Report

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- Excellent flavor
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- 83 days
- IR:Co(1), Fon(1)



### ***Captivation***

- Full season blocky-oval crimson
- Sound interior quality, bright red and firm
- 45 count, 14 - 17 lbs
- 89 days
- IR:Co(1), Fon(1)



### ***Exclamation***

- Large seedless for full season use
- Yields 36 and 45 count fruit
- Blocky shape with distinct dark stripes
- 90 days
- 17-21 lbs
- IR:Co(1), Fon(1)

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# Texas Report

Winter greetings from Texas! I hope you all have enjoyed your family and friends and have had a wonderful, blessed holiday season.

This past October and November were eventful for Queen Kristin as she had the opportunity to go to Washington, D.C. for the Marine Corps Marathon. It began with the USDA booth at the farmer’s market. From there Kristin went to the NWPB booth at the health expo where she and the other girls visited with people from all over. On Saturday, Kristin and the other queens attended the Kid’s Run at the Pentagon, and even though there was a little logistical problem with the watermelon truck, the watermelon arrived and was cut in time for the girls to pass it out, with much appreciation from all those who attended. The girls also enjoyed cheering the children on as they ran. It was a little chilly, but a great time was had by all. Sunday was the day of the marathon and though it started out wet and dreary, it was still a wonderful day and the runners were grateful to receive the delicious watermelon from some beautiful queens at the end of their long trek.

The next occasion for the Texas Watermelon Association and Queen Kristin was our 50th annual convention which was held in McAllen, Texas at the Doubletree Suites. Our President, Mr. Jeff Fawcett, did an excellent job of planning everything. It started with a casual reception on Thursday called “Boots, Beer, and BBQ” at Sophie’s Saloon. Friday was the day for our guest speakers, seed spit, dinner, auction and dance which were all well attended and also a lot of fun. Saturday was our final day and the members got to know more about our six queen contestants. They were Miss Madeline Cash from Childress, Texas, Miss Victoria McGee from McAllen, Texas, Miss Emily Heissler from San Augustine, Texas, Miss Taylor Pemelton from La Feria, Texas, Miss Makensie Anderson from Denison, Texas and Miss Amy Permenter from Shelbyville, Texas. They were all beautiful girls and did a wonderful job with their speeches, impromptu question, promotion wear competition, interviews and evening gown competition. Saturday evening started at McAllen Country Club with a wonderful dinner and the evening gown competition. When the results were finally announced, the second runner up was Miss Taylor Pemelton. The first runner-up was Miss Madeline Cash, and crowned as our new 2016 Texas Watermelon Queen was Miss Makensie Anderson. I look forward to getting to know her and to see her grow as our Texas representative. For the time being Kristin will be preparing for the National Convention in New Orleans and we both hope to see many of our members there to support her. We would again like to thank Wiggins Farms, Warren Produce, and Nowell Borders Companies, our wonderful queen sponsors. Without you this year would not have been possible.

With fond regards,  
Barbara Duda TWA Coordinator  
bcduda62@gmail.com



Kristin and Emily enjoyed the visit with the USDA folks.



Our lovely contestants worked hard and kept smiling.



Kristin and the other queens kept the smiles going for the expo.



Nice hat, Jimmy!



Who doesn't love getting pictures with men in uniform?



Amy Permenter, Emily Heissler, Taylor Pemelton and Queen Kristin



All the state beauties took time for some pictures at the Kid's Run.



Contestants Amy Permenter, Makensie Anderson, Taylor Pemelton, Emily Heissler, Victoria McGee, and Madeline Cash in their promotion wear



Even the wet weather couldn't keep them down.



Queen Kristin giving her farewell speech



Grateful runners getting hydrated with watermelon



Second runner-up, Taylor Pemelton, First runner-up, Madeline Cash, and the 2016 Texas Watermelon Queen, Makensie Anderson- Congratulations all!



Some of the queen contestants were trying the seed spit for the first time.



Passing on the crown



A really good seed spitter, Ava Everage, can even do it while holding her purse!



Miss Wanda had fun at the casino games! So glad she came!

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Western Report



**IT'S CONVENTION TIME!!**  
**January 16, 2016**  
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**Las Vegas, NV**



The Western Watermelon Association will hold it's annual convention on January 16th, 2016 in Las Vegas, NV. This convention brings together growers, shippers, distributors and related service providers of the watermelon industry in a relaxed environment. We have an exciting line up of guest speakers this year as well as some new and exciting venue changes. Breakfast and lunch will be provided as well as a three hour long social hour for members to gather together and exchange ideas and meet one another. All are welcome and encouraged to attend! Please contact the Western Watermelon Association for more information. Look forward to seeing all of you there!

Western Watermelon Association  
P.O. Box 6695  
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