



Watermelon Update

NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTION BOARD



Visual Cuisines Photos

New and Revamped Recipes & Carvings to launch on Watermelon.org

Each year the NWPB invests in fresh photography of watermelon recipes, carvings and creative product shots to be used on the website, social media, print ads, paid article features and promotional materials. The Visual Cuisines food photography studio has been a long time partner and vendor creating the modern looks of watermelon. And with the new website launched this spring, strong and impactful photography has never been more important to tell in an instant how fresh and delicious watermelon is. If we want people to eat watermelon every day, we need to reimagine how we present it in recipes, usage ideas and in various environments.

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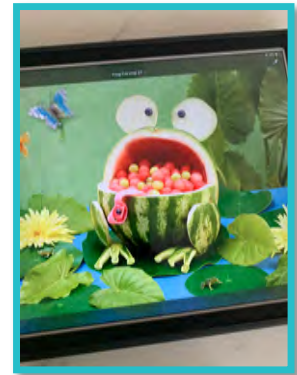
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Sometimes that means updating popularly visited recipes and carvings from the website, such as the Breakfast a Go Go parfait, the Watermelon Tiki Mask, the Watermelon Baby Carriage and the Watermelon Vase. In addition to new cuts on creative backgrounds and backdrops, we will also be creating a Breakfast Banana Split, Kids Grazing Board, Watermelon Limeade, Go Red Watermelon Salad, Tajin Mexican Fruit Salad, Simple Watermelon Slushie, Watermelon Poptails, and new Christmas Cookie Cutouts and a Watermelon Frog Carving (pictured, right).



Foodservice Media Keeps Watermelon Top-of-Mind

Although editorial calendars have shifted or been thrown out the window in the last few months, the NWPB continues to see watermelon covered in foodservice media. The NWPB sponsored the International Foodservice Editorial Council’s Spring Board Meeting. Half of the board are editors from various foodservice publications. The sponsorship included collateral material distribution. One of the editors even made one of the cocktail recipes for the virtual board meeting!



Watermelon inclusions vary by publication. Foodservice Director’s Recipe Report which goes to more than 100,000 recipients, was focused on seasonal flavors - one spun towards health featuring Watermelon Boba Tea and the other on Bowls with the Thai Watermelon Rind Noodle Salad. Both of these recipes come from our ongoing work with the Culinary Institute of America (CIA). In addition to their marketing for the new recipes, the NWPB pitches them to the media and often they are picked up due to the CIA’s notoriety. Gold Medal Classroom, through the Center for the Advancement of Foodservice Educators, is a publication for culinary educators. In this feature about thinking like a butcher when it comes to produce, messaging included basic cutting steps for watermelon, different shapes watermelon can be cut into, but ultimately how to use the whole product. This newsletter goes to more than 2,000. El Restaurante reaching 25,000 operators, focuses on Mexican and Latin foodservice trends. They featured the Board’s Watermelon Paloma as a part of a beverage feature. These examples are just from the second quarter of this year and we see strong coverage year-round. As menu innovation continues these educational messages and inspiring watermelon usages continue to grow watermelon on menus.



Watermelon Retail Merchandising Contest Call for Entries

NWPB Revises Display Contest to Adapt to New Climate

The National Watermelon Promotion Board invites all retail chains, independent retailers and commissaries to submit entries to their 12th annual Watermelon Retail Merchandising Contest. Unlike years past, where in-store displays were the focus, the 2020 contest shifts to a watermelon merchandising effort that includes displays but also encourages mixed marketing tactics. The contest will start in July to honor National Watermelon Month and run throughout the month of August and is used by NWPB to encourage and identify retailers who are showcasing watermelon's benefits including health, value and versatility.

“Total marketing efforts are more important as consumer habits change and the retail space changes with it,” said Juliemar Rosado, Director of Retail and International Marketing for the NWPB. “It is always our goal to not only be a resource but a partner, and with that comes looking at overall promotional efforts at retail during the customer’s path-to-purchase as well as inside the store.”

Watermelon of any kind can be included in the promotion, including whole, fresh-cut, mini watermelon, yellow and red or any mix thereof. Marketing efforts considered in judging will include category visibility, point-of-sale materials, good visual merchandising, messaging nutritional benefits, recipes and/or selection education and use of print, online and/or digital platforms.

More than \$10,000 in cash and prizes will be awarded to top entrants, including \$5,000 for the grand prize for winner. The second place winner will receive \$2,500, third place will receive \$1,000 and three honorable mentions will each receive \$500. An additional incentive of a \$15 gift card will be awarded to the first 25 entries.

To enter a promotion, retailers can submit their entry and photos, links, screenshots, etc. online, via email or postal mail beginning July 8, 2020. All entries must be submitted/postmarked by midnight EST on September 9, 2020. Visit: <http://watermelon.org/Retailers/Retail-Contest> for more information, including official contest rules and entry form, or email NWPB at retail@watermelon.org.



Enter to win the
NATIONAL WATERMELON RETAIL
MERCHANDISING
CONTEST!
More than \$10,000
in cash & prizes!

Create a retail campaign in July or August that:

- Promotes watermelon of any kind
- Share extras such as recipes, health benefits and selection tips
- Uses a merchandising display, point-of-sale materials, print and online and/or digital platforms

Grand Prize \$5,000
2nd Place \$2,500
3rd Place \$1,000
3 Honorable Mentions \$500 each

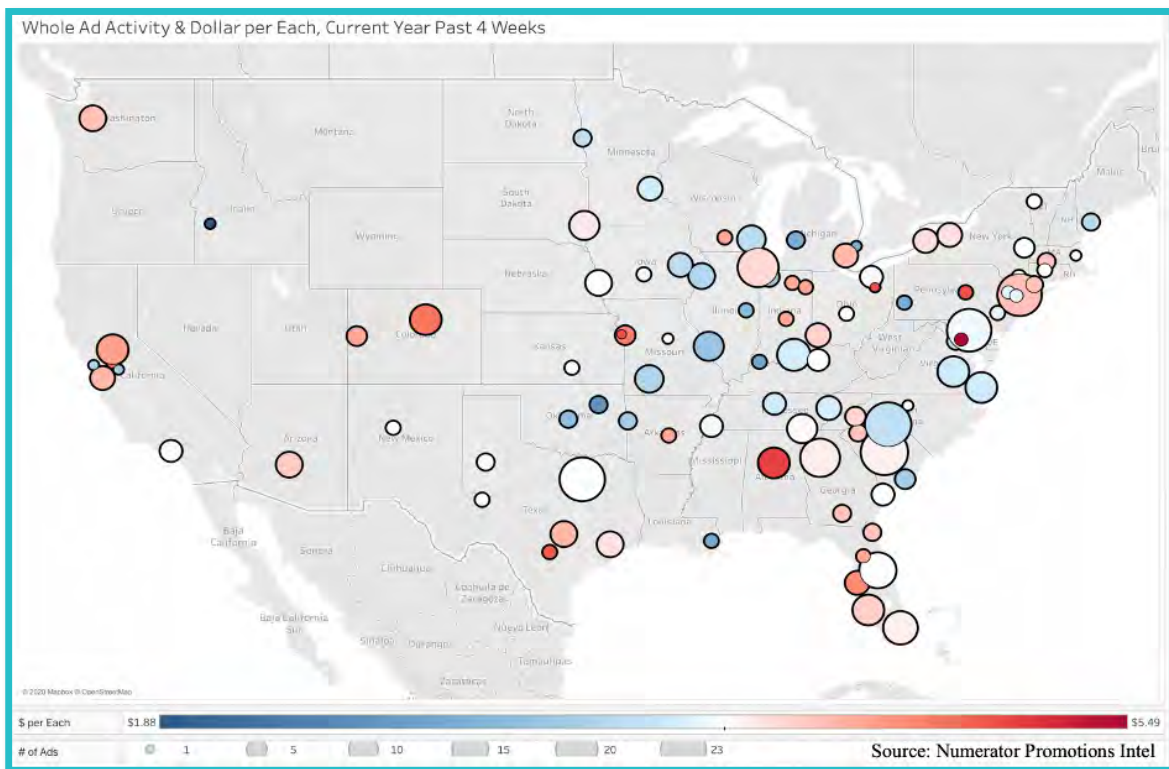
First 25 entrants receive a \$15 Amazon gift card*
*Redeemable only locally.

Go to <http://watermelon.org/Retailers/Retail-Contest> for more details!

WATERMELON BOARD

New Additions to Ad Tracking Report

As a part of our [Retail Research](#) program, working with Numerator Promotions Intel allows NWPB to have insight into promotional volume and pricing levels at retail. The database provides data, such as, store, market, price, product description and more over various time periods. Each week, NWPB updates the [Retail Ad Tracking Report](#) (second report on the webpage) that utilizes this data to compare ad activity over the past 52 weeks to the year prior calculating price per each and pound for mini and whole watermelon. Ad volume for both periods, as well as, price per each is calculated for all markets covered using an easy-to-grasp map. Further analysis changes the timeframe to the past four weeks in order to gauge how more recent periods compare.



As an example, on this map the bigger the bubble the more ads in that market over the past four weeks, while the color ranging from blue (low) to red (high) gives a sense for how price per each compares to the other markets. A quick glance can convey a lot of information regarding the retail scene around the country so be sure to check back each week. If you have any questions please reach out to Mark Arney at marney@watermelon.org.

PFK Digital Healthy Advocate

The results are in from NWPB's participation as a digital healthy advocate with Produce For Kids! The program included content creation, recipe development and photography, e-newsletters, and social support and the results are as followed:

Content Creation

- Produce for Kids developed & provided:
 - Blog post: [3 Unconventional Ways to Use Watermelon](#)
 - Recipe Development & Photography
 - [Watermelon Rind BBQ Sauce](#)
 - [Fish Tacos with Watermelon Rind Slaw](#)
- Blog post visits: 470 & growing
- Recipe page visits: 675

E-Newsletter

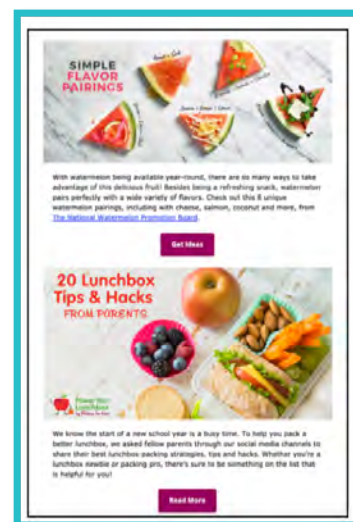
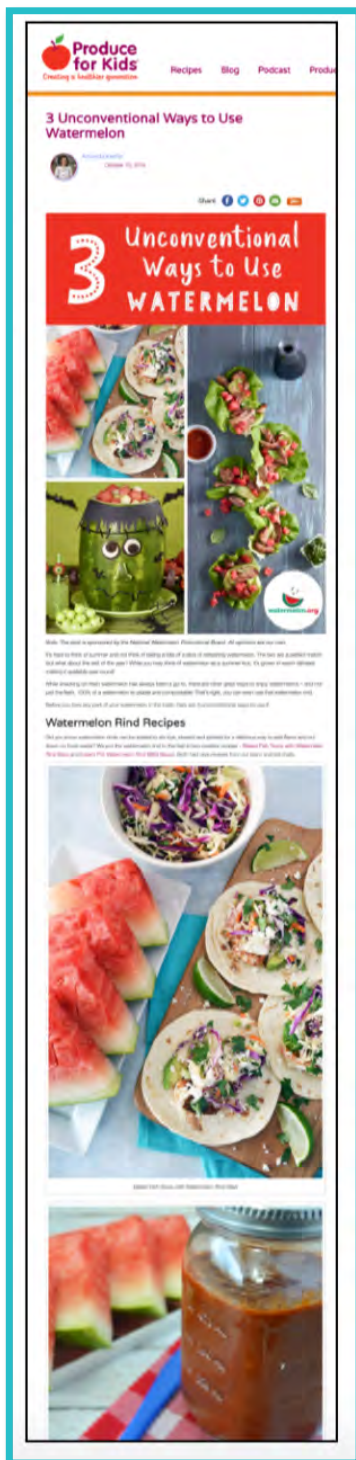
- Dedicated [e-newsletter](#) to PFK consumer distribution highlighting blog post, recipes, watermelon carvings, and Use The Whole Watermelon infographic
 - Distribution: 36,202
 - Open Rate: 7%
 - Click Rate: 7.2%
- Watermelon Board featured in 4 Produce for Kids weekly e-newsletters sent to list of 36,000 subscribers
 - o [September](#)
 - o [October](#)
 - o [November](#)
 - o [January](#)

Social Support

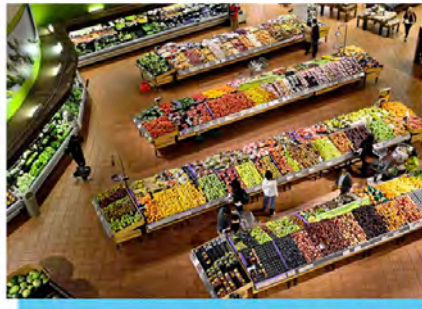
- Content shared across PFK channels, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram & Pinterest
 - Impressions: 166,199
 - Engagements: 4,899

Healthy Bite

- Watermelon Board featured in Healthy Family Project [ep_36](#). Healthy Bite break
 - o Podcast reaches listeners in 32 countries
 - o Evergreen episodes to continue to see downloads month over month



United Fresh Live!



In June, NWPB staff attended the first-ever virtual tradeshow and conference for the produce industry online at *United Fresh Live!* hosted by the United Fresh Produce Association. According to United Fresh, there were more than 12,000 attendee registrations from six continents and users averaged 6,000 per day, with a peak of 7,500 (whereas last year the peak was nearer 5,000). United shared that retail buyers were in high attendance: 500 retailers from 86 countries, among them Walmart, Costco, Publix, Kroger, Whole Foods, Albertsons, H-E-B, and others.

United Fresh made all registrations complimentary. Attendees logged in and entered into the “lobby” landing page. You could enter the virtual exhibit hall and browse exhibitors alphabetically, or click into education spaces for sessions done via Zoom. The exhibit hall was open 24/7, but Power Hours were daily from 1pm-3pm and were generally staffed for live chats. If you visited a booth and didn’t start a chat, but rather browsed the company’s digital offerings, you might have received a follow up email from the exhibitor.

The virtual event week may have ended, but the platform remains live through September 1. Stephanie Barlow, senior director of communications, completed the Cornell certificate virtual program “Leading Through Crisis: The Path Forward for the Fresh Produce Industry,” covering Values Driven Leadership, VUCA Leadership (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous), Planning Supply Chains for Resiliency, Communicating through Crisis and finally a State of the Industry: Forecast for the Future series.

Also, congratulations to former NWPB board member, President and CEO of Frey Farms and Founder of Tsamma™ Watermelon Juice and Sarah’s Home Grown, Sarah Frey for being chosen as United Fresh 2020 Women in Produce Honoree!



Watermelon on the Menu

Glass & Vine - a Euro-style eatery based in Coconut Grove, FL - is featuring watermelon on its current dine-in and takeout menu. This isn't your typical watermelon salad - this dish features lime crema, queso cotija, corn nuts and jalapenos and has been reviewed on Yelp nearly 100 times since it's debut last summer!



Watermelon.org Website Wins

The new version of the Watermelon.org website is getting raving reviews from audiences all around, from consumers and health professionals to industry peers in produce and beyond. Naturally as we emerge from winter to spring, and then spring to summer, watermelon becomes more popular in terms of search online, in-store presence and menu and media visibility. The latest April/May analytics of Website Sessions, Users, Traffic from Social and Unique Events is showing **triple digit growth** in percent compared to February/March. A terrific stat is the average time on site, **nearly 2 minutes**. Some of the top pages are posts at The Slice, NWPB's internal blog, visitors comment. Comments on a website are "the ultimate escalation point in terms of engagement," according to agency account professionals who can compare to other high profile clients.

The Board's goal is to get users to click to the site, whether by search or by social media. (Check.) To further have them spend time on the site is the next goal. (Check!) To comment on a website -- not a social media post mind you -- is the absolute pinnacle, a massive success point! Additionally, Google's algorithm has changed to factor in how people spend time on a site, and then Google uses those signals to prioritize that site in Google Search, which means all these factors are helping this new website shine brilliantly.



Upcoming NWPB Connections

USAEDC Virtual Attache Seminar – July 7th – 9th

PMA Foodservice Delivered – July 20th – 24th

Watermelon Wellness Master Class/Media Event – July 15th

Ultimate Watermelon Workshop/Media Event – July 22nd

