



In between cutting and bagging, each Pureheart Melon is gently wiped clean by crew members who then place the melon on the field conveyor.

ripe and ready for pickin'



Knife in one hand, one of the harvesting crew (left) can hold one of the Pureheart Melons in the other hand.

Five ripe melons (below left) wait to be picked up.

A Pureheart Melon cut open in the field to check for ripeness (below right) is deep red.

'Personal size' melons grown by farmers in Yuma area head to market

Text and photos by Randy Hoeft



One of the picking crew cuts a melon and tastes it, checking for ripeness.

What might catch the eye of anyone driving past some of the watermelon fields in the Yuma area this time of year is the size of the melons in the field.

No, not the enormity, but the smallness.

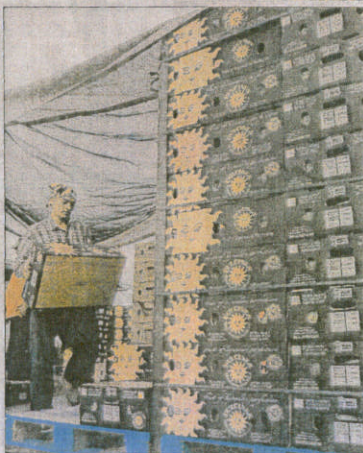
Rest assured, however, there's nothing wrong with the melons. They are supposed to be small, or as John Meiser, regional manager for Dulcinea Farms out of California, calls them, "personal size" melons.

Officially, they are Pureheart Melons. The name, said Meiser, comes from the melon's flavor, which "tastes like the heart of a melon all the way through."

He added that while the melon is a little more expensive compared with a big melon in the store, the flavor is worth the investment.

Recently crews out of Calexico were harvesting Pureheart Melons west of Winterhaven for local grower Jerry Nakasawa. "Jerry is one of the local growers who works with us," said Meiser.

He added that this is the fifth year Dulcinea Farms has been operating in the Yuma area.



Boxes of the ripe melons ready for market are stacked and ready to go.



The field conveyor crew picks up the small melons, wipes them off, bags the melons three at a time and packs them in boxes, which are also assembled on the spot.