



Watermelon UPDATE

NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTION BOARD



National Grocers Association

NWPB was once again on-hand at the National Grocers Association Conference & Expo in Las Vegas, Nevada February 12 and 13. This is the third year NWPB has exhibited at the expo under PMA's Produce Pavilion. NWPB staff was able to continue to build awareness and promote NWPB's unique resources to 3,800 attendees including supermarket operators, wholesalers, food industry service suppliers and manufacturers.

The display contest information was particularly well-received as a unique and creative incentive to assist independent grocers with merchandising and creating excitement at store-level. Additionally, attendees were able to communicate their needs and share insight through exclusive conversations throughout the show.

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NGA Continued...



NWPB's Juliemar Rosado and Rebekah Dossett



Rosado Presents at Educational Session

Over the course of the conference, attendees have the opportunity to take part in over 40 educational workshops to drive profitable growth. This year, Juliemar Rosado, NWPB Director of Retail Operations and International Marketing was invited to be a panel participant as well as present at one of the educational sessions entitled “Freshen Up Produce Promotions and Events to Grow Your Business.” The educational session was well received and attended by independent grocer attendees specific to the produce aisle.

Q1 “On the Go” Influencer

This spring, NWPB activated an influencer campaign to begin laying the groundwork for on-the-go conversations, recipe inspiration and usage techniques. Through these strategic partnerships, NWPB is able to reach consumers through authentic yet controlled messaging via the influencer’s channels.

The Q1 campaign consists of four partners, each creating a recipe video using an on-the-go recipe from Watermelon.org. The partners and recipes include:

- Eazy Peazy Mealz: Watermelon Chia Parfaits
- fANNEtastic Food: Watermelon and Bulgur Wheat Salad
- From My Bowl: Lemony Quinoa and Watermelon Salad
- Alena Food Photo: Sweet Watermelon Pizza

The first recipe video, from Eazy Peazy Mealz, has already garnered more than 45,000 views on social channels. The remaining videos will go live through the month of March.



2018/2019 Program Overviews

Retail/International Marketing



The Marketing Committee is responsible for developing and implementing an effective retail and international marketing campaigns. This includes trade and consumer promotions as well as public relations. The purpose of our yearly campaigns is to energize domestic and international retail markets to create continued, year-round awareness and therefore move more watermelon. NWPB continues to work to build demand for the increased watermelon volume available to consumers. Getting watermelon into the hands of consumers of all ages, including millennial shoppers, requires NWPB to build and maintain relationships with retailers across the US and Canada. NWPB will continue supporting retailers to the best of our ability.

NWPB's regional retail account management team continues to be the backbone of our retail and international marketing programs. These independent contractors work diligently to keep watermelon top of mind and continue to establish new connections with retailers. They are also a direct line to

retailers' needs as it pertains to marketing tools and materials.

In addition to the personalized promotions coordinated by the retail account management team and the Watermelon Queen program, NWPB will continue its partnership with the shopping app Ibotta. NWPB will also continue supermarket dietitian outreach via Produce for Kids. New this year, NWPB plans to work with NutriSavings, a digital nutrition wellness program where employers, supermarket retailers, health plans, and food companies join forces in a digital ecosystem focused on getting employees and their families to shop, cook and eat healthier.

Also new this year, in conjunction with the foodservice and communication programs, NWPB will conduct a watermelon year-round documentary project that will allow retailers, foodservice operators, media and influencers to better understand and tell the year-round watermelon story in 2019.

The retail display contest turns 10 this year! Open to all retail chains, independent retailers, and commissaries, the contest is used by NWPB to encourage retailers to create displays that showcase the many benefits of watermelon. The contest will accept entries for displays built in the months of July and August.

The NWPB will continue to attend and exhibit at regional tradeshow, as they are an advantageous way to connect with influential key contacts at many of the major retail chains at every level of the supply chain and produce industry.

Finally, NWPB will continue promotional activities in the export markets of Canada and Japan.

Communications

Our 2018 efforts aim to educate consumers on the **versatility** and **convenience** of watermelon through the *Watermelon on the Go* integrated communications campaign, as described in the February Watermelon Update. The visual aesthetic of this campaign shows watermelon in beautiful, inspiring imagery providing visceral design, or instant emotional impact. The hero images of the *Watermelon on the Go* include the meal-prepped refrigerator insinuating a grab-and-go readiness, as well as the Sunday family meal-prep day, with the whole family working together breaking down a watermelon into many healthy recipes for the week. Health underscores everything, as watermelon creates the healthy ingredient in any recipe it's added to.



Versatility describes creativity and flexibility of the flavor of watermelon into recipes for every application, including *on the go* examples like:

- Watermelon parfait for an out-the-door breakfast
- Watermelon dippers for midday snacks
- Diced watermelon for lunchtime salads

Convenience with watermelon means that breaking down a whole watermelon can be easy -- and results in dozens of meals. Fresh cuts, juice and minis are convenient and can be shortcuts to using in recipes.

Watermelon on the Go campaign activities for this year include: a landing page hub for consumers at Watermelon.org, a blogger influencer network campaign, and a twitter party to launch the return of the recipe contest.

Other Communications program activity highlights for the 2018-2019 fiscal year that have been approved include:

- Advertising - YouTube performance media and paid feature placements
- Photography and video creation - Press kit imagery and 20 new recipe videos
- Jump with Jill national partnership for in-school children's outreach
- Media event at Time, Inc. showing *Watermelon on the Go* versatility and convenience
- A new fitness event this summer at the Fit Foodie Run's 'Watermelon Mile'

Stay tuned to the Watermelon Update to experience the elements and events that will define the Communications program this year. If you have any questions, contact Stephanie Barlow, Senior Director of Communications, at sbarlow@watermelon.org.

Foodservice

The Foodservice Committee is responsible for developing and implementing an effective foodservice marketing campaign. This includes outreach to culinary, marketing, purchasing and nutrition decision-makers with foodservice organizations through foodservice media, industry events, promotions, menu ideation sessions and culinary schools and organizations with the ultimate goal of getting more watermelon on foodservice menus. With strategic support from the Board, momentum for watermelon in foodservice continues to grow. We know from our 2017 Foodservice Menu Research that watermelon is featured **on one in ten menus and has grown by 27%** from 2012 to 2016.

The NWPB will continue media-focused partnerships with the **Culinary Institute of America**, the **International Foodservice Editorial Council** and others to reach foodservice in the media they read every day. Industry and event partnerships get the NWPB face-to-face with decision makers. Ongoing outreach includes:

- K-12 Outreach: **School Nutrition Association (SNA)**, **CSI Foodpro Virtual Trade Show**
- College & University Outreach: **National Association of College & University Food Services (NACUFS)**, **Chef Culinary Conference**
- Registered Dietician Outreach: **National Restaurant Association (NRA) Nutrition Executive Study Group (NESG)**
- Distributor/Operator Outreach: **PMA Foodservice**
- Operator Outreach: **The Flavor Experience**
- Grocerant (Retail Foodservice) Outreach: **Grocerant Summit**
- Foodservice Watermelon Tour will host approximately 10 decision-makers from across the Foodservice world and highlight watermelon usage on menus, in retail, at processors and more including a hands-on watermelon experience to educate and influence

From media and event outreach, the NWPB is consistently receiving more requests for watermelon ideation sessions and promotions. The ideation sessions take the work out of placing watermelon on a chain's menu and promotions help the item sell and get watermelon messages in front of consumers. Finally, for ongoing work, we will continue to promote the [culinary curriculum](#) to culinary schools and students as well as to current chefs, for ongoing education opportunities through the **American Culinary Federation** and the **Center for the Advancement of Foodservice Educators**.

There are two new programs to highlight for 2018/2019. A part of Media, *Watermelon Year-Round: The Story*, **will help audiences understand and appreciate that high-quality watermelon is available year-round**. Although volume and pricing shows year-round opportunity, there is a need for a hook. To do this, we will **build confidence, trust and emotional attachment to the story of watermelon** including how and where it is grown and the people, cultures, and traditions associated with it. We will identify two growing regions and farmers to highlight: one in the U.S., one in Mexico. For each region, we will develop written content, photography, and videography. The written narrative will document the region and grower's specific story including details such as local climate and conditions that enable watermelon to grow optimally; the position of watermelon within local culture; unique local recipes/usages of watermelon, etc. From the narrative, we will identify exactly which elements need photography to visually support the story. One three-minute video will be produced to capture the essence of the year-round story for the two regions. This program is in partnership with Communications and Marketing.

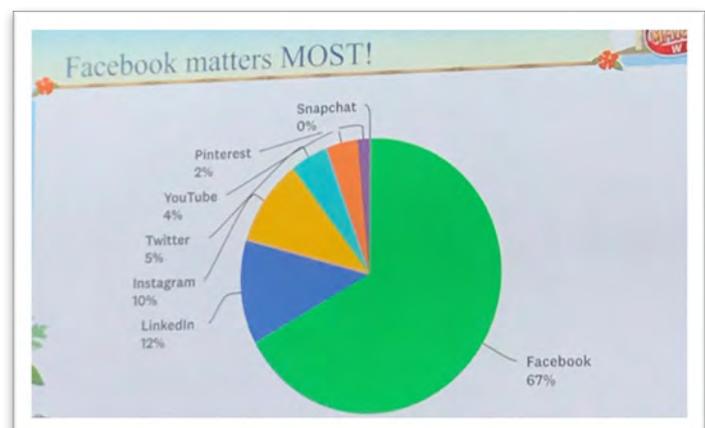
Also new this year, the NWPB will reach out to Hotel/Entertainment foodservice which is projected to be more than 7% of the industry with 54,000 locations and \$14 billion in operator purchases. Lodging is realizing their menu needs to be on par with restaurants in their area to keep customers spending with them. As a supporting partner at MISE, the NWPB will receive: complimentary operator invitations, a minimum of three watermelon recipes plus beverages, website logo recognition with link to watermelon.org/foodservice, social media mentions, on-site logo recognition in various locations including event signage, program, etc., a company profile in the program and attendee list provided leading up to event as well as after.

Social Media Marketing World

Keeping up on the latest social media trends is essential for our industry's success, making sure watermelon and its key messages impacting buying behavior are top of mind, and now top of the feed on the smartphone in various social media platforms. Stephanie Barlow, Senior Director of Communications, attended the Social Media Marketing World conference in late February in San Diego, CA with our Digital Strategy Director from FLM Harvest. The conference hosted 5,000 digital marketers, and enabled discovery of valuable new ways to market watermelon and the watermelon industry in the digital world.

- Tracks and workshops covered social media tactics for every major platform, plus video marketing, live video, analytics, influencer marketing, social care, social strategy, and more.
- 140+ expert-led sessions by nearly all the biggest names in social media.

Social Media Marketing World 2018 was the world's largest social media marketing conference. We took away amazing ideas that will transform our social media marketing, digital storytelling, and personal connectivity for years to come. **Expect to see more from the Watermelon Board on: Chatbots, Messenger, Videos and Live.**



Influencing Menus Through Dietitians



The beginning of March in Seattle, Washington, NWPB sponsored the Nutrition Executive Study Group (NESG) through the National Restaurant Association (NRA). The goal is to educate and inspire foodservice dietitians. This is a fun group to work with and due to menu labeling legislation and the continuing obesity epidemic, they continue to become more and more influential in menu change. As a silver level sponsor, watermelon was showcased during breakfast with a watermelon and avocado salsa to go on eggs and potatoes. NWPB also co-sponsored a pre-conference workshop featuring a speaker on trends and an early dinner full of watermelon, allowing for more one-on-one time with dietitians from Starbucks, Denny's and Panera, just to name a few.



*Congratulations to the New
National Watermelon Queen!*

All of us here at the National Watermelon Promotion Board would like to say a big 'Congratulations!' to the new National Watermelon Queen, Savannah Christensen from Florida! We are excited to help you leap into a very big year ahead promoting #watermeloneveryday!

Southeast Produce Council Southern Exposure



NWPB once again participated in the Southeast Produce Council's annual "Southern Exposure" expo March 2nd and 3rd in Tampa, FL. This year, along with retail and foodservice workshops, NWPB's Juliemar Rosado and Megan McKenna joined regional account manager Sheila Carden at the Southern Roots women's leadership program luncheon



where Grace Killelea of Grace Killelea Consulting was the keynote speaker. Southern Roots is the council's leadership program for women in produce. NWPB was also honored at the Produce for Kids reception with their "Retail Dietitian Advocate" Award.

At the expo, NWPB provided retail and foodservice attendees with information on how to keep watermelon top of mind on menus and in grocery stores. With the theme of "Where Produce is King," NWPB staff also got into the Elvis Presley spirit, donning "jailhouse rock" costumes. Every year, the expo attracts more than 2,400 attendees, continually setting records for overall attendance as well as for participation by the retail and foodservice sectors of the fresh produce industry.

Produce for Better Health Consumer Conference – Scottsdale, AZ – April 3 – 7

Viva Fresh Expo – San Antonio, TX – April 5 – 7

National Agri-Marketing Association Conference – Kansas City, MO – April 11 – 13

Queen Media Training – Atlanta, GA – April 21 – 22

Canadian Produce Marketing Association – Vancouver – April 5 – 7

**Where will
NWPB be
next?**

