



Watermelon Update

NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTION BOARD



NWPB Announces First Female Board President

NWPB held its biannual board meeting virtually on Saturday, March 6 during which board member Jordan Carter was elected President by her peers becoming the first woman to serve in this position. Prior to this nomination, Carter (District 2, Cordele, GA) served as Secretary/Treasurer as well as interim President since January 2021.

In addition to Carter’s nomination, Christian Murillo (District, 6 Nogales, AZ) was elected Vice President and Kelly Patch (District 5, Brawley, CA) elected Secretary/Treasurer. For more information or a full list of the Board of Directors and Committee Assignments, [visit the industry section of watermelon.org](https://www.watermelon.org).

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Program Overviews

Retail & International Marketing

The Marketing Committee is responsible for developing and implementing an effective retail and international marketing campaign. This includes retail, trade and consumer promotions.

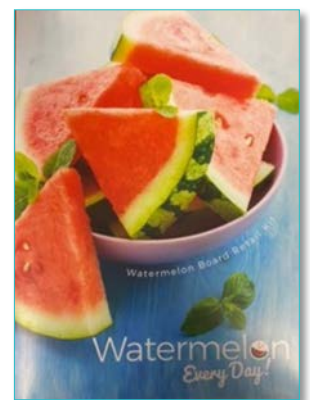
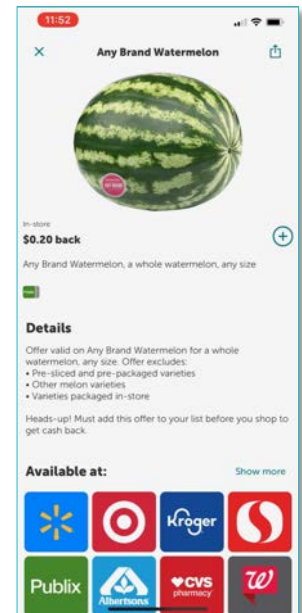
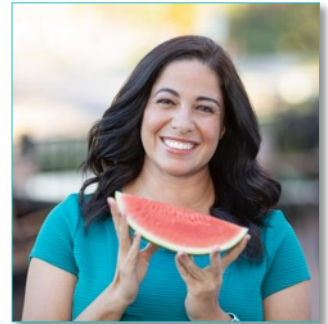
The purpose of this plan is to energize domestic and international retail markets to create continued, year-round awareness. Getting watermelon into the hands of consumers of all ages, including millennial and Gen-Z shoppers, requires NWPB to build and maintain relationships with retailers across the US and in international markets.

In addition to continuing the partnership with shopping app Ibotta, NWPB is exploring additional digital promotional components to the program to reach the consumer earlier in the path to purchase. These opportunities not only align with the most recent strategic plan recommendations, it also tracks with current and potential future shopper habits that have shifted over the course of the last year and continue to change as consumers navigate through a new normal for 2021.

NWPB plans to have a presence at conferences, events and regional produce shows either in-person or virtually as they release their plans and scheduling information for the year ahead.

The ever-changing promotional opportunities at retail are now more robust and include in-store, digital, and social media marketing components, providing customer reach for product and nutrition education beyond the brick and mortar element. NWPB will continue supporting retailers by contracting with merchandising representatives that manage various retail accounts across the US and Canada. Throughout the year, this team aims to keep watermelon top of mind every season and continue to establish new connections with retailers. They are also a direct line to retailers' needs as it pertains to marketing tools and materials throughout the year.

NWPB plans to continue allocating a budget for a retail promotional grant fund to support each of the national, state and regional associations' watermelon queen programs. The goal of this grant is to help invigorate the program's reach and impact, particularly at retail. Given the current retail climate, NWPB understands that retail-specific promotions may be limited or have restrictions that may inhibit the ability to exclusively use these funds for retail. Though we anticipate retail promotions being available in the future, the budget allotted will be expanded so



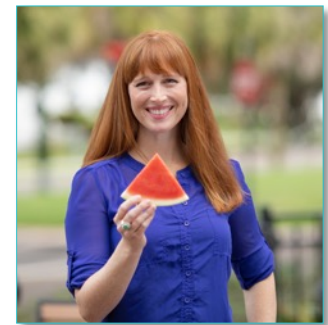
that each watermelon association can either meet or match any queen promotional activities that benefit or involve product from that association's region or state.


Finally, 2020's iteration of the retail display contest – the 12th since its' inception – was reimagined to incorporate social media and marketing efforts in addition to in-store displays. The contest started in July to honor National Watermelon Month and ran throughout the month of August to encourage and identify retailers who are showcasing watermelon's benefits including health, value and versatility. For its 13th year, NWPB plans to continue this format. If you have any questions about the Retail program, please reach out to Juliemar Rosado, Director of Retail & International Marketing at jrosado@watermelon.org.



Foodservice

The [Foodservice](#) Committee is responsible for developing and implementing an effective Foodservice campaign. The NWPB reaches purchasing, culinary, marketing and nutrition decision-makers with commercial and noncommercial operators through media and events to get more watermelon on menus. Although the focus is on chains due to market share, K-12 education and College & University are a couple examples of other targets. The Board invests in foodservice to move more watermelon through the supply chain as well as to get more watermelon messages in front of consumers.



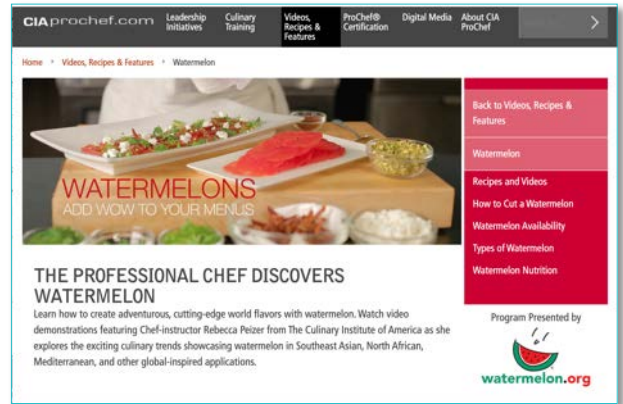
Last year was one of the hardest years in history for foodservice. Overall, total foodservice sales were down \$240 billion from expected levels in 2020, according to the National Restaurant Association. Although foodservice is down, the future is bright and the foodservice industry is preparing for the opportunity. Restaurant Business highlighted the optimism in an article titled: [Why the Post Pandemic Era Could be the 'Roarin' '20s' for Restaurants](#) . The article points to an oversaturated market now being undersaturated, pent up demand, and the staying power of takeout/delivery systems with sustained consumer demand, to drive foodservice growth. It benefits the Board to remain close to this audience. Many operators are struggling to innovate with smaller staff and pantries, but the Board continues to offer menu ideation and promotion support when operators need it most.

[Research](#), trends and strategic direction come together to build the program. Research tells us watermelon is growing in foodservice. Menu mentions have increased 31% in the last four years. There is growth across all segments, day parts, restaurant types and regions. The lack of availability on menus is the primary inhibitor to watermelon orders – more than 75% of consumers wish there were more items with watermelon on menus. Operators view watermelon as affordable, easy to prep and readily available from distributors and recipes can help boost positive perceptions of watermelon.

In addition to the positive sentiments from consumers and operators, trends help to drive watermelon menu growth. From comfort to immune boosting, global flavors to regional favorites, watermelon fits many trends driving menu innovation. Ultimately the Strategic Planning Session that took place in the fall

of 2020 drove most of the planning for the 2021/2022 Foodservice Program. The Board's directives included engaging with culinary schools, expanded menu usage including K-12, working with foodservice in the retail space, year-round messaging, beverage expansion and more.

Starting with the foodservice media program, the Board will continue ongoing media pitching using operator menu examples and photography. Work will continue with the International Foodservice Editorial Council to reach editors from foodservice media. The partnership will also continue with the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) to continue watermelon's presence at ciaprochef.org/watermelon and share watermelon messages through their platforms and channels. A new and strategic year-long advertising campaign with foodservice media will help keep watermelon's key messages in front of operators.



For foodservice events, the NWPB will continue sponsorships at staple events such as the Flavor Experience and PMA Foodservice. Others include:

- Extend the partnership with Healthy School Recipes to include more recipes and a webinar to reach K-12 foodservice.
- Sponsor CIA Worlds of Flavor to reach 600 foodservice professionals, predominantly from noncommercial segments.
- In partnership with Marketing, sponsor the Retail Foodservice Forum to influence foodservice offerings in retail.
- Sponsor Very Important Beverage Executives to reach beverage professionals – another growth opportunity for watermelon on menus.



The Board will also provide custom on- and off-site culinary and operations support as well as support menu promotions for watermelon food and beverage menu items. New this year, the NWPB will execute an On-premise Restaurant & Discovery Week with StarChefs. StarChefs will curate a group of influential restaurants in eight markets across the country to host a "Discovery Week" showcasing Watermelon on their menu. Markets will be selected using retail scan data, foodservice data and media market insights. These custom on-premise promotions will provide long-lasting relationships with potential brand ambassadors, new original recipes and photos for future marketing use and a way to connect with consumers through foodservice.



The NWPB will continue its work reaching [culinary educators](#) to influence future chefs and offer ongoing education opportunities to current chefs. Partnerships and sponsorships with the Center for the Advancement of Foodservice Educators and the American Culinary Federation will help the Board reach this audience. The whole Foodservice program works together to get more watermelon on menus, year-round. Contact Senior Director of Foodservice & Marketing Megan McKenna at mmckenna@watermelon.org for more information.

Research

The NWPB mission is to increase consumer demand for watermelon through research, promotion and education. The Research Committee is responsible for developing and implementing research to help the promotion and education programs. During the last Strategic Planning Session in Fall 2020 the Board was interested in many health and nutrition research related projects and many other comments focused on program support such as retail and consumer research.

[Consumer research](#) measures attitudes and awareness toward watermelon, year-over-year. Types and formats include whole, mini, fresh-cut and juice. The survey will address year-round demand although executed in Summer 2021. Research delves into topics such as purchase behavior, food safety, quality and nutrition.



For the [retail](#) audience, the Board will invest in IRI Retail Scan Data. It tracks volume & price collected from approximately 80% of US retail grocery sales developing a historical base for year-over-year reporting. Data is available by region and major markets for whole, mini and fresh cut. The sample provides representative data of sales activity and retail price trends from which watermelon's position can be analyzed. Numerator Ad Tracking includes data and images for the ads and includes regional information in addition to types and formats of watermelon. In addition to these ongoing projects, a Price Elasticity Study will be executed. The goal is to provide the Board with a focused set of insights into past consumer demand response measures, examine how the watermelon segment is affected and compare it to data from the 2016 study.

[Foodservice research](#) includes the Watermelon MenuTrends Study which analyses 5,000+ menus across the United States. The goal is to identify watermelon use across segments, cuisine types, and regions, assessing ways in which watermelon is used regarding both item types and ingredient pairings. Additionally, SCORES concept testing is the foodservice gold standard for concept testing, preferred by many national account chain operators. The NWPB will use SCORES to test concepts being pitched to chains to give them more menu placement credibility.

Due to COVID-19, the [nutrition projects](#) approved for 2020/2021 were postponed to 2021/2022. The Board approved four nutrition research projects:

Evaluating Health Benefits of Watermelon Flesh and a Value-Added Watermelon Product in Human Subjects – Oregon State University (building on past research)

- This is a one-year project to investigate the impact of watermelon (WF) consumption and our fiber-rich value-added product (WR), in human subjects at risk for development of chronic inflammation and/or metabolic syndrome

Effect of watermelon extract supplementation on skeletal muscle oxygenation and exercise performance – Hofstra University

- The primary objective of this study is to determine the potential for 7 days of watermelon extract supplementation to enhance skeletal muscle oxygenation and exercise performance in recreationally trained men.

Evaluation of bioavailability and effect of watermelon bioactive compounds on intestinal carbohydrate-hydrolyzing enzymes – NCATSU

- The overall objective of the proposed project is to investigate the effect of bioactive compounds of watermelon flesh, rind and skin on intestinal carbohydrate-hydrolyzing enzymes and bioavailability of watermelon bioactive compounds


Target Media Relations to Promote Results of Studies – Wild Hive

- Leveraging the results of 1-2 published research studies through targeted media relations to promote the results of these studies.

For questions about the Research program, please contact Executive Director Mark Arney at marney@watermelon.org.


Communications

The Communications program is responsible for communicating the Board's message to **educate, influence and advertise** watermelon's health, value, convenience and versatility message to consumers in order to encourage demand. Communications targets consumer education through traditional & digital media, events and partnerships and includes social media and public relations, influencer marketing programming and consumer/media/social events.

Necessarily, the communications program takes into account many learnings and pivots from the pandemic year. What does our research reveal? [IFIC](#) 
Food trends tell us: Two-thirds of consumers are cooking at home more. 36% reported cooking more simple foods.

41% of consumers under 35 say they are snacking more than normal, with 30% saying they have been eating healthy snacks or snacking on fruits and vegetables more often since the pandemic began. And importantly: Taste, price and health are leading purchase motivators for food and beverages.



NWPB consumer purchase behavior [research](#) tells us people buy watermelon because of the taste, and because it's refreshing. Juicy, sweet and hydrating refreshment are the main reasons people buy watermelon. Arguably, watermelon has a nuance and sense of happiness and joy, with a slice of watermelon resembling a smile. Lastly, [Global Web Index](#)  research on media consumption research in the age of covid tells us that each generation is relying more and more on their online content, from watching shows online to researching more recipes or streaming music. What matters is what kind of content we serve them, that has the largest impact on well-being.



With audiences looking for **more ways to be distracted, entertained and informed**, and with myriad watermelon messages that play well throughout the year, let's break up the 2021-2022 year into short, micro-campaigns that can focus on timely and seasonal trends in a way that keeps watermelon relevant and authentic.

Micro Campaigns

May - June: Back to Basics

There's no better time to remind audiences that peak watermelon season is right around the corner. Brush up on the basics of selecting, storing and using watermelon to its fullest!

June - August: Summer Adventures

Playing off of the themes of a partnership with a major movie film and beyond, we will focus on overall summery adventures to be found with watermelon at your side - whether swimming at the beach, hiking through trails or endless scooter rides.

September - October: Fit is Fresh

Fitness and nutrition go hand in hand; a holistic look at how watermelon fits into any healthy lifestyle.

November - December: Better Together

Focus on flavor and health by partnering with other produce/commodities to spotlight ingredient pairings through new recipes, the nutrition found in each, and coming together for the holidays.

January - March: Simple Pleasures

Offer up a dose of "happy" for those who seek out watermelon during colder months. An interactive homepage game, recipe lists curated based on moods and monthly "escapes" live on NWPB social channels.

Now that we've looked at some background and some promotion strategy in themes, how about goals? Here are some measurable goals regarding our digital ecosystem. Are these goals aggressive? Yes.

- Website sessions +20%
- Social media community growth +15%
- Social media engagements increase +25%
- Video views +25%

The Communications marketing plan for the 2021-2022 fiscal year will include consumer, media, industry, health professional, educator and influencer outreach tactics. Partnerships with The Mailbox, Today's Dietitian, Ross Chastain Racing, Family Features, and Jump with Jill to name a few. New watermelon product and recipe photography, new video content to be shared across all digital channels to engage and educate various target audiences. Strategic analysis and landscape road mapping for influencer partnerships, increasing community sizes and earned audience outreach. And a return to the Marine Corps Marathon in late October in Washington, DC. Look for new television-worthy commercial content to be advertised on YouTube and social media calendaring of relevant watermelon content as well as UGC shares every week and every month.



WHAT THEY SEE

- Tweets
- Facebook Posts
- Hashtags
- Instagram Posts

WHAT THEY DON'T SEE

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer response Blocking trolls FB Creator Studio FB Ad Manager Influencer research and management Defining brand voice Research new vendors and software solutions Content performance reports Social listening Internal social teacher | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging, replying and amplifying in real-time Specializing and optimizing graphics and video Social photo animations and gifs Advertising for community growth Drive traffic to website Measuring and reporting Selling in all your ideas Monitoring overall product mentions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning Tik Tok & Reels Exploring new platforms Content brainstorming Competitor research Content calendar Getting creative approved Edits to creative More edits to creative Crisis management plan Copyediting Analyzing metrics |
|---|---|---|

Contact Stephanie Barlow, Senior Director of Communications if you have any questions, comments or influencer partners you'd like Watermelon to explore: sbarlow@watermelon.org. #WatermelonEveryDay

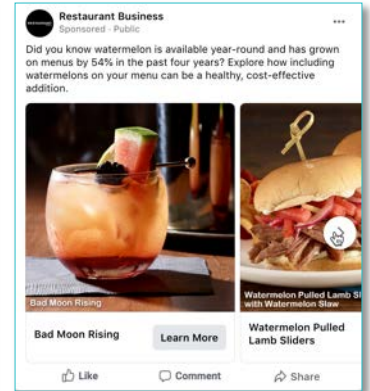
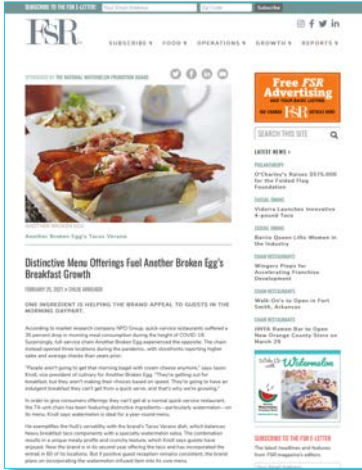


How Do You Wintermelon? Promotion Review & Final Results

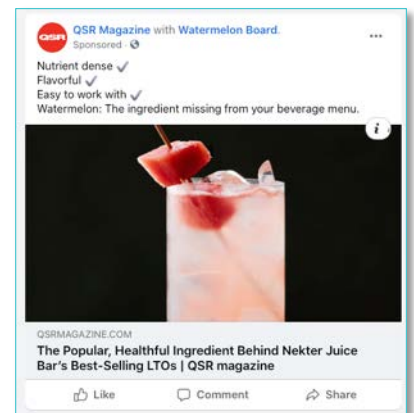
The new wintertime watermelon consumer campaign called How Do You Wintermelon? officially came to a close February 28. A grand prize winner was awarded to Jim Roach for his carved watermelon snowflake. The overall promotion results earned 58 entries from consumers, and overall had a reach of 24,351 and over 63,000 impressions with, most importantly, **9,098 engagements!**



Paid Media Reaches Foodservice Decision Makers

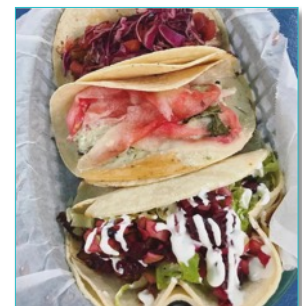


From October 2020 to March 2021 the Board invested in paid media (print and digital) in an effort to reach foodservice audiences the Board would have usually seen at foodservice events. In addition to recipe inspiration, the campaign included year-round messaging, menu research, and savory and beverage menu item operator endorsements. Reaching foodservice professionals nearly a million times and providing great leads, even with events coming back in 2021, advertising will remain an important part of the foodservice program.



Watermelon on the Menu

White Duck Taco Shop's downtown Asheville location offers a Pork Belly with Pickled Watermelon Rind taco on their permanent menu (pictured, middle). This taco, which is topped with aioli, has rave reviews from Yelpers including "The pork belly/watermelon taco was a great blend of savory and refreshing!" Sliced watermelon with mint is also offered on the snack menu.

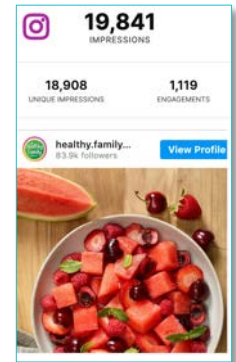
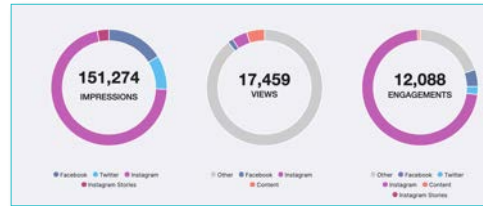


Healthy Family Project Program Recap

Healthy Family Project was tasked with highlighting watermelon during the fall/winter months through a digital promotion. Messaging around watermelon's versatility, healthy benefits and freshness were shared with our network of families through social media promotion, recipe development, blog posts, the Healthy Family Project podcast and e-newsletters.

Deliverables Included:

- Social Media Posts (8)
- Dedicated E-Newsletter (1)
- Inclusion in Weekly Newsletter (4)
- Blog Post (1)
- Podcast "Healthy Bites" Segment (1)
- Recipes (2)
- Food Rx (1)



New Database for Retail Scan Data Report

The [Retail Scan Data Report](#) (found in the Industry section of watermelon.org, under Retail Research) will undergo changes as our data provider, IRI Worldwide, will be migrating to a new platform. One benefit of the upgrade is that data will become available for analysis every two weeks so the report will be updated twice a month instead of once a month. Another benefit is an enhanced ability to create tables and charts within the portal. These new capabilities come alongside a change in how the database classifies various aspects of watermelon retail sales, which can be summed up in the following table comparing sales in pounds by category for the past 52 weeks, ending January 24, 2021.

| Region | Cut# | Mini# | Whole# | Total# |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| TOTAL U.S. | 15.9% | -30.4% | -8.5% | -7.7% |

The new platform shows a 15.9% increase in cut pounds sold over the previous platform, though both mini and whole pounds came in lighter. Total pounds sold is 7.7% lower, showing a small decline in overall volume. Differences across regions can be found in the table below. Please reach out to Jason Hanselman at jasonh116@gmail.com with any questions or to receive expanded information.

| Region | Cut# | Mini# | Whole# | Total# |
|---------------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| WEST | 80.2% | -53.7% | -0.5% | -1.7% |
| SOUTHEAST | -5.2% | 11.0% | -2.0% | -1.9% |
| CALIFORNIA | 54.5% | -42.6% | -3.8% | -6.7% |
| NORTHEAST | 9.0% | -18.3% | -9.2% | -7.3% |
| MIDSOUTH | 0.4% | -7.7% | -8.4% | -7.6% |
| SOUTH CENTRAL | 40.1% | -53.2% | -13.9% | -11.9% |
| PLAINS | 29.9% | -39.8% | -14.1% | -12.0% |
| GREAT LAKES | -2.4% | -12.5% | -13.3% | -12.3% |

Updated Budget Friendly Produce Study

In 2020, the NWPB funded a study through IRI to assess the cost of recommended daily servings of fresh produce. IRI completed an analysis to determine the lowest retail price for a consumer to purchase nine servings of fresh fruit and vegetables per day while having variety in his/her diet. Watermelon was the frontrunner for fruit throughout the study.

The research focused on these key questions:

- What is the lowest average retail price for a consumer to purchase nine servings of fresh fruits and vegetables per day while having variety in his/her diet
- What is the lowest average retail price for nine servings by season?
- What is the lowest average retail price for nine servings by region?

Parameters included:

- Spring/Summer is an aggregate of Q2 and Q3 2020
- Fall/Winter is an aggregate of Q4 2019 and Q1 2020
- 9 servings of Fruits and Vegetables include 4 servings of Fruit and 5 servings of Vegetables
- Serving size is defined as a ½ cup of the edible portion of a product



Total U.S. data showed that \$6.96 was the average retail price per servings of fruit and vegetables. More than 20 varieties of fruit were priced lower than the average \$.76 price per serving. Similarly, 18 varieties of vegetables were priced lower than the average \$0.79 per serving. Whole watermelon had the lowest cost per serving of fruit and whole potatoes had the lowest cost per serving of vegetables over the course of 52 weeks. When examining each IRI defined region over the course of 52 weeks, whole **watermelon had the lowest cost per fruit serving in each region**, while in vegetables whole potatoes had the lowest cost per serving in each region.

Retail prices for 9 servings varied between seasons, ranging from \$6.32 in the Spring/Summer to \$7.80 in the Fall/Winter. Fruits ranged from \$0.69 to \$0.86 per serving. Watermelons and Bananas appeared in the top two least expensive fruits per serving in both seasons. Depending on region, other fruits mentioned included cantaloupe and pineapple. South Central showed the lowest average price for nine servings for the year, with \$6.35, while the North East was the highest with \$7.59.

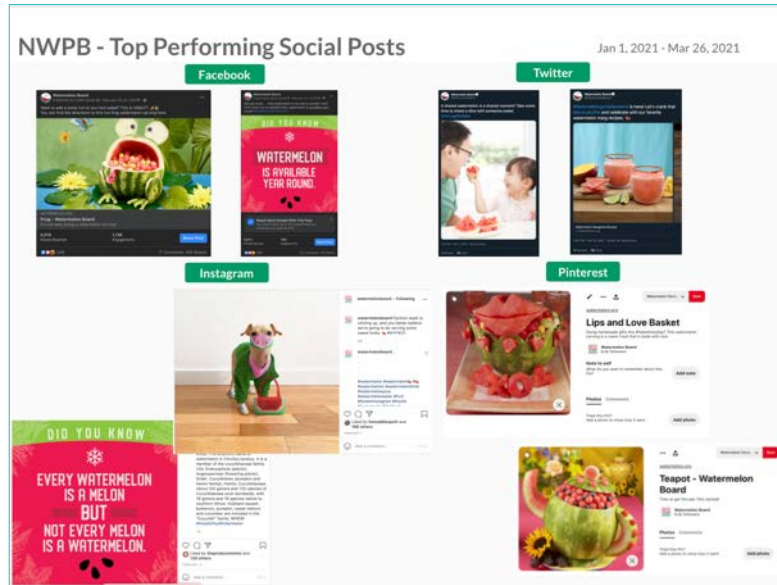
If you have any questions or are interested in receiving the report, please reach out to Mark Arney at marney@watermelon.org.

Source: IR FreshLook POS, Total US MULO, Latest 52 Weeks Ending 11-11-2020

Social Media Q1 Recap

January to March 2021 represents the NWPB fourth and final quarter of the fiscal year. As expected with the off-peak watermelon season product availability and visibility, watermelon social media channels are engaged with less than the summer, but higher than the same quarter in 2020. Community size numbers have maintained roughly the same from peak season on some platforms with 243,000 Facebook fans and 13,000 Instagram followers, but doubled our followers on Twitter now to 18,000 and 4,000 Pinterest saves (20% increase).

Best performing posts in terms of reach and engagement include not just the How Do You Wintermelon campaign posts, but also simply, fun, family imagery enjoying watermelon. Follow along and engage with @WatermelonBoard on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube and TikTok. If you have any questions, contact Stephanie Barlow, Senior Director of Communications at sbarlow@watermelon.org.



| Facebook Metrics | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Page Likes | Post Impressions | Shares |
| 243,314 ↓ 0.0% | 218,863 ↑ 56.1% | 1,758 ↑ 57.8% |
| Net Page Likes | Engagements | Comments |
| 58 ↑ 129.1% | 14,959 ↑ 80.4% | 439 ↓ -32.1% |



TikTok and Brands – New Benchmark Report

TikTok is in the news and on our radar, and yours too according to the Fall 2020 Strategic Planning Session. This new [2021 TikTok benchmark report](#) came out last week from Conviva and there are many interesting stats and highlights to share with the industry. Jason Keath of SocialFresh, a social media marketing conference that NWPB attends, has the following insights.

TikTok is still (mostly) a media channel. Its most successful accounts are focused on entertainment, media, or sports. In many ways, it is the closest a social network has gotten to echoing cable television.



One impact of that is that volume matters. If a brand wants to be successful on TikTok, posting more often is one of the most predictable ways to achieve more followers and reach. The most successful brands post multiple videos each day.

That scale of production, posting multiple videos each day, requires resources that most brands just don't have. If you DO have the resources, TikTok has an increasingly influential audience that is worth tapping into, and a lot of them. Reminding me of the cable TV comparison once again.



10 TikTok insights from Conviva's report:

1. TV and Entertainment brands get the most likes per video
2. Sports Media brands (ESPN, Barstool, etc) get the most followers (they are publishing several times a day)
3. Streaming brands saw the highest growth in 2020 (Netflix, Disney+, etc.)
4. Netflix gained the most followers in 2020 among brands (+10.6 million)
5. Pro sports team posts twice a week, on average
6. Apple has 525k followers with ZERO public videos (all from running ads).
7. There's almost a total adoption of TikTok by major sports teams
8. Of the 900 brands Conviva reviewed for their report, the average posting frequency was roughly 3 videos per week
9. The top 20 brands on TikTok (by followers) have posted an average of 1,721 videos each. That works out to posting more than twice a day for two years.
10. Current estimates put TikTok at around 1 billion monthly active users, globally (3rd largest in the world).

Something that might be obvious to most users, but bears emphasis, is that TikTok is almost completely a consumer marketing play. None of the big B2B companies are spending time or resources there yet. It's the anti-LinkedIn in many ways. Almost none of the 900 leading brands Conviva tracks on TikTok can be labeled as B2B.

Several B2B companies are testing the platform out, but most are spending more time on Instagram Reels today. That might change with time, but TikTok is a strong fit for consumer products and will likely retain that focus for a while.

Top TikTok Brands

If we take a look at the top brands on TikTok that are NOT entertainment, media, or sports focused, we see a few key consumer categories. Namely gaming, fashion, destinations, and fast casual restaurants.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Guinness World Records – 11.3 million followers | 7. San Diego Zoo – 1.8 million followers |
| 2. Redbull (multiple accounts*) – 5.2 million followers | 8. Disney Parks – 1.6 million followers |
| 3. Roblox – 3.9 million followers | 9. Flex Seal – 1.6 million followers |
| 4. Fortnite – 3.7 million followers | 10. Among Us – 1.5 million followers |
| 5. Gymshark – 2.4 million followers | 11. Shein (fashion) – 1.4 million followers |
| 6. Xbox – 2 million followers | 12. Chipotle – 1.4 million followers |
| | 13. Starbucks – 1.3 million followers |
| | 14. Nike – 1.3 million followers |
| | 15. Bang Energy – 1.2 million followers |


What does this mean for Watermelon, and reaching not just Gen Z but the millions of users on TikTok daily? Partner content, and sharing watermelon content that others are creating (UGC) within and outside of TikTok. If you're on the app, search for #watermelon. There already are 3.5 billion views of videos tagged with #watermelon!



What's Trending in Nutrition – Survey by Pollock Communications

In planning strategically to execute watermelon consumer communications this fiscal year, it's important to consider what's trending in nutrition. Pollock Communications, in collaboration with Today's Dietitian, surveyed 1,165 registered dietitian nutritionists.


COVID-19 Shifted Food Choices & Eating Patterns



As a result of the pandemic, 78% of RDNs believe that consumer eating habits are shifting away from the traditional 3 meals a day to more frequent snacking.

With anxiety about health, wellness and the challenging economy looming in consumers' minds, RDNs predict the top purchase drivers of 2021 will be foods and beverages that:

- 1 Support immunity
- 2 Are affordable and value-based
- 3 Promote comfort and emotional well-being



95%
of RDNs recommend healthy snacking

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pollock communications

Top 5 Nutrition Recommendations

Healthy eating took a back-seat for many consumers during the pandemic. These are the top nutrition recommendations by RDNs for patients and clients during the pandemic:

- 76%** Eat more servings of fruits and vegetables per day
- 67%** Limit highly processed foods or fast food
- 56%** Limit foods with "added sugars"
- 48%** Increase fiber intake
- 38%** Choose non-caloric drinks, like unsweetened tea or coffee

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Recommendations align with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans

The Guidelines

Make every bite count with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Here's how:

- Follow a healthy dietary pattern at every life stage
- Customize and enjoy nutrient-dense food and beverage choices to attain and maintain healthy body weight, nutrient needs, and health status
- Focus on meeting food group needs with nutrient-dense foods and beverages, and stay within calorie limits
- Limit foods and beverages higher in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium, and limit alcoholic beverages

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We Stay One Step Ahead of Nutrition Trends

Hot Off the Press: What's Trending in 2021

- As a result of COVID-19, eight out of ten consumers say they will continue current purchasing patterns, eating for health and boosting immunity.**
- Healthy eating and diets, such as plant-based, are here to stay.
- The plant-based diet is one of the top three trending diets — an important news hook to leverage.
- Affordability and comfort are top-of-mind.

*1,168 RDNs responded to the ninth annual "What's Trending in Nutrition" survey
 **IFIC 2020 Survey & Emmanuel Faber, CEO Danone, "The relationship between food and health has never been closer."

2 Watermelon Board

THE TOP 10 SUPERFOODS FOR 2021

The global pandemic is profoundly changing how we shop and eat. Foods and beverages with strong health and wellness benefits, sometimes referred to as "superfoods," have become a dominant in-consumer choices to help boost immunity.

- Fermented Foods
- Blueberries
- Green Tea
- Exotic Fruit
- Seeds
- Avocados
- Spinach & Leafy Greens
- Kale
- Nuts
- Salmon

Fermented foods, which help promote gut health, are once again the top superfood, while green tea, a healthy and antioxidant beverage, takes the 2021 #3 slot year to #3 this year. Spinach and leafy greens make a debut on the list, as consumers make plant-based diets a priority.

pollock communications | Today's Dietitian

COSMOPOLITAN

11 Superfoods That Are Going to Be *Huge* in 2021

Eat This, Not That!

yahoo! lifestyle

“ More than 1,100 registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs) provided “an in-depth look at how [their] bettve consumers’ diets have changed due to COVID-19.” It also included their forecast for the healthy foods Americans will want to get their hands on this year. — Yahoo! Lifestyle ”

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On Trend for 2021:

- With RDNs predicting **immune support** as a top purchasing driver in 2021, there is an opportunity for watermelon to leverage its Vitamin C content with simple recipes that can help to support immunity.
- With health being a top purchase driver for consumers, there is huge opportunity to capitalize on the many health benefits of watermelon, including heart health, skin health, hydration and more.



- With snacking increasing among all demographics, consumers are thinking of snacks as “mini-meals”. Innovation of snack development with watermelon in easy recipes for consumers fits perfectly into the snacking trend.
- Consumers trust RDNs when searching for nutrition information and there is an opportunity for watermelon to share relevant science-backed content with consumers, or with RDs to share with consumers.
- The pandemic has shifted consumers’ eating patterns to include more clean, simple ingredients that can support their overall health and well-being.
- Watermelon pairs with many superfoods topping the list. From nuts, seeds and spinach to fermented foods, watermelon complements several of the Top 10 Superfoods.
- Consumers are cooking at home now more than ever with cookbook sales at an all-time high. There is a unique opportunity to help new and aspiring home cooks achieve success with guidance in shopping well, cooking well and eating well.
- Plant-based food products are one of the top 3 sources that RDNs feel consumers are seeking. Plus, watermelon fits into some of the top diet trends such as IF, plant-based, clean eating, gluten free, Mediterranean, flexitarian and Whole 30.



Upcoming NWPB Connections

Southeast Produce Council Southern Exposure – Lake Buena Vista, FL – April 6 – 8

CPMA (Virtual) – April 12 – 16

