



1130 Shackleburg Road, Anderson, SC 29621

June 6, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to offer my support to Dr. Brent Murdock, owner of US Seedless, LLC and Highmark Seeds. I first met Brent in the 1980s when he was a beginning graduate student at Clemson University and I was the professor in his introductory genetics class. I quickly realized the uniqueness and importance of the research that he was beginning and I became his major professor responsible for directing his research on seedless watermelon production which was in its infancy at that time.

Since completion of his Ph. D., Brent has developed a successful business whose goal is to breed and develop useful varieties of seedless watermelon. This is a very labor intensive process and to facilitate the work he hires young teenagers from the local community to assist. Brent is an excellent role model for young men and women and contributes to their maturity as well as helping them financially. I have been personally acquainted with some of his young employees and have enjoyed hearing how they have learned a lot and had a very good work experience.

Security and biosecurity are important issues on any farm. My husband and I own and operate Walker Century Farms in Anderson where we produce grassfed beef and pastured pork. We are fully cognizant of the need for security to keep vandals and others out of our pastures, both for protection of our animals and the farm as a whole.

Brent has talked with me over the last decade about his difficulties in keeping strangers out of his watermelon fields. He has on occasion slept in the field to make sure of the security of his very valuable plants. I have been apprised of the small county road that cuts through his farm and the difficulty this poses to overall security of his fields.

The efforts of Brent contribute to the economy of Anderson County and to the future of agriculture in the state of South Carolina in general. There is an ongoing emphasis at the state level on sustainable local agriculture. It is important in matters such as this to keep the larger picture in mind.

Thank you for your consideration,

Nancy H Walker, Ph. D.

Professor Emeritus, Department of Plant, Soil and Environmental Sciences, Clemson University