



JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2020

Watermelon UPDATE

NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTION BOARD



Pro*Act Partnership

Inspiring Through a Distributor to Reach Operators

Pro*Act is a national network of local distributors working together to supply operators across the country. They have 71 distribution centers, 3.5 million square feet of warehouse space, 1,950 distribution trucks, 2.6 million miles of coast-to-coast distribution. The NWPB focuses on outreach to operators (the consumer-facing foodservice organizations) but saw an opportunity with new initiatives Pro*Act was pursuing to educate their customers.

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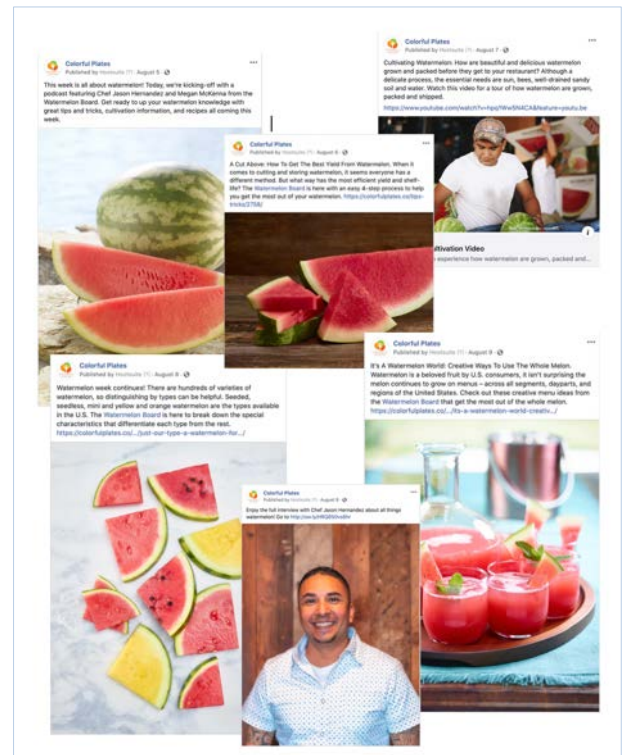
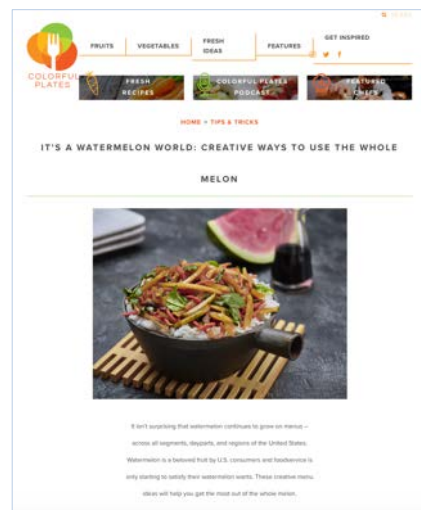
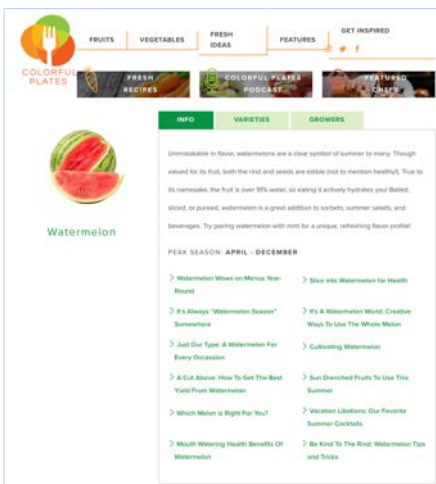
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New in 2019, Pro*Act hosted their first annual Culinary Summit (<https://www.theculinarysummit.com>) bringing not only contacts from their company but also their operator customers together to learn from speakers and sponsors. This by-invitation-only event in the heart of the fresh produce world brought the brightest minds in foodservice, together with the growers, shippers, and distributors who work to bring fresh produce to their kitchens for hands-on culinary experiences, tastings, field tours, and collaborative sessions with chefs and suppliers to discover ways to work better together. Attendees included 100 people from 30 distributors in the Pro*Act network as well as 63 contacts from 42 operators from across the country. The NWPB supported a session presented by celebrity chef Hugh Acheson who focused on pickling and demoed a Fresh and Pickled Watermelon Salad. There were 40 people in attendance who worked hands-on through pickling the rind and then how to incorporate it into a fresh salad. In addition to the great product presentation, the NWPB provided collateral, a 2-minute watermelon presentation and the web logo was highlighted throughout the conference.



In addition to this event Pro*Act also recently launched Colorful Plates (<https://colorfulplates.co> and pictured, below), a website designed to educate and inspire their customers about fresh produce. Their diverse operator reach is apparent through the web menu highlighting content for K-12, Universities, Hospitality, Healthcare, Fine Dining and Fast Casual. To grow watermelon's presence on Colorful Plates, the NWPB sponsored two podcasts (<https://colorfulplates.co/podcasts/>), articles (<https://colorfulplates.co/fruits/watermelon/>), and social media posts on cultivation, cutting and yield, usage ideas, nutrition and more (collage below, right). The first half of the content was posted in August and the second half was spread out over November, December and January. A great reminder that watermelon is available year-round.



Suwannee Valley Watermelon Institute

On December 3rd, NWPB Executive Director Mark Arney gave a presentation at the Suwannee Valley Watermelon Institute meeting at University of Florida IFAS Extension. Participants included watermelon producers, handlers, and allied industry representatives. The full event included educational sessions, industry trade show and lunch.



B.GOOD's Roasted Watermelon Continues to Gain Traction

As mentioned in the [December issue of the Watermelon Update](#), fast-casual restaurant B.GOOD included roasted watermelon as part of their Spicy Korean Bowl in a limited time menu offering. In their "2020 Top Ten Trends" story, *Flavor & the Menu* - a trade publication for food and beverage menu developers - included watermelon as part of Trend #3 - "Forward with Fruit." The piece includes images of B.GOOD's bowl and other examples of watermelon's "culinary potential" such as the watermelon ham at Duck's Eatery.



In addition, NWPB's Executive Director Mark Arney went to Brooklyn's B.GOOD in December. During his visit Arney spoke with the restaurant's Assistant Manager who said that the dish was very popular.

Sweet, Luscious Snacks for Loved Ones

Valentine's Day eats and treats

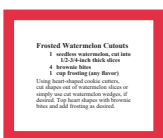
Valentine's Day naturally brings thoughts of hearts, romance, chocolate and love. This February 14th occurs during American Heart Month, it's a perfect opportunity to start taking care of your own heart and the hearts of loved ones.

For the occasion of the 10th anniversary of its founding, the American Heart Association is giving away 100,000 heart-shaped watermelon slices to enjoy from December and continue to challenge every American. The heart-shaped slices will be completely free based on availability. Here are a few to make someone feel special.

12 In the fall of 2010, I was the serving line at my own event, several friends. For example, these Frozen Watermelon Cubes make for great gifts for children and adults alike. You can also adjust them to a sweet dessert with just these ingredients: hand-sliced (cubed) watermelon, hand-sliced (cubed) citrus and minimal icing.

13 If you're really looking to impress this special someone, the Watermelon and Chocolate Dessert Board calls for creativity and plenty of easy-to-find ingredients. Watermelon, strawberries, blueberries, almonds and dark chocolate. You can also try using the ingredients for a glaze that's just as quickly spreading as it is appetizing.

14 Both recipes include the benefits of watermelon, which has many of vitamins C to boost the immune system's defenses as a cardiovascular, skin, hair and nail health booster. Plus, watermelon is a great source of antioxidants, which can help reduce inflammation and improve circulation. It's also a good source of potassium, which can help lower blood pressure.



- 12 cup roasted, cubed watermelon
- 1 cup chocolate-covered almonds
- 1 cup dark chocolate, broken into squares
- 1 cup coconut chips
- 1 cup marshmallows
- 1 cup fresh raspberries
- 1 cup fresh strawberries
- 1 cup fresh kiwi slices
- 1 cup fresh blueberries
- 1 cup fresh kiwi slices
- 1 cup fresh strawberries
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Family Features: February

The Family Features currently in distribution is in honor of Heart Health Month and Valentine's Day. The article features watermelon cut outs with sweets as a delicious and fun dessert - try it at home!

New York Produce Show

NWPB returned as exhibitors to the Eastern Produce Council’s New York Produce Show and Conference held in December 2019. The three-day event included a retail “thought-leader” breakfast panel, trade show of more than 500 companies, networking opportunities, retail tours and educational sessions throughout the day. As an exhibitor, the NWPB interacted with many retailers, media, wholesalers and the foodservice industry about materials and information NWPB has available for them in promotion and retail education. Pictured, above, in order are NWPB’s Juliemar Rosado, Influencer-Partner Ana Quincoces and Executive Director Mark Arney.



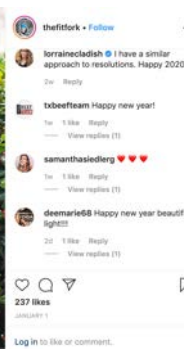
Promoting Watermelon Year-Round

Continuing to spread the message of health and year-round availability, NWPB partnered with Tajin and ChefsUSA for in-store promotions in October and November!



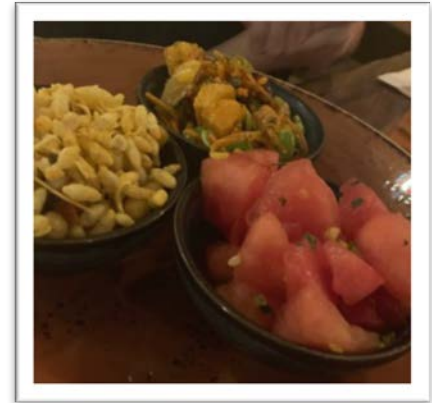
Influencer Partner Calendar Continues During Winter

Influencers continue to spread watermelon messaging throughout the winter months! Jennifer from The Fit Fork posted a watermelon workout Instagram TV story (screenshots below). Jennifer also carved a watermelon for the new year and Ana Quincoces posted a watermelon steak that garnered nearly 500 likes and 48 comments including watermelon conversation and dialogue!



Watermelon on the Menu

As part of their Thanksgiving menu, Sanaa at Walt Disney World's Animal Kingdom Villas featured watermelon in their Salad Sampler which also included black eye peas and beet salads. The Watermelon & Pickled Fennel salad is featured occasionally throughout the year.



Top Social Posts



Where will NWPB be next?

NWPB Spring Board Meeting – Lake Buena Vista, FL – February 22

National Grocers Association Show – Las Vegas, NV – February 23 – 26

Southeast Produce Council Southern Exposure – Tampa, FL – February 27 – 29

Social Media Marketing World – San Diego, CA – March 1 – 4

National Restaurant Association Nutrition Executive Study Group – Ft. Lauderdale, FL – March 3 – 5