

# Watermelon crop weathering the heat

By JADE MCDOWELL  
NEWS EDITOR

HERMISTON — Hermiston's watermelon crop is hanging in there despite being pounded by a record-breaking heat wave.

"Overall, they're holding up pretty well," said Jack Bellinger of Bellinger Farms, describing himself as "cautiously optimistic."

He said on Tuesday, June 29, that he had just gotten done checking half his watermelon fields, and he was pleased with what he saw. They might have to start picking their earliest fields sooner than expected, he said, but the heat and drought haven't been as detrimental to watermelons as it has been to some crops.

"Luckily watermelons are desert plants," he said. "They originated in the Middle East, so they do pretty well in the heat."

Scientists believe watermelons originated in northern Africa, specifically.

Hermiston's soil composition, as well as its hot days and cool nights, helps create an ideal mix of conditions for the sugary, juicy watermelons



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald, File

**Hermiston seedless watermelons sit in cartons outside of the Bellinger Farms store on Highway 395 in Hermiston in 2019. Jack Bellinger said this year's crop seems to be holding up in the extreme heat.**

Hermiston is famous for. While the nights haven't been as cool in the past week, with a hotter-than-usual June, Bellinger said he is looking forward to testing the sugar content of this year's crop soon.

Bellinger Farms also grows a vari-

ety of other crops, including some being harvested now, so Bellinger said during the extreme heat workers have been starting earlier, with most coming in around 5 a.m.

"Some of my irrigators start at 3," he said.

# Good Shepherd welcomes foot & ankle specialist

HERMISTON HERALD

Good Shepherd Health Care System recently welcomed Dr. Kyle Duncan, a board certified podiatrist.

He joins orthopedic surgeons Dr. Jeremy Anderson and Dr. James Whittum in Good Shepherd Medical Group's Advanced Orthopedic & Sports Medicine Institute on the GSMC campus in Hermiston. Duncan and his team offer the full scope of podiatry care at the clinic and accept patients 6 months and older.

"I'm excited to offer foot and ankle services in this community to give patients the option of receiving quality podiatry care right here at home," Duncan said.

Growing up in Kennewick, Duncan said he is happy to be back practicing close to family. He completed his residency in Fort Worth, Texas, at a Level 1 trauma center that also was the county hospital for around two million people. Duncan said he completed nearly 1,500 surgery cases during his residency and has been practicing podiatry for the past four years.

"Podiatry specializes in one area of the body, the foot and ankle, and I liked the fact that I get to practice many different types of medicine, such as skin conditions, bone and joint prob-

lems, endocrine problems and neurological diseases that happen to all take place in the foot," he said. "Nearly any foot and ankle problems that arise can be treated by a podiatrist."

He said for most foot and ankle conditions, patients should seek care when they experience pain. Also, he said skin conditions — such as lesions, spots and changes in nail color — are abnormal changes that should be checked out, too.

Some in-office procedures Duncan performs include ingrown toenail and wart removal/treatments, which are two of the most common conditions that can be fixed on the same day. For surgical procedures that can't be done in the office, Duncan said Good Shepherd has a great surgical facility and staff, located next to the clinic.

"I believe in a patient-centered approach to medicine. I enjoy taking the time to get to know my patients so that we can come up with a treatment plan that fits their individual lifestyle and needs," Duncan said. "This leads to faster recovery and better outcomes."

The clinic is open Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 620 N.W. 11th St., Suite M-201. To schedule an appointment, call 541-289-7075.



Duncan

# New industrial park site breaks ground

HERMISTON HERALD

The city of Hermiston is about to extend paved roads, water lines, sewer pipes and upgraded electrical power to the South Hermiston Industrial Park.

The city in a press release announced it expects the \$2.5 million project to wrap up in four months and create about 16 shovel-ready parcels of light industrial property.

The city is holding a groundbreaking ceremony

Wednesday, July 7, at 12:15 p.m. To access the South Hermiston Industrial Park, take Kelli Boulevard southwest from Highway 395 near the former Hermiston Foods plant and then take a right on East Penney Avenue for a quarter of a mile.

The construction project includes:

- Paving and installing water and sewer lines to Southeast 10th Street between U.S. Highway 395 and East Penney Avenue.

- Paving and installing water and sewer lines to a new road spur from Southeast 10th into Port of Umatilla property within the industrial park.

- Completing paving on Southeast Campbell Drive to East Penney.

- Installing new underground power through Port of Umatilla property to loop with existing power along Highway 395.

Funding for the utilities projects come from a vari-

ety of sources: \$1.46 million in a U.S. Economic Development Administration grant; \$1.16 million from a local improvement district representing adjacent property owners; \$250,000 from the city of Hermiston; and \$50,000 from Umatilla County.

The city also reported the Economic Development Administration estimated the activity will lead to 250 jobs and \$70 million in private development.

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