



# Watermelon Update

NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTION BOARD



## Watermelon Board Announces Winners to Retail Merchandising Contest

Chuck's Produce and Street Market's Mill Plain Take Home Grand Prize

The National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB), has named winners in its annual Retail Merchandising Contest which garnered over 150 entries from various retail chains, independent retailers and commissaries throughout the U.S. and Canada. This year's contest – the 13<sup>th</sup> since its inception – continued to support mixed media 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.

*Continued on page 2*

### Inside this issue:

2

Retail Merchandising Contest Winners Continued

3

CucCAP Project, Commodity Roundtable and New Nutrition Video Resource

4

New TikTok Reels/Partner for Recipe Videos and Florida Watermelon Association NWPB Update

## Contest Winners Continued

Marketing efforts considered in judging included 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. This year's winners used mixed marketing tactics ranging from social posts that shared watermelon nutrition, fun facts and recipe ideas to eye-catching in-store displays and take-home materials for store customers.

### This year's winners included:

**Grand Prize:** Chuck's Produce and Street Market Mill Plain – Vancouver, WA (pictured, page 1)

**Second Place:** Borderland Co-Op – Saskatchewan, Canada (pictured top)

**Third Place:** B&T Food Fresh Market – Millen, GA (pictured second)

**Honorable Mentions:** Family Fare – Dickinson, ND (pictured third); Food City Store #433 – Louisa, KY (pictured bottom left); Laughlin AFB Commissary – Del Rio, TX (pictured bottom right)



“The entries we received this year were very fun and imaginative. This year's grand prize winner really explored every avenue of promotion and merchandising, using clever in-store optics and collateral materials as well as engaging their customers via social media,” said Juliemar Rosado, Director of Retail and International Marketing for the NWPB. “It was great to see all the unique spins on merchandising across the stores.”

“Thank you for recognizing our team's hard work and fun ideas. We here at Chuck's welcome any opportunity to bring a little pizzazz to our community and support this amazing American staple crop,” said Kayla Beal, Internal Marketing/Signs Department Manager.

More than \$10,000 in cash and prizes will be awarded to winners, including \$5,000 for Chuck's Produce and Street Market as the grand prize winners. The second place winner will receive \$2,500, third place will receive \$1,000 and each of the three honorable mentions will receive \$500.

A complete list of the winning displays with images will be posted on [watermelon.org/retailers](http://watermelon.org/retailers). For more information, contact Juliemar Rosado at [jrosado@watermelon.org](mailto:jrosado@watermelon.org).

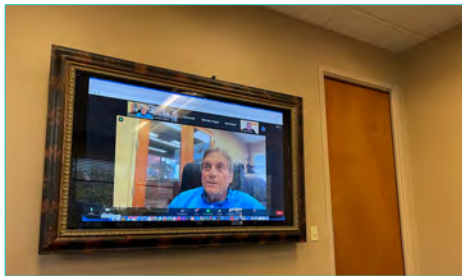


## CucCAP Project

The CucCAP project began with a grant to develop genomic resources to increase disease resistance in cucurbit crops, including watermelons. With a second grant recently awarded, the project is now known as CucCAP2. Involvement includes a broad participation of crop producers, plant pathologists, plant breeders, plant genome scientists, and vegetable extension specialists. This group held its first CucCAP2 virtual meeting in October 2021. NWPB Executive Director Mark Arney is on the Stakeholder Advisory Board for CucCAP2. He was joined by NWPB Research Committee Chair Jose Gomez who also participated in the meeting, who said “The [CucCAP2 watermelon] team has done some excellent research and the information will certainly assist in maintaining the viable commercial production and marketing of watermelon.”





## Commodity Roundtable



NWPB Executive Director Mark Arney participated in a Commodity Roundtable meeting on October 12 and 13. This is an informal group of Chief Executive Officers and Executive Directors of agriculture promotion groups who share information to help their organizations achieve efficient and effective program implementation.

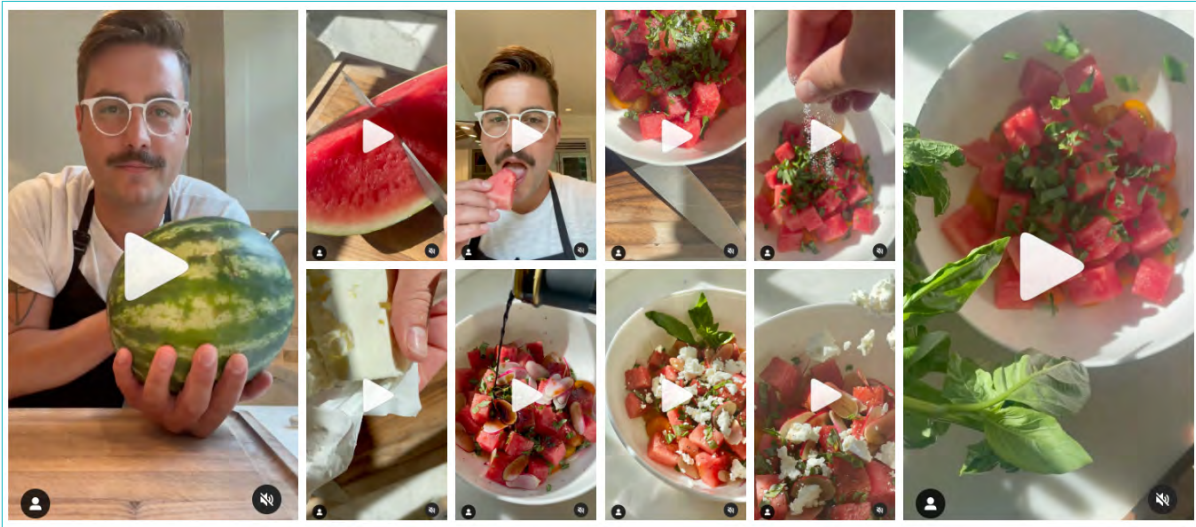


## New Nutrition Video Resource

In an effort to reach all audiences with watermelon nutrition messages, the Board has created new nutrition video resources. The title is [\*\*\*Watermelon Nutrition: This not That.\*\*\*](#)  For example watermelon has vitamins but does not have cholesterol. The longer video is 2 minutes in length and details the benefits of the vitamins and minerals watermelon provides. The shorter version covers the top level nutrition facts. Check out the long and short videos on the [nutrition section of watermelon.org](#) and our [YouTube channel](#). 



## New TikTok/Reels Partner for Recipe Videos



The Watermelon Board recruited a brand new partner, content creator Chef Reilly Meehan, who found his way to our feed with his talent for recipe videos made in the ultra-current style for Instagram Reels and TikTok. A minute is not a lot of time to learn how to cook. That's how long your typical TikTok user has to make a video — with several seconds-long clips strung together to get your point across. The point of the platform is the short attention span, the way you can reveal a trick or a joke or, in this case, a complete meal.

The format in this new wilderness of recipe videos is short and choppy, and in fact don't need to focus on being instructional but rather entertaining and educational. Sound is key, from the ASMR of up close and personal audio of knife chops and bowl mixes to the current top TikTok audio tracks and songs.

The recipe videos will be debuting one per month, with the first in November featuring the Thanksgiving favorite, the Watermelon Cranberry Sauce. Tune in to @WatermelonBoard channels on Instagram, TikTok and Facebook to check it out!



## Florida Watermelon Association NWPB Update

Executive Director Mark Arney presented to the Florida Watermelon Association during their annual convention in October. Arney updated the association about research available on the website, as well as encouraged attendees to sign up for the Supplier Database to help reach buyers and to keep up with Board programs by signing up and reading the Watermelon Update each month. A flyer was available to raise awareness for the Watermelon Update. Finally, marketing, foodservice and communications highlights were shared in a highlights video.



# Analytics Study on Watermelon Price & Trade Response

In 2020, the Board funded a study with Information Resources Inc. (IRI) with the objective to leverage base, promoted and cross price elasticity estimates to help determine strategic direction and mitigate the volume and impacts of potential price increases or decreases for watermelon within the produce department. The focus was to build price elasticity and trade promotion response models that help the NWPB understand the following:

- What's the role of watermelon price, relative to other price & trade drivers?
- What is the impact of short-term price reductions, measured as discount elasticities, and of merchandising, measured as lifts, for watermelon items?
- Is there substantial variation in shelf price elasticity across channels, key food retailers, and mass?
- Is there substantial variation in promotion response across channels, key food retailers, and mass for the watermelon category?



Please note, COVID-19 controls were a key factor in the 2020 study.

## Everyday Price

Response to everyday shelf pricing is relatively low in the U.S. retail landscape, while consumer response to price changes on whole watermelons is somewhat stronger than cut and minis. Consumer response to price change of cut and mini watermelon has decreased since the study in 2016. Base price thresholds do not present as a strong risk factor in the current pricing landscape for any watermelon type across all retail formats.

## Competitive Shelf Pricing

While measurements indicated moderate to strong pricing effects between a variety of fruit types and watermelon sales, it is believed the strongest impacts are driven more by seasonal pricing of the various fruits rather than specific consumer switching. However, there are some very compelling price gaps between certain items that are worth managing to optimize watermelon sales levels:

Food: Mini Watermelons to Whole Watermelons  $-\$2.20$  (-5.5%) and  $-\$2.70$  (-5.5%)

## Promotional Price Response

Response to price discounting is generally low across all watermelon types and retail outlets with few exceptions. Temporary price reductions on cut watermelon are not effective. Lifts on all are significantly lower than reported in 2016. Specific promoted price threshold present could be used to help focus promotional efforts at the right price point to efficiently drive volume within the industry:

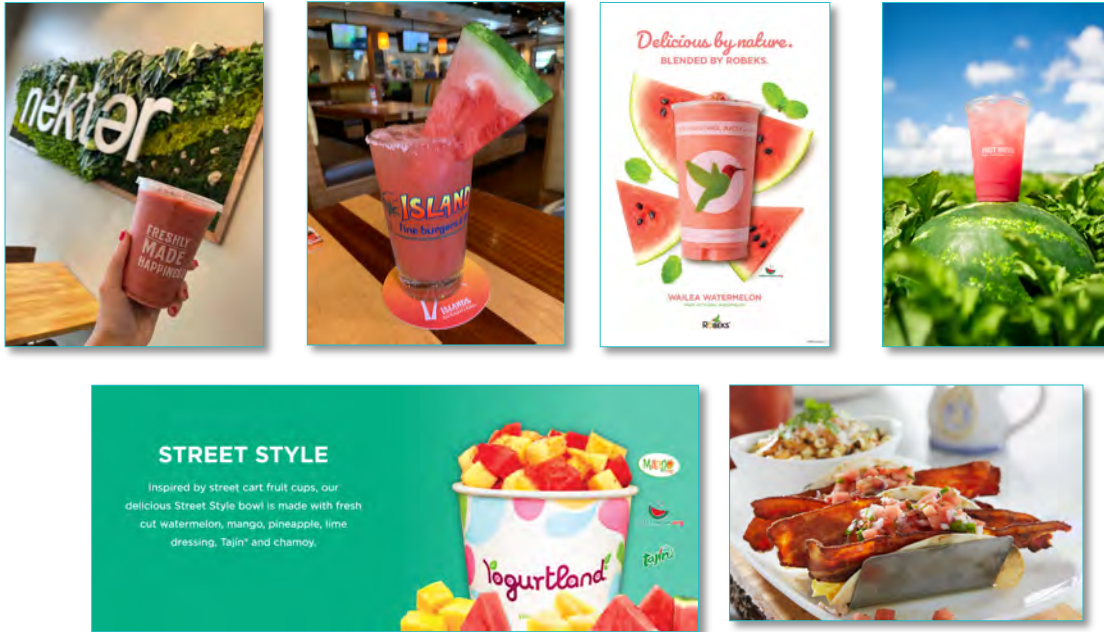
Food: Mini Watermelons @  $\$3.79$  (+23.8%), Whole Watermelons @  $\$5.79$  (+11.2%)

## Quality Merchandising

Secondary Display appears to drive significant incremental lift. In food, feature ads perform very well for mini watermelons – ensure all promotions include feature support.

Please visit the [Retail Research](#) page to see the full summary of the study. If you have any questions on this study, please reach out to Mark Arney at [marney@watermelon.org](mailto:marney@watermelon.org).

## Foodservice Menu Promotions



This spring and summer the Board's menu promotions were in more than 900 restaurants in 35 states! The partners were diverse in their operation, menu items and locations. All of the promotions included at least one watermelon menu item and consumer-facing promotion support, both in-restaurant and online. Here is a list of the promotions, highlighting a special component of each:

- Another Broken Egg (75 locations) promotion ran from April to August featuring Tacos Verano with watermelon pico and watermelon was included in the fruit side. They are currently testing a fall LTO for next fall, further expanding their watermelon promotion window.
- First Watch (425 locations) promotion ran from June to August featuring Watermelon Wakeup (fresh watermelon juice blend). First Watch visited a local field and packing shed to help tell their customers about how watermelon is grown. This was highlighted on their seasonal menu insert in-restaurant and social media.
- Robeks (85 locations) promotion ran from June to August featuring Wailea Watermelon Smoothie. They extended their marketing efforts into very geographically-targeted ads on Nextdoor and third-party delivery platforms.
- Nekteer Juice Bar (154 locations) promotion ran from June to September featuring Watermelon Berry Smoothie and Watermelon Cooler Juice. Nekteer's co-founder hosted an Instagram Live to interview Board chef consultant, Chef Jason Hernandez, to help promote watermelon and their menu items.
- Yogurtland (200 locations) promotion ran from June to August featuring the new Street Style Bowls featuring watermelon. This was a new type of menu item for Yogurtland as the bowl does not have yogurt.
- Islands Restaurant (44 locations) promotion ran from June to September featuring Watermelon Margarita. Islands was a new partner for the Board and we hope this is just the beginning of their use of watermelon on their menu. The margarita became their second highest selling cocktail.

To learn more about these foodservice promotions or to share watermelon menu items, reach out to Megan McKenna, senior director of marketing and foodservice, at [mmckenna@watermelon.org](mailto:mmckenna@watermelon.org).

## Jump with Jill Fall Digital Tour

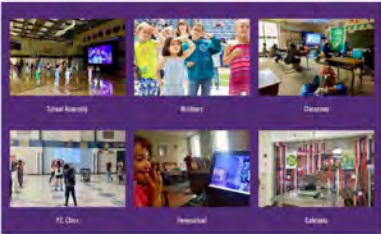
Each year NWPB partners with Jump with Jill to educate elementary-aged kids on the importance of nutrition and healthy choices. Of course watermelon is the perfect way to show kids that healthy habits can be easy and sweet too! This year educators are just as excited about the Fall Digital Tour as more than 90 teachers have created an online account to view the online Jump with Jill portal with nutritional resources and tools in anticipation of the digital tour. The Fall tour will reach more than 8,500 kids in the following areas: Hawaii, Georgia, Florida, Oregon, California, New York, Pennsylvania (2), North Carolina, Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas (2), New Jersey, South Dakota, Michigan, Colorado and Department of Defense school in Germany.

### Action Steps:

Enjoy the 50-minute interactive film, *Jump with Jill: The Movie!* The 50-minute exclusive recording will make you want to get up and move while learning Jill's famous mantras of healthy eating and exercise. On screen, Jill will invite you and your students to dance and sing along!

[Watch The Movie!](#)

There are SO many ways to rock, so choose whatever works for you:



Didn't make your account yet? It's not too late!

[Create Your Account](#)

### Are You Ready to Rock?

The Jump with Jill Digital Tour: Fall 2021 Edition is underway. We will help you make this flexible nutrition education program work for your school through these emails!

Thank you for making your account in the Digital Tour portal!


Thanks to the National Watermelon Promotion Board, you are joining an international learning cohort with schools from 18 states - and Germany!

This means hundreds of teachers are committed to making healthy rock for thousands of students in the classroom.




©2021 National Watermelon Promotion Board


### Dig In with Lesson Plans and Activity Sheets See All




Nature's Candy Music Video 03:35



Film Festival 05:42



Nutrition Action News: Watermelon Bandits 02:48

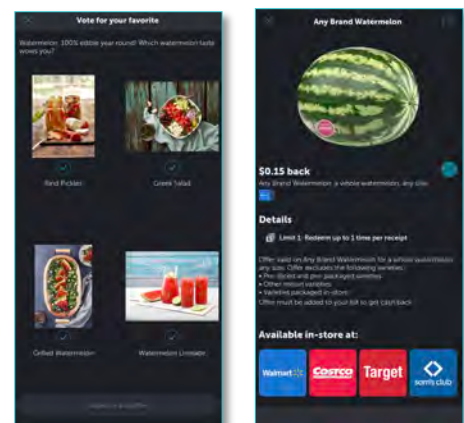


Watermelon Workouts 02:00



## Ibotta Recap

The Ibotta redemption program completed from September 22 to October 1 resulted in approximately 52,158 redemptions, which equates to actual product sold nationally that was incentivized by the offers. Of the 52,158 redemptions, most were new redeemers. The offer was split between new redeemers and past redeemers and included a contest “joust” as the unlock offer for users to choose which watermelon taste (recipe) wows them. The options were watermelon rind pickles, Greek salad, limeade and grilled watermelon. The winner was the watermelon limeade recipe. The offer resulted in a reach of almost 16 million impressions.



# Marine Corps Marathon 2021: Virtual Event & Watermelon Support

Ever since 2013, Watermelon has been a core partner of the annual Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, DC that takes place at the end of each October. Only a few weeks ago the return of the highly anticipated in-person marathon weekend was replaced with virtual-only components for safety and security reasons. The Watermelon Board is still a spotlight supporter for their virtual run and race-month activities, as runners have the whole month to complete their virtual runs. Watermelon is featured in the Digital Program and Queen Paige Huntington sent in videos for the MCM social channels to cheer on the runners as they race their way to these huge goals and have watermelon to refresh, refuel and rehydrate at home.



## Want to connect with Retailers & Foodservice Buyers?

Join the Watermelon Board's Supplier Database! As the premiere resource for retail and foodservice buyers looking for watermelon, this opt-in only listing connects you to new customers and industry suppliers.

**Sign up at [www.watermelon.org/supplierdatabase](http://www.watermelon.org/supplierdatabase)**



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



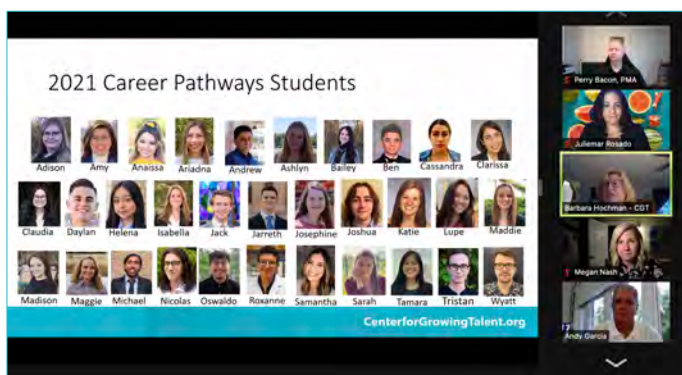


## VIBE Sponsorship Reaches Beverage Professionals in Foodservice

The Board sponsored the Very Important Beverage Executives (VIBE) Conference at the end of September to reach beverage decision makers in foodservice, mostly commercial operators. The event is touted as the #1 education program for on-premise beverage executives and their supply partners. More than 150 attendees from 90 operators across the country were present for the 3-day event in southern California. Sponsors ranged from alcohol brands to garnishes to equipment. The Watermelon Board was there as an ingredient sponsor and featured two drinks, Fancy That and the Watermelon Mezcal Spritz. Fancy That is a no-abv cocktail featuring a watermelon shrub. The Watermelon Mezcal Spritz is a traditional cocktail with great garnishes including a rice paper crisp tossed in watermelon essence. Follow-up with brands such as Applebee's, Dave & Buster's and Margaritaville is ongoing.

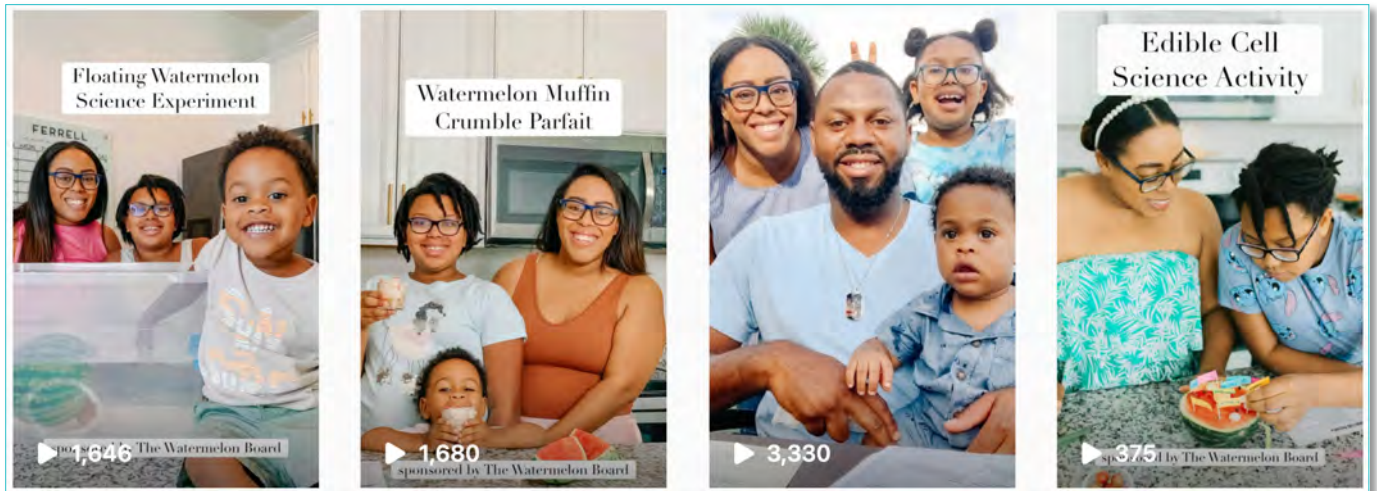



## Fresh Summit Virtual Mentorship



The Center for Growing Talent (CGT) excites, educates and empowers young people and industry professionals at all stages of their careers by supporting personal and professional development. In October, NWPB's Juliemar Rosado was asked to be a part of a virtual mentorship program that CGT conducted. The program included being paired with a student, one-on-one meetings and a virtual networking mixer with all students, faculty, CGT staff and mentors.

## Bianca Dottin Teacher Toolkit Activities – Instagram Reels



Longtime NWPB partner and lifestyle influencer Bianca Dottin recently created four Instagram Reels to support educator resources, highlighting worksheets and lesson plans. Each Reel was at least 30 seconds and included a “swipe up” feature to link directly to [watermelon.org](http://watermelon.org). Watch them at [instagram.com/biancadottin](https://www.instagram.com/biancadottin).  Subjects included:

- Sun, soil and watermelon science experiment
- Edible Cell Activity sharing the process of making an edible watermelon cell
- Will Watermelon Float – conducting an experiment using watermelon and different food items to test density
- Recipe for Watermelon Muffin Crumble Parfait and the benefits of learning math through cooking and incorporating watermelon into your diet

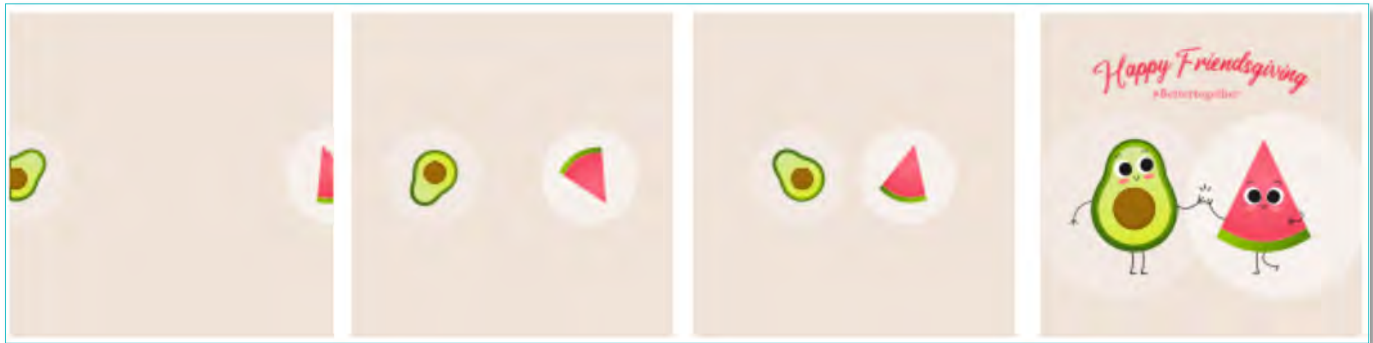


## Watermelon on the Menu

Chroma Modern Bar & Kitchen in Orlando, FL is currently serving ½ Dozen Oysters with Watermelon Granita as part of their Lunch, Dinner and weekend Brunch menu. This popular dish is regularly reposted in the restaurant’s IG stories because customers love to share it on their social feeds!



## Better Together – Produce Pairing Partners for November/December Consumer Campaign

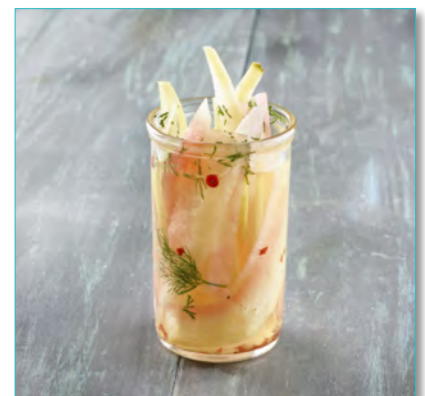


Watermelon goes well with SO many things, and the focus of our November/December consumer social theme is Better Together. We pair with produce and others to elevate and amplify watermelon's versatility in recipes and availability all year round by posting existing recipes and tagging ingredient partners. We will be filming the Better Together "Surprising Flavor Pairings" Facebook Premiere and IGTV video to post in early December, drilling down from other ingredients and partners to flavors that watermelon works with, especially fun and playful for the holidays. Check out the campaign graphics and posts at The Slice on Watermelon.org and across the @WatermelonBoard social media channels.



## National Pickle Day is November 14<sup>th</sup>

Did you know that the Watermelon Rind Pickles recipe page is consistently in the Top 10 pages of all webpages at Watermelon.org each month? Well it is! And it's popularity inspired us to create all the new recipe photos this year inspired by using watermelon rind pickles that we posted last month. Experiment with adding pickled watermelon rind to your grazing boards, sure, but also sandwiches, salads, avocado toasts and deviled eggs! The new dill flavored watermelon rind pickles really pop on a pulled pork sandwich. All recipes and photos are found at Watermelon.org.





## Labor Day Recap Report

Movement	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2016 - 20	v 20	v Avg
California	45,300,000	86,860,000	124,850,000	88,610,000	94,570,000	48,590,000	88,038,000	-49%	-45%
Delaware	41,310,000	27,390,000	24,780,000	26,680,000	33,820,000	39,580,000	30,796,000	17%	29%
Illiana	109,540,000	99,730,000	98,780,000	115,460,000	133,380,000	120,420,000	111,378,000	-10%	8%
Maryland	29,480,000	15,520,000	16,540,000	12,840,000	24,320,000	23,480,000	19,740,000	-3%	19%
Mexico	12,340,000	6,350,000	20,970,000	27,890,000	33,360,000	28,300,000	20,182,000	-15%	40%
Michigan	48,600,000	46,920,000	48,600,000	40,480,000	48,870,000	45,080,000	46,694,000	-8%	-3%
N. Carolina	25,480,000	18,120,000	21,560,000	44,680,000	21,840,000	27,080,000	26,336,000	24%	3%
Oklahoma	1,900,000	840,000	2,300,000	5,200,000	5,130,000	9,880,000	3,074,000	93%	221%
Texas	62,860,000	57,240,000	53,760,000	59,210,000	47,590,000	43,020,000	56,132,000	-10%	-23%
Virginia	5,000,000	6,640,000	5,840,000	7,200,000	4,480,000	10,040,000	5,832,000	124%	72%
<b>Total</b>	<b>381,810,000</b>	<b>365,610,000</b>	<b>417,980,000</b>	<b>428,250,000</b>	<b>447,360,000</b>	<b>395,470,000</b>	<b>408,202,000</b>	<b>-11.6%</b>	<b>-3.1%</b>

FOB	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2016 - 20	v 20	v Avg
California	\$ 0.185	\$ 0.185	\$ 0.172	\$ 0.193	\$ 0.219	\$ 0.161	\$ 0.190	-26%	-15%
Delaware	\$ 0.145	\$ 0.149	\$ 0.191	\$ 0.203	\$ 0.184	\$ 0.160	\$ 0.172	-13%	-6%
Illiana	\$ 0.146	\$ 0.137	\$ 0.182	\$ 0.191	\$ 0.175	\$ 0.147	\$ 0.167	-16%	-12%
Maryland	\$ 0.145	\$ 0.142	\$ 0.193	\$ 0.203	\$ 0.184	\$ 0.159	\$ 0.170	-13%	-6%
Mexico	\$ 0.157	\$ 0.165	\$ 0.181	\$ 0.194	\$ 0.191	\$ 0.156	\$ 0.184	-18%	-15%
Michigan	\$ 0.153	\$ 0.163	\$ 0.194	\$ 0.217	\$ 0.188	\$ 0.175	\$ 0.182	-7%	-4%
N. Carolina	\$ 0.145	\$ 0.144	\$ 0.179	\$ 0.193	\$ 0.182	\$ 0.149	\$ 0.173	-18%	-14%
Oklahoma	\$ 0.151	\$ 0.120	\$ 0.174	\$ 0.187	\$ 0.187	\$ 0.156	\$ 0.177	-17%	-12%
Texas	\$ 0.152	\$ 0.123	\$ 0.174	\$ 0.185	\$ 0.187	\$ 0.155	\$ 0.163	-17%	-5%
Virginia	\$ 0.146	\$ 0.152	\$ 0.201	\$ 0.199	\$ 0.180	\$ 0.162	\$ 0.176	-10%	-8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 0.153</b>	<b>\$ 0.152</b>	<b>\$ 0.180</b>	<b>\$ 0.195</b>	<b>\$ 0.190</b>	<b>\$ 0.156</b>	<b>\$ 0.175</b>	<b>-17.6%</b>	<b>-10.7%</b>

Revenue	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2016 - 20	v 20	v Avg
California	\$ 8,363,583	\$ 16,068,950	\$ 21,457,300	\$ 17,068,733	\$ 20,743,400	\$ 7,843,814	\$ 16,740,393	-62%	-53%
Delaware	\$ 5,984,917	\$ 4,072,550	\$ 4,737,267	\$ 5,406,067	\$ 6,215,433	\$ 6,350,295	\$ 5,283,247	2%	20%
Illiana	\$ 16,005,000	\$ 13,677,833	\$ 17,949,858	\$ 22,071,233	\$ 23,311,533	\$ 17,694,926	\$ 18,603,092	-24%	-5%
Maryland	\$ 4,270,667	\$ 2,206,333	\$ 3,185,800	\$ 2,609,733	\$ 4,463,933	\$ 3,735,762	\$ 3,347,293	-16%	12%
Mexico	\$ 1,933,369	\$ 1,048,599	\$ 3,804,843	\$ 5,414,867	\$ 6,371,468	\$ 4,423,408	\$ 3,714,629	-31%	19%
Michigan	\$ 7,432,133	\$ 7,630,467	\$ 9,441,333	\$ 8,771,133	\$ 9,166,826	\$ 7,888,000	\$ 8,488,379	-14%	-7%
N. Carolina	\$ 3,699,633	\$ 2,602,900	\$ 3,849,733	\$ 8,644,667	\$ 3,964,733	\$ 4,028,592	\$ 4,552,333	2%	-12%
Oklahoma	\$ 287,683	\$ 100,900	\$ 399,800	\$ 969,800	\$ 960,817	\$ 1,537,267	\$ 543,800	60%	183%
Texas	\$ 9,567,950	\$ 7,033,825	\$ 9,349,717	\$ 10,940,450	\$ 8,904,600	\$ 6,686,767	\$ 9,159,308	-25%	-27%
Virginia	\$ 729,400	\$ 1,007,333	\$ 1,172,267	\$ 1,432,000	\$ 805,267	\$ 1,626,590	\$ 1,029,253	102%	58%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 58,274,336</b>	<b>\$ 55,449,691</b>	<b>\$ 75,347,918</b>	<b>\$ 83,328,684</b>	<b>\$ 84,908,011</b>	<b>\$ 61,815,421</b>	<b>\$ 71,461,728</b>	<b>-27.2%</b>	<b>-13.5%</b>

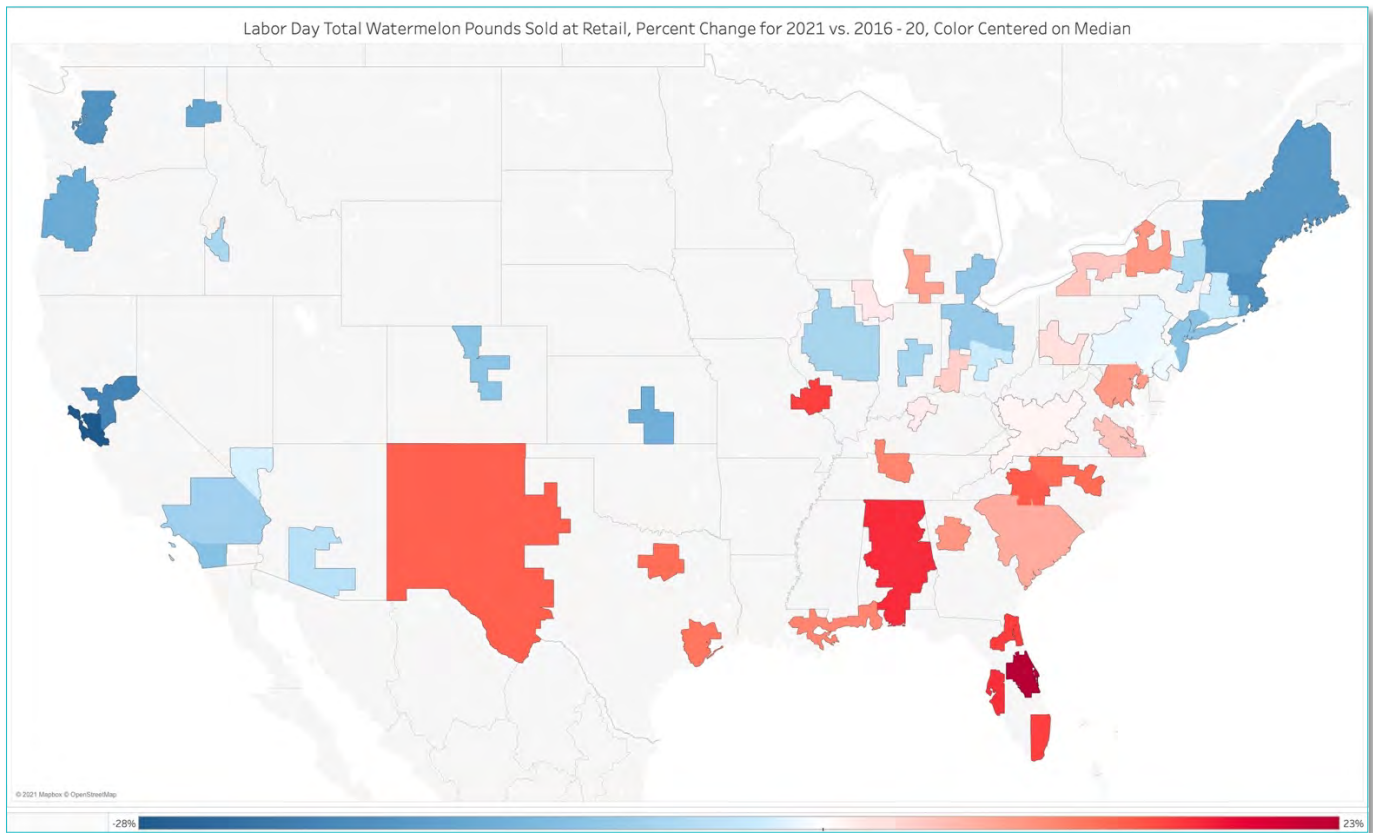
Labor Day weekend annually sees a surge in watermelon shipments. The two weeks leading into the holiday and the week that follows from 2016 to 2020 showed an average of roughly 408 million pounds shipped with 2020 surging to just shy of 450 million pounds. Data for the same period this year shows volume around 395 million pounds, which is 3% lighter than average, though down more than 11% from the unique 2020 season. AMS Market News also shows that per pound pricing for seedless watermelon was lower than the most recent years, and on par with 2016 or 2017 leading to revenue estimates that are a bit above those earlier years, while lagging behind the more recent.

Continued next page



Numerator Promotions Intel reported robust watermelon advertising during this period. The number of advertisements for both mini and whole watermelon were up over the prior two years, while prices for mini watermelon were lower than both. Whole prices were on ad around 10 cents higher than last year at \$3.93 each, which was up five cents from 2019. The [full report](#) shows the number of ads and cost per each for over a hundred markets.

Lastly, the report utilizes IRI Retail Scan Data to examine how sales performed at retail. This year saw above average pounds sold nationally, which trailed last year and continued the trend of year-over-year increased fresh cut sales. Total pounds sold were below average on the West Coast and in the Northeast, but much of the South and Mid-South made up for the shortfall. Please see the [full report](#) for more information.



## NWPB Connections

United States Agricultural Export Development Council Annual Workshop (virtual) - November 17 - 18

Texas Watermelon Association Annual Convention - November 11 - 13

