



NEWSLETTER

Spring/Summer 2007

President's Message

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the North Carolina Watermelon Association. If you received this newsletter late it wasn't Cathy or Bonnie's fault. I had to get off the planters long enough so that I could introduce myself. I am Floyd Taylor, your new NCWA President. My family has raised watermelons for the past 60 odd years and will continue to do so for the next generation. That's enough about me.

Many of us just returned from an awesome NC Watermelon Convention. Gloria Richardson, Bonnie Holloman, Cathy Price, Nick Augostini and Sandra Woodard really out did themselves this year. To everyone who helped during this past convention, THANK YOU for your dedication and hard work. If you have never attended our Annual Convention, I personally want to invite you to come and bring the family. This is your chance as a grower to learn important up-to-date information pertaining to watermelons, its production and marketing as well as getting to know your fellow growers and buyers. We would like to express a tremendous thank you to the following stores and buyers who bought watermelon loads at the auction:

- Food Lion:** Nicole Trenor
- Freshouse:** Chuck Dechene & Steve Van Meter
- Harris Teeter:** Armon Lansing
- Ingles Market:** Ricky Carr
- Wal-Mart:** Charles Freeman
- Bi-Lo:** Authorized Don Hiller to buy a load for them.

Stephanie McLamb is our new Watermelon Queen. Congratulations Stephanie. We look forward to working with you next year. I would like to thank Katie Mills, our 2006 Queen for a wonderful job this past year. She and Sandra traveled all over North Carolina as well as many other places promoting North Carolina Watermelons. We couldn't have asked for a more dedicated, hard working and enjoyable young lady to represent us. Good luck in the future and remember, you will always be our Queen.

As you may know, this year Congress is working on a new farm bill. It will be interesting to see how we as growers and buyers will be affected. I encourage you to be very active in voicing your opinions and concerns to your local representatives.

Now on a personal note . . . Miss Gloria, what can I say! You have been awesome, wonderful, and more, as our NCWA President for the past two years! THANK YOU for all your hard work and dedication. Our Association has truly been blessed.

Have a great summer and watermelon season!

Floyd Taylor

Executive Director's Report

Cathy Price

Watermelon season is now approaching and I know everyone will become very busy in getting those melons pick and distributed. Please take a moment and join the NCWA.

Our 2007 NCWA dues statements have been mailed out. Send your dues and application in today. Renewal of your membership and new memberships assure that the NCWA will continue to be one of the best recognized and most active of the North Carolina commodity groups.

If you need additional membership information, please contact the Association office.



P.O. Box 58220 Raleigh, NC 27658
Phone: 919-790-7099 Fax: 919-877-0940



NCWA Specialize License Plates

It is still not too late to get your personalized watermelon plates. Every member should want at least one plate. You can download a form on our website. www.ncmelons.com

Member News

Congratulations! to Rodney and Melissa Jackson, Jackson Farming Company on the birth of their baby boy Nicholas Adam Jackson, born March 29th. Weighed 8lbs,

8ozs and was 21 ¼ inches long. Nicholas Adam has an older sister, Jordan Grace.

Proud Grandparents are Brent & Debbie Jackson and Eddie & Debbie Parker.

Promotions Coordinator Report Sandra Woodard

The North Carolina Watermelon Association wishes to welcome Stephanie Leigh McLamb as 2007 Watermelon Queen.



Stephanie was crowned at the Banquet held during the 26th Annual Watermelon Convention on March 10 at the Hilton Raleigh Durham Airport in Research Triangle Park. Stephanie is a junior at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC. where she is a double-major in Political Science and Communications Studies. She is the daughter of Brenda and Timmy McLamb of Benson.

Six contestants competed in the Queen Pageant. Christina McWhirter of Asheboro was named 1st Runner Up. Candi Allen of Pendleton received 2nd Runner Up and Brandy Hardison of Raleigh was selected as Miss Jubilee. Congratulations to all the young ladies for a job well done.

We are proud and honored to have had Katie Mills serve as our 2006 NC Watermelon Queen. Thank you Katie for all you have done as you represented North Carolina this year. You made us all proud.

A special thank you to everyone who donated or purchased items at the auction and for helping to make it such a success. Many thanks to all – individuals, companies, queen sponsors, judges, President Gloria Richardson, NCWA Board, NCDA and to Cathy Price and Bonnie Holloman for their dedication and hard work resulting in such an outstanding convention.

Our 2007 Watermelon Queen Stephanie began her reign by participating at the New Bern Farmers Market on March 24. On April 13-15, Queen Stephanie and 1st Runner Up Christina and I attended the National Watermelon Promotion Board Queen Media Training in Orlando, Florida. Both young ladies enjoyed meeting National Watermelon Queen Jenna Stanford along with the other state Watermelon Queens and Queen Coordinators. The National Watermelon Promotion Board did a great job hosting and teaching everyone

about watermelons and how to successfully meet the media and the public. Thank you to all who made the weekend such a memorable experience.

Queen Stephanie attended the NC Agricultural Products Dinner held April 18 at the Agricultural Expo Building on the NC State Fairgrounds in Raleigh. As Queen, Stephanie had the opportunity to visit with Steve Troxler, Commissioner of Agriculture, NCDA personnel, NC legislators and commodity groups in attendance.

2007 promises to be an exciting year filled with opportunities to promote watermelon. Stephanie and I look forward to a great year representing the NC Watermelon Association on the Queen Promotional Tour.

2007 Queen Tour

March

24 New Bern Farmers Market - New Bern, NC

April

13-15 NWPB Media Training - Orlando, FL

18 NC Commodities, Dinner – Raleigh, NC

May

9 Wal Mart Grand Opening –Mt. Olive, NC

14 I-85 Welcome Ctr. – Norlina, NC

18 I-95 Welcome Ctr. –Roanoke Rapids, NC

28 Glory Days – Fayetteville, NC

June

1 Murfreesboro Farms Visit

1 Gatesville Elem. School.- Gatesville, NC

9 Onslow Co. Farmers Market- Grand Opening

July

7 State Farmers Market – Lumberton, NC

7 Jackson Farms Visit – Autryville, NC

12 Farmers Market Festival – Raleigh, NC

13 State Farmers Market – Asheville, NC

20 State Farmers Market – Charlotte, NC

21 China Grove Farmer's Day – China Grove, NC

23-25 Capital Hill, USDA, White House Visit, Washington, DC

27-29 Brickyard Race Promo – Indianapolis, Indiana

27-29 NC Watermelon Festival – Fair Bluff, NC

August

3-4 NC Watermelon Festival - Murfreesboro, NC

9 State Farmers Market Watermelon Day – Raleigh, NC

10 State Farmers Market – Piedmont Triad, Greensboro, NC

24-25 Winterville Watermelon Festival – Winterville, NC

September

Food Lion Family Day – Salisbury, NC

October

12-15 PMA – Houston, TX

2008 Dates

February

20-24 National Watermelon Association – Perdido Beach Resort – Orange Beach, Alabama

March

14-15 NC Watermelon Annual Convention
Wrightsville Beach, NC

Research Update

Allan Thornton Extension Associate Horticultural Science, NCSU

I want to take this opportunity to thank the NC Watermelon Association for their continued support of the research and extension programs at NC State University. The Association continues to step up support for the research necessary to move the NC watermelon industry forward. I also want to thank the growers for cooperating with us to make these programs possible.

In 2007, NCWA is supporting the following research at NC State:

Nutsedge Management in Watermelon with V10142 Herbicide, K. Jennings, D. Monks, A. Thornton

Grafted Watermelon: Evaluation of Rootstocks, Cultivars, and Planting Density for Yield and Fusarium Wilt Control, J. Schultheis, A. Thornton, and T. Wehner

Optimizing Nitrogen Fertility Level for Bare Ground Seedless Watermelons, A. Thornton

These projects are the direct result of your input and are designed to answer your needs. I would encourage you to continue bringing research priorities forward so they can be addressed for the benefit of all. The 2007 projects are getting underway in the field and there should be excellent data to report at the end of the season.

Following is a reminder about fungicides, many of the newer fungicides require a chemical rotation in the disease control program. This is important with all pesticides, but especially with a product like Pristine that has worked very well on Gummy Stem Blight in recent years. We need to fight the urge to use these products in back to back applications. Continuous use of these materials will reduce their effectiveness

NCDA&CS Marketing Specialist Nick Augustini

The objective of the NCWA's 2007 Marketing campaign is to promote watermelon consumption in North Carolina. 74% of consumers say that knowing the health benefits of watermelon makes them more likely to buy. So in light of this statistic our ads will include facts about nutrition and the health benefits of eating NC watermelons. We will be using several media outlets to get our message to the consumer. The media portion of the campaign will include radio, billboard, bus and truck wraps, restaurant and magazine advertising along with television ads airing state wide on UNC-TV.

The educational portion of the campaign will consist of a Farm to School Display Contest, Watermelon brochure and posters. The brochure and posters will include watermelon facts and nutritional information, watermelon selection and storage information, as well as recipes and menu items. These brochures will be given out at Welcome Centers, State Farmers Markets and Extension offices throughout North Carolina. The posters will be sent to wholesale and retail buyers of NC watermelons.

We will once again use promotion items including T-shirts, hats, bumper stickers and coloring books. These items will be given to produce buyers, legislators, tourists and convention attendees to increase awareness of the association as well as promote the consumption of North Carolina watermelons.

N. C. Good Agricultural Practices Certification Assistance Program

The North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services has developed the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Certification Assistance Program. This program will help North Carolina growers with financial support in obtaining a third party audit to verify they are following effective food safety practices.

Food safety has become an important marketing and health issue for the produce industry. Buyers are demanding assurances from growers that their produce is safe. It will become more difficult for growers to market their fruits and vegetables if they don't have a GAP program in place to make sure their produce is free of contamination. The goal of this program is to increase the number of N.C. farmers following Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)/ Good Handling Practices (GHP) and using third party audits to verify their food safety program.

This is a cost share program designed to assist fruit and vegetable growers with the cost of a first time GAP/GHP audit. The NCDA & CS will pay up to \$400 of the cost of having a successful third party audit to verify a farm's food safety program. Funds will be paid to the auditor conducting the GAP/GHP audit to reduce the cost to the farmer by up to \$400. Participating farmers will be responsible for paying the auditor for any balance due above \$400. Funding for this program comes from a USDA grant to the NCDA & CS. Funds are available on a first come first served basis until the funds are depleted.

To be eligible for assistance, North Carolina fruit and vegetable growers must meet the following requirements:

- Growers must successfully pass a third party audit from an approved government agency or company that verifies Good Agricultural Practices/Good Handling Practices.

- GAP/GHP audits can be for Farm Review, Field Harvest and Field Packing Activities, Packing House Facility, Storage and Transportation, and Traceback.
- Assistance is limited to growers that have a GAP/GHP audit for the first time during 2007.
- Submit an application form for approval to participate in this program to the NCDA&CS prior to receiving the GAP/GHP audit.

For additional information or to request an application for this program, contact Ross Williams, 919-733-7887 or email Ross.F.Williams@ncmail.net.

DON'T FORGET TO MARK YOUR CALENDARS

2008

**NC WATERMELON ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL CONVENTION
MARCH 14-15, 2008**

**Holiday Inn Sunspree Resort Wrightsville Beach
1706 N Lumina Ave, Wrightsville Bch, NC
Phone: (910) 256-2231**



Calendar of Events

July Proclaimed as NC Watermelon Month

July 27-29, 2007 - Fair Bluff Watermelon Festival, Fair Bluff, NC

August 1-4, 2007 - Murfreesboro Watermelon Festival, Murfreesboro, NC

August 23-25, 2007 - Winterville Watermelon Festival, Winterville, NC

October 30-31, 2007 – NC Greenhouse Vegetable Growers Association Annual Meeting – Wake County Agri Center, Raleigh, NC

December 12-13, 2007 – Southeast Vegetable & Fruit Expo, Myrtle Beach Convention Center, Myrtle Beach, SC

February 20-24, 2008- National Watermelon Convention, Association – Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach, Alabama

March 14-15, 2008– NC Watermelon Association Annual Convention, Wrightsville Beach, NC

