



## Natural Disasters Have Become Commonplace; What Happens Next?

When the average citizen hears about the political debate disaster aid, it is important to know that it can mean 20 different federal government agencies implementing about 90 different programs. Unfortunately, many citizens and politicians are unaware of how disaster funding works, which often leads to unwarranted criticism of FEMA and unnecessary political fodder regarding disasters.

In 2017 and 2018, more than 200 disasters and wildfires were declared. In the aftermath of these events, FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund is only one major source of funding that was made available to state and local governments. As a result of the magnitude of disasters over the past two years, it is estimated that FEMA will administer the same amount of recovery funding that the agency distributed between 1979 (the year FEMA was created) to 2016. That's the equivalent of 37 years — in just two.



FEMA works to administer funds in a timely manner, but within the context of support by all levels of government funding and a host of other agencies that are largely out of FEMA's control.

*DISASTER continued on page 6*

## A Disaster Bill is Done; What will Help Farmers?

Farmers in particular have been hit hard in the past few years by hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, typhoons, volcanic activity, snowstorms and wildfires. The South is still trying to recover from Hurricanes Michael and Florence, while the Midwest is reeling from unprecedented flooding this spring.

On June 3rd the House passed a \$19.1 billion disaster aid bill that previously passed the Senate. The aid package includes more than \$5.2 billion to assist USDA and related programs. Let's take a look at the breakdown, and how this will work to help those that need help.

USDA was allotted \$3.005 billion to assist with the loss of crops because of Hurricanes Michael and Florence, as well as other natural disasters occurring in the 2018 and 2019 calendar years. The crops and commodities include milk, on-farm stored commodities, crops prevented from planting in 2019, trees, bushes, vines and harvested adulterated wine grapes. A provision is also included for



*BILL continued on page 6*

## Immigration Reform Can Happen; But When?

It's almost summer, and right on queue (with the same month in 2018), the U.S. House of Representatives took up the topic of immigration reform. The House passed a bill that deals with the DREAMers and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) recipients on June 4th. Passed primarily along



party lines, the proposal is designed to protect undocumented immigrants who came to the United States as children and are protected under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, as well as other immigrants with temporary protected status or deferred-enforced-departure. The bill clears the way for possible consideration of an Agriculture labor bill next, although the timing of that is unclear.

Overhauling the ag guest-worker system stands out as a potential area for cooperation amid the heated national immigration debate. Agricultural lobbyists and Hill staffers say the industry is largely united on a pathway to citizenship for ag laborers and an H-2A expansion. But sources close to the negotiations caution that unity could splinter as talks progress, especially as 2020 campaigning heats up.

*REFORM continued on page 6*

## Hours of Service Changes Expected by June 30

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration is expected to release

A petition for rulemaking was filed by a joint coalition of agricultural associations to request modifications to the Hours of Service (HOS) and Electronic Logging Device (ELD) rules for perishable fruit and vegetable commodities. The requested modifications would give increased flexibility to truck drivers for the delivery of perishable commodities while ensuring driver and public safety. The associations have asked for the following changes to the HOS rules:

- Add an allowance for drivers to rest at any point during their trip without counting this rest time against their HOS allotments.



- Exclude loading and unloading times from the 14-hour on-duty HOS calculations.

- Allow drivers to complete their trip, regardless of HOS requirements, if they come within 150 air miles of their delivery point.

*CHANGES continued on page 6*

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# National Report

Katie has been very busy promoting watermelon since her crowning in Hawaii. Her first stop was back to her home state of North Carolina. We were guest of their awesome convention in Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina. They were North Carolina proud to welcome home the 2019 National Queen Katie! Congratulations to Sharon Rogers for an awesome program and to Amy Arnold on being selected the North Carolina Queen! Thanks to NC and to all that purchased gifts for Katie during the auction. Special thanks to the NC Watermelon Association for sponsoring us and for a successful convention. Thanks for your hospitality!

Queen Katie's next stop, French Lick, Indiana for the Illiana Watermelon Convention. We were welcomed warmly to Indiana by the Coordinator Lana Brothers and their Queen Brilee. It was an awesome convention, and it's always a pleasure to visit with our IWA group. It was especially good to see Ms. Anita Field, and spend time with her. We congratulate Miss Madison Heiden on being selected their 2019 IWA Queen! Thanks again to IWA for your warm hospitality and for sponsoring us!

Our next stop, beautiful Savannah, Georgia for their St. Patrick's Day parade, sponsored by the Allen Lund Company. We enjoyed an Allen Lund Company group sushi dinner the night before. It was so exciting to be a part of a 200 year old tradition, and one of the largest St. Patrick's parades in the country. Our special thanks to Nora Trueblood for making all the arrangements, and to the Allen Lund Company for sponsoring. It was awesome!

Next stop. Charleston, South Carolina for the Cooper River Bridge Run, sponsored by the South Carolina Watermelon Association. We were joined by several state queens, and our host Coordinator Ann Bryant and Queen Courtney. We all attended the Harris Teeter Bridge Run Health and Wellness Expo on Friday prior to the run on Saturday. It is always an amazing event, and this year we were joined by NWPB's Stephanie Barlow, and Juliemar Rosado. It was another successful day in Charleston for the Cooper River Bridge Run serving around 40,000 runners. Special thanks to Ann for all you efforts to make it a success.

We enjoyed an excellent workshop in Atlanta, Georgia, hosted by the NWPB, Stephanie and Juliemar, and sponsored by NWA It was a enjoyable and informative two days for the girls. They were given so much need information, including; learning about NWPB from Stephanie Barlow; Professional Etiquette from Erika Preval; Media training and coaching from Carmine and Vanessa Gallo; and 2016 National Watermelon Queen, Carla Penney, Your role as the Watermelon Queen. We certainly appreciate Stephanie and Juliemar and NWPB for hosting this valuable event. Thank You!

Queen Katie was sponsored to Home Grown in the Park, an Agricultural Experience, and a Farm Bureau hosted event in Burlington, North Carolina. It was an awesome event with Katie helping with all the activities of the day. We want to thank Mr. Craig Mathis, and Seedway for sponsoring this new event, we appreciate your support.

Katie was invited to the annual Got to Be North Carolina Products Dinner hosted by NC Department of Agriculture and the State Commodity Associations, and sponsored by the NC Department of Agriculture. Thank you for your support! It was an enjoyable evening and lovely display of North Carolina products. Thanks again NC Department of Agriculture.

Best of the Season to You!  
Eleanor T Bullock  
229.322.9933;  
etb.nwa@gmail.com



Kristina and James Brake of the NC Association visit with Nick and the girls



Joe Jones gives Katie a whirl on the dance floor at the NC convention



Katie thanks Rich Chastain, and Melon 1 for the beautiful Watermelon bracelet in French Lick, Indiana at the IWA Convention



Auction time at the NC Convention



It's a bowling party at the hotel in French Lick, thank you IWA!



Ms. Frances and Mr. Percy Bunch enjoy a visit with Katie



Katie enjoys meeting Anita Field at IWA



Katie Congratulates Amy Arnold, 2019 NC Watermelon Queen



What a fantastic group!



Katie gets congratulations from Senator Brent Jackson



Katie enjoys a visit with Rick Linenburg at the IWA Convention



Katie's very supportive family



Katie and Brilee congratulate Madison Heiden!



Congratulations from Freddie Ellis and Angela Boyette



A wonderful year ahead of you Madison



Sharon with two of her girls, Katie and Amy



Dinner with the awesome Allen Lund group in Savannah

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### DISASTER continued from page 1

Federal partners such as HUD, Small Business Administration and the Federal Highway Administration also distribute funds due to the sheer magnitude of the damage left behind.

The federal government has collectively committed more than \$120 billion since 2017 to support ongoing disasters. A large majority of the funding will repair infrastructure problems in Puerto Rico that occurred over several decades.

Putting recovery money to work and rebuilding communities in a more resilient manner is a difficult process that cannot be rushed. While disaster aid packages are often politicized, it may surprise people to hear that FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund currently has a balance of \$28 billion dollars. This is a massive amount of money that will not run out overnight, nor should it.



FEMA carefully estimates and projects anticipated future disaster costs so that it can accurately convey to Congress what communities will most likely need to recover. The current disaster aid package on the Hill will simply provide additional funding to multiple agencies and programs. FEMA does not ask for arbitrary funding amounts from Congress.

Recovery funding is not haphazardly sent to states by FEMA. Legislation requires grantees to execute sound cost estimates, and to design project worksheets that are jointly approved at all levels of government before money is provided to a community.



The process makes sure that relief funds are not wasted along with an opportunity to rebuild communities in a mitigated manner. Long-term recovery funds designed to rebuild public infrastructure should not be rushed, but money to support individual citizens and help them get back on their feet should be expedited.

### REFORM continued from page 1

The negotiations toward an AG bill have been underway for a time with some good progress on various aspects of a bill (such as a framework for earned status adjustment for current workers, and some H-2A streamlining issues). They are having difficulty in matters such as how to establish fair but realistic wages in a foreign worker visa program. Given the growing wage disparity in the headed-to \$15 minimum wage, and the differences between West Coast states versus federal minimum wage states, the negotiations have become a challenge and vastly more difficult than before.

### BILL continued from page 1

losses due to Tropical Storm Cindy, as well as losses of peach and blueberry crops from extreme cold and hurricane damage in 2017 and 2018. Orchardists and pecan tree growers may receive payments if their tree mortality rate is over 7.5% and below 15% (adjusted for normal mortality) in calendar year 2018.

Importantly, payments for crop insurance policies under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program will cover up to 90% of the loss. Crops not covered under these programs can receive up to 70% of the loss. If a crop is offered a revenue insurance policy under the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, the greater of the projected price or harvest price for that crop will be used to determine the expected value. If producers receive these payments, they are required to purchase crop insurance where it is available (under NAP if crop insurance coverage is not available) for the next two available crop years.

Finally, up to \$7 million is provided for Whole Farm Revenue Protection indemnity payments that were reduced in 2018. This program provides a safety net for all commodities on a farm under one insurance policy.

To help owners of non-industrial private forests restore forest health, the Emergency Forest Restoration Program was allotted \$480 million. In addition, the measure allocates \$558 million for the Emergency Conservation Program, which helps farmers and ranchers recover damaged farmland and install methods for water conservation during a severe drought, and \$435 million for Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Practices to assist with rural watershed recovery.

The bill provides \$150 million for Rural Development Community Facilities grants. These grants assist small rural communities in improving and

repairing essential public services and facilities. However, these payments will not be applicable if the community is already receiving assistance from the Rural Community Advancement Program via the Rural Development Trust Fund, grants and guaranteed loans.

As of May 13, the first round of trade aid provided \$8.5 billion in market facilitation program payments to farmers and ranchers. One limiting factor, however, was that trade assistance was capped at \$125,000 per operator and farmers with an adjusted gross income above \$900,000 were not eligible for trade assistance. The disaster relief bill amends this provision and waives the eligibility requirement with respect to adjusted gross income. A person or legal entity is now eligible to receive payments under the Market Facilitation Program if the average adjusted gross income exceeds \$900,000 and more than 75% of the adjusted gross income comes from farming, ranching or forestry-related activities. Payment remains capped at \$125,000 per operator.

The disaster bill includes provisions for disaster nutrition assistance in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and American Samoa. Assistance totals \$643.2 million to these U.S. territories in response to major disasters or emergencies designated by the President.

In summary, the disaster relief bill provides emergency assistance to farmers dealing with the aftermath of natural disasters, as well as farmers impacted by late planting. Most of the agriculture-related funding — slightly more than \$3 billion — is for farm disaster assistance related to natural disasters. Other funding is allocated for nutrition, conservation, forestry and watershed assistance programs. Helping farmers get back as close as possible to square one is the goal. Hopefully the aid package will help them, and they can avoid another natural disaster for many years to come.

### CHANGES continued from page 1

The petition takes into consideration the safety of both the driver and consumers to deliver quality produce while following USDA requirements. Current HOS and ELD requirements contribute to higher volumes of undesirable food waste as delays in shipping and delivery can destroy the quality of fresh fruits and vegetables. Modifying the regulations will better align FMCSA with the Food Safety Modernization Act, which spells out food safety requirements.

Current HOS rules do not allow a driver to turn off the ELD when stopping to rest along a route. The petition asks for the driver's ability to pause the ELD during rest periods and loading times. This would allow a driver to rest at any point during their trip without counting this rest time against their HOS allotments. In addition, it asks to exclude loading and unloading times from the 14-hour on-duty HOS calculations. To help address these concerns, the petition asks for flexibility to the Split Sleeper Berth Provision that allows for splitting sleeper berth time, adding up to a 10-hour rest period, and allowing flexibility to take shorter breaks when needed.

Lastly, the petition requests that drivers be allowed to complete their trip if they come within 150 air miles of their delivery point (if delivery takes place on any day beyond the original departure work period).

The requested modifications are necessary for the movement of perishable commodities and will give drivers the flexibility needed to complete deliveries of fresh fruit and vegetables that meet USDA and FSMA regulations while enhancing driver and public safety measures. If the changes are not made, we have asked that they delay enforcement of current HOS and ELD rules for trucks hauling perishable fruits and vegetables for two to four years to allow for improvement in the regulations.

We understand that the notice of proposed rule-making regarding changes to the existing Hours of Service rules will be released as late as June 30th. FMCSA plans to host two listening sessions after the release - one in Washington, DC and the second outside of DC. Changes are coming. Stay tuned.



Labor groups are less optimistic about the effort, and they generally oppose expanding H-2A to a year-round program. They're likely to push for priorities like higher overtime pay, better housing conditions and stronger rules to protect workers from heat exhaustion. The next few weeks will be interesting to see what transpires and potentially rises to the top.

What we have to keep in mind, and long before we call for any advocacy for or against any bill, we must appreciate that there is a long way to go while Congress deals with a huge disparity of ideas, ideologies and (let's be frank) political agendas related to immigration reform and the migrant labor-force. Also, we should take into account that the leadership control of both legislative chambers are split between the parties, and because one chamber passes a bill does not mean that the other will take it up.

An Agriculture Labor bill — a standalone or included in a huge immigration reform effort — will be a significant push uphill under the current Congress and in this political environment. That is the reality, yet we will never give up. We will continue to be conscious of what the field of play looks like, who the players are, and what the rules of the game may be. It goes without saying that your Association is on top of this issue more than most, and every day!

# National Pictures



Nora and Katie put the finishing touches on Big Al for the St. Patrick's Parade



Nora, Katie and Shawn and Big Al



Shawn and Katie parade ready



Thank you to Allen Lund Company for sponsoring us!



Beautiful girls on Folly Beach after the Harris Teeter Expo



Welcome to the Harris Teeter Health and Wellness Expo



Katie and Courtney enjoy the Harris Teeter group



Katie is handing out the watermelon at the Cooper River Bridge Run



This group is ready



NWPB's Stephanie Barlow joins us in Charleston



Katie hydrates the runners



The girls are ready for watermelon school



Thank you NWPB, Stephanie and Juliemar



Carmine Gallo's media training



What a great group!



A Great looking group, looks like we are missing a few



Katie attends the Farm Bureau Home Grown in the Park in Burlington, NC



It looks like she's a real hit in Burlington, thanks to Craig Mathis and Seedway



They love their stickers



Katie and Amy with the NC Commissioner of Agriculture Steve Troxler at the Got to Be NC Event



Senator Brent Jackson visits with the girls at the event



These Watermelon Queens are looking good



Thank you Nick Augustini and the NC Department of Ag for sponsoring Katie!



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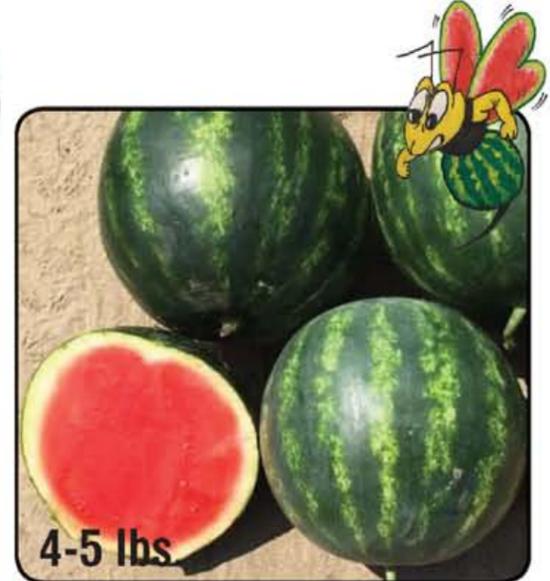
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# Florida Report

Summer time is Watermelon Time!!!

Starting off our summer watermelon promotions we have been busy promoting something we love, “Florida Watermelons”!

The month of March started off with our first promotion in Tallahassee with the Dept. of Ag Fresh from Florida “Taste of Florida Agriculture” event. All of our state Leaders and visiting officials throughout the State of Florida that attended enjoyed playing “Spin the Wheel”. Attendance of 250 plus enjoyed this event.

The month of April, Queen Avianna and I flew to Atlanta, Georgia for the NWPB Queen Training Seminar. A two-day filled with etiquette, media training and what your role is as the watermelon queen.

Thanks to National Watermelon Promotion Board and everyone that made this training successful.

The month of May, Queen Avianna along with Laura Land and Debbie Alexander attended the 19th Annual Suwannee Cares Celebration Dinner in Live Oak, Florida. Congratulations to Adrian & Melissa Land and family for receiving the Cares Award. A double booked promotion that weekend followed with our Queen Avianna traveling to Clermont, Florida and our Runner-up Kiersten headed to Dover, Delaware. Queen Avianna handed out slices of watermelons and talked to consumers on how to pick a Florida Watermelon at the Citrus Tower Village Publix grocery store, then on Saturday she attended the Clermont Garden Club Festival. Thanks to John and Lori Toth with Indian Hills Produce for sponsoring these events. Our Runner-up Kiersten along with Mar-Del Queen Summer Thomas were handed out slices of watermelon that weekend at the Dover International Speedway. Congratulations to the #45 Truck Driver Ross Chastain for finishing in the Top 10. Thanks to Melon 1 for sponsoring this event. The second weekend of May, Queen Avianna and I headed to south Florida to visit watermelon farmers, packing sheds, and visiting with watermelon buyers. Thanks to all of you for taking the time out of your busy season to show us around and visit with us. Our weekend ended with “Watermelon Day” at “Sweet Frog” in Sebring. Thanks to Super Sweet Farms, Mark and Judy Bryan for a fun-filled day with games, watermelon eating contest, seed spitting contest and handed out watermelon slices at the Gold’s gym.

If you haven’t yet seen our “Instagram” page go to FloridaWatermelon. There are a lot of our watermelon promotions pictures on there. Until next time, be sure and pick up a Florida Watermelon from your local grocery store!

Debra Harrison - Florida Watermelon Promotions Coordinator  
– Email: [debra@flfwa.com](mailto:debra@flfwa.com)

Being crowned the 2019 Florida Watermelon Queen in January, I have had so many wonderful opportunities these past few months. I have been able to promote Florida watermelons by traveling all throughout the state of Florida. These promotions have been everything from visiting farms to learn more about how each farmer produces their melons and problems they have encountered this year, to teaching kids about watermelons at schools, and helping consumers pick out the perfect melon at grocery stores. This year has already been so productive and exciting for me, and I can’t wait to see what comes next for me on this journey!

Avianna Liuzzo – 2019 Florida Watermelon Queen



A “Taste of Florida Agriculture”!



A beautiful day at the “Clermont Garden Club Festival”.



Queen Avianna handed out coloring books to our future representatives.



Queen Avianna visiting with John and Lori Toth with Indian Hills Produce.



Thanks Juliemar and Stephanie with NWPB for a wonderful “Queen Training”.



Queen Avianna taking time out for lunch with “Melon 1”. Thanks everyone so much!



our “Beautiful Watermelons Queens” in Atlanta, Georgia.



Queen Avianna and Chad Chastain checking out the bees hives in the watermelon field.



Queen Avianna at the Cares Dinner having some fun and laughs with Crawford Family.



Enjoyed meeting the “Turner’s” and visiting with them in Arcadia at their packing shed.



all smiles with this little boy enjoying his watermelon slice at the Cares Dinner.



Queen Avianna passing out watermelons with Judy & Kate Bryan on “Watermelon Day”.



FWQ Runner-up Kiersten Waldron and MDQ Summer Thomas at Dover Speedway.



Vice-President Mark Bryan going over all the rules for the “Watermelon Eating Contest”.



MDQ Summer Thomas and FWQ Runner-up Kiersten Waldron chatting with the team owner Al Niece and Nascar Driver Ross Chastain before the race.



Congratulations to Kendall Prescott for being chosen the 2019 Desoto County Watermelon Queen and Phoebe Lackey 2019 Desoto County Miss Jubilee.



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# Georgia Report

Happy summer from Georgia!

The GWA is busy promoting watermelons in Georgia and all over the United States! Queen Meredith has been very busy this summer and the GWA is very proud of her hard work and dedication to her role as ambassador!

Queen Meredith had a very busy month in April as she traveled to Queen Training Seminar and Workshop in Atlanta hosted by the National Watermelon Promotion Board. Learning about watermelon, communication skills, and etiquette tips are all beneficial qualities that ensure our ambassadors are well equipped for their new jobs! Thank you to Stephanie, Juliemar and the NWPB Team for their continued support and coordination of this event. Our tradition continued as we traveled to Charleston, SC for the Cooper River Bridge Run. The athletes look forward to not only finishing the race but even more so, the real prize awaiting for them at the finish line – WATERMELON and Queens! We appreciate all the hard work that Ms. Ann Bryant contributes to ensure this event is the best it can be year after year!

‘Farm to School’ Ag Day promotions and sharing the nutritional and health benefits of watermelon were the main focus for Queen Meredith in May. The students enjoyed learning more about this sweet and refreshing summertime treat! We are grateful to the schools who were our hosts and allowed us to educate and advocate for agriculture! Sutherland’s Foodservice hosted its annual food show early in May at the State Farmer’s Market where Queen Meredith showcased Georgia watermelon and shared samples with the attendees.

Queen Meredith was super busy in June with retail visits, NASCAR, Braves Country 5K, commissaries, visitor welcome centers and Facebook Live broadcasts. Several live sessions on Facebook were hosted by Queen Meredith where she showcased her love for watermelon and inspired others to buy this summertime necessity throughout the 2019 season. We hope all of you will tune in for our next FB Live session scheduled for July 30th @gawatermelons and comment and like!

We are looking forward to many more exciting events in our future travels across Georgia and in to Canada and St. John’s Newfoundland and can’t wait to share those with you in the fall publication! Would you like to schedule a date for our Georgia Watermelon Queen to visit your location? Please call Dawn Cheplick at 706-845-8575 or dcheplick@asginfo.net to book the queen.

Sincerely,  
Dawn Cheplick, Promotions Coordinator  
706-845-8575  
dcheplick@asginfo.net



Queen Meredith on her first promotion of the year! Folly Beach, SC for the Cooper River Bridge Run



Queen Meredith getting 'pumped' to serve up watermelon at the Bridge Run!



Selfie time with Kennedy Elementary School students at their Farm to School Ag Day.



Queen Meredith and Gulf Coast Queen Taylor Skipper learn more about proper manners and etiquette at Queen Training.



Can you guess what Queen Meredith is teaching these students? Look, lift and turn is key to picking out the perfect watermelon!



GWA promotes their first Facebook Live of the summer! Queen Meredith will be co-hosted a Q & A to allow the viewers to learn more about her role as the Georgia Watermelon Queen.



Queen Meredith prepares for her mock TV interview with Carmine at Queen Training



School ag days would not be complete without Queen Meredith and 'Georgia'!

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## Commercial Hemp may be a Specialty Crop?



When the federal government included hemp in the 2018 Farm Bill it became one of the most discussed topics and new concepts on Capitol Hill. With that inclusion comes a new set of thoughts and needs, especially where to put it and what to do with it.

The USDA is trying to see how commercial hemp and Congressional Intent fit into the Farm Bill and USDA programs. The fit ranges from crop insurance to disaster programs. It also has federal government issues that may include the Food & Drug Administration, Department of Transportation, Department of Labor and the Department of Justice which have oversight into key parts of the production, manufacturing, transportation, growing, handling and the utilization of hemp.

At a recent advisory meeting in Washington it was suggested that hemp should be considered a specialty crop and as a result would be eligible for specialty crop farm bill programs. That would range from specialty crop block grants, to specialty crop research initiative grants and trade programs. A group in Washington is exploring a legal analysis on hemp being able to participate in specialty crop farm bill programs. We'll see what happens when they air it out.

## Problem Solving with the NWA

The National Watermelon Association focuses every day on the cornerstones that make up our member services – federal advocacy, food safety, production research, communications and promotions. One of the best examples of our responsiveness was displayed recently.

The Association received urgent calls from a few members asking for our immediate help with our federal government. There were issues related to migrant workers not arriving at the farm on time when the harvest was ready to begin.

Following a number of telephone calls to other associations and members to discover how far the issue reached, the Association made contact with our key Congressional contacts in Washington. They responded almost immediately and opened congressional inquiries with the appropriate federal agencies that are involved. A few urgent calls to the NWA resulted in federal interaction, quickly. As of this writing, the issues are not resolved yet, but we have the right people on it that can solve them.



## Disagreements: We Must Learn from Them

Across the past few years the fruit & vegetable industry has debated some large issues such as immigration reform and trade agreements. One might expect that AG would be unified on every front and read from the same hymnal. However, that is just not the case every time. Here is a prime example that comes to light:

### Food Safety Remains Job 1

During the past 60 days the National Watermelon Association undertook a significant effort to create the Fourth Issue of our own Watermelon Food Safety Guidance. That effort has come to a close with the Fourth Issue now available to our members.

The guidance is one of the only commodity-specific food safety programs that exists today. Although no audit firms (or retailers) accept it on its own merits as a food safety audit, the guidance was never intended to be that. Rather, it was and is intended to be a watermelon-exclusive resource for our crop.



The latest issue reflects the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and the Harmonized Standards (which are accepted by the majority of scheme owners, third-party audit firms and retailers.) Additionally, the links, logs, self-audits and other applicable materials are all updated and available to our members for use in their watermelon operations today (and beyond).

One of the largest questions surrounding FSMA and farm audits has been water testing on the farm. FSMA adopted the original water standard from the Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement (LGMA), and that is the standard that our guidance will follow.

We specifically focused on FSMA and the Harmonized Standards because they are universal and set in stone (for the most part). FSMA can only change through legislative fixes, and that is not likely anytime soon. The scheme owners of Global GAP, SQF, USDA-GAP and other schemes that have joined into the harmonized efforts are set for a while (and they follow an established calendar to consider updates). Since a significant number of our members use audit firms that follow the harmonized standards, that allows us to keep the guidance updates to a planned frequency of 'every few' years.

Our program is designed to be a guide toward the safe handling of watermelons and is not intended to reflect any individual audit scheme or retailer requirements. If you use an audit firm that does not follow the harmonized standards, or you are required to adapt to retailer-specific considerations, you should work with a food safety specialist to learn about the variances. Good luck.

The moral to this story is simple. The National Watermelon Association works for our members each and every day to make a positive difference in our members' businesses and livelihoods. Our response to immediate issues such as the one described above is an example of how we can and will approach the issues that are affecting our members. If we can be a valued service, and are capable of doing so, we will. That is what we do, every day.

One year ago, the U.S. House debated two AG Labor bills. Albeit close votes, both bills failed to pass the House. It was thought, expected and presumed that AG was united in what is needed in an AG labor bill. In fact, AG was divided, with the American Farm Bureau (and other groups) for the bills while most of F&V groups were against. The reasoning varied, and both sides have valid points to argue. In the end, there was disagreement when there needed to be unity. Unity would have passed a bill. Division defeated it.

What has occurred since the failed votes? Setting aside the disappointment that was shared by all (we all want an AG labor fix), the groups came together to discuss what is in the best interest of Agriculture. In the end, the Agricultural Workforce Coalition (AWC) and their guiding principles were selected to guide AG's efforts moving forward.

So, there was disagreement one year ago on this huge issue, and fortunately Agriculture learned from the experience and came together. We listened to the sound advice given to us a few years ago by U.S. Senator Lindsay Graham who told us, "The only way that Agriculture will ever get a labor bill passed is by being united; being together." We listened, and fortunately will take that wise advice forward.

However, let's not be naïve to think that all issues will have a similar result. Trade agreements will always have two sides. Importers, domestic producers and exporters have differing needs. Supply and demand will always determine markets. In those instances when we have members on opposite sides, with differing desires. The NWA must remain 'neutral' and avoid alienating any members. The wise path is to monitor the situation; share the news; allow members to make their own choices. In those few cases, the middle is the right place to be.



## NWA is Honored as 2018 Music City Brand Champion

With an overwhelming feeling of gratitude, honor and truly being humbled, we are excited and blessed to share some wonderful news with you. The National Watermelon Association has been selected by the City of Nashville as their 2018 Music City Brand Champion!

It is a huge honor just to be nominated; never mind be the one that is recognized as the best.

The criteria of the competition is defined as any convention, meeting, or event which embraces Nashville's Music City Brand through their marketing and promotional efforts. The Music City Brand represents all genres of music — from country to blues, rock to jazz, gospel to bluegrass, and classical to songwriting. Nashville is about all kinds of music. They challenge each nominated event to find ways to include music into their meetings.

The Association incorporated Music City (and Nashville) along with all of the venues that we took part with into our theme, printed materials, convention logo, website design, mobile APP, the resort hotel from top to bottom, and much more.

So many thanks to our leaders, members and attendees for helping us to make Nashville a huge success. The city looks forward to welcoming our convention back, and soon.

The Nashville Convention & Visitors Corp is proud to announce that the Association Convention of the year in 2018 and their Brand Champion is the National Watermelon Association. The NWA will receive a GOLD RECORD (to commemorate the achievement) that will be displayed in the Association's offices for years to come. The little engine that could ..... Just Did!

# Gulf Coast Report

Happy SUMMER from the Gulf Coast

We are having a blast with new 2019 Queen, Taylor Skipper.

So far we have been on farm tours, passed out watermelon at the Cooper River bridge run, attended queens training, cheered on Ross Chastain, and rode in the Chiefland Watermelon Festival parade.

We are super excited for what the rest of the summer will bring. We have farmers markets and grocery stores galore coming up.

Check us out on our social media outlets and keep up with all of our fun watermelon adventures.

Until next time Vineline,

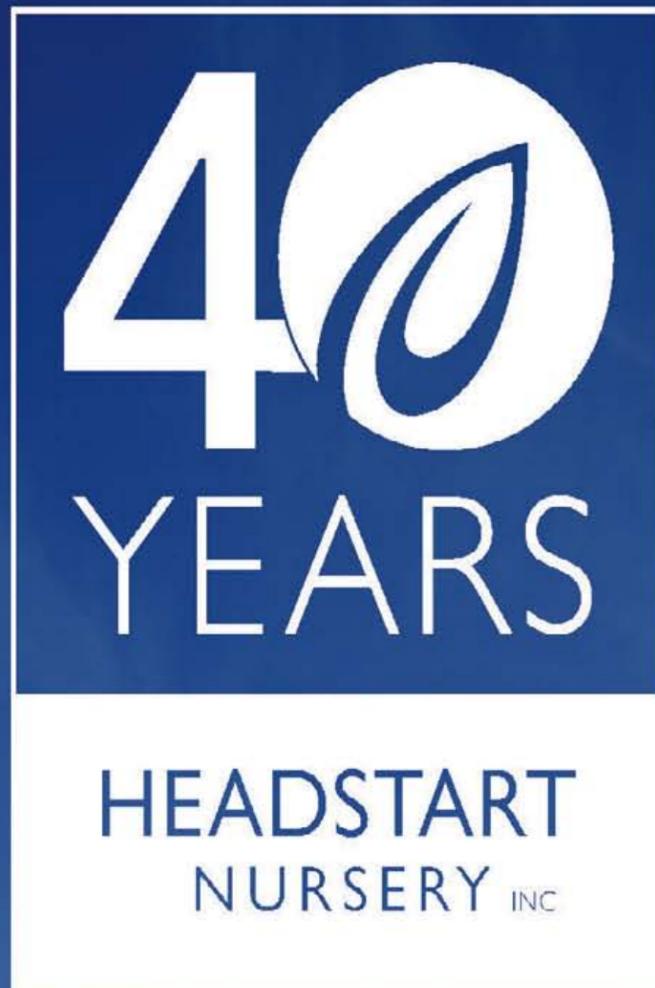
Madison Laney  
Gulf Coast Watermelon Association Coordinator



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# Illiana Report

Greetings from Illiana!

Madison, Our 2019 queen, has been hard at work spreading the word on the delicious benefits of watermelon since her crowning in March!

Madison's first task as the Illiana Watermelon Queen was to join the South Carolina Watermelon Association in serving thousands at the Cooper River Bridge Run and Expo. It was a great bonding trip for the queens and a great way to introduce them to the wonderful world of watermelon!

Next up, Queen Madison headed to queen training in Atlanta, Georgia! Thanks to the National Watermelon Promotion Board Madison is now armored with enough watermelon facts and promotion tips to use throughout her reign. She especially enjoyed Carmine Gallo's tips on interviewing and storytelling, skills she can continue to use throughout her life!

Back home Queen Madison had the opportunity to educate hundreds of third graders at the Southwest Purdue Extension Day on the Farm event. This event was a perfect fit for Madison since she is an education major at Vincennes University and hopes to teach elementary education in the future! It was a fun filled day where the children got to learn about multiple aspects of farm life and each child got to take home their very own watermelon seedling. Queen Madison taught them how to help their parents pick out the perfect watermelon and wowed them with her seed spitting skills!

Lastly, Madison was able to present a check to Vincennes area Catholic Schools. In 2019 the Illiana Watermelon Association will be presenting checks to Knox County public schools, including North Knox, South Knox, and Vincennes Community schools! This is our way to give back to the community and to help area students in need.

Queen Madison and I are looking forward to a busy summer promoting delicious Illiana Watermelon throughout our great states and beyond!

Kind Regards,

Lana Brothers  
 (314)724-6305  
 iwapromocoordinator@gmail.com



A few of the 2019 queens at the Cooper River Bridge Run Expo



The Queens with etiquette coach Erika Preval



Queen Madison being interviewed!



With the fabulous ladies of NWPB



Expo fun



With Carmine Gallo and his newest book!



Beach fun in South Carolina



Ready to teach area kids all things watermelon!



Have crown, will travel



With one of the many third grade classes at the Day on the Farm event



Ready to hydrate at the Cooper River Bridge Run!



Teaching in the greenhouse!



Team Watermelon

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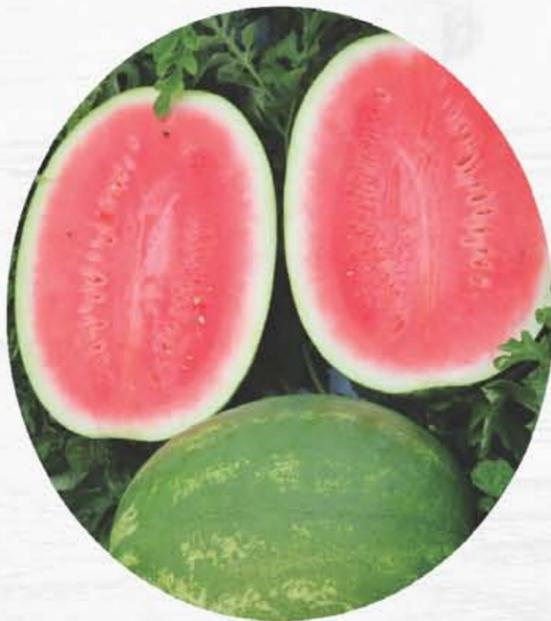
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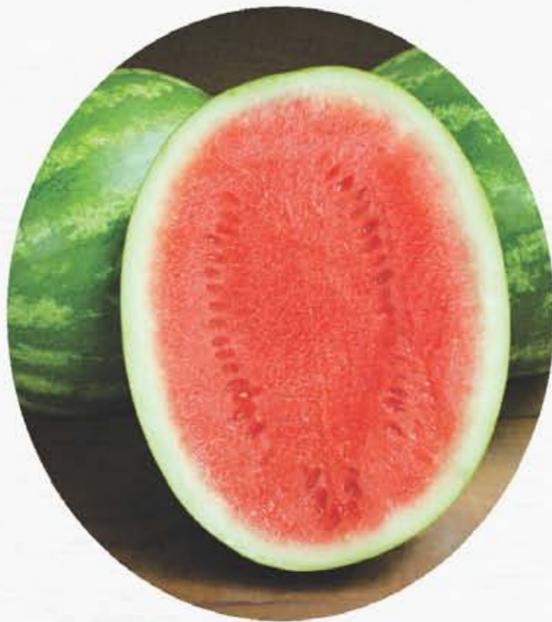
*new* dual purpose 45/36-count watermelon that performs well for both the cut and traditional markets.



## Tailgate

dark mottled stripe that produces a large percentage of 36-count watermelon with some 45-counts

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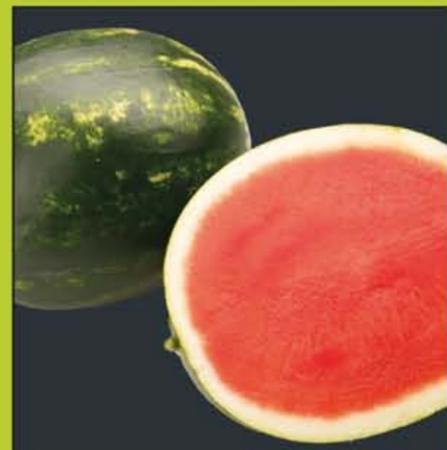
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# Mar-Del Report

The weather is warming up and so is Ms. Summer Thomas to her title as Mar-Del Watermelon Queen. Summer was very excited to start her year as a watermelon ambassador for the industry. We jumped right into promotions with the Cooper River Bridge Run. Summer enjoyed meeting all the state queens and fueling the athletes with watermelon at the finish line.

Next stop was Queen Training in Atlanta, Georgia where the Promotion Board put on a great training for all the state queens. Summer was able to put her Queen training into practice at her first local promotion. University of Delaware Ag Day. This is one of our favorite events to kick off our year with. The weather was perfect for a slice of watermelon.

Summer was able to visit a couple schools and teach them about the watermelon growing process. The students cannot wait to get their hands on a local Mardelicious watermelon!

In between promotions, Queen Summer enjoyed learning more about the watermelon germination process and transplanting of watermelons. Vincent Farms and DMC Farms hosted Summer to give her a hands on tour of their farms.

The first sign of summer here on Delmarva is the Dover Monster Mile NASCAR race. We enjoyed cheering Ross Chastain on and promoting watermelon!

Mar-Del is always thankful for the local support of our association from Froggy 99.9. Whisky and Randy hosted Summer on their morning show and wished her the best with her 2019 year as Mar-Del Watermelon Queen.

Our watermelon promotion calendar is filling up for the Summer and Queen Summer is ready to promote some Mardelicious watermelon!



Queen Summer with Haley Keenan from Vincent Farms. Haley showed Summer around the farm!



Education the next generation on all things watermelon! Great day at the Dover Elementary Ag Day.



Passing out watermelon at the Cooper River Bridge Run expo! Fueling athletes for the race.



Watch out! Queen Summer is driving the tractor. Thank you DMC farms for hosting us on your farm to plant some watermelons.



Summer enjoyed greeting runners at the finish line with a smile and watermelon.



Queen Summer smiling with her row she planted. Can't wait for harvest time.



Successful day at Cooper River Bridge Run! All the state queens had a great day.



Watermelon for everyone! Another great school promotion teaching the W.B. Simpson kids all about watermelon.



Thank you to the Watermelon Promotion Board for hosting such an awesome queen training for the girls!



Watermelon is always in Victory lane here in Mar-Del. The girls had a great weekend promoting watermelon at the NASCAR race.



Queen Summer with the University of Delaware Blue Hen at the UD Ag Day.



Queen Summer had a blast at the NASCAR Race weekend! Cheering on Ross and encouraging race fans to Buckle up and Protect your Melon.



Queen Summer ready for the Mardella Heritage parade! Such fun celebrating a small town filled with American pride.

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Captivation produces a heavy set of medium- to large-sized, blocky-shaped seedless fruit with a rich Crimson Sweet skin appearance that is suitable for both fresh market and fresh-cut use. Attractive, dark red flesh with firm texture and small pip size for repeat sales. 14-17 lb. fruit. Mostly 45-count fruit for whole fruit markets.

**Fascination** 83 Day • *Triploid Crimson Seedless*

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**Excursion** 81 Day • *Triploid Crimson Seedless*

Excellent fruit size potential. Attractive deep red, firm flesh, with small pips. Strong vine growth. Large, oval shaped fruit with crimson striped appearance. 18 - 22 lbs. Mostly 36- and 45- count fruit.

**Sweet Dawn** 74 Day • *Triploid Crimson Seedless*

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# North Carolina Report

Greetings from North Carolina,

Summertime is here and the North Carolina watermelon season will soon be in full swing. Since our last article, the North Carolina Watermelon Association hosted its 38th Annual Convention in Wrightsville Beach, NC. It was a great convention with lots of growers and industry leaders in attendance. We had a record number of young ladies to participate in our Queen Scholarship Pageant this year. At the convention, Miss Amy Arnold of Washington, NC was selected as our 2019 NC Watermelon Queen. Queen Amy is a graduate of NC State University with a degree in Horticulture Science. She has a true passion for agriculture coming from a farming family.

Queen Amy has been busy since her crowning in March and lots more activities are just around the corner. To ensure all the new state Queens a successful start to their season the National Watermelon Promotion Board hosted our annual queen training in Atlanta, GA. It was a great learning experience for Amy. Stephanie and Juliemar did an excellent job of helping the young ladies to better understand the industry and how to promote watermelon to any audience.

Queen Amy has already meet many consumers of all ages and shared the value of watermelon. Including a Food Lion grand opening in Huntersville NC, the NC Got to Be NC Festival and national tourism day events at two NC Welcome Center.

Queen Amy's trip to Charleston, SC for the Cooper River Bridge Run was a huge success. The South Carolina Watermelon Association, Ann Bryant and SC Queen Courtney were great hosts. The weather was beautiful and the queens were very excited to be a part of the run. Everyone worked hard sharing watermelon with runners at the conclusion of the race. Watermelon really does fuel athletes!

Queen Amy along with National Queen Katie Honeycutt were special guest at the NC Ag Products Dinner hosted by the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Service. During the reception and dinner Amy discussed NC agriculture with Commissioner Steve Troxler, several NC legislators, commodity leaders and farmers.

Queen Amy is excited about all the promotional events to come. We hope to see you during the season.

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



Ingles Market King Load Buyer at the NCWA Convention. Pictured Don Hiller, Jim Ray, Queen Katie and Johnny Bradley



Amy at NWPB Queen Training with Stephanie and Juliemar. Thank you for a great training



We were excited to have our National Queen Katie Honeycutt, Jason Hanselman from NWPB and Eleanor Bullock as a part of our convention



Food Lion Grand Opening – Huntersville, NC



2019 NCWA Convention Watermelon Queen Scholarship Pageant contestants



National Queen Katie, NC Commissioner of Agriculture Steve Troxler and Queen Amy at the NC Ag Products Dinner



Former NC Watermelon Queens welcome Miss Amy Arnold to the watermelon family



Queen Amy, James Brake-NCWA President, Kristina Brake, National Queen Katie and Nick Augostini-NCDA Marketing Director enjoying the NCDA Ag Products dinner



All the queens getting ready to distribute watermelon to the runners in Charleston, SC



Queen Amy sharing the watermelon message with consumers



Queen Amy greeting runners at the Cooper River Bridge Run. Watermelon fuels athletes!



Welcome to North Carolina



State Queens learning proper etiquette techniques at NWPB Queen Training in Atlanta



It was a fun day meeting consumers at the I-85 Welcome Center for National Tourism Day



Carmine Gallo and Queen Amy at Queen Training. Carmine shared the secret to giving the perfect media interview



Queen Amy at the Got to be NC Ag Festival

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# South Carolina Report

March found our South Carolina Queen, Courtney Kubu, at the North Carolina Watermelon Association Meeting in Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina, and the Commissioner's Cup BBQ in Columbia, South Carolina.

On April 4-6, the South Carolina Watermelon Association passed out 50,000 pounds or 34,000 cups of watermelon at the Cooper River Bridge Run in Charleston, South Carolina. Those in attendance were Nationals, North Carolina, Gulf Coast, MarDel, Illiana and Georgia. The Queens also attended the Expo for the runners and worked the booth for Harris Teeter who was the sponsor for the Bridge Run. Members of the NWPB, Stephanie Barlow, Juliemar Rosado, and Rebekah Dossett, also attended and helped with the distribution of watermelon at the main event.

Following the Bridge Run, Queen Courtney attended Queen Training in Atlanta Georgia on April 12-14. The sessions were very informative and well planned by the NWPB. Many thanks for their continued service to our queens.

May was a very busy month with the Beaufort 5k in Beaufort, South Carolina, Homeland Park Elementary School in Anderson, South Carolina, Robert Cashion Elementary School in Fountain Inn, South Carolina, The Myrtle Beach Garden Club at the Dunes Resort in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and Mitchell Road Elementary School in Greenville, South Carolina. Courtney also attended the Atlanta Braves 5k in Atlanta, Georgia with the Georgia Association and Nationals.

Monarch Elementary School in Simpsonville, South Carolina held their field day on June 4th, where over 1,200 students were served delicious slices of watermelon. Following the field day, Courtney and I traveled to Columbia, South Carolina for the Fire Flies Pro Baseball game where Courtney was honored to throw out the first pitch. June is packed with in-store promotions, TV appearances and the Hampton Watermelon Festival in Hampton, South Carolina.

The SCWA is very proud of our queen who is working diligently to promote our product. Courtney and I both wish our watermelon families a very productive season and hope to see you all soon.

Ann Bryant  
 SC Promotions Coordinator  
 abryant028@charter.net  
 ann.bryant@furman.edu  
 864-303-3995



Courtney, Eleanor and Katie at the North Carolina Watermelon Association in Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina.



Courtney was a hit with the runners in Beaufort, South Carolina.



Passing our watermelon slices at the Commissioner's Cup BBQ in Columbia, South Carolina.



Stacy Kubu helping with the cutting at Homeland Park Elementary in Anderson, South Carolina.



Queens getting ready to pass out pre-packaged cups of watermelon to runners at the Cooper River Bridge Run in Charleston, South Carolina.



Getting ready for the students at Robert Cashion Elementary in Fountain Inn, South Carolina.



Courtney proudly showing off the "Watermelon Fuels Athletes" slogan in Charleston, South Carolina.



Entertaining the Myrtle Beach Garden Club with a very well received presentation on watermelon.



Expo fun with Harris Teeter in Charleston, South Carolina.



Mitchell Road Elementary School in Greenville, South Carolina.



Girls having fun on beautiful Folly Beach, South Carolina.



Queens are ready for the Atlanta Braves 5k in Atlanta, Georgia.



Courtney was excited to receive an autographed copy of Carmine Gallo's new book at Queen Training.



Field Day at Monarch Elementary School in Simpsonville, South Carolina.



President of the SCWA, Jim Plunkett and wife Sue, helping with the Beaufort 5k in Beaufort, South Carolina.



Rusty Kinard and Mike Sullivan with Queen Courtney at the Fire Flies Baseball Game in Columbia, South Carolina.



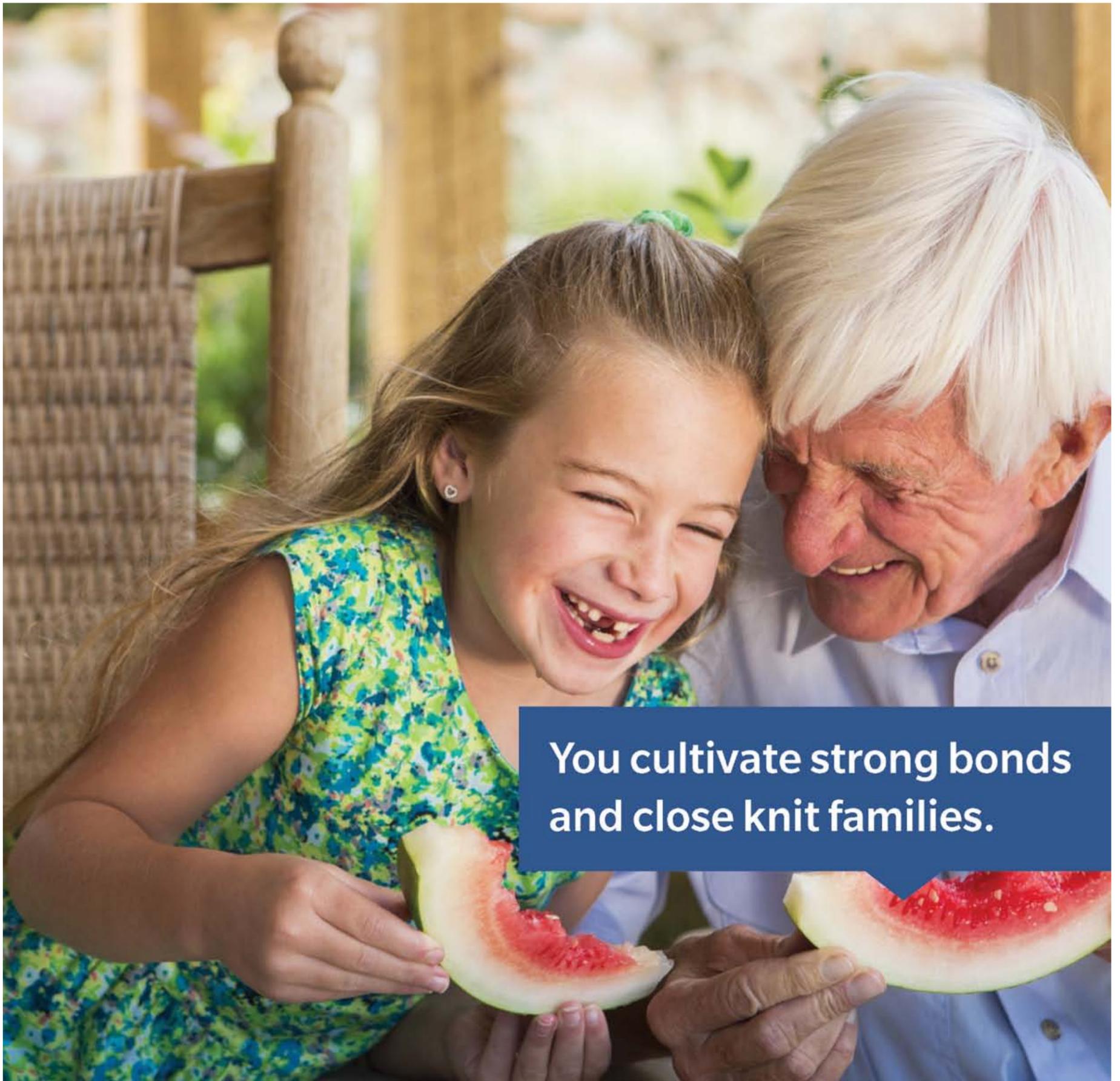
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# Texas Report

Summer greetings from a very warm south Texas! I hope this letter finds you and yours healthy, happy, and blessed.

Our 2018 Texas Watermelon Queen is Miss Hannah Crisp. She is from Marshall, Texas and attends East Texas Baptist University as a nursing major. Hannah began her year as the Texas Watermelon Queen with a trip to San Antonio, Texas for the Viva Fresh Expo. This event, put on by the Texas International Produce Association, allowed Hannah exposure to many industry suppliers and buyers. She also got to know more of our Texas Watermelon Association members and some of the National Watermelon Promotion Board folks.

After the expo in April, Hannah took a trip to Atlanta, Georgia for queen training. This training is put on by the NWPB and is invaluable to the new queens as they learn about key messages to put forth about watermelon like its versatility in recipes, the value of it, and the health benefits of watermelon. All of the facts that they learn can be used at in-store promotions, festivals, in their social media, and in their on-camera interviews. The National Watermelon Promotion Board also prepares the young ladies for these on-camera interviews by having Mr. Carmine Gallo and his wife, Vanessa Gallo, do practice interviews and then give the girls feedback about their strengths and also how to improve. Also, for the second year now, the ladies had a class in etiquette put on by Mrs. Erika Preval, who did a great job of explaining that they should always want to put their best selves out before the public and how to do just that. Also at training were two past National Watermelon Queens, Mrs. Brandi Harrison John and Miss Carla Penny. They gave the girls excellent information about what to expect as queens and how to handle different situations that may arise and also what is expected of them. Last, but not least, was Jordyn Twilley who was a past Mar-Del queen who talked about personal branding, image and communication skills. Overall it was a great weekend for the young ladies who walked away more confident in their roles as state queens.

The next trip that Hannah took was in May to the Rio Grande Valley for a farm tour of the Borders' farm and packing shed where she got to see first-hand how watermelons are harvested, sized and loaded into bins. The next day Hannah had her first in-store promotion at an HEB in Sharyland and as is usually the case, people were buying up the watermelon after having a sample. After the in-store promotion Hannah attended her first festival in Alamo, Texas and enjoyed meeting the local queens and other south Texans, while having fun helping with the barbeque cook-off.

It has been a great start to the year for Hannah and we both look forward to coming events like a trip to Toronto, a festival in Center, Texas and plenty of in-store promotions.

Have a wonderful, prosperous summer.

Fondest regards,  
Barbara Duda TWA Coordinator  
bcduda62@gmail.com



Ready for Queen training in Atlanta



This little girl was excited to meet the TWA Queen.



On-camera interview practice with Carmine Gallo



Saying "Hello" to Jody and Clint Wiggins at the Viva Fresh Expo



Group picture with Stephanie and Juliemar of the NWPB and Carmine and Vanessa Gallo



The NWPB booth with Stephanie Barlow and Juliemar Rosado



Receiving a signed copy of Mr. Gallo's book was a highlight.



TWA President, Jesse Wiggins and Paige at the TWA booth



Paige's first in-store promotion in San Antonio



Another in-store promotion and more happy customers



Paige helped more than one customer in picking out their watermelon.



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- (2) Cull Product Distribution Conveyors
- Dry Brush with Top Articulating Brushes
- (2) Melon Orientation Conveyors to A/V - 13'6"
- V-Belt Singulator
- Accu Vision Melon Sorter Model #1109
- Motor Control Panel, Platforms, Stairs & Catwalks

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**San Joaquin**  
**California**



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## Western Report



June 14, 2019

Summer is here and watermelon season is back in full swing here in the West. We have had quite a year already and it's just the beginning. Spring started out, as usual, with lighter production in Mexico, which carried through until late-Spring when we started seeing the market adjust as California fruit entered the market. Trucking continues to be a challenge, where we seem to face new regulations and difficulties every year. Yet, through all the difficulties and new challenges, we continue to grow as an industry.

Our spring here on the West Coast was uncharacteristically wet, pushing back planting dates and harvest projections region-wide. We have since had very warm weather which has picked us back up and put us back on track for the summer. The desert is rolling with steady volume and many shippers have started harvesting in the Bakersfield region, as well as farther north, making supplies more available and leveling out the prices.

We expect supply & demand to remain strong for the Fourth of July pull as well as the rest of the season. The Western Watermelon Association would like to wish you all a happy & successful National Watermelon Month. We are continuing to work hard to bring our delicious West Coast watermelons to the hands of watermelon lovers everywhere!

Sincerely,  
Danielle Ratto  
Western Watermelon Association  
[DanielleR@VGandSons.com](mailto:DanielleR@VGandSons.com)

For more information on the Western Watermelon Association, be sure to check out our website at: [www.westernwatermelon.org](http://www.westernwatermelon.org) and  "like" us on [facebook](https://www.facebook.com/westernwatermelon)



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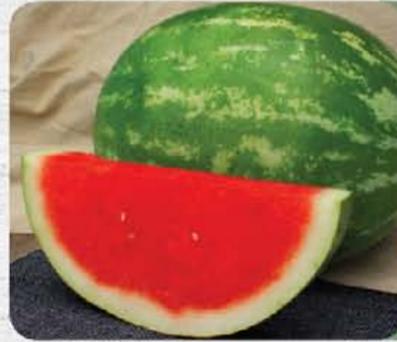
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Round-Oval Shape, 15-17 lbs.  
Super Crisp With High Brix  
Very Small Seed Pips  
Excellent Shelf Life



## KINGMAN

High Yield Potential  
Nice Round-Oval Shape  
Crisp Flesh and Tiny Pips  
Excellent Main Season Variety



## WALKER



High Brix; Excellent Flavor  
Strong, Vigorous Plant  
Excellent Uniformity  
Firm, Crisp Flesh

FOR SALE IN FL, GA, SC, NC, TN, AL, MS ONLY



## CAPTIVATION

Small Pip Size & Firm Texture  
Attractive, Dark Red Flesh  
Strong Disease Resistance  
Rich Crimson Sweet Skin



## CUT ABOVE

Crisp, Sweet Flesh  
Round-Oval Shape, 15-17 lbs  
High Brix, Small Seed Pips  
Excellent Shipping Capability



## TROUBADOUR

High Yield Potential  
Mid-Early Maturity  
Uniform Fruit, 14-17 lbs.  
High Brix With Deep Red Color

FOR SALE IN FL, GA, SC, NC, TN, AL, MS ONLY



## SIRIUS



Personal-Sized Fruit  
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Small to Medium Pip Size  
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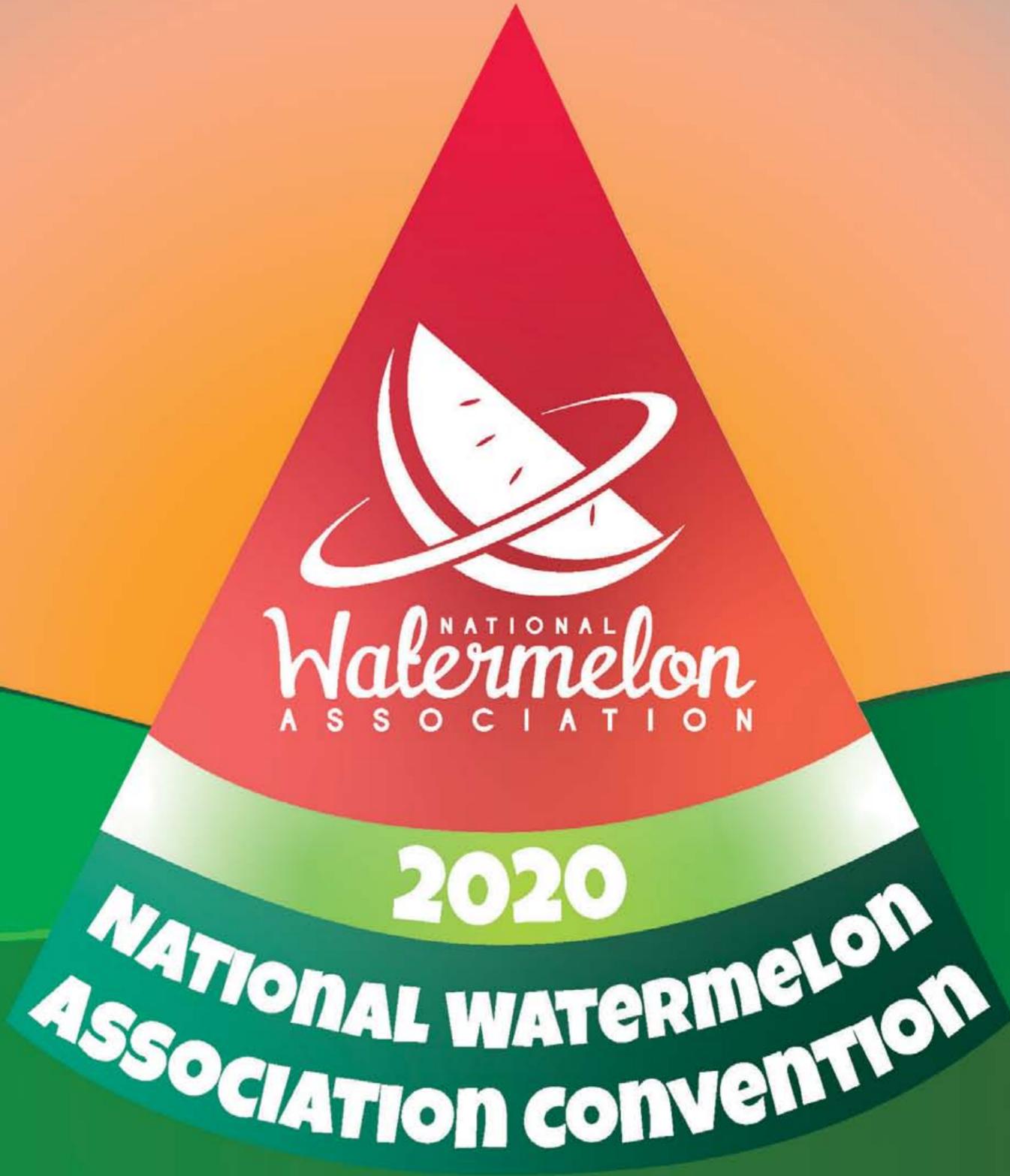
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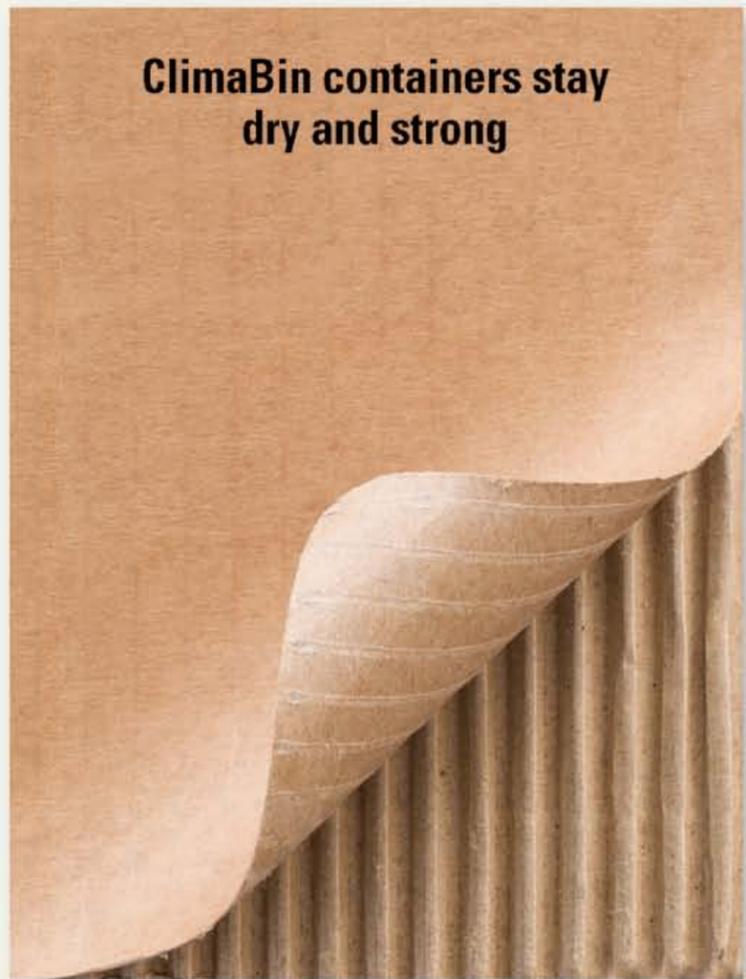
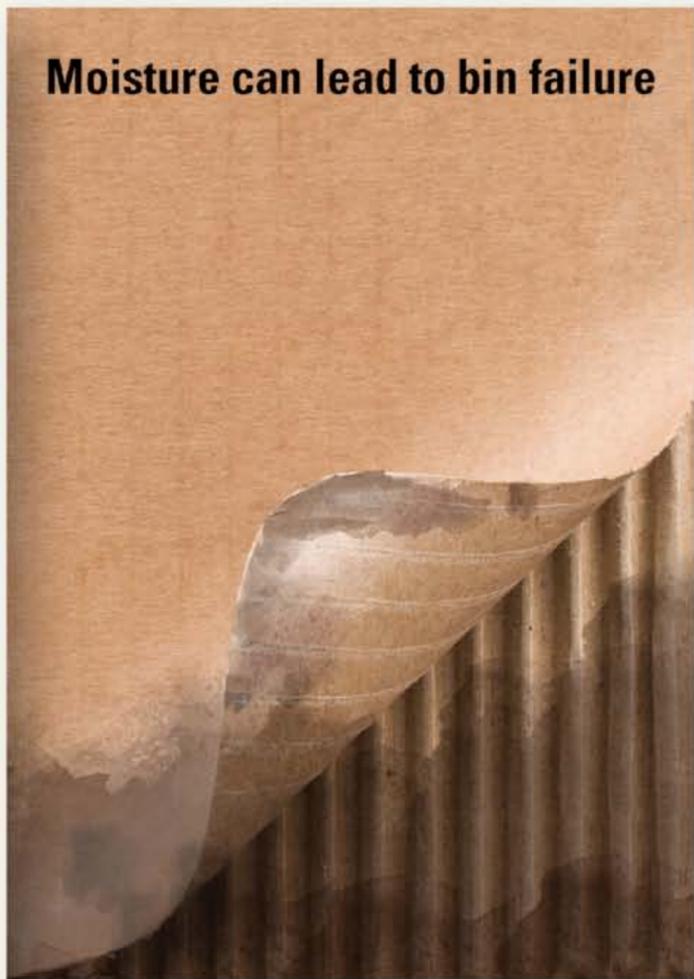
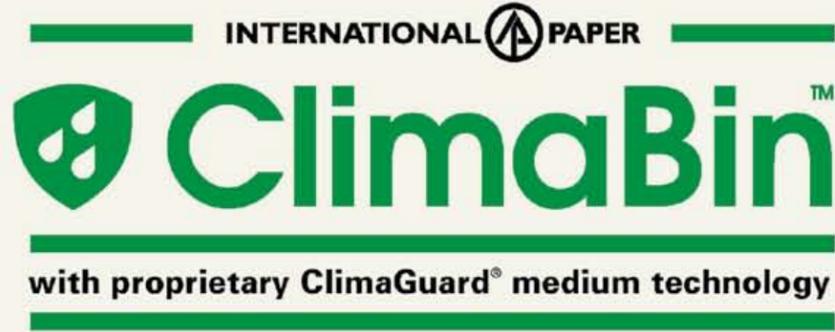
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