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Spring 2023

Official Newsletter of the NATIONAL WATERMELON ASSOCIATION



NATIONAL
Watermelon
ASSOCIATION

CROWNING NEW QUEENS



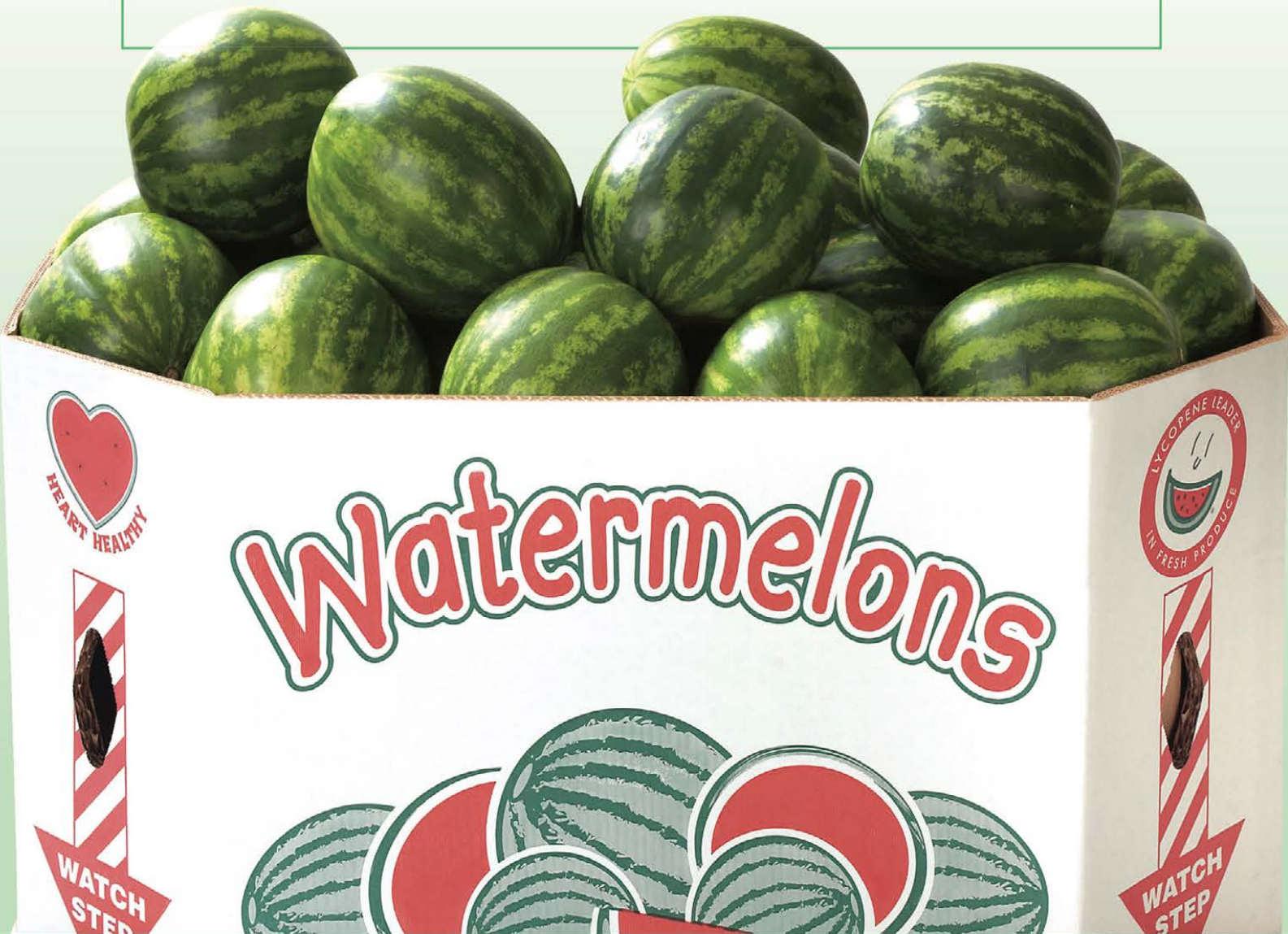


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Welcome to Spring 2023 here on the Vineline!

As we enter the new season, marked with Spring flowers, new growth and new beginnings, the Vineline is here to reflect that same feel. As the cover promises, we’re crowning new Queens. We’re celebrating the crowning of our new state watermelon queens, and our new National Watermelon Queen, Olivia Johnson, but also our new Promotions Coordinator, Mrs. Kerri Wiggins. The transition to new queens paving the way for a great season is so fitting as we come into Springtime.

This period of transition was a notable one for the Queen Program, but also for me personally, as I begin this new chapter in my life as part of the watermelon association, stepping into the big shoes of retiring Executive Director, Bob Morrissey. This past National Convention was my first as a part of the National Watermelon Association staff, and I was inspired to see how our team came together. The work of our year-round team, amplified by the support of members, partners, former queens, sponsors, vendors... it is certainly inspiring.

Continuing with our focus on the Queen Program, what could be more inspiring at this year’s NWA National Convention in Asheville, than the legacy left by our retiring Promotions Coordinator, Eleanor Bullock. Eleanor’s retirement was the culmination of 40 years serving this industry, marked with stories and testimonials from decades of watermelon queens. The profound impact left by Eleanor and Bob on the industry and Association is an inspiring call to service. And as we look to the future, Kerri is the perfect person to carry the torch- bringing her cheerful approach, a respect for the history, but also while shining as her own genuine self. She’ll clearly be an asset to the ladies she works with in the years to come. I’ve been taught that replacement is a virtue in any organization- that finding a successor is key to the survival of an organization. Living up to this virtue is part of why this Association has been around for more than one hundred years.

We’re looking forward to another great year with these newly crowned queens, and a great watermelon season with our members and friends in the industry. We’re optimistic about the future, and taking inspiration from the energy and enthusiasm of the newly crowned, as well as from the legacy of those who have passed the torch.

Thank you for your dedication and example, for your warm welcome, and for marching into Spring with the queens and me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'GFS', is written over a faint background of watermelon slices and vines.

George F. Szczepanski
Executive Director
National Watermelon Association



National Report

Hello Spring,

Queen Bethany welcomed 2023 with open arms and hit the ground running into convention season. She served the National Watermelon Association with such grace and kindness, and truly embraced the watermelon industry as a whole. She will be an advocate for the watermelon industry forever. We know her future is bright, and she will face whatever comes her way with a beautiful smile intact!

She attended the TEXAS CONVENTION which was held in McAllen, TX November 10th-13th. Queen Bethany did an HEB in store promotion of watermelon. She visited Speedling Incorporated with sister queens. She was introduced to the Rio Grande and got to see the US/ Mexico border while doing a farm tour. We thank you TWA for having us, it's always an amazing learning time. We enjoyed welcoming new queen sister, Savannah Carr.

The next visit was the SOUTH CAROLINA CONVENTION, Queen Bethany met the South Carolina watermelon family in Hilton Head, SC. We were honored to enjoy some amazing speakers and music by The Embers with Craig Woodard. So many fun activities but always the best time adding a new watermelon sister, Kayden Douglas.

And on to the ILLIANA CONVENTION...Hello French Lick, you are always a great time hosted by IWA. Seed spits, fellowship, promotion wear and bowling concluded the first night. After several great speakers, a sweet tribute to Mrs. Eleanor and Mrs. Anita Field. We then celebrated by adding a new IWA queen, Miss Abby Niehaus.

GEORGIA CONVENTION was next, it was held in St. Simmons, Georgia. The GWA planned a lady's retreat with an opportunity to attend a cooking experience with Johnny Carino. The meal included watermelon in every dish, it was so amazing just like the rest of convention. We enjoyed a special guest speaker, commissioner of Agriculture Tyler Harper. Welcome to our new GWA Queen, Charley Lollis.

MAR-DEL CONVENTION theme was Groovy baby and groovy it! We were honored to hear our new NWA Executive Director, George Szczepanski, where he addresses the association for the first time. Queen Bethany got to help other queens judge the Mar-Del King Competition and the lucky winner was Mr. Dave Pino. Congratulations to the new 2023 queen, Brielle Carter!

GULF COAST CONVENTION was a bittersweet last promotion before nationals for Queen Bethany. The convention was held at none other than the Beau Rivage in Biloxi, MS. Tailgating fun, great speakers, corn hole tournaments, and a successful, annual auction was had by all. We ended the beautiful banquet by crowning queen, Miss Juliana Singley.

Our 2023 NATIONAL CONVENTION was a record breaker on many levels! The turnout was second to none, and oh my at all the queens! We said farewell to our past Executive Director, Bob Morrissey and Mrs. Betsy, we then honored Mrs. Eleanor in the best possible way with the majority of her queens by her side. Lastly, a final farewell to our 2022 National Queen, Bethany Barfield. Farewells always lead to hellos, and we welcome aboard Mr. George Szczepanski, Kerri Wiggins, and our 2023 National Watermelon Queen Olivia Johnson.

The National Watermelon Queen program looks forward to a very successful, fun and full of delicious watermelon touring year. We love this industry and everyone in it. Thank you all for supporting us, we are proud advocates of everything watermelon.

Sincerely,

2022 National Queen Bethany Barfield, Past Promotions Coordinator Eleanor Bullock, 2023 National Watermelon Queen Olivia Johnson, Promotions Coordinator Kerri Wiggins 2022 National Watermelon Queen, Bethany Barfield wants to say a heartfelt thank you to all of the sponsors that made this past year possible.

2022/2023 SPONSORS:
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Please email us for any promotion opportunities or call us for any and all information.

Kerri L. Wiggins
936-488-9060
or email
Nationalwatermelonqueen@gmail.com
Kerri.wiggins72@hotmail.com



Visiting the Texas and Mexico border



National Watermelon Association Queen Bethany w/Michelle Martin of AgMag



National Watermelon Association Queen Bethany with Ben Horton of Rio Fresh Farms



National Watermelon Association Queen Bethany with visiting state sister queens and contestants of Texas Watermelon Association



Mrs. Ann Bryant, SCWA Promotions Coordinator w/SC Watermelon Queen, Samantha Nichols, National Watermelon Association Queen Bethany Barfield and FL Watermelon Queen, Amber Boykin



Mr. Rusty Kinard, Mrs. Ann Bryant and Mrs. Eleanor Bullock



National Watermelon Association Queen Bethany having fun during the SCWA 2023 Auction



Mr. Bob Morrissey, National Watermelon Association Queen Bethany and Mrs. Betsy Morrissey



Queen Bethany with her sister state queens at SCWA Convention Represented associations here are FLWA, GCWA, SCWA, NWA and NCWA



Mr. Jason Hanselman, National Watermelon Association Queen Bethany and Mr. Mark Arney



National Watermelon Association Queen Bethany at IWA crowning of Miss Abby Niehaus



Recognition and gifts for Mrs. Anita Fields and Mrs. Eleanor Bullock



Illiana's Promotion Coordinator, Lana Brothers and IWA President, Cody Smith w/ National Watermelon Association Queen Bethany Barfield



Kerri L. Wiggins, National Watermelon Association Queen Bethany and Mrs. Eleanor Bullock



Illiana Fun w/ IWA Queen Gabby and Mr. Kelly Tyner



Let's Bowl



Seedway - Bobby Arellano w/NWQ Bethany Barfield, FL Queen, Amber Boykin, TX Queen, Olivia Johnson, Illiana Queen, Gabby German, SC Queen, Samantha Nichols and NC Queen, Emory New



Gowan Texas Guys w/ National Watermelon Association Queen Bethany Barfield



TriEst Rob Borchardt and NWQ Bethany Barfield



Queen Bethany at a HEB Store Promotion in McAllen, TX



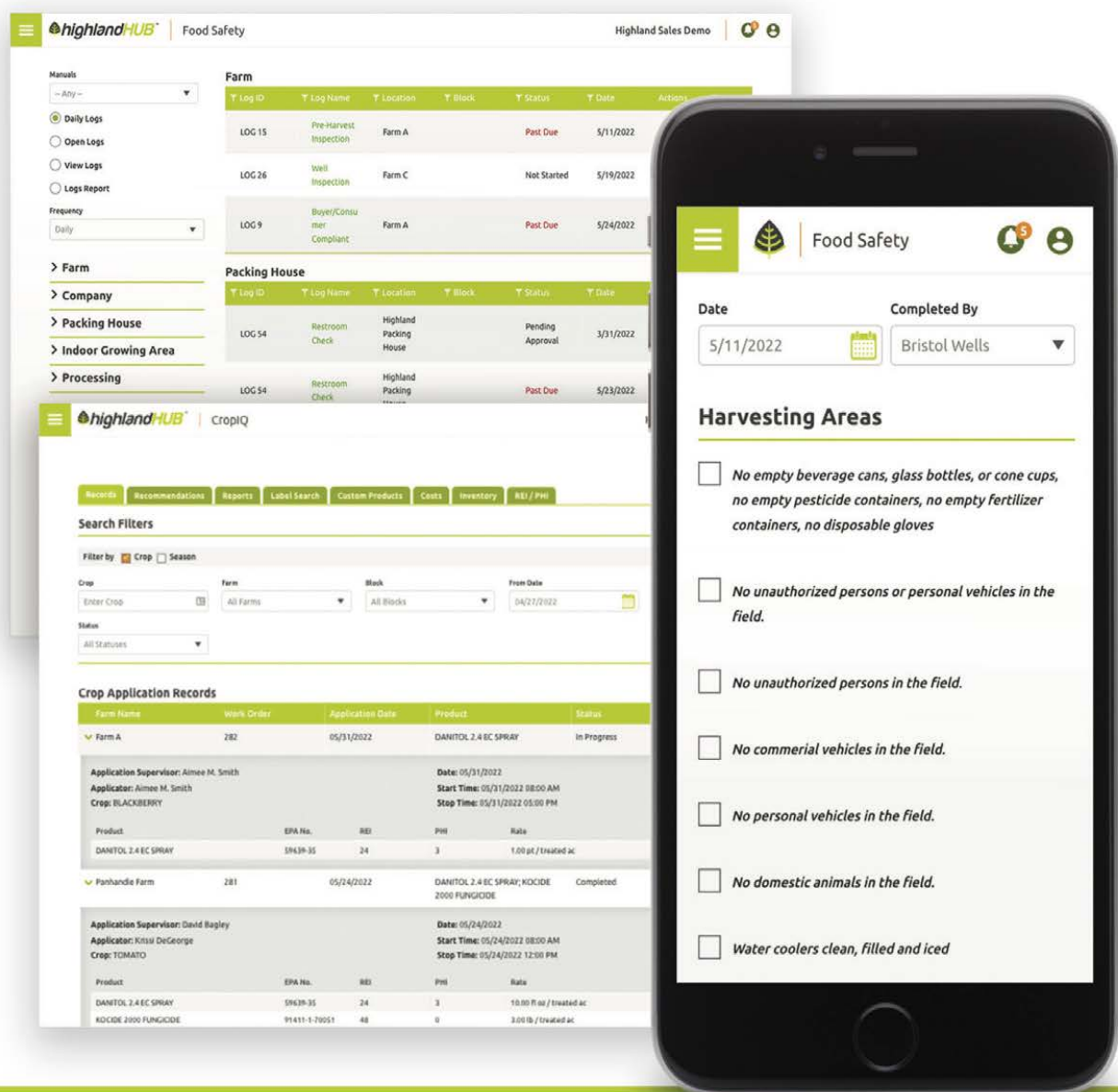
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National Pictures



A Queen Favorite, Mrs. Kendra Kennedy



Bethany congratulating 2023 GWA Queen Charley



National Watermelon Association Queen and Promotions Coordinator, Terra Eby



GWA Queen, Adahy Pritchett and visiting Queens to the GWA Convention



Heather Raulerson and Bethany at Ladies Retreat with Johnny Carino



Crowned the 2023 MDWA Queen, Brielle Carter



Mrs. Eleanor, National Watermelon Association Queen Bethany, Gulf Coast Watermelon Association Queen Adahy and Mrs. Dawn Cheplick



Love for Kel and Bo Gibson



Royalty



Mr. and Mrs. Rob Gibson showing their love and appreciation for National Watermelon Association Queen Bethany with the purchase of her new earrings



Groovy time in MarDel



Congratulations MDWA King, Dave Pino Great fund raiser for the association



Visiting Queens with Adahy and Mr. Ross Chastain



Mr. George's first convention and our new Executive Director



Tailgating with the Queens



Heather Raulerson, Jesse Wiggins and FWQ Amber

Clifton Seed Company

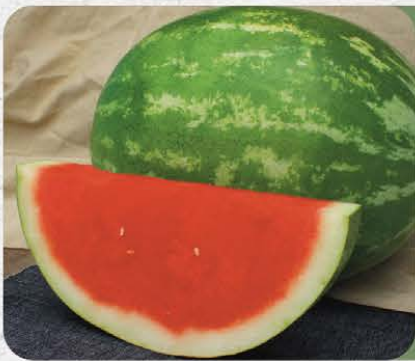
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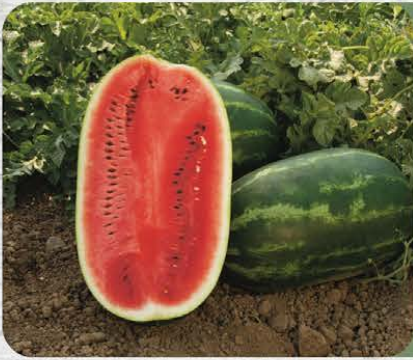
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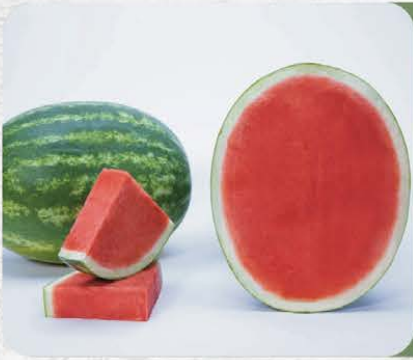
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National Pictures



GCWA Fun with NWPB



All the love with the Queens



Terry Parrish and Jeff Garret with Clifton Seed

Paul and Queen Olivia going toe to toe



Kendra and Amber sandwich



NWPB & NWA friends



South Carolina Watermelon Association Queen Samantha with GCWA President, Trey Smith



Corn hole tournament champs



State Queens and National Watermelon Association Queen at NWA Convention



Gulf Coast Watermelon Association Queen, Madison and Promotions Coordinator, Sarah Jane Levine



National Watermelon Association Queen and Gulf Coast Watermelon Association Queen Julianna Singley



Limor Golan of Hazerra Seed



SC Queen, Samantha Nichols and Florida native and friend to watermelon industry, Mr. Billy Smith



All the Queen love



NWA ROYALTY



Gifts for the Queen

SAVE THE DATE!

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FEBRUARY 21ST-25TH 2024



SCOTTSDALE



Arizona



National Pictures



Gibson family bearing gifts



National 2023 Watermelon Queen, Miss Olivia Johnson, Runner-up, Miss Emory New and Second Runner-up, Samantha Nichols



Bo Gibson and Zayde Wiggins



Auction fun



Executive Director, George Szczepanski and Queen Olivia



Ross, Mr. John and (L) Grayson James Izzo and (R) Waverly Scarlett Izzo



Mr. Bob Morrissey and Queen Bethany



Mrs. Eleanor and her two best friends, Mrs. Jane Hussey and Ms. Anita Field celebrating her retirement



Mr. Ray and Miss Filomena



Beautiful Bethany



Miss Zayne Klaire Wiggins



Trey and Kaden



Jesse Wiggins with Future Farm Leader, Miss Bailey Leger



Fun @ Asheville w/ Miss Maya



Mr. Bob and Jackson



Mrs. Eleanor and all her queens including her daughter Lori Worley

Florida Report

Greetings from the Sunshine State of FLORIDA!

The month of December, Queen Amber attended the IFAS Suwanee Valley Watermelon Institute Meeting in Fannie Springs where she spoke about all the things that she has learned this past year in our watermelon industry. Thank you to Bob Hochmuth for inviting us to this wonderful event.

These past few months in 2023, our 2022 Florida Watermelon Queen Amber Boykin has had the opportunity to be able to attend some of the state conventions. Thanks to South Carolina, Mar-Del and Gulf Coast Watermelon Associations for all of your hospitality to attend this year conventions. Congratulations to all the newly crowned 2023 Watermelon Queens at these conventions. A big thank you to our sponsors for sponsoring us to attend these conventions; Gibson Produce, Sun State Produce, Fresh Pro, Farmwey and Healthy Harvest.

Our first two weeks in February, we were at the Florida State Fair in Tampa kicking off the opening breakfast with “Fresh from Florida”. The breakfast is a showcase of Florida Agriculture! Many attendees enjoyed a slice of watermelon, handed out recipes cards, activity sheets and stickers to all the kids that attended.

Queen Amber has done an outstanding job being our 2022 Florida Watermelon Queen. She has represented our industry with great pride, dignity, and is a hard worker. She has loved every minute this past year as our 2022 Florida Watermelon Association Public Ambassador. Can’t wait to see and good luck Queen Amber on your next adventures.

Also, these past few months, our newly crowned 2023 Alyssa has had the opportunity to do a couple promotions starting off with the JDRF One Walk. This event was a walk to raise money to help all the kids with Type 1 Diabetes. This event had a very special place in my heart as my granddaughter was diagnosed at the age of 10 with Type 1 Diabetes. Thank you to the Florida Watermelon Association for your donation to this event.

Our next event Queen Alyssa and I traveled to Fort Myers for the Edison Festival of Light Parade, Southwest Florida Largest and Longest Running Festival. With thousands of spectators watching the magnificent parade everyone enjoyed it all. Thank you to Sawyer Smith for driving and sponsoring us to this event. A fun evening promoting Florida Watermelons.

As our seasons begins, if you would like Queen Alyssa for any appearance and promotions, please reach out to Debra Harrison – Promotions Coordinator.

Wishing everyone a successful Watermelon season this year!

Debra Harrison –
Florida Watermelon Promotions Coordinator
Email: debra@flfwa.com
Cellular: (863) 633-8306



Queen Amber with Bob Hochmuth at the IFAS Suwanee Meeting in Fannie Springs.



Beautiful Hilton Head Resort at the South Carolina Watermelon Convention.



Thank you Bob and Rob Gibson with Gibson Produce for sponsoring us to the Mar-Del Watermelon Convention.



Congratulations to Miss Brielle Carter for being chosen as the 2023 Mar-Del Watermelon Queen.



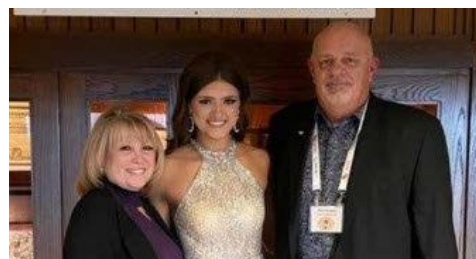
Queen Amber with Chef Justin Timineri at opening breakfast at the Florida State Fair.



our beautiful booth at the “Florida State Fair”.



Congratulations to Julianna Singley for being selected as the 2023 Gulf Coast Watermelon Queen.



Beautiful couple Paul and Jackie Sawyer with Queen Amber at the National Watermelon Convention in Asheville, NC. Thanks for all your support this past year.



Our beautiful 2022 Florida Watermelon Queen Amber Boykin in Asheville, North Carolina.



Thank you John, Trey and Hami of Melon 1 for the beautiful earrings!



Queen Amber along with FWA Officers and Chad Chastain in Asheville, NC.



Congratulations to first runner-up Emory New – North Carolina, 2023 National Watermelon Queen Olivia Johnson – Texas, second runner-up Samantha Nichols – South Carolina.



Queen Alyssa walking with Macie team at the Junior Diabetes Research Foundation Miles of Hope.



Thank you to Florida Watermelon Association for being a sponsor at this event.



Queen Alyssa enjoying visiting with the crew of Wink News Weather Meteorologists.



Queen Alyssa along with Sawyer Smith and Madison Vogelbach at the Edison Festival Light Parade.

Georgia Report

Greetings from Georgia!

The Georgia Watermelon Association is proud to report on a successful annual conference in St. Simons this year. The King & Prince Beach and Golf Resort was the setting and host hotel for all activities throughout the weekend! This year the GWA rolled out a special program for the ladies – Worldly Watermelon Cuisine and Wine Tasting with Johnny Carino! The function was fabulous and thank you to Kendra Kennedy for helping organize everything!

The GWA Annual Convention had a great attendance this year with 250 growers and watermelon agribusinesses who joined us for the weekend. The live auction was a great success raising over \$300,000. A BIG THANKS to our load donors, buyers, and other auction supporters for this 2023 event. This association will thrive due to your support and passion for the industry and we’re excited about the upcoming year. Also, thanks for the support given by our CORPORATE sponsors for the meeting; it would not be possible without your generous donations. Congratulations to our 2023 Georgia Watermelon Queen, Miss Charley Lollis! Charley is from Perry, Georgia. She graduated from Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College with a bachelor’s degree in Agricultural Communication and a minor in Agribusiness. Charley is employed as a Territory Sales Manager for AgBiome.

Charley has already begun her year of promoting Georgia watermelons. She looks forward to retail visits, Queen Training with the NWPB, farm visits, and many other events throughout the spring and summer months. Be sure to follow Charley on Instagram @gawatermelonqueen!

If you are interested in booking our new Georgia Watermelon Queen, please call ahead to schedule a date for our 2023 tour by contacting Dawn Chepick at 706-845-8575 or dchepick@asginfo.net.

Looking forward to seeing you all this summer!

Sincerely,
Dawn Chepick, Promotions Coordinator
706-845-8575
dchepick@asginfo.net



2023 GWA Queen, Charley Lollis



Charley helps kick off Open House for the Summer Culinary Kids Program.



2022 GWA Queen, Charley prepares for Promotion wear and speech.



“Straighten that crown and move forward like the Queen you are!”



First time watermelon promotions are VERY special!



Gulf Coast Report

What a great beginning to the year!

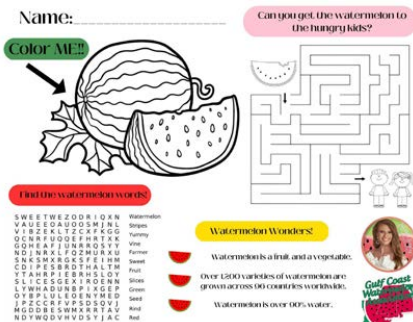
The Gulf Coast Watermelon Association just completed our 2023 Convention. The weekend was filled with our watermelon friends and family. Updates to our Executive Committee include Katie Eubanks, previous Queen and Queen Coordinator. The 2024 Convention will be here before you know it! Mark your calendar for February 9-10, 2024.

Congratulations to our newly crowned 2023 Gulf Coast Watermelon Queen Miss Julianna Singley of Newton, Alabama. Julianna is a student at Enterprise State Community College majoring in MultiMedia. We are happy to welcome her to our watermelon family!

Julianna attended her first watermelon promotion at Wicksburg Elementary School for Read Across America Week. She is looking forward to attending Queen Training hosted by the National Watermelon Promotion Board. Looking ahead into the year, Queen Julianna will be visiting festivals, farm stands, schools, farm tours, and much more. Would you like to book the Gulf Coast Watermelon Queen? Please email Sarah Jane at gulfcoastwatermelonqueen@gmail.com to schedule a promotion. Queen Juliana can hardly wait for her busy year as the 2023 Gulf Coast Watermelon Queen!

Be sure to check out and keep up with our queen on the Gulf Coast Watermelon Association Facebook and Instagram pages to see all of our watermelon promotions. We wish everyone a successful watermelon season!

Many Blessings,
Sarah Jane Levine
Gulf Coast Watermelon Association
Promotion Coordinator
(337) 348-4465 gulfcoastwatermelonqueen@gmail.com



Illiana Report

Greetings from Illiana!

Preparations are underway for what we hope will be a prosperous growing season in Indiana and Illinois!

The time has come for Queen Gabby to give up her crown and we are so proud of the way she has served our association. Gabby shared her passion for the industry with the judges at the National Watermelon Association convention and we are excited to share she was named Miss Jubilee in Asheville, North Carolina! Thank you, Gabby, for an amazing year. We know you will do great things!

Our 33rd annual convention took place in January at the beautiful French Lick Resort in French Lick, Indiana with record-breaking attendance! It was a wonderful weekend filled with good food, great friends, and fun. As an association we came together to raise money for two very worthy causes, The Ronald McDonald House in Evansville, Indiana, and the Southern Indiana chapter of Make-A-Wish. We also had the privilege to honor two important women, Ms. Anita Field and Ms. Eleanor Bullock with Lifetime Service Awards for their impact on our association and the industry as a whole. Even better, these two friends got to celebrate together! Lastly, we crowned our new 2023 Illiana Watermelon Queen, Miss Abby Niehaus of Bruceville, Indiana. Queen Abby is a Construction Management major at Murray State University and will graduate this May. We are happy to welcome her to the watermelon family!

New board members include Dwayne Nowaskie, Whitney Horrall, Katie Ellermann Niehaus, and Madison Heiden Niehaus.

Of course, our convention could not go on without the help of our wonderful sponsors. A huge THANK YOU to our platinum sponsors, CorrChoice, Knox County Farm Bureau, Service Trans Inc, Mouzin Brothers Farms, International Paper, Seedway, Superior Ag, and Frey Farms.

We look forward to a wonderful growing season!

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



Thank you Gabby for a great year



Our 2023 IWA queen contestants



Asheville, NC explorations at the Biltmore



Lifetime Service Award winners, Ms. Anita Field and Ms. Eleanor Bullock



National seed spit champion



IWA Convention fun



Introducing the 2023 Illiana Watermelon Queen, Miss Abby Niehaus



Ready for the evening gown portion of the competition



Congratulations Abby!

Mar-Del Report

They always say time flies when you are having fun. We can not believe the watermelon season is quickly approaching once again! Our 2022 promotion year was a success! Queen Jenna was able to represent the Mar- Del Watermelon Association at a couple end of the year promotions. She attended the Maryland Agriculture dinner. It is always rewarding to see the strong presence of the department of agriculture in both Maryland and Delaware.

Mar-Del Watermelon Association kicked off their annual convention weekend with a Peace. Love. Watermelon theme! It was a successful weekend and a good time was had by all! We wished Queen Jenna the best of luck at Nationals and thanked her for doing a wonderful job as the 2022 Mar-Del Watermelon Queen. Jenna did her last walk as the Mar-Del Queen before crowning our 2023 Mar-Del Watermelon Queen, Miss Brielle Carter.

We are excited to announce our 2023 Mar-Del Watermelon Queen Miss Brielle Carter. Brielle is 19 years old and currently attending the University of Delaware where she is majoring in Landscape Architecture and her hobbies include reading, working out, drawing, going outside, and spending time with friends and family. We can not wait to see what the 2023 promotion year holds for Brielle.



Introducing our 2023 Mar-Del Watermelon Queen, Miss Brielle Carter.



Thankful for all the watermelon support at the 2023 National Watermelon Convention.



Queen Jenna ready to compete in evening gown at the 2023 National Watermelon Convention.



Queen Jenna ready to compete in interviews.



Queen Jenna showing off an item in the auction.



Peace. Love. Watermelon at the 2023 Mar-Del Watermelon Convention.



All state queens and National Queen with Chad Chastain.



North Carolina Report

What a fun year it has been for our NC Watermelon Queen Miss Emory New. Emory was the perfect watermelon ambassador and we would like to thank her for her dedication this season. Always happy to be promoting watermelons no matter the time or place. We must also congratulate Queen Emory for being selected as the first runner up in the NWA Queen in Asheville, NC. Emory wanted an opportunity to say thank you to the North Carolina Watermelon Association and all of her supporters this year.

Letter from Queen Emory:

Dear North Carolina Watermelon Association and NWA Members,

Thank you for one of the best years of my life! This year has been full of learning, advocating, fun, and watermelon. I have so much to be grateful for when I reflect on this year. During each of my travels and events, I was overwhelmed with the hospitality and love shown to me across the state of North Carolina and beyond. I have participated in watermelon festivals, TV promotions, in-store promotions, farm visits, farmers markets, out-of-state promotions, and so much more! I have learned so much about watermelons through my talks with farmers, consumers, and industry professionals.

Thank you to everyone for your willingness to answer my questions and teach me. I am thankful for the unique experiences I have had to promote my favorite fruit across the state and nation. It has been an immense pleasure to serve this association. I am so blessed to have found a platform that combines my love for people and agriculture. I cannot wait to see where my passion for watermelon and agriculture leads me in the future.

Thank you,
Emory New

We have enjoyed attending other state conventions this fall and winter. We want to thank the Texas, South Carolina and MarDel Watermelon Associations for their hospitality. Be sure to check out our next article for scenes from the 40th Annual North Carolina Watermelon Association Convention.

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



Queen Emory with sister Queens and contestants at the South Carolina Watermelon Convention.



Getting ready for the auction at the South Carolina Watermelon Convention



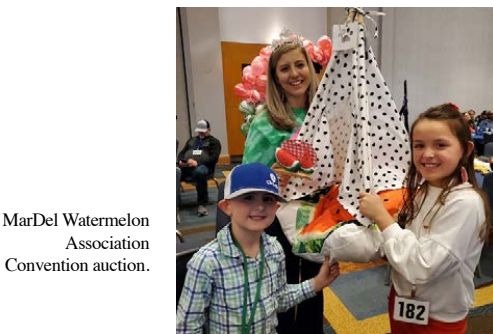
Mr. Freddie Ellis from Sun Up Produce and Queen Emory at the South Carolina Watermelon Convention. Mr. Ellis purchased the beautiful bag for Emory.



Queen Emory and NCSU Professor Dr. Jonathan Schultheis having a little fun at the MarDel Watermelon Association Convention.



Queens Bethany, Amber and Emory riding the groovy bus at the MarDel Watermelon Association Convention.



MarDel Watermelon Association Convention auction.



Juliemar and Stephanie from the NWPB having fun with the Queens at the MarDel Watermelon Association Convention.



Queen Emory enjoying the views of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Asheville, NC during the National Watermelon Association Convention.



Queen Emory getting ready for the National Watermelon Association Convention.



Agriculture tour of Biltmore for the Queens in Asheville, NC.



On stage promotion wear competition at the National Watermelon Association Convention.



Thank you to the NC Watermelon Association and Howell Farming Company for purchasing this beautiful necklace for Queen Emory.



NC Watermelon Association members enjoying the National Watermelon Association Convention.



Congratulations to our Queen Emory for being named first runner up in the 2023 National Watermelon Queen. Also congratulations to Olivia Johnson and Samantha Nichols.



Queen Emory with Sue Colucci from Clifton Seed.



NC Watermelon Association members congratulating Queen Emory after the banquet at the National Watermelon Association Convention.

South Carolina Report

What a wonderful start to 2023. The SC Convention was a huge success and we are happy to welcome Miss Ansley Grace Still as the new 2023 South Carolina Watermelon Queen.

At the National Convention, Miss Samantha Nichols, 2022 South Carolina Watermelon Queen placed Second in the competition in Asheville, NC. She did a tremendous job for SC and we want to wish Samantha all of the best in her future endeavors. She will forever be a part of our SC family.

On March 10-13, Ansley Grace traveled to Wilmington, NC, and the North Carolina Watermelon Convention. A great time was had by all of those in attendance and we look forward to working with the new North Carolina Queen, Gracy Peterson.

Ansley is looking forward to starting her year off with the upcoming Queen Training in Orlando, Florida, followed by many more events promoting our industry as a public relations ambassador.

Ann Bryant
SC Promotions Coordinator
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Texas Report

Hello everyone. I hope this letter finds you all well and your growing season coming along as it should be. May you all have the best year yet.

These last few months have been busy for Queen Olivia as she has continued to do her social media posts to highlight the fact that watermelon can be enjoyed all year long. Her #Melon Mondays and #Watermelon Wednesdays have been informative and fun. At the end of January she and I took a trip to St. Simons Island, Georgia to attend their convention at the beautiful King and Prince Beach Resort. We enjoyed visiting with the other state queens and coordinators and GWA members that attended. Thank you CorrChoice for sponsoring this trip for Olivia. Next Olivia attended the Gulf Coast Watermelon Convention at the Beau Rivage Resort and Casino and had a wonderful time. Thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Luke Brown for sponsoring her trip.

Throughout the past year, Olivia prepared herself to compete in the National Watermelon Association pageant and in February we traveled to Asheville, North Carolina to the convention. It was a wonderful weekend at the Omni Grove Park Inn. Before the competition started, we visited the Biltmore Estate and enjoyed a farm tour there. Learning about their self-sustaining farming operation was very interesting. As I mentioned before, Olivia showed her passion and commitment to the industry throughout the year. Before the competition she stated, “It has been a privilege and honor to represent the Texas Watermelon Association. This has been the best year of my life and I hope I have shown my dedication to this industry. I hope to make Texas proud as I compete at Nationals.” Well, Olivia certainly did that. After the speeches, impromptu questions, promotion wear, interviews, and evening gown competition Olivia was crowned the 2023 National Watermelon Queen. I know she will continue to give her all to the many industry people, companies, and associations that come together to make up the NWA.

It has been a delight to see Queen Olivia interact and thrive in this job and I wish her all the best.

Until next time, God bless you and yours.

Sincerely,
Barbara Duda TWA Coordinator
bcduda62@gmail.com



Beautiful queens at the Georgia Convention



On the beach at St. Simon's Island



With Ross Chastain



Ready for the Gulf Coast Convention!



Lovely ladies enjoying the GCWA convention



Olivia enjoyed the beauty of the Biltmore Estate farm.



In front of the Biltmore Estate



Olivia thanks Kendall Duke and Ranell Borders for her bracelet.



Ready for speeches



Giving her autograph to a sweet girl



Congratulations to all!



Past Texas Queens, Kendall Brown, Paige Hudson, and Stephanie Reissner wish Olivia all the best.



Olivia's family and friends are so proud.

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