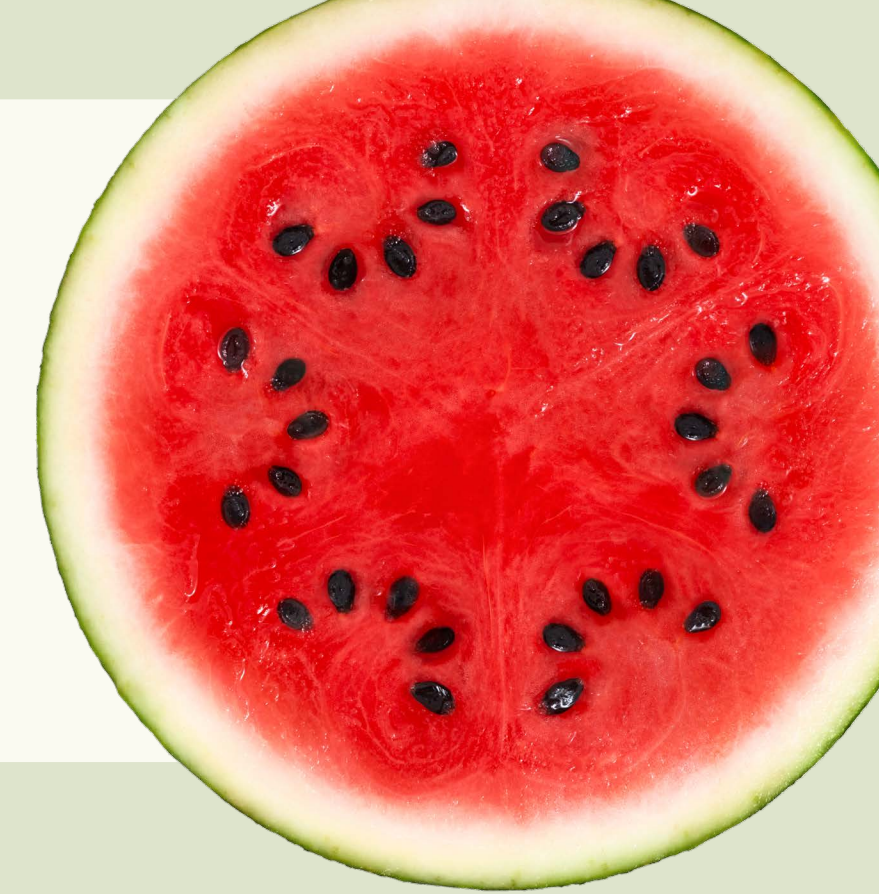


# WATER-WISE WATERMELONS

## IN FLORIDA'S SUWANNEE VALLEY



For the past 30 years UF/IFAS Extension has partnered with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Suwannee River Water Management District and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to develop systems and best practices that help Suwannee Valley watermelon growers conserve water, fuel and fertilizer.

**\$88 MILLION**  
watermelon  
industry  
statewide

**NEARLY  $\frac{1}{3}$**   
of all Florida watermelons are  
grown in the Suwannee Valley area

**RESEARCH-  
BASED BMPs**  
have led to an industry-wide shift from  
overhead irrigation techniques on open  
soils to a more efficient system of drip  
irrigation under plastic mulch.

### Suwannee Valley Area **RESULTS**



#### *Less water used*

2.1 billion gallons in annual water savings—  
roughly equivalent to the water use of  
65,000 Florida residents



#### *Less fertilizer applied*

180,000 lbs less nitrogen applied annually



#### *Less fuel expended*

120,000-270,000 gallons in diesel fuel  
savings per year



#### *Greater watermelon yields*

50-60,000 lbs watermelon harvested per acre  
annually—compared with 25-40,000 lbs/acre  
in the early 1990s

