



# Watermelon Update

NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTION BOARD

Dear Industry Members,

Over the past two years, you, our industry, has shown us the meaning of resilience. Through this pandemic, you have adapted with optimism for the future. **Your** NWPB has adapted too and shares that optimism in continuing to maintain a strong and impactful watermelon promotion program.



Last year, 2021, ranks as the second most voluminous year of the last ten, trailing only 2020. USDA-AMS data shows how watermelon volume totaled nearly 5.7 billion pounds. Movement was 1.6% higher than the preceding five years. Estimated revenue to the industry placed 5.7% higher than 2016 to 2020. For a more detailed look at how watermelon volume, seedless FOB pricing and estimated revenue have tracked over the past years, see article titled *2021 Watermelon Movement, Revenue & FOB Analysis* on page 2 of this newsletter.\*

One highlight in September 2021, was holding the first in-person board meeting in more than 18 months with keynote speaker former USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue. Other presentations covered [Summer 2021 Consumer Research Findings](#), Communications, Marketing, and Foodservice Program Highlights, Nutrition Research Presentation and NEW Communications Training (formerly known as Crisis Training) for the full Board. Additionally, I was invited to make presentations at the Suwannee Valley Watermelon Institute and other industry meetings. Attendance and enthusiasm made everyone feel that we were finally turning the corner.

While this new year will not be without challenges, it's encouraging to feel that we are well-equipped to adjust to new opportunities. Looking forward, we are hoping 2022 will include more in person events, although the Board will be present to promote watermelon whether in person or virtual. Upcoming events include the NWA Annual Meeting & Convention, SEPC's Southern Exposure, Queen Media Training, various events as a part of the new International Fresh Produce Association Exposition, and many more.

Speaking of NWA's Annual Meeting & Convention, we look forward to the NWPB Board Meeting on Wednesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> in Nashville, followed by Thursday's presentation. We invite all industry members and stakeholders to attend our session, *Affecting Watermelon Demand through Promotion: NWPB Research and Results*.

As always, we will work for you, our industry members, to strengthen watermelon's position as a budget-friendly, nutritional powerhouse through communication, retail and foodservice, supported by sound research! Should you ever have any questions or concerns, please reach out to myself or any Board member or staff.

Mark Arney, Executive Director, National Watermelon Promotion Board.

*\*Please note, revenues are based on extrapolating USDA-AMS data and overall averages may not be reflective of individual watermelon farming operations.*

## Inside this issue:

2

**2021 Watermelon Movement, Revenue & FOB Analysis**

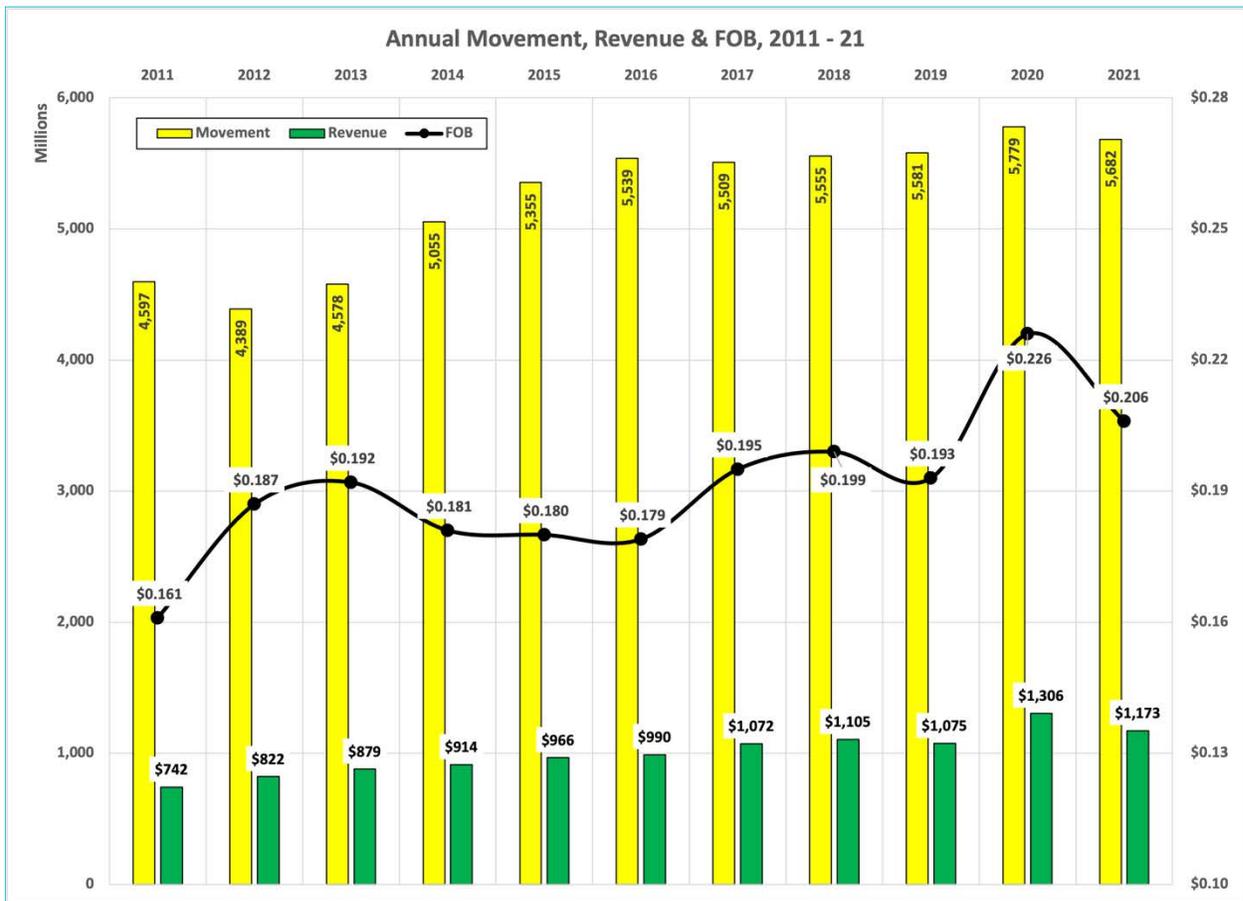
3

**Affecting Demand – Attend the NWPB Presentation at NWA!; Suwannee Valley Watermelon Institute**

4

**Multimedia Partnership with Culinary Institute of America; New York Produce Show**

## 2021 Watermelon Movement, Revenue & FOB Analysis



USDA-AMS data shows how watermelon volume (both seeded and seedless), seedless FOB pricing and estimated revenue have tracked over past years. Movement totaling nearly 5.7 billion pounds in 2021 ranks this the second most voluminous year of the last ten, trailing the unique 2020 season. Movement was 1.6% higher than the preceding five years, and 9.4% higher than the previous ten. Seedless FOB prices came in 3.8% higher than the more recent 2016 to 2020 period, while pushing to 8.4% higher compared to the 2011 to 2020 timeframe. This past year fell short of the historically great high in 2020, but otherwise continued the trend of upward growth. Uniting both aspects allows for calculating estimated revenue to the industry, which trailed 2020, but placed 5.7% and 18.8% higher than the preceding five and ten-year intervals, respectively.\*

For a more granular look at how 2021 performed relative to past years please visit the [Supply Chain Research](#) section of [watermelon.org](#). In addition to the final version of the 2021 workbooks, there are weekly updates for the current year alongside the Watermelon Market Report. Please direct any questions to [Jason Hanselman](#) who can tailor custom reports using free and proprietary resources on production, pricing, retail components, import/export, and more.

\*Please note, revenues are based on extrapolating USDA-AMS data and overall averages may not be reflective of individual watermelon farming operations.

## Affecting Demand – Attend the NWPB Presentation at NWA!



### *Affecting Watermelon Demand through Promotion: NWPB Research and Results*

In this action-packed one-hour session, taking place Thursday, February 24th at 11 a.m., National Watermelon Promotion Board of Directors and staff will show how your NWPB affects demand for watermelon through results-based programs: Research, Communications, Marketing and Foodservice.

The Board looks forward to hosting you for an interactive session highlighting success stories from the last few years. Research will highlight resources available to the industry including consumer research, scan data and more. Communications will share the digital landscape and how it is utilized to reach consumers and influencers by positioning watermelon's health, value and versatility benefits year-round. Marketing will illustrate how retail education, research and promotion tactics help move watermelon in domestic and international markets. Foodservice will highlight how one chain moves more watermelon with innovative dishes throughout the year, while also adding more value to NWPB presence in foodservice media and at events.

Finally, the session will end with tools and resources available to the industry and examples of watermelon industry members using them in their businesses. Each section will offer an opportunity for Q&A and general feedback is welcome throughout.



## Suwannee Valley Watermelon Institute

In December, NWPB Executive Director Mark Arney attended the Suwannee Valley Watermelon Institute meeting at Suwannee River Fair facility in Fanning Springs, FL. Arney presented an update of current NWPB activities and showcased highlights from Communications, Foodservice and Retail & International Marketing departments. The meeting was well attended by watermelon producers, handlers, and allied industry representatives and included educational sessions, industry trade show and lunch.



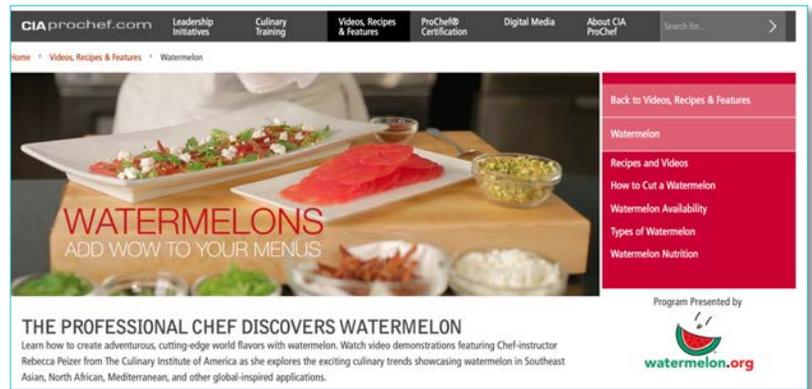
*Robert (Bob) Hochmuth, the Assistant Center Director for the UF/IFAS North Florida Research & Education Center and NWPB Executive Director Mark Arney*



*Florida Watermelon Queen Bethany Barfield and NWPB Executive Director Mark Arney*

## Multimedia Partnership with Culinary Institute of America

Since 2017, the Board has worked with the Culinary Institute of America (CIA), the world's premier culinary college, to educate and inspire foodservice professionals with watermelon techniques and usages ideas through recipes, videos and photos. Watermelon's page and content at <https://www.ciaprochef.com/watermelon> continues to see traffic and marketing through CIA social and digital platforms. In the fourth quarter of 2021, to follow web accessibility standards, the CIA team upgraded all of the videos to be closed captioned. They were then republished so the videos came up as new content for subscribers and sparked new interest. Because of this iTunes, YouTube and Pinterest saw triple digit percentage increases in traffic compared to Q3 2021! SmartBrief newsletter recipe inclusions have reached more than 800,00 subscribers in 2021 alone. The multimedia partnership also included the webcast sponsorship for the Menus of Change conference in June of 2021 and the recipes are used during events and pitched to foodservice media. We will continue to see strong results with this partnership in 2022.



## New York Produce Show

NWPB returned as exhibitors to the Eastern Produce Council's New York Produce Show and Conference held in December 2021. The in-person event included a retail "thought-leader" breakfast panel, trade show of more than 500 companies, networking opportunities, and educational sessions. The following day, NWPB staff attended a Brooklyn urban agriculture retail tour and the "Ideation Fresh" Foodservice Forum. As an exhibitor, the NWPB interacted with many retailers, media, wholesalers and the foodservice industry about materials and information NWPB has available for them in foodservice and retail promotion and education.



## NWPB Attends, Presents at South Carolina Watermelon Association Convention

NWPB Executive Director Mark Arney and Director of Retail and International Marketing Juliemar Rosado attended the South Carolina Watermelon Association's annual convention January 14 and 15. Arney presented the association with a marketing, foodservice and communication highlights video 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 included in the registration packet when attendees checked in for the event with information on the supplier database and the Watermelon Update.



## Consumer Microcampaigns: Better Together Wrap Up, Introducing Simple Pleasures!

November and December consumer communications microcampaign was the theme Better Together, perfectly pairing Watermelon with other fun foods and flavors and promoting with those partners across social media, totaling more than 81,000 social impressions with 7,354 engagements.

At Watermelon Board Headquarters, Stephanie Barlow and Summer Walker's live video paired several flavors for a holiday entertaining inspiration platform: the video earned more than 1,000 views and 244 comments! Now we are promoting under the banner of Simple Pleasures. Think a dose of happy with watermelon! Anything that brings you joy, from cooking to dancing to painting and meditation, anything goes!

January 20th we shared a paint-along escape of a beach scene with a watermelon slice. Our partner who created this is known for her social media painting activities and she has a mellow music background and calming voiceover while the camera simply stays put as the easy painting comes to life. We are very excited for new partner posts like this, approaching partner-created content for @WatermelonBoard social media channels. Next in February we will post a joyful movement dance workout created by another new member of Team Watermelon, as we recruit watermelon lovers and influencers to share watermelon in their communities and with their earned audiences. March will round out the partners of Simple Pleasures with a guided meditation sound bath.



# Creating Healthy Habits with Watermelon – Consumer Feature Release

Watermelon consumption in the wintertime months is currently being supported and promoted by a consumer media release through the Family Features Syndicate. Released on January 6, 2022, the article titled “Creating Healthy Habits in the New Year” has earned 1,159 program placements across print and digital media that has an ad equivalency of over \$620K with 183,329,671 impressions. In only 10 days so far of its distribution cycle, the ROI is 103:1. One of the best benefits of working through Family Features is the nationwide distribution map of the media outlets downloading and adding our story into their news layouts, and as you can see in this map the story has hit 49 out of 50 states! The feature will remain live in the news syndicate for up to 3 months, and will be retitled to remove “New Year’s” references after 4 weeks.



Create Healthy Habits in the New Year

The article preview includes a large photo of a watermelon salad, a smaller photo of watermelon slices, and a list of ingredients and instructions. The text discusses the benefits of watermelon and provides a recipe for a healthy salad.



## Watermelon in College & University Foodservice

College & University Foodservice experienced a lot of change in the last couple years but the Board remained informed through the National Association of College & University Food Services (NACUFS). Similarly to K-12 and nursing homes, traditional buffets were shifted to grab and go and delivery meal opportunities, limiting the year-round opportunity for watermelon. Although promotions came to a halt, watermelon was still used on menus. The Board engaged with this audience by sponsoring the NACUFS 2021 Fall Conference Learning Series. Attended by nearly 300 decision-makers in C&U dining, the series was a success. The Board received logo recognition on NACUFS’ website, social media and more but also received the attendee list. Ongoing follow-up will lead to more robust work with this group in 2022.

NACUFS 2021 Fall Conference Learning Series Wrap-Up

NACUFS would like to thank all members, presenters, and sponsors who made the 2021 Fall Conference Learning Series a reality. It was a great opportunity to come together for just a short amount of time to learn, share, and reconnect.

Our NACUFS community is stronger thanks to each and every one of your contributions.

Thank You to Our Sponsors!

The graphic features logos for various sponsors including: Alpha Foods, Baker Group, Bergmeyer, Bear Head Brand, BSI, Colibri & Capote, ECOLAB, Food Service Systems, JGL, Land O'Lakes, OZZI, RICH'S, Simplot, Sysco, touchwork, and ZERO EGG.

## NWPB Nomination Teleconference for Districts 4 & 5

The National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB) will hold a nomination teleconference on **Wednesday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 11:00 A.M. (EST)** for district 4 and **Wednesday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 1:00 P.M. (EST)** for district 5 to nominate qualified watermelon producers and watermelon handlers to fill open positions as directors of the Board.

District 4 -- The States of: Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Washington, DC.

District 5 -- The States of: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

The NWPB encourages all women, minorities and persons with disabilities who qualify as watermelon producers and handlers to attend the meeting and run for nomination to the NWPB.

All watermelon producers and handlers in District 4 & 5 are encouraged to attend and vote to nominate their representatives to the NWPB. Nominations are submitted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Secretary of Agriculture makes the final appointments to the NWPB. The newly appointed Board members term of office will begin on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, and end December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025.

If you conduct business as a 1st handler in any of the states listed above you are eligible for nomination as a director for that district.

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/content/usda-seeks-nominees-national-watermelon-promotion-board-2> 

Please see the meeting call in information below:

Dial-In Number: (267) 930-4000

Participant Access: 132 049 880

To join the conference on your iOS Device, click this link: <http://rconf.net/2IXHcoY> 

Conferencing Tips:

To mute your line, press \*#6 on your keypad.

### *Current Board Members for District 4:*

Producer - Jacob Horrall, IN (1st Term - eligible for nomination)

Producer - Blake Mouzin, IN (1st Term - eligible for nomination)

Handler - Cody Smith, IN (2nd Term - ineligible for nomination)

Handler - John Lapide, NY (1st Term - eligible for nomination)

### *Current Board Members for District 5:*

Producer - VACANT

Producer - Cassidy Carpenter, NM (1st Term - eligible for nomination)

Handler - Kelly Partch, CA (1st Term - eligible for nomination)

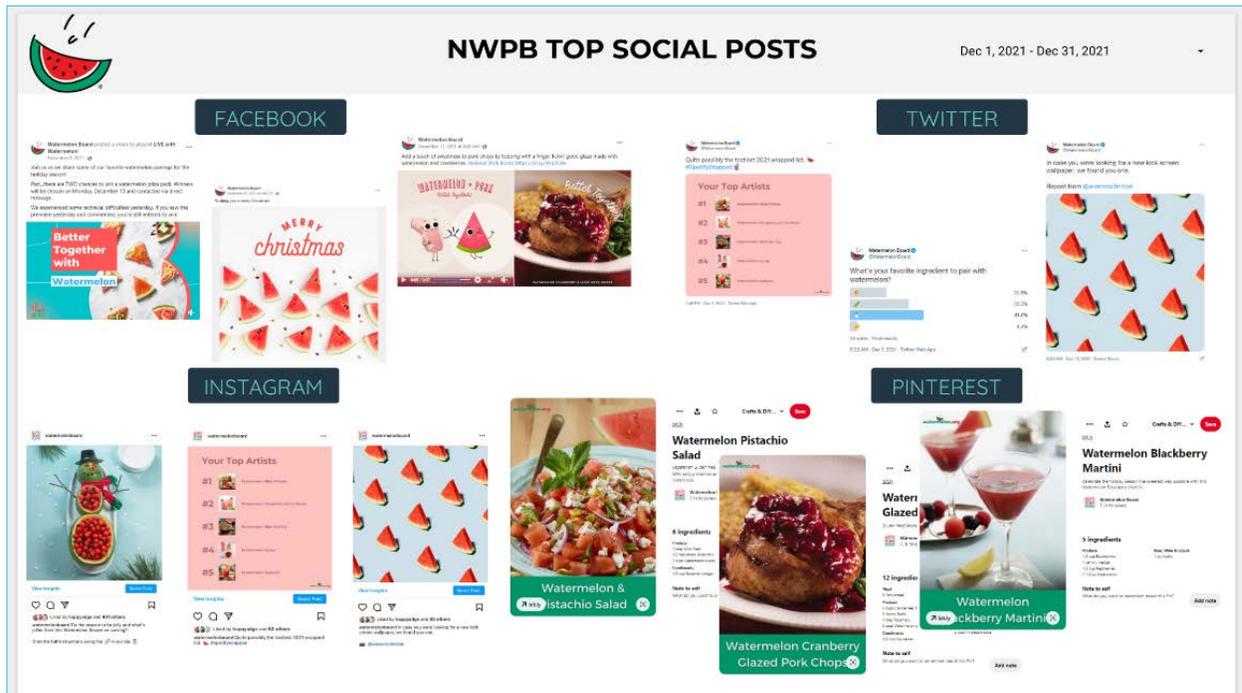
Handler - Chris Elsie, AZ (1st Term - eligible for nomination)

For each district, we are seeking two names per position which will result in a total of eight names.

Producer 1:	A) _____	B) _____
Producer 2:	A) _____	B) _____
Handler 1:	A) _____	B) _____
Handler 2:	A) _____	B) _____

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Rebekah Dossett or Andrea Smith.

## December Digital Stats Show Impressive Growth



**NWPB TOP SOCIAL POSTS** Dec 1, 2021 - Dec 31, 2021

**FACEBOOK**

- Watermelon Blackberry Glazed Pork Chops
- Better Together with Watermelon
- Merry Christmas
- Watermelon & Pistachio Salad
- Watermelon Cranberry Glazed Pork Chops

**TWITTER**

- Watermelon Blackberry Glazed Pork Chops
- Watermelon Blackberry Glazed Pork Chops
- Watermelon Blackberry Glazed Pork Chops

**INSTAGRAM**

- Watermelon Blackberry Glazed Pork Chops
- Your Top Artists
- Watermelon Blackberry Glazed Pork Chops
- Watermelon & Pistachio Salad
- Watermelon Cranberry Glazed Pork Chops

**PINTEREST**

- Watermelon Blackberry Glazed Pork Chops
- Watermelon Blackberry Glazed Pork Chops
- Watermelon Blackberry Glazed Pork Chops

As we evaluate monthly web and social media traffic, in December we looked at year over year rather than month to month comparisons. Doing so reveals an impressive leap in traffic: 70% more website traffic in December 2021 vs the same month in 2020, and a 200% increase in social media traffic year to year! Consumers are online, and our watermelon content is getting their attention and engagements! From watermelon health benefits, seasonal recipe inspiration, and the incredible value of our favorite fruit, we are capturing eyes and creating wintertime watermelon demand. Top posts include the Better Together Facebook Premiere video, a fun twist on a Spotify Wrapped Playlist trend, and a wallpaper graphic for fans to save for a new Watermelon lock screen image for their phones!

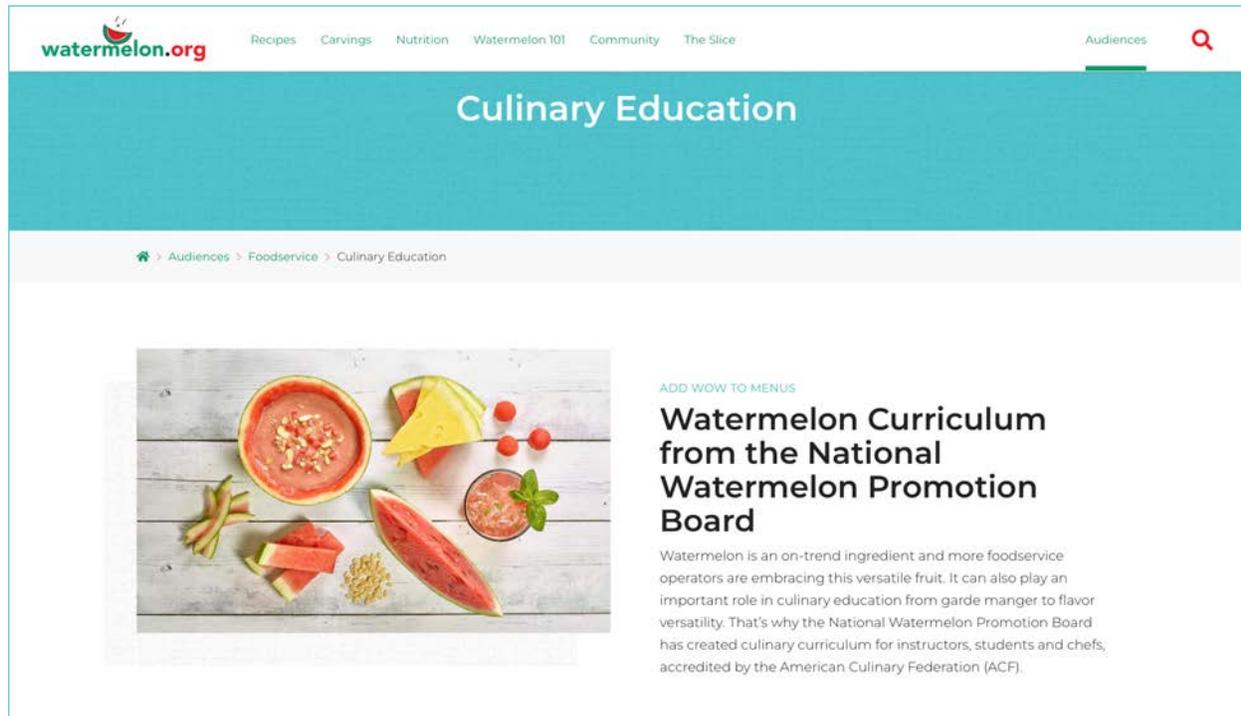


## Watermelon on the Menu

PARA, a new restaurant in Charlotte, NC serving globally-inspired small plates, is serving a “Tuna” crudo made with watermelon, jalapeno, lime, avocado, citrus, hot pepper and radish (pictured left). The family-style dishes aim to highlight foods from local farms and will also feature Kakigori - a dessert that includes watermelon, mint, jalapeño, pistachio, sweet and condensed milk (pictured right).



# Culinary Curriculum for Foodservice Educators and Professionals



**watermelon.org** Recipes Carvings Nutrition Watermelon 101 Community The Slice Audiences 

## Culinary Education

[Audiences](#) > [Foodservice](#) > [Culinary Education](#)



**ADD WOW TO MENUS**

### Watermelon Curriculum from the National Watermelon Promotion Board

Watermelon is an on-trend ingredient and more foodservice operators are embracing this versatile fruit. It can also play an important role in culinary education from garde manger to flavor versatility. That's why the National Watermelon Promotion Board has created culinary curriculum for instructors, students and chefs, accredited by the American Culinary Federation (ACF).

Since 2017, the Board has offered Watermelon Culinary Curriculum. The curriculum is approved for five ongoing certification credits with the American Culinary Federation for current chefs and it is promoted for use in culinary classrooms at the high school and college level. Since its inception the curriculum has been submitted for credit nearly 1000 times! That doesn't include the number of educators who have used the resource in their classrooms. What's next? Look for an revamped curriculum with new lesson plans coming soon!



## NWPB Connections

Georgia Watermelon Association Convention - January 28 - 30

Western Watermelon Association Convention - January 28 - 30

MarDel Association Convention - February 4 - 5

Gulf Coast Watermelon Convention - February 11 - 12

National Watermelon Association Convention Nashville, TN - February 23 - 27

