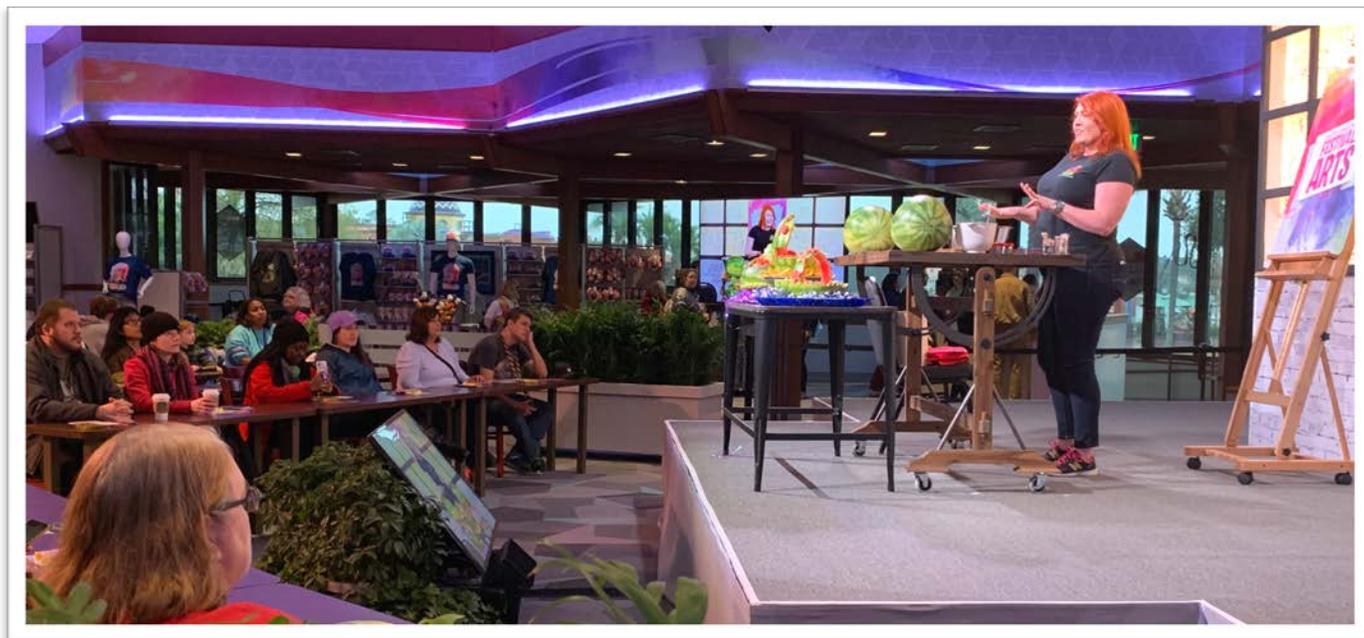




Watermelon UPDATE

NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTION BOARD



Epcot Festival of the Arts

NWPB Returned for Third Year to Educate & Inspire Consumers

The event celebrates visual, culinary and performing arts inspired from all around the world set against the incomparable backdrop of Epcot at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida. Taking place daily from January 18-February 25, the festival featured gallery exhibits, foodie experiences with art-inspired menus, live Broadway-style entertainment and of course, “The Art of Watermelon Carving” demos with Stephanie Barlow, Senior Director of Communications.

Inside

2 Epcot continued; Produce for Better Health Social Promotions

3 The R Before the P – Research Leads to Promotion

4 Foodservice Media Craves Watermelon

The R before the P – Research Leads to Promotion

The Research Committee is responsible for developing and implementing the research program for the NWPB. In an effort to help provide new messaging for promotion and education programs, the Board invests in health and nutrition research each year. The nutrition research program underwent some structure and process changes a couple years ago. The Board conducted a Nutrition & Health Insights & Analysis to gain a deeper understanding of how health and nutrition attributes of watermelon align with current consumer trends and to provide strategic guidance to inform the NWPB's nutrition research program.

Below is an update on current projects:

- A Watermelon Focused Dietary Inflammatory Index Counseling System to Reduce Systemic Inflammation –manuscript for publication **is in development for 2019**
- Watermelon and the Bioactive Compounds Promote the Digestive Health in Diabetes – **no cost extension for 2019**
- Bioavailability and Pharmacokinetic Parameters of Watermelon (rind, flesh and seeds) Polyphenols in Human Plasma: A Pilot study to Investigate Relationship to Endothelial Function – **analyzing data**
- Efficacy of Watermelon Consumption on Range of Motion, Pain and Cartilage/Inflammatory Biomarkers in Older Adults with Symptomatic Knee Osteoarthritis – **research in progress**
- Effects of Fresh Watermelon Consumption on Satiety and Cardiometabolic Health – two abstracts presented in 2018, an **abstract and manuscript for publication are in development for 2019**
- Investigating the Differential Effects on Metabolism with Consumption of Watermelon and By-Products during Intake of an Unhealthy Western-Style Diet – one **abstract presented in 2018, one manuscript is under review for 2019**

Once these projects are published in peer reviewed journals the NWPB will work with USDA to share results with nutrition media, trade media and others, in an effort to reach consumers with new watermelon health and nutrition messages.



Foodservice Media Craves Watermelon

The Board reaches foodservice media year-round (all these placements are from November to February!) to educate about and inspire with watermelon. Sometimes the stories feature NWPB recipes, sometimes a foodservice operator's creative recipe and sometimes it is something more obscure, like our consulting chef talking about how much fun it is to be a commodity board chef! No matter the coverage, images and mentions of watermelon help keep it top of mind with operators across the country.

To help make watermelon coverage turnkey, the NWPB invests in a foodservice photoshoot to photograph chef and operator's recipes for inclusion in foodservice media. Although we have beautiful photography, many magazines want to highlight operator recipes that have been successful on menus. In January we shot multiple recipes from the University of Massachusetts, a beverage from an operator in the northwest and a trail mix created by our consulting chef. The trail mix has already been picked up and we hope to see that coverage in the spring.



Throughout Dave Woolley's culinary life — from his three-year ACF apprenticeship at Disney World in the early 1990s through his seven-year stint in menu development with Red Robin Gourmet Burgers — he applied himself to developing relationships. He believes that is one of the most important things he did to pave the way for his current business, CD Culinary Approach, Denver, a culinary consultancy with commodity boards as his clients. He shares the type of work he does and how he got the opportunity to work with his commodity clients.



How did you begin consulting for commodity boards?
I didn't start with a plan to focus on commodity boards. As I began my consulting business, someone working with the California Avocado Commission encouraged me to figure out what I could do with my experience gained throughout my whole career, including my relationships with Red Robin, and turn it into doing things for the commission in foodservice. So, I began working with them to inspire other chain restaurants to think of California avocados in ways they hadn't thought of before.

What other commodity boards and commissions have you worked for?
I have done work for the California Strawberry Commission and the National Pork Board. And currently I'm working with the California Avocado Commission, National Mango Board, National Watermelon Promotion Board and the Idaho Potato Commission.

What type of work do commodity groups want you to do for them?



UNEXPECTED VEGGIES

Plant-based ingredients are popping up in flavorful, albeit surprising guises on menus nationwide. Here are four recent standouts.

SMOKED WATERMELON HAM, DUCKS EATERY, NEW YORK CITY: Chef/co-owner Will Horowitz starts this \$75 dish of a whole watermelon served in the style of ham by curing the watermelon for four to six days before it's dried, smoked for eight hours, and then finished in a pan. It takes Horowitz around a week to make each one, and they sell out months in advance, thanks to social media.

SHISHITOS WITH SMOKED TOFU AND DOENJANG BAGNA CAUDA, PASSEROTTO, CHICAGO: In this clever Italian-Korean mashup, chef Jennifer Kim chars shishitos then tosses them in bagna cauda that subs in doenjang, a fermented soybean and brine paste, for the requisite anchovies. She piles the blistered peppers atop a mixture of smoked soft tofu blended with smoked whole-milk ricotta, honey, salt and orange blossom water.

GROUPER BRINED IN SHIO KOJI, EMMER & RYE, AUSTIN: After brining meaty grouper in a koji, salt (shio) and water mixture, executive chef/owner Kevin Fink poaches the tenderized fish in charred corn and hoja santa chili butter and served with a foam of its poaching liquid and smoked bread.

MAC 'N YEASE, PLUM BISTRO, SEATTLE: Chef Makini Howell's now-famous vegan mac and cheese gets its silky texture and cheesy flavor from a blend of soy and rice milks, vegan cheeses, butters and a bit of xanthan gum to thicken. It's laced with garlic and thyme and topped with panko for crunch, with a sprinkling of minced smoked tofu standing in for bacon bits.

Obstacles

We're Not Allowed to Serve School-Grown Items

It's been nearly 10 years since USDA published a guide about how to serve school garden produce for school meal programs. For the first time since that 2008 document was updated, the federal government says it's OK to serve up a variety of fresh produce in school meals.

What's the problem? The problem is that many schools are still using the old USDA guidelines from the Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program (FFV) that were published in 2008. USDA's Food and Nutrition Service published a report earlier this year on school and school garden systems, which is helpful in that it notes the disconnect between school garden programs in the marketplace. It can be found online at www.fns.usda.gov/ffv.

Why there are no federal rules prohibiting the use of school garden produce in school meals, even in local markets, North Carolina does not permit school garden produce to be incorporated into school meals. The state's food safety concerns. Carolina's local health departments have similar rules in place. You can see the state's permission regarding food safety prohibiting or limiting school garden crops in the appendix, but even after the long-term work to understand the current federal school rules and state policies that may be outdated, it's the best.

How to overcome: Work with your local health department to get a list of approved produce items. If you're not sure, ask your local health department for a list of approved produce items. If you're not sure, ask your local health department for a list of approved produce items.

How to overcome: Work with your local health department to get a list of approved produce items. If you're not sure, ask your local health department for a list of approved produce items.





Valentine's Day Facebook Live with Abbie Gellman (and Olivia!)

On February 13th, Watermelon Board broadcasted a Facebook Live event, but for the first time on our channel, a creator and influencer hosted. Abbie Gellman is an RD and chef, and her daughter Olivia is a HUGE fan of all things watermelon. Together, the Gellman Girls talked all things watermelon and showed some fun ways to LOVE watermelon this Valentine's day.

Abbie and Olivia played with the L-O-V-E cookie cutters to create watermelon cookie cutouts, decorating and topping with their favorite fun flair, including sprinkles, coconut and chocolate chips. To try and win their own set of L-O-V-E cookie cutters, the audience was asked to tell us their favorite way to eat watermelon and to tag their Valentine, creating engagements and fun discussion points in the comments.

Key messages educated on during the Facebook Live include:

- Where to find watermelon in February? Local grocery store! Think minis and fresh cuts!
- Health benefits especially important during National Heart Health Month like 92% water for hydration, the antioxidant lycopene giving it red color, Vitamin A for healthy eyes and Vitamin C for helping with immunity and keeping us from getting sick



Expect to see more Facebook Lives at Watermelon Board's channel with Culinary Nutrition Cuisine and other influencer partners throughout the year. This fantastic broadcast earned a reach of more than 10,000 with nearly 800 engagements!

Where
will
NWPB
be
next?

Southeast Produce Council Southern Exposure – Orlando, FL – March 8 & 9

SXSW – Austin, TX – March 11 – 13

National Restaurant Association Nutrition Executive Study Group – Ft. Lauderdale, FL – March 12 – 14

FoodOvation – Savannah, GA – March 17 – 20

Social Media Marketing World Conference – San Diego, CA – March 20 – 22

Canadian Produce Marketing Association – Montreal, Canada – April 2 – 4