



Watermelon Update

NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTION BOARD



Watermelon Research & Development Group 2020 Meeting Takes Place

The Watermelon Research and Development Group is an organization of university and industry researchers interested in improving watermelon. Members are national and international, and based in academia, government, and industry. The work of the members includes research in developing new varieties, investigating diseases and insect pests, improving cultural practices, as well as basic research. The group met January 31 and February 1 in Louisville, Kentucky in conjunction with the American Society for

Horticultural Science. NWPB Executive Director Mark Arney made a presentation at the meeting reviewing NWPB activities. Shown left to right: Dr. Penelope Perkins-Veazie, North Carolina State University, Professor, Department of Horticultural Science Plants for Human Health Institute and NWPB Research Committee Advisor; Dr. Daniel S. Egel, Extension Plant Pathologist, Southwest Purdue Agriculture Center and Chairman of the group; and Mark Arney, NWPB Executive Director.

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Spring Board Meeting

The Board held its annual spring meeting on February 22 in Lake Buena Vista, FL in conjunction with the National Watermelon Association annual convention. President Jesse Wiggins presided over the meeting that was attended by 30 of 41 board members, meeting quorum. In addition to new board member orientation, the meeting included:

- Swearing in of new board members
- National Watermelon Association Update
- Budget Review and Approval
- Election of Officers. Your 2020/2021 Executive Committee are:
 - President: Jesse Wiggins - District 6
 - Vice President: Lee Wroten - District 1
 - Ex-Officio: Ed McClellan
 - Secretary/Treasurer: Jordan Carter - District 3
 - James Sharp - District 2
 - John Lapide - District 4
 - Kelly Partch - District 5
 - Jeremy Holden - District 7
 - Dan O'Connor - District 8



Also, the Research, Communications, Retail & International Marketing and Foodservice departments each presented plans for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. The next Board Meeting will take place in October in Washington D.C. to coincide with the Marine Corps Marathon.



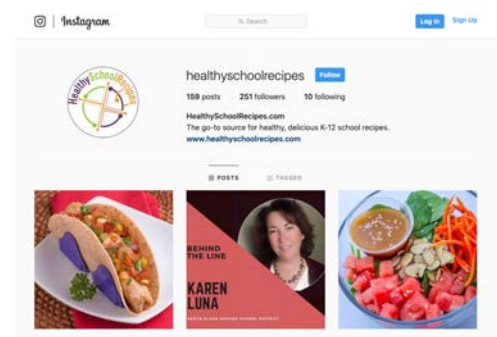
Valentine's Day Family Features Final Reporting

With the sweet holiday behind us in the calendar year, let's look at the terrific results from the Family Features distribution of Sweet Treats. With a solid, national placement map, it earned 1,284 placements in print and online publications and outlets, and calculating the reach of publication and circulation, an impressive overall reach of over 194 million and an ad equivalency of over \$1 million. Here are some example "tearsheets" from various magazines and newspapers that worked our feature into their layout.

Nationwide Placement



K-12 Foodservice Outreach



In response to interest in featuring more fresh produce on school menus, the NWPB partnered with [Healthy School Recipes](https://www.healthyschoolrecipes.com) (HSR) to encourage more use of watermelon on school menus. HSR is an online resource dedicated to providing K-12 school foodservice professionals a database of recipes that meet the unique needs of school nutrition programs. HSR has 500 registered users on the site, and in addition 1,300+ unregistered users every week.

The four-week watermelon campaign ran January 13 through February 9 and featured three of NWPB's recipes. HSR school nutrition/culinary experts tested and formatted existing NWPB recipes so schools can plug them into their menu database and feature them on menus. School nutrition professionals trust HSR to provide recipes that are streamlined and will appeal to kids. About 1,000 recipes currently reside on [healthyschoolrecipes.com](https://www.healthyschoolrecipes.com). The recipes featured (and number of downloads) on the website during the watermelon campaign were: Gingered Watermelon Salad (50), Watermelon Rind Coleslaw (45) and Black Bean Corn Watermelon Salad (45). All three recipes performed well on social media compared to the average. Watermelon Rind Coleslaw was the most popular recipe on Facebook and Ginger Watermelon Salad was highest on Twitter. NWPB recipes will remain on the website for users to access at any time.

To keep the momentum going, NWPB will build on this program in 2020 with watermelon handling/training materials and expanded reach through blog and newsletter features.



Supplier Database

Sign up to be a part of the NEW National Watermelon Promotion Board's Supplier Database! Each year the NWPB participates in multiple trade shows to reach buyers and the new opt-in only Supplier Database will be THE resource for retail and foodservice buyers looking for watermelon. Look for the Supplier Database on the new [watermelon.org/industry](https://www.watermelon.org/industry).

Interested in opting in to the new Supplier Database? Visit the Database entry form (on the website at [watermelon.org/supplier-form/](https://www.watermelon.org/supplier-form/)), email supplierdatabase@watermelon.org or call 407-657-0261.

National Grocers Association Show



NWPB was on-hand at the National Grocers Association Conference & Expo in San Diego, California February 24th and 25th. Under PMA's Produce Pavilion, NWPB staff was able to continue to build awareness and promote NWPB's unique resources to attendees including supermarket operators, wholesalers, food industry service suppliers and manufacturers. Additionally, attendees were able to communicate their needs and share insight through exclusive conversations throughout the show.

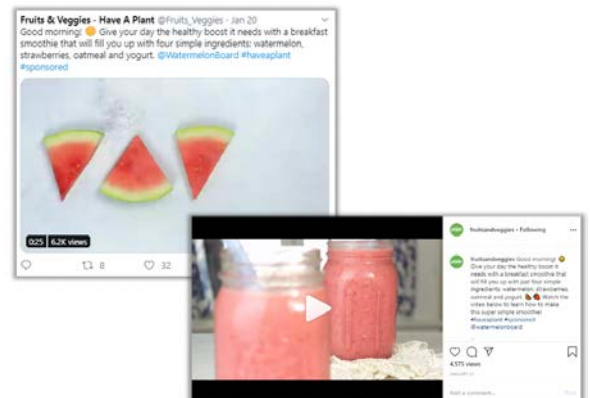


Produce for Better Health Social Media Promotions Results

In January and as part of our partnership, Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH) posted four recipe videos including DIY Watermelon Juice, Watermelon-Infused Water, Watermelon Oatmeal Smoothie and Super Green Detox Smoothie, all from watermelon.org. PBH tagged @watermelonboard on social media channels with a combined reach of the following impressions:

- Twitter: 67,044
- Facebook: 301,763
- Instagram: 154,072

Recipe videos had the largest collective reach, impressions and views on the PBH Facebook channel with the Watermelon Oatmeal Smoothie recipe out-performing the other recipes in total impressions and views across social platforms.



New Retail Research Tools Available

As a part of the new watermelon.org there are new retail research tools available to the industry. The quarterly IRI retail scan data report now includes market-level data, drilling down to fifty different markets across the country to give an even more in-depth view of retail and consumer behavior. Additionally, the new monthly Ad Tracking Report shows the total number of weekly ads over previous year and drills down to market-level data. Both can be found at <https://www.watermelon.org/audiences/industry/research/retail-research/>.

NWPB Reach Foodservice Dietitians



The National Restaurant Association’s Nutrition Executive Study Group met in Ft. Lauderdale the beginning of March to discuss trends in health and wellness in the Foodservice industry. Dietitians aren’t just charged with nutrition analysis but now have a seat at the table when developing new menu items. The Watermelon Board hosted a private event before the conference started to educate and inspire about watermelon. The event included a tour of a fresh cut facility to demonstrate the different formats of watermelon available year-round. The tour also included a watermelon 101, touching upon availability, handling, nutrition and, of course, samples! The day ended with a dinner featuring a watermelon beverage and salad. Attendees included brands such as Panera Bread, Bloomin’ Brands, Darden and others representing more than 30,000 restaurant locations across the country.



KitchenPlay Partnership Results

This past November through January, NWPB partnered with Kitchen PLAY for a *Winter with Watermelon Campaign*. Five food-focused Instagram influencers including @milkandcardamom, @unicornsinthekitchen, @savvysavingcouple, @chefleen and @graciouspantry were recruited to raise consumer awareness of availability of watermelon during the winter months. Together they earned 59,038 impressions and 116,606 engagements with Instagram posts and stories combined.





Congratulations to the New National Watermelon Queen!

All of the staff at the National Watermelon Promotion Board would like to say a big 'Congratulations!' to the new National Watermelon Queen, Paige Huntington from Texas!! We are excited to help you leap into a very big year ahead promoting #watermeloneveryday!



Southern Exposure

NWPB once again participated in the Southeast Produce Council's annual "Southern Exposure" expo February 28th and 29th in Tampa, FL. This year, along with retail and foodservice workshops, NWPB retail account managers Cece Krumrine and Sheila Carden provided retail and foodservice attendees with information on how to keep watermelon top of mind on menus and in grocery stores. 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.



Watermelon on the Menu



Spotted on the menu in December, the Compressed Watermelon Bowl at Drive Shack - a golf themed entertainment venue with a chef-inspired menu - is a vegan dish made of compressed watermelon, avocado, cucumber, green onions, sweet soy, and jalapeños. In addition, they also offer a Watermelon Margarita with real watermelon puree and watermelon wedge garnish.

Where Will Watermelon be Next?

Watermelon Queen Media Training - Atlanta, GA - April 9 & 10