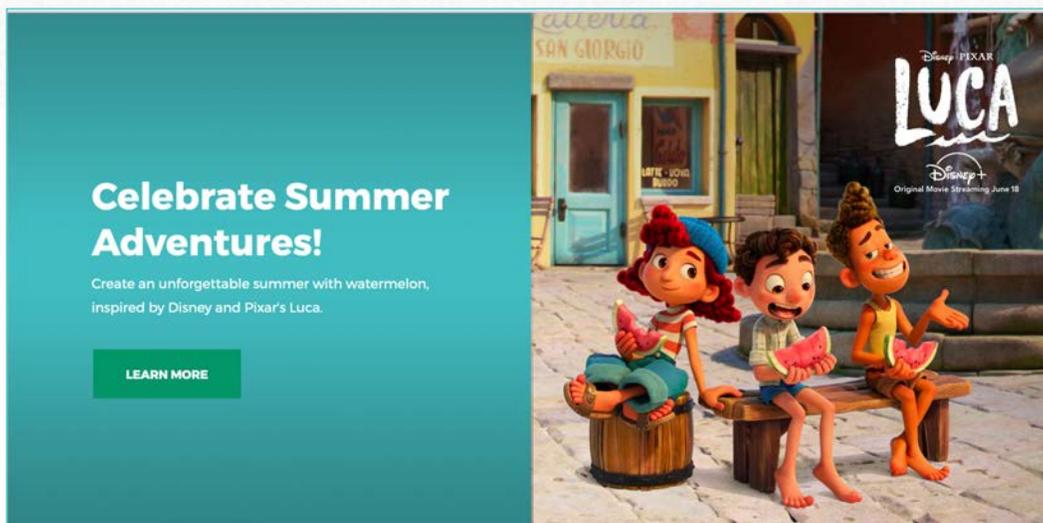




# Watermelon Update

NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTION BOARD



## NWPB's Celebration of Disney and Pixar's *Luca* Makes for Unforgettable Summer

It will be a summer of adventure for National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB), thanks to a month-long collaboration with Disney and Pixar's original feature film *Luca*, which streams exclusively on Disney+ starting June 18.

"Luca" is a fun and heartwarming story about friendship, stepping out of your comfort zone and an extraordinary pair of sea monsters who experience a life-changing summer. Watermelon makes a special cameo in the film as sea monsters Luca and Alberto, who look human when they're dry, venture beyond the surface to the Italian seaside town of Portorosso to see—and taste—all this new world has to offer.

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## The Joy of Watermelon Meets the Thrill of Pixar

As part of its collaboration, NWPB has developed the “Unforgettable Summer” campaign, connecting watermelon and *Luca*’s inherent themes of **summertime joy and happiness**.

Throughout the month of June, NWPB will encourage people nationwide to visit a special landing page ([Watermelon.org/PixarLuca](https://Watermelon.org/PixarLuca)) to either share an unforgettable summer adventure they’ve had or would like to have in 2021.

Individuals who share their stories and dreams are entered for the chance to win weekly prizes, such as *Luca* merchandise or one grand prize of an “Unforgettable Movie Night” prize pack which includes an Outdoor Movie Projector, Projector Screen, Popcorn Maker, Watermelon Slicer and a BlendJet.

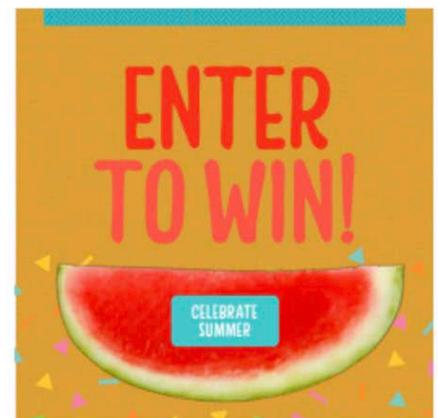
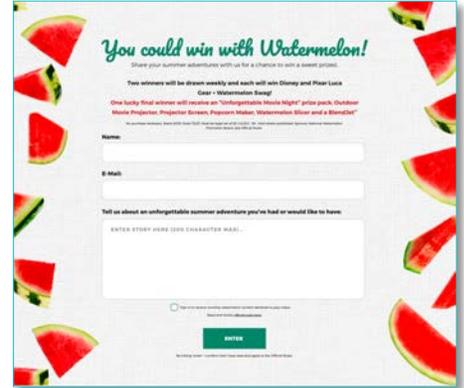
“Watermelon and summertime adventures go hand-in-hand, which makes our collaboration with Disney and Pixar’s *Luca* a perfect pairing,” said Stephanie Barlow, Senior Director of Communications, NWPB. “While watermelon is incredibly versatile, there’s no denying most everyone associates enjoying watermelon with our best summer memories – whether it’s family picnics, weekend getaways or unforgettable vacations. That connects directly with the themes of *Luca*, which arrives just as we find ourselves in peak watermelon season.

“Our members are incredibly excited about the “Unforgettable Summer” campaign, as well, and look forward to sharing with their stakeholders in the months ahead,” Barlow added.

**Watermelon industry members are invited to share the special promotion graphics, recipes and videos** developed for the celebration, as it’s all in the name of watermelon!

On the [Watermelon.org](https://Watermelon.org) landing page, visitors also will find:

- The film’s trailer.
- Watermelon recipes inspired by Italian cuisine – such as “Watermelon Pizza alla Italia” and “Watermelon Caprese alla Feta Bites.”
- A chance to enter the “Unforgettable Summer” Sweepstakes\*.



## Promotions Online and In Social

To draw people to the landing page, NWPB will promote the collaboration on its social channels as well as via pre-roll digital ads – **all targeting watermelon lovers** while drawing new fans and followers of Pixar and *Luca*. Longtime partner Lori Taylor of The Produce Moms created an IGTV video featuring one of the new Italian Summer recipes. [Check out the promotional video](#)  featuring animated characters of Luca eating watermelon as they drive across the screen on a Vespa.

### About Disney and Pixar's LUCA

Set in a beautiful seaside town on the Italian Riviera, Disney and Pixar's original feature film "Luca" is a coming-of-age story about one young boy experiencing an unforgettable summer filled with gelato, pasta and endless scooter rides. Luca (voice of Jacob Tremblay) shares these adventures with his newfound best friend, Alberto (voice of Jack Dylan Grazer), but all the fun is threatened by a deeply-held secret: they are sea monsters from another world just below the water's surface. Directed by Academy Award® nominee Enrico Casarosa ("La Luna") and produced by Andrea Warren ("Lava," "Cars 3"), "Luca" debuts exclusively on Disney+ on June 18, 2021.

\*Open to legal residents of the 50 United States and D.C., age 18 or older. Void where prohibited. Sweepstakes starts June 1, 2021 and ends at 11:59 p.m. EST on July 2, 2021. For full official rules and to enter, visit [www.Watermelon.org/PixarLuca](http://www.Watermelon.org/PixarLuca). Sponsored by National Watermelon Promotion Board, 1321 Sundial Point, Winter Springs, FL 32708.



## CRCEO Meeting

On May 6, NWPB Executive Director virtually attended the CRCEO meeting. The Commodity Roundtable is an informal group composed mostly of Chief Executive Officers and Executive Directors of agriculture promotion groups who **share information to help their organizations achieve efficient and effective program implementation.**



Items on the agenda included visiting with USDA-AMS Administrator Bruce Summers. The group was briefed by Summers on the new administration's initiatives and priorities, board nomination timetables, and potential new programs. Pertaining to the latter, it was announced that the turf grass industry is expressing interest in forming a national R&P (Research and Promotion) program with a potential annual budget of \$15M. The group scheduled its next meeting as an in-person event in Washington DC in mid-October 2021.

## 2021 Winter Consumer Research

Each year the NWPB measures consumers' attitudes and awareness toward watermelon and compares it year-over-year. The research delves into topics such as purchase behavior, food safety, quality, and health and nutrition. Consumer research helps to focus consumer outreach, and findings are used to educate retail and foodservice contacts on consumers' attitudes toward watermelon.

The winter 2021 survey was completed by **1,182 primary food shoppers** at the end of March. After the results were analyzed it was determined that COVID-19 did have some impact on perceptions of watermelon and other fruit. Key findings include:

- Taste and watermelon's refreshing quality continue to be the **main reasons** watermelon is purchased.
  - Watermelon is on par with other non-melon fruits in terms of taste and freshness while outperforming other melons (cantaloupe and honeydew).
- Bananas, oranges, apples, and blueberries are viewed as better values and healthier than watermelon.
  - Lower value ratings may be driven by the perceived waste with watermelon.
  - Being good for hydration is the key health benefit of watermelon. Consumers would like to see health benefits displayed at point of sale.
- Key barriers of watermelon purchase include being too big/inconvenient and messy.
  - Fresh cut watermelon is one potential way to overcome these barriers.
  - However, consumers also perceive fresh cut as costing more, not tasting as good, not being safe, and not being truly fresh.
- Although many claim they know how to pick a watermelon, other data suggests **a need and desire for assistance**.
  - A third have experienced a quality issue and just over half want information on picking at point of sale.
- There is an opportunity to provide guidance to pick-up and delivery shoppers on how to pick a good watermelon.
- COVID-19 is likely impacting a few measures versus previous studies that may lead to trends in the future.
  - More washing of watermelon before consumption especially among younger generations.
  - Decrease in percent of people who like the taste of certain fruits.
  - Decrease in purchases at farmers markets.
  - More pick-up/delivery grocery shopping especially among younger generations.
  - Differences in how one might consider consuming watermelon in restaurants.

The full report, as well as previous surveys can be found on the website in [Consumer Research](#) in the [Industry Section](#).



# StarChefs Workshop

Although in-person events are quickly coming back there are many foodservice professionals who are still on travel restrictions or have been too devastated by the last year to be able to afford travel so the Board sponsored a Virtual Watermelon Workshop with StarChefs. StarChefs **serves as a community, resource and platform for restaurant professionals** who have an intense passion for food, beverage, and industry trends. The Board very successfully worked with StarChefs on a recipe contest last year.

The workshop featured Chef Ford Fry. Chef Fry is an owner/operator with more than 20 restaurants in Georgia, Texas, North Carolina and Tennessee. He has a passion for using the highest quality ingredients and being creative with watermelon. After a short presentation from NWPB Sr. Director of Foodservice Megan McKenna on cultivation, availability and handling, Chef Fry demoed Ember Charred Squid with Salsa Matcha, Watermelon and Lime and Smoked Watermelon-Brined Spare Ribs Fish Sauce Caramel, Watermelon, and Herb Salad. The **recipes showcased watermelon versatility and how well it lends itself to trends such as global flavors.** The promotion of the event was seen by nearly 10,000 foodservice professionals. The workshop **was attended by 36, from 22 states, cooking multiple types of cuisines. Nearly a third were from multi-unit operators but many other foodservice segments were represented.** The recipes and webinar are available to the Board for future use and follow-up is ongoing with the workshop attendees. Multiple attendees have already reached out looking for watermelon education and inspiration for their summer menus!



Join StarChefs and The Watermelon Board with special guest **Chef Ford Fry** for an exclusive, virtual industry workshop

**Tuesday, May 18 1:30pm ET**

Rediscover the fun of watermelon

This is a **complimentary virtual workshop** open to all industry professionals. All attendees will receive a free print copy of Chef Ford's cookbook. Don't miss your chance, register today!

[watermelon.org](http://watermelon.org)

## Demographics

**Total: 36 Attendee Sign-Ups**

Job Title	Sector	Annual Revenue
<b>31%</b> Executive Chef	<b>31%</b> Multi-Unit/Group	<b>42%</b> \$1 to \$5 Million
28% Chef/Owner 11% Pastry Chef 6% Corporate Chef 6% Pastry Chef/Owner 18% Other	30% Independent 20% School 11% Hotel/Resort 6% Private Catering 2% Health Care	25% Under \$1 Mil 19% Over \$20 Mil 11% \$5 to \$10 Mil 3% \$10 to \$20 Mil



## West Coast Produce Expo

The NWPB exhibited at the 7th annual West Coast Produce Expo held in Las Vegas, NV May 18th - 19th. NWPB's Juliemar Rosado attended the event along with NWPB retail account manager Katie Manetti. The two-day event included a networking reception as well as the full expo. This event is hosted by The Packer and Farm Journal Media, Inc. and **connects the produce industry with the West Coast buying community**. The event was a great opportunity to discuss the board's latest foodservice, retail and communications programs.



## Watermelon Warrior Commercial

Our newest 30-second video targeted towards parents and caregivers, as well as movie lovers and kids is up! The Watermelon Warrior is a whimsical, cinema-style tale of the battle for hydration. You can view it on the [Watermelon Board's YouTube channel here!](#) 



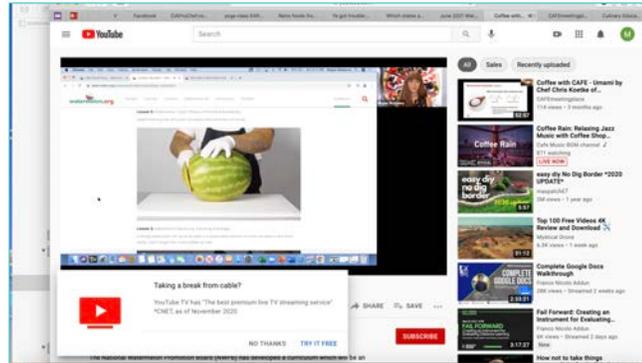
## AHA Heart Check Certification Officially Renewed

Choosing a healthier lifestyle and eating habits is one of the best ways to assist in reducing heart disease. According to the 2020 FMI Grocery Shopper Trend report, due to the pandemic, there is an increased demand around functional foods and beverages that support health—particularly immune health. And as more families are cooking and eating at home, validated health claims are increasingly important. “According to The Hartman Group, consumers are looking to become more empowered and resilient to help propel them through this time of uncertainty. This has resulted in a stronger focus on health and wellness,” says Mallory Brown of the American Heart Association. Watermelon is Heart Checkmark certified for another year. **If you are interested in using the Heart Checkmark for your labels, bins or promotional marketing pieces**, contact Stephanie Barlow at [sbarlow@watermelon.org](mailto:sbarlow@watermelon.org).



## Board Reached Culinary Educators through Coffee with CAFE

The Center for Advancement for Foodservice Educators (CAFE) is an organization focused on Foodservice or Culinary Educators from high school through college. CAFE cancelled their annual conference for the second year but replaced the event with opportunities to reach this audience virtually. The Board hosted Coffee with CAFE on May 19th. The 20-minute session highlighted the Board's [Watermelon Culinary Curriculum](#) available 24/7 at [watermelon.org](#). It is worth 5 continuing education credits through the American Culinary Federation. The presentation also highlighted video assets that can be used with the curriculum. Content included watermelon cultivation, cutting and yield, menu solutions and more. There were **nearly 40 foodservice professionals** in attendance but the webinar is [posted for viewing](#)  and shared with CAFE's membership of approximately 3,000. One of the educators in attendance streamed the presentation in her classroom. Her students gave a round of applause at the end!



## Jump with Jill Digital Tour Launch



*(Above) This school in Pennsylvania is watching the Rock 'n Roll Nutrition show in their individual classrooms and their teacher sent a tweet about it!*

The Jump with Jill Digital Tour rolled out in April, and there is much excitement to share from the participating schools. There have been **425 teachers logged into the JWJ portals** at the time of this article draft. Some schools are sharing how they are using the program and are even posting on social media about it. Watermelon is enjoying a starring role with the new experience and is reaching kids in the classroom and beyond. It's so amazing to see kids getting excited about healthy choices, even through the screen!



*(Left) Burnet ISD in Texas went wild to decorate the school with our downloadable materials!*



## New Recipe and Recipe Videos on Watermelon.org

Working with a new production studio, NWPB has finalized **15 new recipe videos and 8 new recipes** targeted at consumers with a simple, approachable and fun feel. The new Italian summer-inspired recipes that will be promoted alongside the ‘Unforgettable Summer’ consumer campaign include:

- Watermelon Pizza alla Italia (*pictured left*)
- Watermelon Feta Caprese Bites
- Watermelon Gelato
- Panna Cotta with Watermelon Sauce
- Watermelon and Feta Bruschetta Topping
- Watermelon Italian Ice
- Minty Trofie al Pesto with a Sprinkle of Watermelon (*pictured right*)



The new recipes have upbeat Italian themed music accompanying to inspire consumers. The other recipe videos were created for existing and popular Watermelon.org recipes, including the Grilled Watermelon Burger, Berry Popsicles, Rind Kimchi, Watermelon Sushi and more.



## Today’s Dietitian

The team at Today’s Dietitian welcomed registrants online to the 8th annual Spring Symposium (TDSS) on May 17. The Symposium event offered registered dietitians from around the world expertise, professional insights and practical and actionable continuing education while spotlighting sponsor products and services. The ad package NWPB secured through the TDSS included a physical send of the **Registered Dietitian Toolkit to the first 500 registered participants** and some comp registrations we shared with our watermelon friends, Kim Rose Dietitian and Chrissy Carroll, RD. We will have several eblast mailings throughout the year to the Today’s Dietitian **database of 60,000 RDNs!**



## Watermelon on the Menu

MILA Miami, a rooftop restaurant featuring Mediterranean Asian-fusion cuisine in South Beach, is now serving a Watermelon Salad on its new summer menu. Recently featured in *Restaurant Hospitality*, this dish is made of cooled and plated couscous cooked with olive oil and orange juice, then topped with watermelon triangles that are vacuum sealed with shiso to compress the fruit and infuse it with the herb’s flavor. It is plated with room temperature heirloom tomato quarters and pickled watermelon rind and topped with honey yuzu foam and garnished with lemon zest and violet flowers.

