Once again, bacterial fruit blotch (BFB), caused by the bacterium *Acidovorax avenae* subsp. *citrulli*, caused severe watermelon losses in Georgia in 2006. BFB renders watermelon fruit unmarketable because the primary damage caused is to the watermelon fruit itself. Infected watermelons will show dark, water-soaked, irregular-shaped, blotches on rinds at maturity. These watermelons later crack open and ooze fluid or rupture from bacterial induced pressure building up inside the watermelon. Below is a list of important points surrounding BFB epidemics.

1. **An epidemic of BFB is always going to originate from infested seed.** It is difficult to prove that it overwinters here or has another source of inoculum.

2. **BFB can be spread very easily.** Once in a greenhouse it can spread to any cucurbits being grown in that house. It can also be spread by people, machinery, and possibly insects.

3. **Fruit infection by BFB occurs very early in the development of the watermelon fruit.** Probably at or during the time of pollination until the fruit has developed a waxy coat on the rind. BFB infection of mature fruit very rarely occurs during the time of harvest.

4. **Remedial disease control measures should occur before fruit begin to form.** Copper applications have helped growers in the past. Spraying copper in a field that has fruit blotch on watermelon fruit is ineffective in reducing disease spread.

5. **The absolute best time to find fruit blotch is on transplants.** This gives the grower the ability to discard them and find clean plants. The next best time to find it is in the field on young watermelon vines that have not yet begun to set fruit. This is when copper sprays can be employed. If you get plants from a greenhouse that had BFB confirmed in it, copper sprays should be used until fruit are nearing maturity.

6. **BFB does not always produce symptoms on foliage, but when it does it resembles the foliar symptoms of anthracnose, except BFB lesions do not cause tears in the lesion and they seem to follow the veins more.**

7. **Irrigation that produces the least leaf wetness period and causes the least splashing is**
best. If you overhead irrigate, do so early in the morning. Drip irrigation allows for the least amount of BFB spread followed by center pivot irrigation with solid set or traveling gun irrigation causing the most disease spread.