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**WATERMELON BOARD'S FOODSERVICE PROGRAM CONTINUES MOMENTUM**  
*Use the Whole Watermelon Tour and Partnerships Among Highlights*

**WINTER SPRINGS, FL – August 28, 2018** – Nearly halfway through the fiscal year, National Watermelon Promotion Board's (NWPB) Foodservice Director Megan McKenna has seen tremendous headway with 2018/2019 program efforts. The foodservice marketing campaign has included outreach to culinary, marketing, purchasing and nutrition decision-makers with foodservice organizations through media, industry events, promotions, menu ideation sessions and culinary schools with the ultimate goal of getting more watermelon on foodservice menus. A few recent key activities include:

**Media-focused partnerships to reach foodservice in the media they read every day:**

- **The Culinary Institute of America's Worlds of Flavor Webcast Sponsorship:** NWPB created new recipes with videos that aired as "commercials" during breaks in the live programming of the 2018 Worlds of Flavor webcast. This year's webcast received record-breaking traffic with more than 50,000 total live viewers. All of the videos and the recipe content now live permanently at [ciaprochef.com/watermelon](http://ciaprochef.com/watermelon). The videos in this series are also featured on the CIA's YouTube and iTunes channels.

**Industry events get the NWPB face-to-face with decision makers including those in the nutrition, marketing, purchasing and culinary:**

- **Use the Whole Watermelon Foodservice Tour:** In April, NWPB hosted foodservice operators and media for a farm to fork watermelon experience in South Florida. The goal was to educate about and inspire with watermelon. The tour included time at a farm and packing shed learning about watermelon cultivation as well as restaurants menuing watermelon.

*Nutrition*

- **Nutrition Executive Study Group (NESG) through the National Restaurant Association (NRA):** The goal is to educate and inspire foodservice dietitians. Due to menu labeling legislation and the continuing obesity epidemic, they continue to become more and more influential in menu change. Watermelon was showcased during breakfast with a watermelon and avocado salsa to go on eggs and potatoes. NWPB co-hosted a pre-conference workshop featuring a speaker on trends and a dinner full of watermelon, allowing for more one-on-one time with dietitians.

*Non-Commercial*

- **American Nutrition & Foodservice Professionals (ANFP) Annual Convention & Expo:** In an effort to reach healthcare operators, the NWPB sponsored Chef Gabrielle Montalbano of the Renaissance Orlando at SeaWorld to demonstrate and serve a watermelon appetizer featuring ingredients from their rooftop and in-kitchen garden. She helped guests understand how they can compress watermelon in their kitchen.
- **Chef's Culinary Conference:** To reach College & University (C&U) operators, the NWPB had an opportunity to present to the attendees for five minutes and watermelon was on the menu multiple times

including watermelon rind pickles. C&U has the ability to be creative and is often a place where trends can be found.

- **Fresh Festival for School Foodservice taking place during United Fresh Produce Show:** The NWPB had a booth during the mini-expo that provides an opportunity to talk one-on-one with school foodservice buyers.

#### *Commercial*

- **PMA Foodservice Conference & Expo:** NWPB participated in the Buyer Roundtable Meetings with key operators and distributors as well as sponsored a sampling station outside the show floor, between the exhibit halls.

### **Promotions with operators across the country to not only get more watermelon on foodservice menus and thus moving more watermelon through the supply chain, but also to educate and inspire consumers.**

- **Another Broken Egg:** To promote their Toasted Coconut Quinoa Power Skillet, featuring fresh watermelon. Their 64 locations featured watermelon as a part of their fruit side as well. Consumer communications included a table tent in restaurants, webpage, e-blasts and social media tagging the NWPB or using the watermelon.org logo. “Fun fact, fruit sales were up for our system 126% and fruit substitutes up 305%! Certainly watermelon had a lot to do with it,” said Jason Knolls, vice president of culinary at Another Broken Egg. They plan to test more watermelon menu items in the future.

### **Education for new chefs, chef educators and those looking for ongoing education.**

- **Center for the Advancement of Foodservice Educators (CAFÉ) annual conference:** The NWPB co-hosted a trend session on pickling and fermentation featuring Chef Dave Woolley and Chef Stella Bernard. The presentation presented the history and techniques of pickling and fermenting and how it fits into today’s food trends, such as less food waste. The goal is for the culinary educators to be inspired by watermelon and use it in their classrooms to educate future chefs.
- **Watermelon Culinary Curriculum:** Lesson plans accredited by the American Culinary Federation launched as a personal development tool for chefs. More than 250 culinary students, educators and current chefs have taken the test. Thirty-seven percent of respondents were either not familiar with or don’t use watermelon in their classrooms or on their menus.

For more information about the Foodservice program including how NWPB can support watermelon usage in the foodservice sector, visit [watermelon.org/foodservice](http://watermelon.org/foodservice) or contact Megan McKenna at [mmckenna@watermelon.org](mailto:mmckenna@watermelon.org).

### **About National Watermelon Promotion Board**

The National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB), based in Winter Springs, Florida, was established in 1989 as an agricultural promotion group to promote watermelon in the United States and in various markets abroad. Funded through a self-mandated industry assessment paid by more than 1,500 watermelon producers, handlers and importers, NWPB mission is to increase consumer demand for watermelon through promotion, research and education programs.

Watermelon packs a nutritious punch with each serving providing an excellent source of vitamin C, a good source of vitamin B6 and a delicious way to stay hydrated with only 80 calories. Watermelon consumption per capita in the United States was an estimated 16.3 pounds in 2017 or approximately 5.3 billion pounds. The United States exported an additional 339.1 million pounds of watermelon. For additional information, visit [www.watermelon.org](http://www.watermelon.org).