

the

vineline

Summer 2021

Official Newsletter of the NATIONAL WATERMELON ASSOCIATION



NATIONAL
Watermelon
ASSOCIATION



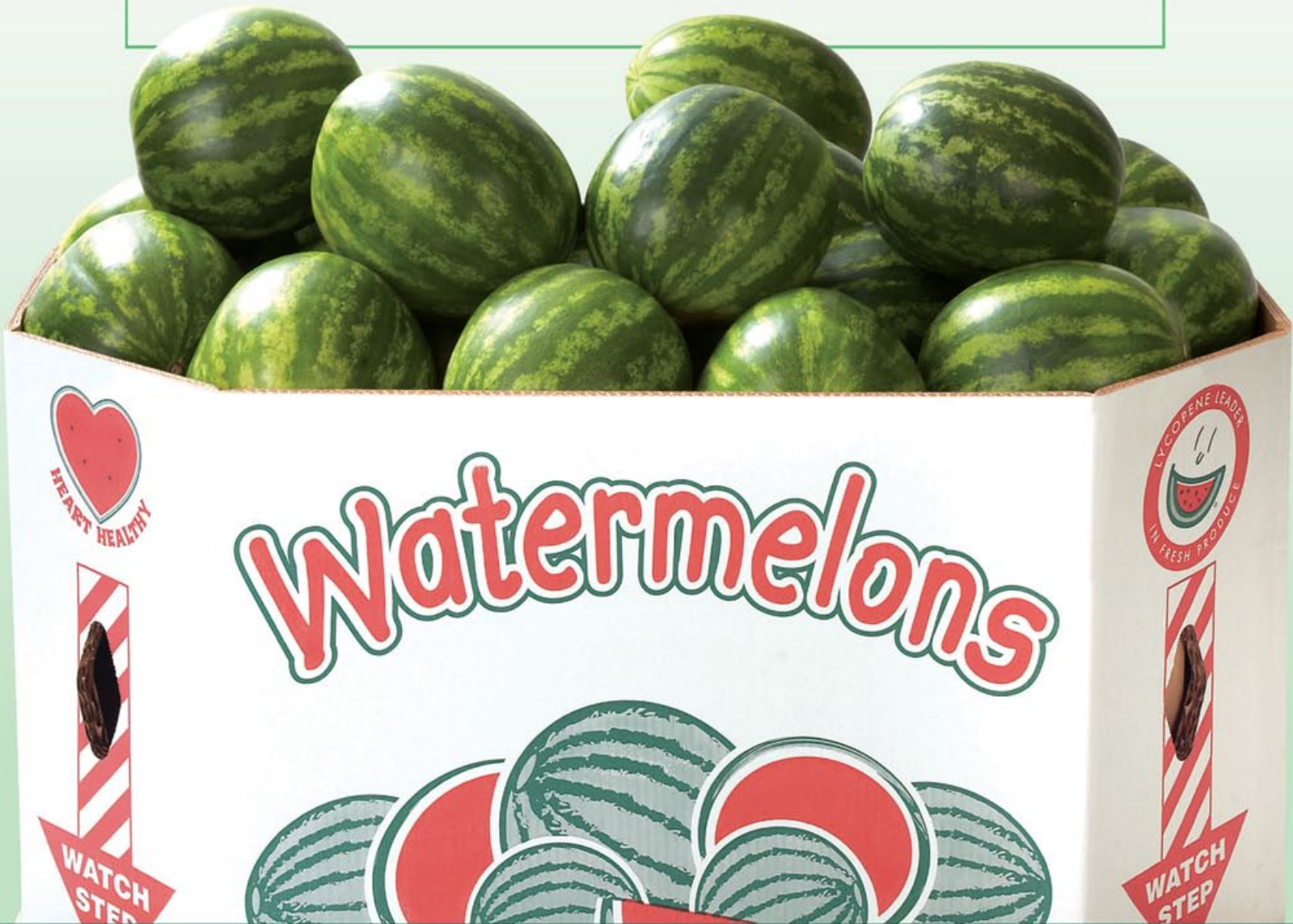


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National Report

Our National Queen Paige Huntington, and Chaperone Kerri have been quite busy since our last printing.

March 26,27 they were in Dallas, Texas for the Viva Fresh Produce show. They were sponsored by the National Watermelon Promotion Board and represented the board for the show. We thank the watermelon board for the sponsorship. The show was very well attended and quite busy. People used every safety precaution available, to keep it safe.

They attended the opening Welcome Reception, where they met new people and reconnected with old friends.

They were pleased to be joined for with the Texas Queen, Micayla Grossman and her coordinator Barbara Duda. They also got to visit and have dinner with former NWA sponsors Allen Lund Company and Santos International.

The NWPB booth looked great, and the ladies did a super job manning the booth for Viva Fresh! Thank you NWPB!

The month of March Paige also attended via Zoom, the North Carolina pageant where they crowned their 2021 North Carolina Queen. Welcome Queen Anna!

They were sponsored to a field day at the Enza Zaden Research Center in Myakka City, Florida. Rod Jorgensen, Eastern Area Sales Manager was the perfect host, and they enjoyed the opportunity to see what goes on during the seed trials. She also met the father-daughter watermelon breeding team for Enza Zaden, Mr. Robert Barham and Mrs. Laura Brown. Paige said she learned so much about the breeding process and what it takes to get the watermelon to the commercial level. They loved the experience, the opportunity to visit with several fellow NWA members and sponsors.

Thank you, Rod Jorgensen, and Enza Zaden for having our National Queen Paige, we appreciate your support.

They visited some sponsors and friends along the way to Newberry, Florida. They enjoyed a visit at the Melon 1 office in Punta Gorda, Florida. She had an opportunity to have a short visit and tour with Rachel and Trey and several others. Thanks for your help with the Newberry sponsorship.

They could not be the Arcadia area and not stop in with Mr. Phil Turner, Sr., and the rest of the Turner family. I am sorry I missed you fellas.

Their next stop was in Lakeland at the NWA home office. Paige and Kerri enjoyed a visit with Mr. Bob Morrissey, Executive Director, wife Betsy; Monica McCook; and Tami Robinson. They loved the tour and the visit.

Their next stop was in Williston, FL for a quick visit with Mr. Adam Whitehurst, thanks to our Seedway sponsor they had the opportunity.

Thanks to Mitchell Herring with Seedway for taking the ladies to meet another grower Mr. Jerry Mills, and his children Jerry and Tori in Morriston.

The next stop was Mr. Brad Ethridge and his son Colby in Levy county, thanks Mitchell and Seedway for arranging another visit.

They were welcomed as guest to the home of Billy and Corliss Smith in Bell, Florida, we certainly appreciate your hospitality and support.

Paige enjoyed being in the Newberry Watermelon Festival parade on Saturday, attending the festival with the lovely Florida Queen Bethany. They participated in the eating contest and seed spitting, which Bethany won! The girls welcomed the opportunity to get to work together!

They toured Trey Smith's field with his cute wife and precious daughter Haidyn. She educated Paige on picking out a good melon.

They also enjoyed a quick visit with Mr. Loran Brookins and his grandson in the area. They visited the Gibson Produce office in their Chiefland office. Bob had not arrived yet, but they got to visit with Katy Mae Harrison and Mr. Murray Tillis. Murray even treated them to dinner. Thanks Murray!

Special thanks to Diamond 99, Dan, and Carrie Thomas, for sponsoring, they couldn't visit because they were attending their beautiful daughters' ballgames. A big thanks to Melon1, Rantz Smith, Smith Farms, they missed Rantz but visited his fields. Seedway, Chuck Elam and Craig Mathis, and Gibson Produce for sponsoring the Newberry Festival and farm tour! We appreciate your support!

The next week Paige was busy with school promotions. She had three days of awesome promotions in the Jefferson, Texas area, the Center, Texas areas. She got to serve the kids watermelon, read a watermelon story, educate them on all the health benefits of her favorite fruit, and how to pick the perfect melon! The hundreds of students loved queen Paige and their delicious watermelon! On her final stop, it was the last day of school. They even had a seed spit contest, and she read Peter Spit A Seed to the first graders. What a wonderful addition to the last day of school. The school promotions were made possible by the NWPB grant program.

The following week Kerri and Paige were off to the Rio Grande Valley area of Texas for farm tours. They really covered a lot of ground. Many of their farm visits will be featured in the photos. We wish to thank the following people for your sponsorship and support for making it possible: Mr.& Mrs. Nowell Borders with Borders Melons; Mr. Jason Holley with Nutrien, Mr. Darren, Jared, and Jesse Wiggins with Wiggins Farms Watermelons; Mr. John Prukop, and Mr. Jack Wallace with Wallace Farms; Mr. Steven Vandever with Sostena; Mrs. Rosie Aguirre with BASF; Mr. Bobby Arellano and Mr. Clyde Watson of Seedway; Mr. Jody , and Clint Wiggins with Wiggins Wholesale; Mr. Will Steele of Frontera Produce; and Mr. Cameron Cruz of Gowan Produce.

Thanks to each of you!

Best of the Season!

Eleanor Bullock
NWA Promotions
Coordinator
229.322.9933
Etb.nwa@gmail.com



The Mighty Mike team and sponsors



Amazing field visits Mr. Adam Whitehurst in Williston



The Jerry Mills Group



Out to dinner with group in Dallas at Viva Fresh



Kerri and Paige enjoy a quick visit



Texas Watermelon Queen Micayla Grossman and Paige visit at Viva Fresh



Show Ready!



Booth is ready to go, before the show



Kerri and Paige at the NWPB booth



Micayla, and friends visit with Paige



President of National Watermelon Association John Gee visits the booth



Rod Jorgensen, Eastern Area Sales Manager for Enza Zaden sponsors Paige to their Research Facility in Myakka City, Florida



Field in full swing, very educational



I think this gentleman is the Watermelon Breeder, giving Paige a little in field training



Paige thanks Craig Mathis, of Seedway for their sponsorship help



Another sponsor with Seedway Chuck Elam was at the Enza Zaden Field Day



Kerri and Paige and the Enza Zaden group



Paul and Courtney catch up with Paige



Thank you Rod and Enza Zaden

National Report



The Melon 1 Group on the tour



Tami and Monica thank the ladies



Thank you Murray for a delicious dinner at Treasure Camp



Thank you Melon1, for your help, and to Trey and Rachel for the tour



Fabulous watermelon farm visits



Paige enjoys a great school promotion in her hometown of Jefferson, Texas



A quick visit with friends at Phil Turner Watermelons, Mr. Phil and Sons



Another shed visit in Morrilton with Jerry Mills and family, thanks Seedway



Great to go back for a visit where you once went



Our Beautiful Queen at the NWA office in Lakeland



Special thanks to the Billy Smith Family for your hospitality, all the grands, and great grands, except Rantz's girls, Trey, and his beautiful family, and FWA's Queen Bethany



Center, Texas for some great promotions



Executive Director, Bob Morrissey and his beautiful furry friend give Paige the tour



Newberry Watermelon Festival Parade



She was a real hit



Paige and the entire NWA team and Bob's wife Betsy



Bethany and Paige represented Watermelon and their Associations perfectly



The Rio Fresh team, Fred Schuster



Tami and Monica enjoy Kerri and Paige's visit!



A visit with Sponsor Gibson Produce, Murray Tillis and Katy Mae Harrison at the Gibson office



Rio Fresh team in the Rio Grande Valley, thanks to sponsors Rosie Aguirre with BASF, Steven Vandever, with Sostena, Clyde Watson and Bobby Arellano of Seedway

Redefining the watermelon industry



wa·ter·mel·on (wô'tər mēl'ən, wŏt'ər-), n.

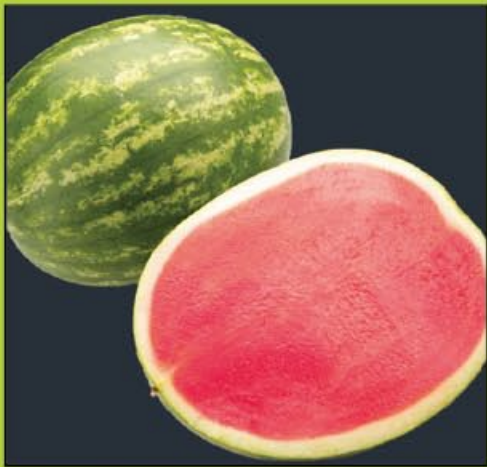
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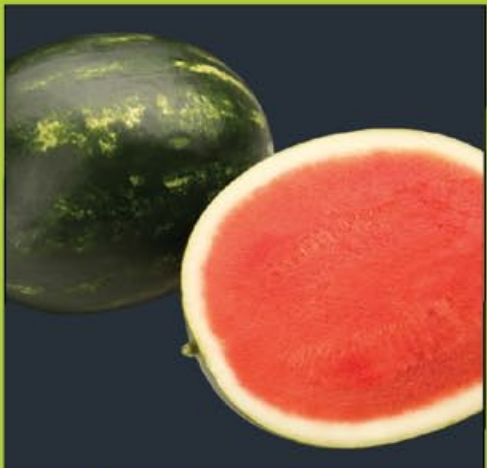
Red Opal



Red Amber



Cracker Jack



Red Garnet

enzazaden.us

National Report



Mighty Mike’s Watermelons, with Mike Helle, Sr. and Jr.



Chip Berry of Chip Berry Produce and Rosie



A visit with the Will Beckwith team in La Villia, Texas



Some of the sponsors pose with Jody Wiggins, of the Wiggins Watermelons team



Mr. John Prukop and Mr. Jack Wallace, what a great visit



Eddie Vasquez owner of Farmers Marketing Service



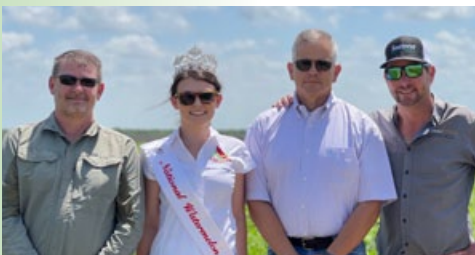
Thank you Jody, Wiggins Watermelons LLC for your support



Thank you team!



And his team!



Enjoyed a visit with Mr. Will Steele and Mr. Greg Lothringer, owners of Frontera Produce and Lothringer Farms



Rob Borchardt of TriEst Ag Group thank you for dinner



Paige visited the Rio Grande Valley Food Bank, one of the largest, it serves over 130,000 people in a three county area, more than double the pre-covid number



J & D Produce owner Jimmy Bassetti



The Wiggins Farms team! Thank you for your support!



It feels good to help!



Thanks to our Sponsor team



Team Wiggins Farms, Jared, Ashlyn, Paige, Darren and Zayne
Klaire, they are missing Jesse



A great day for watermelon!



Andy Lozano and Gerry Lozano of Sandia Depot



Ashlyn and ZK choose the perfect melon



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CONTACT
ELEANOR BULLOCK TO BOOK
etb.nwa@gmail.com
(229)322-9933

Florida Report

Greetings from the Sunshine State of Florida

This past few months Queen Bethany and I have been very blessed to be able to get out and promote something we all love “Watermelon” from school promotions, Savage Race, filming with Kids’ Choice in the field, visiting farmers and packing sheds, “Girls on the Run” 5 K Run, being in the studio with Chef Justin making watermelon recipes, Florida State Fair, Judging and Emcee Desoto County Watermelon Pageants, Newberry Watermelon Festival, radio promotions, doing in-store grocery stores promotions and Family owned Produce stands. Thank you to all of our sponsors and to the farmers taking the time to share a special story to us about something that they have the passionate for growing watermelons.

We are all very blessed with all of our watermelon promotions this year that we can’t cover all of them in our National Watermelon Vineline Editions. If you like to see more on what going on with our Florida Watermelon Association and Queen Bethany please go on and like our Florida Watermelon Facebook page and our Florida Watermelon Instagram. Also please visit our Florida Watermelon Association website to get all the information on upcoming things as well. A big thank you to everyone that helped us out these last few months. Until Next Edition!

Debra Harrison - FWA Promotions Coordinator
Email: debra@flfwa.com Cell: (863) 633-8306

Watermelon time is here! Once again what we in our industry look forward to. A way of life that most can only dream about. A part of Agriculture that has an impact on the citizens of this country and aboard. We are a big deal!! Sometimes we might feel insignificant in this world we live in, but we are the core of hard work, values and common sense. Exactly what this country was founded on. So, this is our time of the year to shine. We should do our best to be united as this season unfolds. United as an association. This unification should be between allied members, brokers, and growers. All coming together for what we agree is our mission. To support research, education, and promotion of the fresh Florida Watermelon industry.

There is one another way our industry will continue to move forward, The Florida Watermelon Association’s Annual Convention. Wow, this one will finally happen. It is time for all of us to come together as one, to listen to great speakers that are directly related to our industry. To support our association with a dynamic load auction that is always exciting and one of the highlights of our convention. A time to talk with our allied members prior to our 2022 season. What a great time: October – As a grower, a chance to meet with your suppliers at one convenient location. Let’s make this a great convention. A time to wind down with friends in a setting where the business of our association can be conducted. Let’s show Orlando how strong of an association the watermelon group is. Better than that, let us show how we can come together for the betterment of the industry that you love as an FWA member. Please get with Debbie Johnson at the FWA office to get registered. Thank you all for your involvement with FWA, and I look forward to seeing you at the convention.

See you in October!

You’re President, Mark Bryan



Winners of the “2021 Savage Race” Congratulations!



A fun filled day handed out watermelon slices at the “Savage Race” in Dade City.



Queen Bethany trying her first slice of yellow watermelon in the field with Daren Hanshaw with Hanshaw Farms.



Thanks to Paul Sawyer with Gowan Seed Company for taking us around and showing us some variety trial fields and educating Queen Bethany on that process.



A fun and windy morning with the students at Pre K classes at High Hopes Preschool enjoying a slice of watermelon.



Queen Bethany visiting with our President Mark Bryan and Dustin Blank at the packing shed in Immokalee.



Queen Bethany educating and sharing some fun facts about watermelons to the 2nd grade class at St. Anastasia Catholic School.



A day at the “Florida State Fair”.



Do you have your FWA tag on says Queen Bethany and the “gang” at Melon1. Get your tag on today and become a member of the FWA.



Queen Bethany enjoyed and visiting with a first time watermelon farmer Blake Hurm with Veg King.



It was good to get to see and visit with Nascar Driver #42 Ross Chastain and his lovely mom Susan at 31 Produce.



Taking time out to enjoy lunch at the Newberry Watermelon Festival with Queen Bethany family. It was nice to get to meet all of you.



“Congratulations” to Aubree Patton for winning the 2021 Desoto County Watermelon Pageant.



Enjoying spending a day in the studio with “Chef Justin” with Dept. of Agriculture making watermelon recipes.



A full weekend of promoting Florida Watermelons at Detwiler’s Farm Market. Everyone enjoyed a slice of Florida watermelon.



Starting our day off on a beautiful Saturday morning handed out cups of watermelon at the “Girls on the Run” K run. Over 400 Runners participated.





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Georgia Report

Hello from Georgia, yall!

What a joy to be ‘on the road again’ promoting sweet, Georgia Watermelon! Queen Lindsey is excited to be traveling and sharing her experiences and knowledge as the public relations representative for our association in her consecutive year as our GWA Queen. We are so proud of her hard work and dedication to this industry!

Queen Lindsey was very busy in March, April, and May as she traveled to schools, guest speaker at the Georgia Organics Farm to School Summit, guest speaker at service clubs, Farmers Markets Seed Swaps, Spring Savage Race, and other events promoting her favorite treat while sharing the nutritional and health benefits watermelon has to offer.

On the horizon, we are looking forward to more travel and speaking opportunities. Queen Lindsey is excited to be invited by the Georgia Farm Bureau as their guest speaker at the Young Farmer Leadership Conference in July on Jekyll Island. Other engagements include visits to Farmers Markets, Back to School Bash, Farm to Table Kids Culinary Camp, Atlanta Foodcast appearance, grower visits, Braves Country 5K, retail store visits, ATL & Co. TV interview segment, 4H Meet and Greet, Honorary Team Captain at the Atlanta Braves game. Additionally, she will be visiting retailers such as Kroger, Food Lion, Fresh Market and Sprouts just as Georgia watermelon hits the stores!

Thank you to Dick Minor for taking time out of your busy schedule to tour Lindsey through your packing shed and for sharing fresh green beans and cabbage from your harvest! We want to thank Syngenta for donating plants for us to take on our promotion Wimberly’s Roots Seed Swap!

We are looking forward to many more exciting events in our future travels across Georgia and the United States and cannot wait to share those experiences 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 Lindsey promotes kids Summer Cooking Camp at Leaning Ladder Premium Olive Oils and Vinegars



Queen Lindsey’s all about rehydrating the runners with thirst-quenching watermelon!



In the classroom with Turner County Elementary scholars!



Little ones love spending time with the Queen!



Cordele Rotarians enjoy their time spent with the GWA Queen.



Thank you Minor Brothers for allowing an impromptu visit from Queen Lindsey! Although watermelons were not quite ready, cabbage and green beans were running hard through the packing shed.





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Road Trip

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Gulf Coast Report

Happy Summer Friends,

On behalf of the Gulf Coast Watermelon Association we would like to formally announce that our Queen, Hannah Hughes, will be staying with us again for this year.

We began our year in March as we watched the virtual North Carolina Watermelon Queen contest. Then, we did a few classroom promotions, and we are starting off June in Trenton, FL visiting some of our beloved Association members, and riding in the Cheifland Watermelon Festival.

We have tons planned for our summer! We can't wait to spread the watermelon message through our social media outlets, farmers market visits, grocery store promotions, and more.

We hope to see you on our tour!

Blessings,
Hannah Hughes
Gulf Coast Watermelon Queen
Madison Johnson
Gulf Coast Queen Coordinator



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78 Day • Triploid Seedless

A WINNER EVERY TIME! Nice oval shape with outstanding internal red color. Firm flesh is extremely flavorful. Strong disease package. Dark green rind. 15-23 lbs. HR: Co:1, Fon:1, Sf



GUARDSMAN

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Illiana Report

Greetings from Illiana!

Planting season is upon us and we are anxious to see what the growing season has in store for our delicious Illiana watermelons!

Queen Grace has been busy this spring promoting US grown watermelon! So far she has visited eight Kroger Grocery stores in the Indianapolis, Indiana area where she has educated consumers on the health benefits and versatility of watermelon, shared her favorite recipe cards (courteously of the National Watermelon Promotion Board) and of course, taught everyone she can the Look, Lift, Turn method for picking out the best watermelon. Safety continues to be a top priority on these promotional visits and Queen Grace wears her watermelon mask with pride at every store she attends. Customers have been very receptive to her help and we hope this is a sign of more exciting promotions to come this summer!

She also had the opportunity to attend the Knox County Chamber of Commerce annual awards banquet where numerous community leaders were honored. Thanks to former IWA Queen, Katie Ellermann, Queen Grace got to rub elbows with countless county leaders and business owners. By attending, Queen Grace was able to remind the Chamber members of the importance of the watermelon industry in Knox County, Indiana!

Queen Grace and I are hopeful that we will have a summer filled with promoting delicious Illiana Watermelon throughout our great states and beyond!

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



Safely promoting US grown watermelon



Teaching the look, lift, turn method



Another successful grocery store promotion



Watermelon for the win



Sharing her watermelon knowledge with the world



Look at those gorgeous yellow bellies



At the Knox County awards banquet

Mar-del Report

Thankful, grateful, and blessed to be gearing up for the 2021 watermelon season. Our 2020 Mar-Del Watermelon Queen has graciously accepted to stay on as our 2021 Mar-Del Watermelon Queen. Leslie Webb is ready for all things watermelon this Summer! Queen Leslie has mastered the technique of virtual promotions. The promotions were different but exposed us to another audience. We were able to reach more people through social media and promote selected material about watermelon. An experience we are ready to blend into our in person watermelon promotion season. Queen Leslie started her 2021 promotion year with a virtual queen training, hosted by the Watermelon Promotion Board. Queen Leslie enjoyed learning more about the watermelon industry and how to apply her public speaking style to any situation.

The Mar-Del Watermelon Association is gearing up for a busy promotion season. Fairs, farmers markets and family events are back in the swing on Delmarva. We are confident that Queen Leslie will be busy promoting MarDelicious watermelon throughout the Summer. We wish everyone a safe watermelon season and look forward to seeing our watermelon family soon!



Queen Leslie signing to be the 2021 Mar-Del Watermelon Queen.



Queen Leslie and President Dawn Collins.



Ready for whatever watermelon adventure comes our way.

North Carolina Report

Greetings from North Carolina,

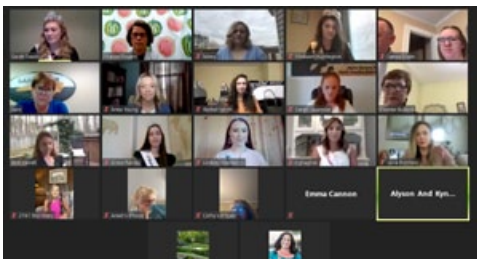
The North Carolina watermelon season is right around the corner. Since our last article, the North Carolina Watermelon Association hosted its 2nd Annual Virtual Watermelon Queen Pageant on Zoom. We had a wonderful group of contestants and judges. Thanks to our 2020 Queen Miss Sarah Swain for serving as the pageant host and to everyone who attended the crowning ceremony. Miss Anna Young of Alexander, NC was selected to be the 2021 North Carolina Watermelon Queen. Anna is a student at North Carolina State University majoring in Agricultural Science with an Agri-Business Concentration. She is looking forward to promoting watermelons and the North Carolina Watermelon Association this year.

With Covid-19 restrictions being lifted in our state, Queen Anna had the opportunity to begin her reign with some fun events and farm tours. James W. Smith Elementary School in Cove City, NC hosted a farm to school celebration to highlight all the North Carolina crops in their school nutrition program. As part of the celebration, Queen Anna shared the NC Department of Agriculture’s Watermelons on the Vine story with students. The watermelon story follows the life of the watermelon from seed to consumption. Helping the students better understand where their food is grown and how it gets to their plates. You can download a copy of the book from ncfarmtoschool.com. The event also included a culinary contest for culinary arts students in all of the Craven County high schools. Students were given the challenge to develop a new recipes using farm to school crops that students would enjoy for school lunch. Anna had the privilege of serving as a judge for the culinary competition which included many tasty recipes.

To help Anna better understand the full lifecycle of watermelons she visited two farms in eastern North Carolina. At Howell Farming Company in Goldsboro, Anna learned about watermelon plants in the greenhouse and went out to the field to see the transplants going in. Thank you to the Howell and Beasley families for showing Anna how your farm transplants watermelons. Lancaster Farms in Wilson also hosted Anna for a farm tour. At Lancaster Farms, Anna got to see watermelon plants going in the field on plastic and learn more about the different ways farms can choose to grow melons. Anna enjoyed her time with Sarah Callaway at Lancaster Farms, learning about all their many farm enterprises and how the whole family is involved in the business.

Queen Anna is anticipating the arrival of the North Carolina watermelon season. She is excited to be able to meet everyone at her upcoming promotional events. We hope to see you during the season.

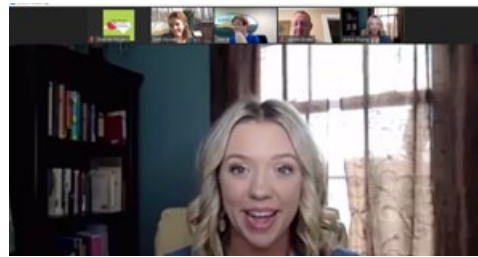
Sharon Rogers
Promotions Coordinator
ncwatermelonqueen@gmail.com
336-583-9630



2nd Annual NC Watermelon Queen Zoom Pageant crowning



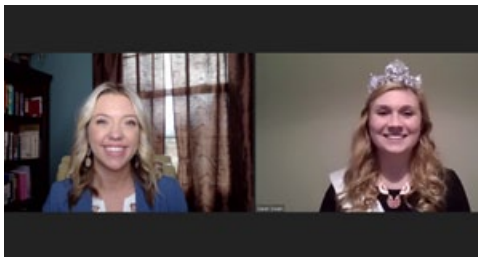
Queen Anna had a great time reading to the students



Miss Anna Young during her interview on the Zoom Pageant.



Howell Farming Company tour, Frank Howell explaining the sweet potato packing to Anna during the tour



2020 NC Watermelon Queen Miss Sarah Swain announcing Anna Young as the 2021 Queen



Frank Howell, Anna, Danny Beasley and Garrett Howell



National Watermelon Queen Paige Huntington and NC Watermelon Queen Sarah Swain welcoming our 2021 NC Watermelon Queen Anna Young via Zoom



Greenhouse tour with Frank Howell and Melissa Beasley



Queen Anna preparing to judge the Farm to School culinary competition



Field visit at Howell Farming Company, Garrett Howell discussing the transplanting with Anna



Farm to School culinary competition winners received a cash prize to benefit their school culinary program



Lancaster Farms in Wilson, NC farm tour. Sarah, Jane, Anna and Derek in the watermelon field



Judges and competitors in the Farm to School culinary competition



Queen Anna enjoyed learning more about the early stages of watermelon production



Zoom story time for students at James W. Smith Elementary



Sarah Callaway was a great tour guide for all the enterprises at Lancaster Farms

South Carolina Report

We are so happy that our watermelon promotions are slowly but surely starting back. There are still many restrictions that apply to certain promotions that make it difficult to carry out a normal year.

On March 13th, Serena was asked to participate in the 2021 Shamrock St. Patrick’s Day Parade in Lexington, South Carolina, sponsored by the Blowfish Baseball Team. There were many people in attendance and the streets were lined with cheering crowds.

Serena was invited to speak to a class at Homeland Park Elementary School in Anderson, South Carolina on May 10th. Watermelon slices were served and the children enjoyed a reading session along with a discussion about how watermelons grow. There was much excitement and participation within this classroom session. Many thanks to Stacy Kubu for the invitation. The South Carolina Watermelon Association is providing a bin of watermelons to the following schools: Oakview Elementary in Greenville, South Carolina and Southside Christian Academy in Simpsonville, South Carolina. Both schools are still following Covid emergency guidelines and will not allow anyone to be in attendance. School employees will be responsible for cutting and serving the melons. Hopefully, next year, we will be back to our normal schedule with all of our schools across the state.

On June 5th, we will be traveling to Atlanta for the Atlanta Braves 5k. The Blowfish Baseball Team has extended an invitation for Serena to throw out the first pitch on June 29th, in Lexington, South Carolina. Farm visits will take place across the state in late June. Serena is hoping to spend some time with our farmers during their growing season.

The Pageland Watermelon Festival will be taking place in mid-July. Since Serena is a Pageland native, she will be helping with all of the functions during the festival week and will be representing the South Carolina Watermelon Association as our current queen.

Wishing all of our watermelon family a successful and profitable growing season and hope to see you all soon.

Ann Bryant
SC Promotions Coordinator
abryant028@charter.net
864-303-3995



Meeting the star of the Shamrock Parade.



Being introduced to the class by Ms. Kubu.



Getting ready for the Shamrock Parade.



Getting a good response from the children.



Enjoying a little sisterly company for the ride.



Everyone is enjoying the good read.



Making the watermelon W.



So much fun with this special class.



Homeland Park Elementary School, Anderson, South Carolina.



So much fun with this special class.

Texas Report

Hello watermelon family! I hope this letter finds everyone well. We have had some interesting weather here lately in Texas, but our growers seem to have a handle on things. I pray this season will be the best in years despite setbacks.

Micayla and I had our first trip together when we went to Dallas, Texas for the Viva Fresh Expo. It was a new hotel with plenty of safety protocols in place. It was wonderful to see so many people in person. Micayla was introduced to and visited with a number of people within the agriculture and retail industry. As we walked around the floor of the expo we were so impressed with the beautiful displays and loved getting to try the samples that were offered. We truly hope to be able to visit stores and do in-store promotions soon where we can give out samples and allow consumers to taste our favorite fruit and buy them at their peak.

Recently Micayla came down to the Rio Grande Valley to visit some growers. We stopped in to see Gerry and Andy Lozano at Sandia Depot, Mr. Eddie Vasquez at Farmer’s Marketing Service, and Darren Wiggins at his beautiful fields. A few days later we also got to see Mr. Mike Helle and Mr. and Mrs. Nowell Borders at their farms. We are so grateful to sponsors like Nunhems who make these visits possible and allow our queen to see how watermelons are harvested in the fields and how they are packed in the sheds. Finally, I wanted to add one last short note to those of you who knew and loved Ms. Wanda Letson, who was the promotions coordinator and secretary for the TWA for many years and who passed away in April. She was a wonderful, funny and beloved person to the Texas Watermelon Association and she will be greatly missed. Though I did not know her as well as some, I have heard hilarious stories from my daughter and Miss Eleanor about the adventures they had together with Wanda, and we laughed over and over about what transpired. Our prayers go out to the many people who loved her.

Until next time, stay safe and be blessed.

Fondest regards,
Barbara Duda TWA Coordinator
Bcduda62@gmail.com



Big smiles are behind those masks with Jesse Wiggins at the NWPB booth.



Paige and Micayla received goodies at the expo.



We like avacados too!



Meeting new people is great!



Micayla got to visit Mr. Andy and Mr. Gerry Lozano at Sandia Depot.



Learning about sizing and packing watermelon



It was great to see Mr. Eddie Vasquez and his son Anthony at Farmer's Marketing Service.



Being educated by Mr. Darren Wiggins while watching the harvest.



Mr. Mike Helle and the Nunhems crew in his fields.



Mr. and Mrs. Nowell Borders at one of their farms right before harvest.



The beloved Wanda Letson

Western Report



June 2, 2021

What a rollercoaster of a season it has been thus far, and things are just starting to heat up as we ride towards Independence Day! The market was high right out of the gate in Nogales this Spring with things taking a turn once production amped up. Prices remain steady right now as domestic fruit is just getting started in the desert region.

Just when life has been returning somewhat back to normal after the pandemic, we are starting to face new challenges as an industry. Transportation and material costs have skyrocketed as of recent, driving up costs not only for the growers but retailers and consumers are feeling the effects as well. Labor also continues to be an ongoing issue in the West, along with water supply shortages and available farm ground. Resilience is key when it comes to the produce industry and if anyone can battle these challenges it is our growers!

We wish everyone a successful and prosperous watermelon season!

Sincerely,
Danielle Ratto
Western Watermelon Association
DanielleR@VGandSons.com

For more information on the Western Watermelon Association, be sure to check out our website at: www.westernwatermelon.org and  "like" us on facebook



We've got you covered for watermelons

It's no wonder Syngenta is a leading producer for watermelon

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Powerhouse



Summerlicious



Fascination



Excursion



Captivation



Exclamation

The numbers speak for themselves.

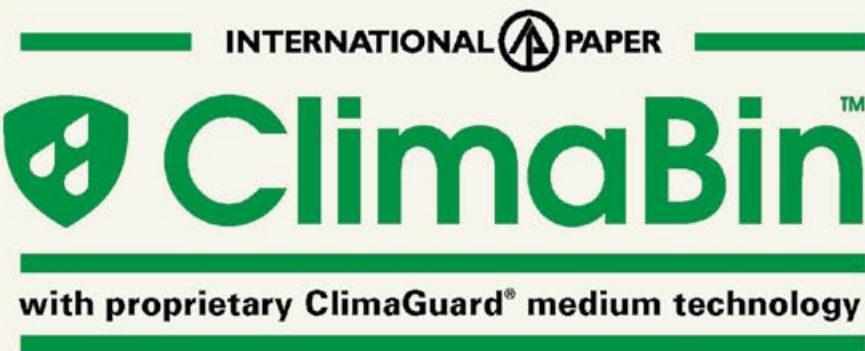
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