



Agricultural Marketing Service

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News Release

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USDA Seeks Nominees for the National Watermelon Promotion Board

WASHINGTON, Feb. 9, 2015 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is seeking nominations for the National Watermelon Promotion Board.

The 37-member board is comprised of 14 producers, 14 handlers, 8 importers, and a public member. Board members are nominated by their peers while the public member is nominated by the board. To be eligible for nomination, producers must grow 10 or more acres of watermelons; handlers must be the first handler of watermelons, and importers must import watermelons. Selected representatives will serve 3-year terms.

The board is planning to fill 12 seats -- 2 producer and 2 handler seats, each, in districts two, three and six.

District two consists of the following Florida counties: Alachua, Baker, Bay, Bradford, Calhoun, Citrus, Clay, Columbia, Dixie, Duval, Escambia, Flagler, Franklin, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Gulf, Hamilton, Hernando, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Lafayette, Leon, Levy, Liberty, Madison, Marion, Nassau, Okaloosa, Putnam, Santa Rosa, St. Johns, Sumter, Suwannee, Taylor, Union, Wakulla, Walton, and Washington. The district also includes all counties in North Carolina and South Carolina.

District three consists of all counties in Georgia while district six consists of all counties in Texas.

The board meets regularly to plan promotion, marketing and research activities that benefit the industry. The national program, which became effective in 1989, is industry-funded and supports domestic and international marketing and promotion of watermelons. USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) oversees the board's activities.

USDA encourages board membership that reflects the diversity of the individuals served by the research and promotion programs. All eligible women, minorities and persons with disabilities are encouraged to seek nomination for a seat on the National Watermelon Promotion Board by the June 2, 2015 deadline.

For more information or a nomination form, please contact the board's Director of Operations & Industry Affairs Rebekah Dossett or Industry Affairs Manager Andrea Smith toll-free at (877) 599-9595.

Research and promotion programs are industry-funded, were authorized by Congress, and date back to 1966, when Congress passed the Cotton Research and Promotion Act. Since then, Congress has authorized the establishment of 22 research and promotion boards. They empower agricultural industries, including the fruit and vegetable industry, to leverage their own resources to develop new markets, strengthen existing markets, and conduct important research and promotion activities. AMS provides oversight, paid for by industry assessments, which helps to ensure fiscal responsibility, program efficiency and fair treatment of participating stakeholders.

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