



Watermelon Update

NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTION BOARD



Recipe & Carving Challenge Launched

Contest Invites Home Chefs to Recreate Recipes on Watermelon.org

Summertime is undeniably watermelon time, with the most visibility in stores and farmers’ markets, the most seen on seasonal menus, the most worn in fashion from beach towels to bathing suits and also the most visits to the Watermelon.org website for recipes and usage ideas.

This summer is all about finding new stay-at-home activities for consumers and continuing to source the best products in health, value and versatility. The Watermelon Board launched the new watermelon recipe and carving challenge on May 18th, inviting consumers to sharpen their knives, warm up their blenders and get ready for tasting and sharing by taking the Watermelon.org Recipe & Carving Challenge.

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“It’s not often you get permission to play with your food, but we’re giving it. Consumers have all summer long to experiment with the recipes and carvings from the Watermelon.org website and show us how they add unique flair,” says Stephanie Barlow. It’s a recipe contest that doesn’t ask consumers to create their own original recipes. Instead, start with our existing recipe and make it, tweak it, snap it, and post it. Maybe making a recipe plant-based and vegan-friendly, or maybe swapping a cheddar for a feta for a Mediterranean twist!

Not only will we be pushing fans to master watermelon techniques and recipes, but we’ll be driving traffic to the new website and capturing user-generated content. Other benefits include:

- Website traffic, including page views but also engaging on-site with comments
- Captures new UGC we will own and can use for promotion on our owned channels by sharing editorial content
- Crowd-sources recipe ranking by interest in entries, as well as tweaks for improvements
- Incentivizes Instagram posts and tags during peak watermelon visibility showcasing versatility for the people, by the people
- Real-time feedback on watermelon techniques and recipe steps

How to enter the contest:

1. Visit Watermelon.org and find a recipe or carving from the website.
2. Recreate the selected recipe or carving with a personalized “unique spin.”
 - a. The unique spin can include any or all of the following:
 - i. Swapping out ingredients, up to 5.
 - ii. Changing the way the recipe is served.
 - iii. Adding something new to the recipe.



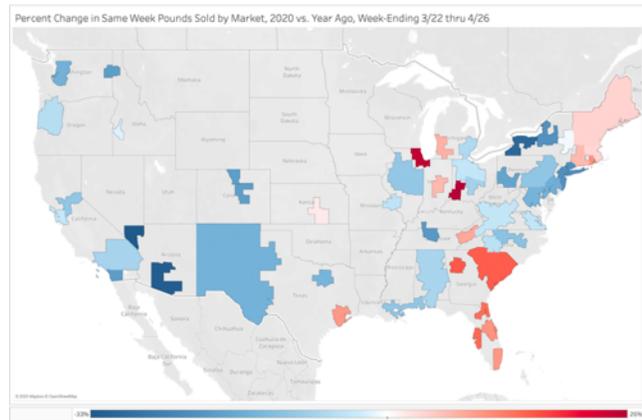
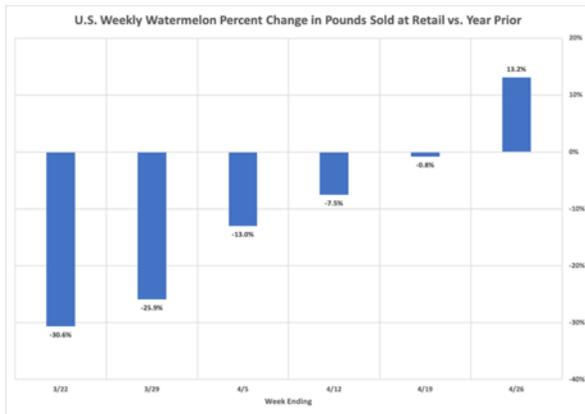
The judging will be a mix of the unique spin, visual presentation and appearance. To help launch the contest on Instagram and gain exposure and momentum for the hashtag **#WatermelonRecipeContest**, NWPB recruited six influencer partners. For more information, please visit <https://www.watermelon.org/recipe-challenge/>.





March & April iRi Retail Scan Data

The NWPB continuously monitors the watermelon market and here are some findings from March and April, 2020, the timeframe impacted by COVID-19. Using retail scan data provided by [IRI](#) the Board gained a sense of how things evolved over this six-week stretch.



The week ending March 22nd aligned closely with when states began to issue “stay at home” orders for the majority of the population. As people were adjusting to a new normal, there was a decline of 30.6% in pounds sold at retail compared to the same week the prior year. The situation gradually improved to being down roughly 26% for the following week, and so on improving until the week ending April 26th, when nearly in line sales a week prior, turned into a very strong week up more than 13% over the prior year.

The map above shows which markets had been the most heavily impacted over this six-week term. West of the Rocky Mountains saw lower pounds sold. Sources say bad winter weather had tightened supplies out of Mexico on top of the demand issues due to COVID-19. Turning east there was less continuity with several markets mirroring the west, but others enjoying above average sales. Many of those well performing markets are connected by a straight line from Miami to Chicago. Again, supply plays a role here as Florida had one of the earliest crops in years.

This improvement to the market could not be happening at a better time given the importance of Memorial Day, with supply typically ramping up throughout May. The table below shows how each market has fared. Please reach out to [Jason Hanselman](#) with any questions or specific requests.

Weekly Pounds v Year Ago	4/26	4/19	4/12	4/5	3/29	3/22	Total
Total U.S.	33%	-1%	-8%	-13%	-26%	-31%	-7.4%
Geography	Week Ending ^ / % Change v						
CINCINNATI/DAYTON	58%	2%	33%	21%	-1%	20%	26.3%
CHICAGO	86%	222%	42%	-34%	-42%	-53%	25.4%
ATLANTA	15%	24%	26%	24%	-5%	5%	16.0%
SOUTH CAROLINA	13%	19%	38%	22%	-6%	3%	15.6%
TAMPA/ST. PETERSBURG	21%	6%	8%	23%	6%	24%	14.6%
JACKSONVILLE	16%	-2%	8%	37%	22%	13%	14.2%
PROVIDENCE	36%	33%	5%	-11%	-3%	3%	10.7%
ORLANDO	8%	3%	12%	19%	8%	19%	10.6%
MAMIPT. LAUDERDALE	11%	7%	7%	19%	6%	11%	10.2%
HOUSTON	55%	29%	44%	-9%	-6%	-88%	10.0%
KNOXVILLE	7%	21%	23%	13%	-42%	21%	8.5%
GRAND RAPIDS	16%	17%	46%	-33%	-37%	5%	7.6%
INDIANAPOLIS	37%	6%	15%	-5%	-31%	-23%	6.9%
HARTFORD/SPRINGFIELD	40%	38%	-17%	-10%	-14%	15%	6.7%
NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND	37%	-2%	-1%	-15%	-7%	10%	4.2%
BOSTON	14%	8%	0%	-10%	-9%	18%	3.8%
WICHITA	26%	-2%	36%	-2%	-42%	-32%	1.9%
ALBANY	22%	-8%	-7%	-8%	-9%	-1%	-0.8%
BOISE	14%	-6%	11%	-17%	-15%	-13%	-2.0%
SAN FRANCISCO/OAKLAND	-3%	14%	-8%	1%	-44%	41%	-3.9%
ROANOKE	20%	-5%	-3%	-18%	-36%	-6%	-4.2%
TOLEDO	25%	-16%	11%	-18%	-39%	-17%	-4.3%
RICHMOND/NORFOLK	-12%	1%	18%	-16%	-10%	-1%	-4.3%
ST. LOUIS	12%	-6%	-15%	-19%	-15%	12%	-4.7%
CHARLOTTE	-30%	40%	52%	-16%	-23%	-10%	-5.2%
Geography	Week Ending ^ / % Change v						
PORTLAND	-3%	-20%	35%	2%	-37%	-13%	-6.0%
DETROIT	25%	-15%	-10%	-22%	-42%	-3%	-6.7%
BIRMINGHAM/MONTGOMERY	-4%	-21%	-2%	8%	-19%	-2%	-7.7%
LOS ANGELES	24%	-3%	-16%	-32%	-42%	8%	-8.0%
COLUMBUS	35%	-20%	-12%	-20%	-39%	-18%	-8.3%
PEORIA/SPRINGFIELD	14%	-12%	-5%	-28%	-39%	-13%	-10.3%
SACRAMENTO	-12%	6%	-4%	-5%	-43%	-5%	-10.6%
NEW ORLEANS/MOBILE	7%	-10%	15%	-5%	-29%	-44%	-10.7%
HARRISBURG/SCRANTON	-4%	-24%	-36%	-4%	8%	36%	-10.8%
RALEIGH/GREENSBORO	-34%	30%	35%	-32%	-14%	-1%	-11.5%
DALLAS/FT. WORTH	70%	1%	-13%	-21%	-28%	22%	-14.3%
BALTIMORE/WASHINGTON	-28%	3%	-7%	-8%	-15%	6%	-14.5%
WEST TEXAS/NEW MEXICO	0%	-24%	-22%	-9%	-30%	-10%	-14.9%
SEATTLE/TACOMA	1%	-10%	-10%	20%	-48%	-16%	-15.0%
PHILADELPHIA	-12%	-20%	-32%	-18%	-11%	19%	-15.5%
PITTSBURGH	15%	-29%	-27%	-29%	-32%	-19%	-17.5%
DENVER	-6%	-28%	-6%	-26%	-40%	-6%	-18.6%
SAN DIEGO	-3%	-18%	-15%	-38%	-44%	4%	-18.7%
SPOKANE	-1%	-35%	-15%	-14%	-41%	-7%	-18.7%
NASHVILLE	-12%	-30%	-7%	-21%	-39%	-9%	-19.5%
SYRACUSE	2%	-29%	24%	-21%	-31%	-28%	-20.8%
NEW YORK	-11%	-29%	-27%	-27%	-30%	-1%	-21.3%
BUFFALO/ROCHESTER	-17%	-40%	-27%	-24%	-32%	-39%	-29.7%
PHOENIX/TUCSON	-5%	-26%	-48%	-32%	-55%	-45%	-31.9%
LAS VEGAS	-13%	-26%	-49%	-30%	-54%	-40%	-32.5%

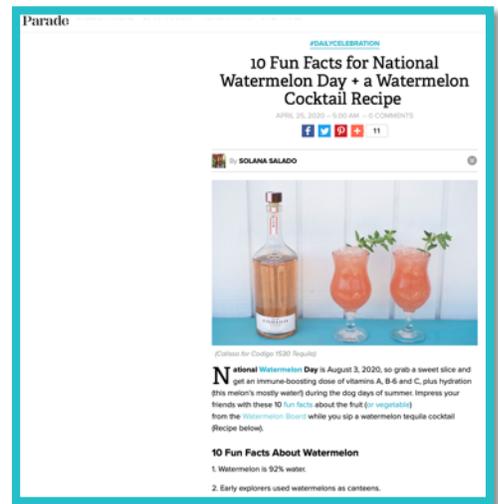
Media Monitoring Coverage Gains

NWPB receives media monitoring reports year round, and with domestic watermelon season and Memorial Day right around the corner, we saw an increase in coverage in April; Cision captured 4,848 pieces of coverage, with Watermelon Health pulling in the most hits. Some recipe coverage highlights include the following:

- [10 Fun Facts for National Watermelon Day + a Watermelon Cocktail Recipe](#)  - Parade (2,332,218)
- [Easy Recipes That Kids Can Make](#)  - Food Network (8,812,049)
- [DIY watermelon juice for these hot days](#)  - Yahoo! News (166,284,506)

Additionally, NWPB’s shifting tactics due to current conditions gained coverage on trade websites in April, including:

- [Produce Blue Book](#)  (24,110)
- [Fresh Plaza](#)  (5,393)
- [The Packer](#)  (30,968)
- [Perishable News](#)  (14,478)
- [Supermarket Perimeter](#)  (6,039)
- [The Produce News](#)  (4,683)
- [Southeast Produce Weekly](#)  (724)
- [The Shelby Report](#)  (20,442)

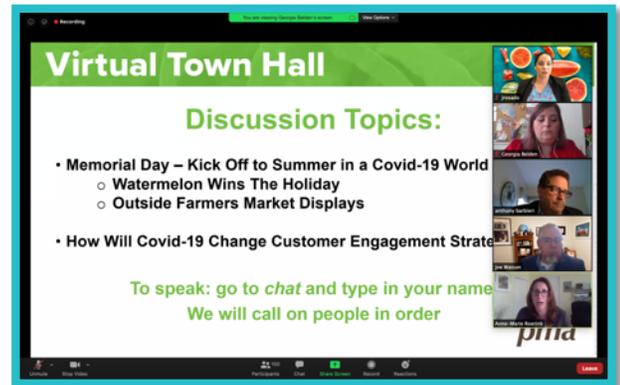


If you have any questions about watermelon in the news, media monitoring print, video or online, or if you are interested in receiving the monitoring report, please contact Stephanie Barlow, Senior Director of Communications, at sbarlow@watermelon.org.



PMA Virtual Town Hall

Juliemar Rosado, NWPB director of retail and international marketing, was a contributor to the retail breakout session at PMA’s Virtual Town Hall on May 13th. During the session, Rosado was asked to provide insight on what retailers can do from a commodity board’s perspective with the Memorial Day holiday coming up. Overall, the breakout session was well attended and Rosado was able to provide insights on hydration, versatility and nutrition messaging as well as the importance of selection information. Rosado also encouraged retailers to take advantage of their online presence to promote watermelon using those messages and then reinforcing it in the store.



Watermelon Offered as a Takeaway, Delivery Solution in Foodservice

After five years of cultivating relationships throughout the foodservice industry, the Board is not waiting to see what happens as restaurants pivot to a new normal but continue to offer watermelon as a solution on menus. As outreach continues to chains offering education, menu ideation and promotional support there was a need to address the abundant operational shift of increased takeaway and delivery. Starting with research, the new handout highlights watermelon's growth on menus as well as consumers' thoughts on watermelon on the menu. Second, operators will find information on handling the product. Last but not most importantly, watermelon recipes and recipe images inspire operators to think about using watermelon in takeaway and delivery-friendly menu items.

This new tool is being used in direct outreach to chains across the country and will be highlighted through digital advertising focused on regional and national chains. Response has been positive for continued watermelon ideation and promotions moving into the summer months.



Family Features Creates Case Study on Latest NWPB Article

The following is an excerpt from a recent case study by Family Features, "A Successful Content Strategy During a Crisis" highlighting the Board's release "Kid Friendly Creativity in the Kitchen" (pictured below):

In today's climate forcing many families to spend abnormal amounts of time at home the NWPB partnered with Family Features to create a half-page Premium Release providing easy, kid-friendly recipes to get the whole family involved in the kitchen. Using tips that applied to a wide audience and recipes boasting eye-catching images, the project and its social media amplification gave editors and readers valuable, visually appealing information.

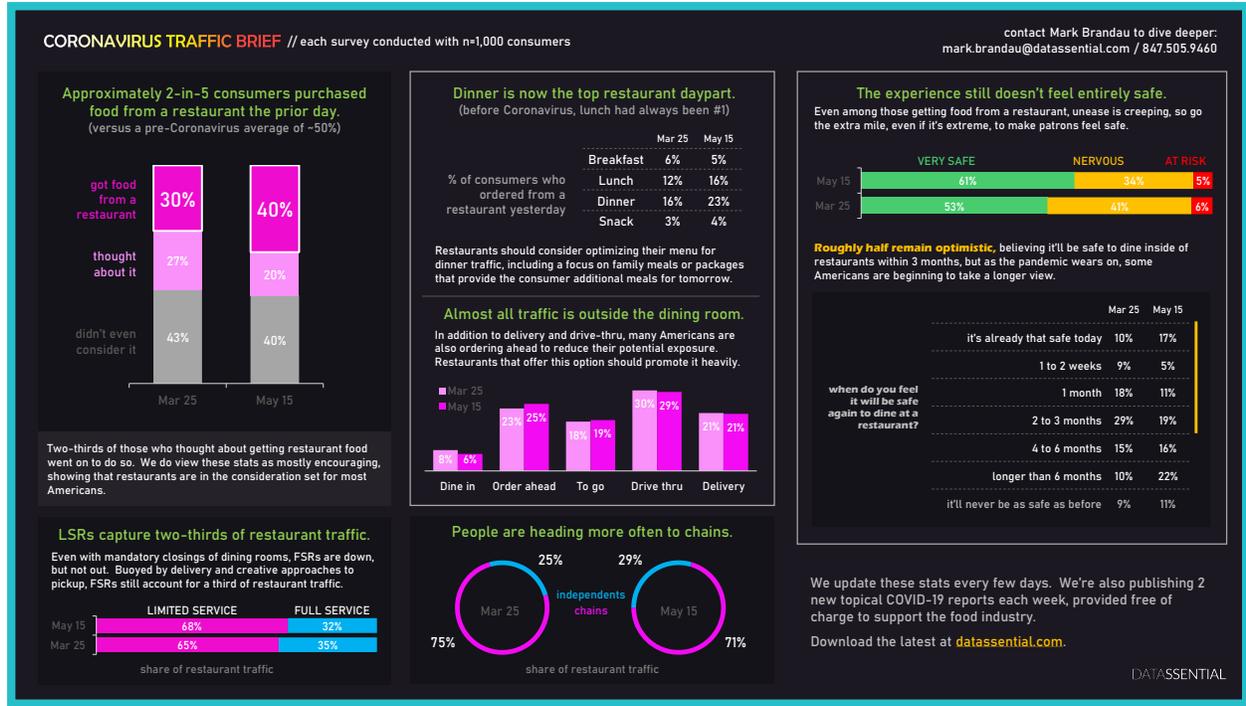
Results in less than 1 month:

- More than **1,000 total placements** in digital and print publications, including more than **200 earned placements**
- More than **170 million total impressions**, including more than **4.5 million earned impressions**
- More than **275,000 total social media impressions** and **16,000 engagements**
- A total ad equivalency of more than **\$700,000** across all platforms
- An overall ROI of **118:1**





Foodservice Research Partner Offers Free Research & Tools



The NWPB has worked with Datassentials for the last few years to help understand watermelon on menus, future growth opportunities and consumers' attitudes and awareness of watermelon in foodservice. As the foodservice industry is emerging from the pandemic, May sales look to be much improved over April but there is more recovery to take place. Datassentials is providing ALL of their research, analysis, interviews, webinars and more free of charge. The Board will utilize these tools to help make decisions on how to approach different sectors of the foodservice industry as recovery progresses and how to massage watermelon messages to be empathetic to the foodservice industry's bandwidth and needs moving forward. For more information visit datassential.com/coronavirus/.



Supplier Database

Sign up to be a part of the NEW National Watermelon Promotion Board's Supplier Database! Each year the NWPB reaches retail and foodservice buyers through the marketing programs 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 at watermelon.org/supplierdatabase.

Interested in opting in to the new Supplier Database? Visit the Database [entry form](#), email supplierdatabase@watermelon.org or call 407-657-0261.

Supplier Form

If you play a role in the Watermelon Industry and would like to be listed in the Watermelon Supplier Database, please fill out the following form. After we review your information, you will be added to the public search page.

Business Name: _____

Contact First Name: _____ Contact Last Name: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____ Website: _____

Role in Industry (check all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Wholesaler	<input type="checkbox"/> Farmer	<input type="checkbox"/> Shipper	<input type="checkbox"/> Processor
<input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Grower	<input type="checkbox"/> Importer (into U.S.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Customs Broker	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Foreign Grower	<input type="checkbox"/> Exporter (into U.S.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Broker	<input type="checkbox"/> Seed
<input type="checkbox"/> Other			

Area of Origin (check all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Southwest U.S.	<input type="checkbox"/> Southwest U.S.	<input type="checkbox"/> Panama	<input type="checkbox"/> Honduras
<input type="checkbox"/> Northeast U.S.	<input type="checkbox"/> West U.S.	<input type="checkbox"/> Nicaragua	<input type="checkbox"/> Guatemala
<input type="checkbox"/> Midwest U.S.	<input type="checkbox"/> Mexico	<input type="checkbox"/> Costa Rica	<input type="checkbox"/> El Salvador
<input type="checkbox"/> Other			

Volume:

<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 5M lbs. (roughly up to 25 acres)	<input type="checkbox"/> 5M to 4-M lbs. (roughly 25-100 acres)	<input type="checkbox"/> Greater than 4M lbs. (over 100 acres)
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“Retail Fresh Foods & COVID-19 – What’s next for fresh foods?” Webinar by Category Partners and The Packer

Our Reality

The Packer

- Consumers are *navigating*:
 - Health and Safety
 - Limited dine out/take out options
 - Paycheck insecurity/budget prioritization
 - More time on their hands
 - Desire for some normalcy...gimme comfort food!
- Consumers *prioritizing*:
 - Flexibility/versatility
 - Shelf life
 - Home prep/cooking – leftovers?
 - What they know – staples/comfort
 - Stretch trip frequency/dollar

CPCATEGORY PARTNERS

How to Prepare

The Packer

Consumers Act/Shop/Prioritize Differently

- Understand the role of category/brand pricing
 - What are the trade-offs?
- Understand assortment to show why your product aligns w/ new consumer priorities
- Promotions increase in importance--know which of your products are right for promotions to drive value
- Assess category: Product risks & opportunities – retailer focus has never been sharper

CPCATEGORY PARTNERS

What Happens Next

The Packer

Consumers Act/Shop/Prioritize Differently

- Reordering shopping: Back to Basics
 - Changing how they shop
 - Opting out of certain categories entirely
 - Re-define discretionary versus essential spending
- Consumers in search of “value”
 - Dollar, Warehouse, Club, SuperCenters gain trips
 - Trip Compression
 - Swapping across categories
 - Trading down on brands
 - Online goes mainline

CPCATEGORY PARTNERS

Protégé National Consumer Survey

The Packer

April 6-12

17%	I've lost my job
24%	I am behind on my bills
41%	My work hours and pay have decreased
45%	I am now working from home
49%	My household income has decreased
84%*	My children are no longer in school/daycare
86%	I now eat all of my meals at home

CPCATEGORY PARTNERS

Since the beginning of March, producers and retailers in the fresh foods industries have been scrambling to react, supply and prepare for what’s next in retail grocery as consumers shift purchase patterns and priorities. This webinar hosted by The Packer and conducted by Category Partners examined how consumers have responded to-date and looked into what retail and consumer data indicates may be coming in the weeks ahead. Category Partners shared insights by examining produce department weekly sales patterns as the Coronavirus response rolled out across the United States. Data results were updated to include results through Easter Week, April 11, 2020.

In addition, Category Partners just completed a national study of 2,000 consumers over the weekend of April 18-19. This new study looked at how consumers are altering their choices on which retail locations to shop for groceries as a result of the changing economic conditions in the US.

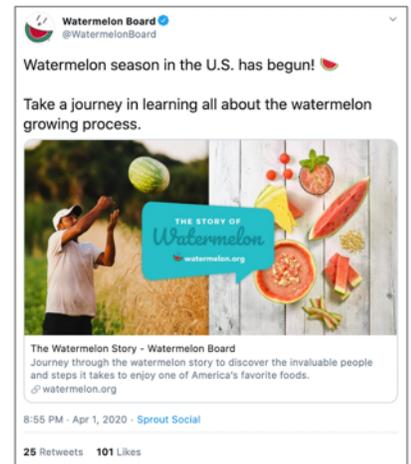
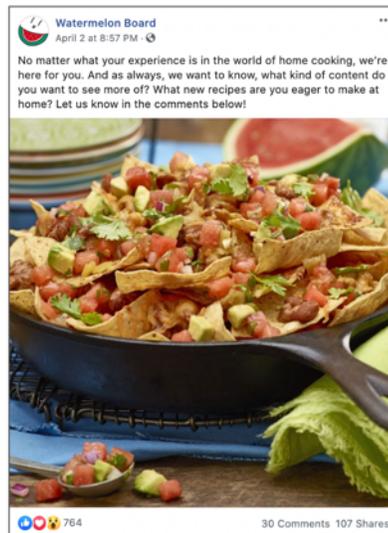
Several key takeaways from the webinar reinforced the realignment of resources and strategic messaging shifts to the at-home world, focusing on value, focusing on health and safety and prioritizing home prep and versatility.

Watermelon on the Menu

Boxi Park, a unique alfresco dining and entertainment venue in Central Florida, hosted a BBQ pop-up private event whose Memorial Day Menu featured fresh sliced watermelon.



Top Social Posts



NWPB Connections

CRCEO Virtual Meeting – May 5th

All Staff Meetings – May 6th, 13th, 20th and 27th

Communications/Social Team Calls – May 6th, 12th, 13th, 20th

Retail/International Team Conference Calls – May 8th, 14th, 19th, 22nd

Queen Coordinator Zoom Meetings – May 14th

IFEC Board Meeting – May 18th

