

NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTION BOARD



FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022
ANNUAL REPORT

Statement of Financial Position

National Watermelon Promotion Board

STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

March 31, 2022 and 2021

| | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| ASSETS | | |
| CURRENT ASSETS | | |
| Cash and cash equivalents | \$ 1,072,208 | \$ 1,468,214 |
| Assessments receivable | 119,070 | 24,725 |
| MAP receivable | 2,370 | 13,657 |
| Prepaid expenses and other assets | 78,651 | 51,518 |
| Certificates of deposit | 704,000 | 495,127 |
| Total current assets | 1,976,299 | 2,053,241 |
| Property and equipment, net | 71,630 | 111,892 |
| Deposits | 5,007 | 5,007 |
| Total assets | <u>\$ 2,052,936</u> | <u>\$ 2,170,140</u> |
| LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS | | |
| CURRENT LIABILITIES | | |
| Accounts payable and accrued expenses | \$ 40,177 | \$ 97,270 |
| Accrued payroll and related expenses | 127,725 | 113,438 |
| Capital lease obligations | 761 | 8,973 |
| Total current liabilities | 168,663 | 219,681 |
| Capital lease obligations, less current portion | - | 761 |
| Total liabilities | <u>168,663</u> | <u>220,442</u> |
| NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS | | |
| Board-designated for frozen reserve | 704,000 | 704,000 |
| Undesignated | 1,180,273 | 1,245,698 |
| Total net assets without donor restrictions | <u>1,884,273</u> | <u>1,949,698</u> |
| Total liabilities and net assets | <u>\$ 2,052,936</u> | <u>\$ 2,170,140</u> |

Statement of Activities

National Watermelon Promotion Board

STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES

Years Ended March 31, 2022 and 2021

| | <u>2022</u> | <u>2021</u> |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| REVENUES | | |
| Assessments - domestic | \$ 2,188,424 | \$ 2,228,417 |
| Assessments - import | 1,304,979 | 1,125,355 |
| MAP revenue | 200,892 | 204,334 |
| Interest and other income | <u>18,750</u> | <u>38,495</u> |
| Total revenues | 3,713,045 | 3,596,601 |
| EXPENSES | | |
| Program expenses | 3,187,231 | 3,100,203 |
| General and administrative expenses | <u>591,239</u> | <u>558,631</u> |
| Total expenses | <u>3,778,470</u> | <u>3,658,834</u> |
| Change in net assets without donor restrictions | (65,425) | (62,233) |
| Net assets without donor restrictions, beginning of year | <u>1,949,698</u> | <u>2,011,931</u> |
| Net assets without donor restrictions, end of year | <u>\$ 1,884,273</u> | <u>\$ 1,949,698</u> |

Statement of Cash Flows

National Watermelon Promotion Board

STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS

Years Ended March 31, 2022 and 2021

| | 2022 | 2021 |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES | | |
| Change in net assets without donor restrictions | \$ (65,425) | \$ (62,233) |
| Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets without donor restrictions to net cash provided by (used in) activities: | | |
| Depreciation and amortization | 44,708 | 45,458 |
| Loss on disposal of equipment | - | 464 |
| Cash provided by (used for): | | |
| Assessments receivable | (94,345) | (24,725) |
| MAP receivable | 11,287 | (11,302) |
| Prepaid expenses and other assets | (27,133) | 20,278 |
| Accounts payable and accrued expenses | (57,093) | 67,768 |
| Accrued payroll and related expenses | 14,287 | 2,573 |
| Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities | (173,714) | 38,281 |
| CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES | | |
| Purchase of equipment | (4,446) | - |
| Purchase of certificates of deposit | (704,000) | (495,127) |
| Proceeds from maturity of certificates of deposit | 495,127 | 704,000 |
| Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities | (213,319) | 208,873 |
| CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES | | |
| Payments on capital lease obligation | (8,973) | (8,682) |
| Net cash used in financing activities | (8,973) | (8,682) |
| (Decrease) increase in cash and cash equivalents | (396,006) | 238,472 |
| Cash and equivalents, beginning of year | 1,468,214 | 1,229,742 |
| Cash and equivalents, end of year | \$ 1,072,208 | \$ 1,468,214 |
| SUPPLEMENTAL DISCLOSURE CASH FLOW INFORMATION | | |
| Cash paid for interest | \$ 188 | \$ 480 |

Independent Auditor's Report



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

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American Institute of
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To the Board of Directors
National Watermelon Promotion Board

Report on the Financial Statements

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of National Watermelon Promotion Board (the Board), which comprise the statements of financial position as of March 31, 2022 and 2021, and the related statements of activities, cash flows and functional expenses for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Board as of March 31, 2022 and 2021, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Board and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Board's ability to continue as a going concern for twelve months beyond the financial statement date, including any currently known information that may raise substantial doubt shortly thereafter.

Independent Auditor's Report

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards* will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards*, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Board's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Board's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

Other Reporting Required by Government Auditing Standards

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated July 13, 2022 on our consideration of the Board's internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the Board's internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the Board's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

Moss, Krusick & Associates, LLC

Winter Park, Florida
July 13, 2022



Program Highlights & Successes

2021-2022 FISCAL YEAR

THE FOLLOWING HIGHLIGHTS ARE NOT INCLUSIVE
RESULTS OF ALL PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Communications

Press Outreach

- PR campaign focused on short micro-campaigns focused on timely seasonal trends in a way that kept watermelon relevant and authentic, including:
 - **May - June: Back to Basics** – Encouraged consumers to brush up on the basics of selecting, storing and using watermelon. Activations included Facebook Premiere video, Instagram Guide: Use the Whole Watermelon, The Joy of Growing Grower Video, How to Cut Watermelon blog post roundup, Nutrition Facts Panel 101 and Simple Recipes.
 - Campaign Total:
 - 43,346 reach; 53,605 impressions; 85 link clicks; 23,884 post engagements
 - **June - August: Summer Adventures** - Playing off the themes of a partnership with a major movie film and beyond, focused on overall summery adventures to be found with watermelon at your side. Activations included Facebook Premiere video, Instagram Guide: National Watermelon Day Recipes and Adventures, UGC Stories, “From the Field” grower spotlights, The Joy of Watermelon, Luca movie promotions, “Unforgettable Summer Sweeps” and Adventurous Recipe Inspiration. Note – Results are listed under Consumer Communications partnership below.
 - **September - October: Fit is Fresh** - A holistic look at how watermelon fits into any healthy lifestyle. Activations included Fitness Partner Workouts, Tips from a Registered Dietitian, Fit and Fresh Recipe Inspiration, TikTok partner recipe video
 - Campaign Total:
 - 39,175 reach
 - 63,686 impressions
 - 940 link clicks
 - 7,395 post engagements
 - **November - December: Better Together** - Focused 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. Activations included: Facebook Premiere: Pairings, Pairing and Holiday recipe inspiration, Recipe shares/cross-promotions with produce and commodity organizations
 - **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” went live on NWPB social channels. Activations included “Live” videos from wellness partners and Weekly Wellness “Moments of Pause” social graphics and giveaways
- Monitored consumer media outreach activities allowing us to move beyond regular mentions in the news and earn more robust watermelon coverage.
- Photography and video for recipe and cuts shots for use on watermelon.org, social media and asset library, including:

Communications

- Tag Spring 2021 – New Italian recipes and video (look to “Luca Partnership” for more details) plus other recipe videos were created for existing and popular Watermelon.org recipes, including the Grilled Watermelon Burger, Berry Popsicles, Rind Kimchi and Watermelon Sushi
- Wellcomm, formerly Visual Cuisines – Fall 2021 pickled rind photoshoot featuring watermelon rind pickles six ways theme.
- Dippin’ Sauce, formerly Visual Cuisines – February 2022, created new and exciting assets to help prepare to communicate the Use the Whole Watermelon 2022-2023 campaign message.
- Ten Acre Marketing – In March 2022, executed a wintertime watermelon lifestyle photo and video shoot in snowy North Dakota. Built a wintertime watermelon story to show consumers what watermelon in the winter looks like from creating a holiday grazing board with friends in the kitchen, to enjoying watermelon slices on a snowy afternoon in a hot tub for sweet refreshments. Assets will be shared in late 2022.
- Family Features paid releases in 2021-2022:
 - Summer Round Up Release – “A Truly Memorable Summer Menu”
 - Included Watermelon Berry Frozen Pops
 - 1,1612 placements and 276,341,221 impressions.
 - Total ad equivalency of \$1,569,106
 - 1 Recipe Video Release – “Kid Friendly Summer Snacking”
 - Included Kids Charcuterie Board
 - 1,293 placements and 89,863,296 impressions
 - Total ad equivalency of \$390,156
 - 2 Premium Releases:
 - “Sweet Ideas for Back to School” (Breakfast)
 - Included Watermelon Oat Flour Waffles and Watermelon “Donuts”
 - 1,286 placements - 50 of which are print publications. Of those, 68% are front page placements. 218,249,709 impressions.
 - Total ad equivalency of \$912,998
 - “Create Healthy Habits in the New Year”
 - Included Watermelon and Pistachio Salad and Chia Seed Muffins
 - 1,264 placements and 188,436,062 impressions
 - Total ad equivalency of \$1,134,106
- Produce for Better Health Foundation Beef Up Your Burger with Fruits and Vegetables for National Fruits & Veggies Month - On September 1st, Wendy Reinhart-Kapsak presented a satellite media tour (SMT) that co-partnered the Beef Board and the Watermelon Board, focusing on adding produce to beef burgers but served with a bright sunny side of a watermelon salad. The SMT had 20 national and regional TV show bookings on the day, which in turn were syndicated and shared across other TV and online news media stations, earning nearly 30 million impressions.

Communications

- National market shows included Daily Flash (audience 5.9M) and Jet Set (audience 12.2M) and top 20 market local news shows included Chicago, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Houston, Sacramento and Washington, DC, all airing throughout the month of September.
- Media highlights sizzle reel created for 2021, updated for Spring 2022 (04:51)
- Worked with editor Robin Sussingham at Edible Tampa Bay magazine on watermelon media spread that was picked up in national Edible Magazine print and online
- Worked with editor Ian Bogost on watermelon feature in The Atlantic, stemmed from Luca partnership

Advertising

- YouTube commercial *Watermelon Warrior* – Leveraging LY's commercial, video was posted organically to YouTube in May 2021 with 8,440 views, 670 clicks and 394 interactions.
- YouTube Pre-Roll: Seasonal Ads – *Watermelon Wellness* - four 15-second seasonally-inspired videos, advertising to coincide with Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter promoting life's simple pleasures throughout the different seasons.
 - Spring: Enjoy the Calm - Views: 208,223; Clicks: 557
 - Summer: Enjoy the Fun - Views: 113,805; Clicks: 270
 - Fall: Enjoy the Adventure - Views: 557,111; Clicks: 923
 - Winter: Enjoy the Moments - Views: 123,916; Clicks: 201
 - The pre-roll advertising of the watermelon Luca promotional video (link to YT of video) and the Sweepstakes earned remarkable results: (June 1- July 7)
 - Ad Impressions: 1.102,163
 - YouTube Clicks: 3,384
 - YouTube Click thru Rate: .31%
 - Landing page: 31,542
 - Sessions: 27,729
 - Over 23,000 unique users and average time on page 2:50
- IDEA Health & Fitness' Integrated Marketing Packaging – to promote watermelon's health attributes to IDEA's network made up of personal trainers, group fitness instructors and gym owners. Package included a 600-word e-newsletter article on 9/16/21, dedicated e-blast sent to 10,000 fitness professionals, three social media posts on Facebook (92,500 followers), Twitter (52,200 followers) and Instagram (42,900 followers), Fitness Journal Print Ad in the September issue and inclusion of watermelon materials in welcome bag for 500 attendees.
- Ad in *Edible Tampa* to accompany grower story and editorial spread
- In April 2021, advertised the fresh new content at Watermelon.org's Educator section to 'teacher influentials' through TheMailbox.com (who also owns Learning Magazine). The ads accompany newsletters to their 400,000 teachers and the specialized whole page e-blasts go to 35,000 teachers each month. Additionally The Mailbox posted about the resources on their Facebook page to reach over 200,000 followers (paid to boost for amplification)

Communications

- Streaming Media Ads research report – December 2021. Conducted in order to identify best streaming platform for watermelon promotion, considering messaging, demographic and budget for implementation next fiscal

Consumer Communications

- Disney and Pixar's *Luca* Partnership
 - Landing page at watermelon.org/pixarluca promoting summer adventures and Italian-inspired watermelon recipes with Luca's movie characters.
 - Created new recipes and videos through outside agency Tag, including:
 - Watermelon Pizza all Italia
 - 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
 - The Ultimate Summer Adventures Sweepstakes had 5,096 entries and received 1,532 new opt-ins for our consumer e-newsletter, *What About Watermelon*
 - The grand prize winner was selected and shipped a prize of exclusive Luca movie merchandise plus watermelon swag and an outdoor movie projector and screen, popcorn maker, a portable blender and other goodies; weekly winners were also selected for smaller prize packs and their adventure stories were used as user generated content to promote the movie partnership all summer
 - Partnership renewed through in-home extension through August 30th (when the movie came out on DVD for home ownership) – including updated landing page graphics and call to action
 - Social results - The average engagement rate (e.g. likes, comments, shares) for their other content as compared to the engagement performance of our co-branded social content are highlighted below:
 - Youtube: +1264% top weekly average engagement boost
 - Facebook: +135% top weekly average engagement boost
 - Instagram: +67% top weekly average engagement boost
 - Creative Insight - The most popular LUCA-related post (sweepstakes image)
- Added new webpage on watermelon.org (www.watermelon.org/rind) where consumers can find a hub of watermelon rind information and inspiration that includes everything from videos to recipes, nutrition studies and more. This hub also highlights the Slice blog post titled "Three Ways to Eat Watermelon Rind" which was the #2 visited webpage next to the homepage for all of May 2021 with 2,632 visits and an average time on page of 2:07.
- In partnership with Pollock Communications, NWPB distributed an all-new health digest e-newsletter called *Wellness with Watermelon* to Pollock's network of more than 3,000 registered dietitians. This newsletter included in-depth nutrition

Communications

news and information designed to act as a resource for dietitians whatever their practice area may be. Distributed five times throughout the year and includes watermelon recipes, educational resources, tips for using the whole watermelon and nutrition trends:

- Welcome to the World of Watermelon – July 2021. 37% Open Rate, 3% Click Rate.
- Celebrate with Watermelon All Summer Long – August 2021. 31% Open Rate, 8% Click Rate.
- “Fall” in Love with Watermelon – October 2021. 35% Open Rate, 8% Click Rate.
- Winter Wellness Wonderland – December 2021. 37% Open Rate, 1% Click Rate.
- Nourish and Bloom with Watermelon – March 2022. 41% Open Rate, 3.5% Click Rate.
- Jump with Jill – Children’s Outreach and Education: Music-based nutrition education program Jump with Jill annual program sponsorship
 - Pivot from live tour model to a multi-media digital platform continued to elevate the benefits of watermelon to thousands of students and teachers nationwide.
 - Feedback from participating educators praised the project anecdotally as well as statistically. Data from teachers showed more engagement with follow-up content compared to the live tour.
 - Partnerships provided physical fruit for students to taste foods featured in the 2D program (select schools co-partnered with State Depts only)
 - Pop up appearances proved the importance of concurrent local implementation.
 - Instagram reach increased 2,000% year over year
 - Participating Schools & Sites: 70
 - States Represented: 16
 - Population Reached: 34,472
 - Educator Accounts Created: 660
 - Teacher Engagement: Coaching Email Open Rate 40.26%; Coaching Email Click-to-Open Rate 19.01%
 - Physical Deliverables: 301
 - Media impressions: 638,611

Special Events

- 8th Annual Today’s Dietitian Spring Symposium (TDSS) on May 17, 2021 (Virtual). 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 comp registrations we shared with our watermelon partners, Kim Rose, RD and Chrissy Carroll, RD. Additionally, several eblast mailings throughout the year went to Today’s Dietitian database of 60,000 RDNs, including a e-blast in August alone that received 642

Communications

responses which included opt-in for our monthly *What About Watermelon* e-newsletter.

- The Saguaro Half Marathon – February 2022 in Tucson, AZ (In Person). Showcased the health and hydration benefits of watermelon in addition to supporting the year-round watermelon availability message to teach consumers that watermelon is available all 12 months of the year.
 - Partnered with the Fresh Produce Association of the Americas
 - Sponsored National Watermelon Queen Paige Huntington to hand out fresh watermelon (first import season promotion)
- Appetite for Health Nutrition News Update – September 2021 in Scottsdale, AZ (In Person). Thirty-minute presentation plus time for Q&A to food editors, writers and freelancers about benefits of watermelon. Also included giftbag inclusion of watermelon collateral and advertising.
 - Sponsored Dr. Britt Burton-Freeman to present on “Understanding the Unique Properties of Watermelon in Health” from published research
- 46th Marine Corps Marathon Virtual Event – October 2021 (Virtual). Just a month prior to the return of the highly anticipated in-person marathon weekend it was announced that it would be replaced with virtual-only components for safety and security reasons. NWPB still participated as a spotlight supporter for their virtual run and race-month activities, as runners had the whole month to complete their virtual runs.
 - Watermelon was featured in the Digital Program
 - Queen Paige Huntington sent in videos for the MCM social channels to cheer on the runners as they race their way to 26.2 miles and have watermelon to refresh, refuel and rehydrate at home.

Digital Communications

- Social media platforms Y/Y results for @WatermelonBoard channels:
 - Facebook: 395,387 post engagements and 4.5% increase in Fans. Most engaged content included UGC and simple/minimal recipes.
 - Instagram: 32,854 post engagements and 12% increase in Followers. Most engaged content included UGC, “hacks,” and seasonal/holiday recipes and carvings
 - Pinterest: 325,957 engagements and 17,952 traffic to watermelon.org website; 12% increase in Followers. Most engaged content included Carvings and Disney and Pixar’s Luca content.
 - Twitter: 8,402 tweet engagements and 2.5% increase in Followers. Most engaged content included Ross Chastain, seasonal/holiday recipes and carvings and UGC. *Due to increased amount of trolling with inappropriate content of NWPB account; decision was made to refocus monetary efforts and support into new and existing social platforms.
 - Media Monitoring: Total tracked impressions of watermelon inclusion in stories in traditional and online newspapers, magazines and websites: 7,938,500,087
- Added TikTok channel: Experimenting with repurposing existing video for posting; sharing UGC TikToks outside of platform

Communications

- Watermelon.org website: Editorial calendar for content across all social channels
- Watermelon.org website saw 23% Year over Year increase with 464,183 total website sessions
- *What About Watermelon* consumer e-newsletter distributed 12 issues (2 more than LY) – 18.4% average open rate average and 3.1% click through rate with 11,207 total clicks to content
- LinkedIn gained more than 400 followers
- Facebook Premiere and Instagram IGTV
 - In May 2021, published first Facebook Premiere video themed “Brushing Up on the Basics:”
 - Reached over 41,000 people and received 2,000 engagements with 21,000 video views including over 400 comments, 102 shares and 194 likes. This video was incentivized with prizes to randomly selected people who answered questions asked as part of the pre-recorded video. The video also gave audiences a chance to ask questions to the Watermelon Experts (NWPB staff Stephanie Barlow and Summer Walker) on screen providing real dialogue and real customer service, as questions were answered days after the video premiered.
 - Disney and Pixar’s *Luca*, themed a “Watermelon Movie Watch Party,” demonstrating some of the Italian summer inspired recipes and also promoted the Unforgettable Summer sweepstakes.
 - More than 11,000 video views
 - 22,550 Impressions
 - 12 Shares
 - 10 Comments
 - 104 Reactions
 - In November 2021, Better Together “Surprising Flavor Pairings”
 - Paired with produce and flavors to elevate and amplify watermelon’s versatility in recipes and availability all year round especially fun and playful for the holidays. Demonstrated pairing flavors with watermelon from the Back to Basics flavor pairings guide. The flavors were paired and shared on different cuts of watermelon, from Christmas tree shapes to melon balls and included: Arugula + Balsamic + Parmesan, Honey + Pistachios, Avocado + Salmon + Cilantro, Onion + Lime + Chile, Salt + Agave and finally the classic Feta + Mint + Cucumber. All video production, from cameras, to directing to editing is done in-house by Andrea Smith.
 - Earned more than 2,000 views and 244 comments
- Distributed National Watermelon Day custom graphics and social copy for industry use on August 3.
- Grower Stories – Kyler Bishop, Jordan Carter and Christian Murillo
 - We also used these social stories to update the watermelon story page/hub at the website, which can be viewed at this vanity URL shortcut www.watermelonstory.com

Communications

Industry Outreach and Communications

- Fresh Produce Association of the Americas (Nogales, AZ) in-person meeting September 2021.
- Sponsored Media and Communications Training during Fall Board Meeting including:
 - General Key Messages
 - Safety Key Messages
 - Mock Interview Prep and Q&As
 - Preparing for media interviews: Tips, techniques and strategies for success
- Watermelon Update e-newsletter distributed 11x/year to more than 625 key industry and assessment-paying organizations with a pdf version under on website
 - Average Open Rate: 31%
 - Average Click Through Rate: 6%
- American Heart Association heart checkmark certification for fresh watermelon PLUs: seedless, seeded, mini watermelon
- Alliance for Food and Farming – paid members
- Created custom watermelon collateral to assist board and industry members, including:
 - Easy to Reference Robert's Rules Infographic
 - Communications At-A-Glance Posters
- Trade Press Coverage
 - Social
 - The Packer (34,702) said "consider us influenced" after purchasing a melon baller as a result of seeing the "How to use a melon baller" video on Facebook page on April 7.
 - Watermelon Promotions
 - *Watermelon season is shaping up to be good quality* - The Produce News (6,232). Several staff members quoted, including Executive Director Mark Arney and Senior Director of Communications Stephanie Barlow.
 - *Watermelon promotions focus on useful basics, in-store and digitally* The Packer (34,702). Several staff members quoted, including Executive Director Mark Arney and Senior Director of Communications Stephanie Barlow.
 - *Traditional, value-added, alternative melons all expected to sell* - The Packer (34,702). Mark Arney quoted.
 - *Cold, wet in part of U.S. but still marketable melon volumes* - The Packer (34,702). Mark Arney quoted.
 - Disney and Pixar's Luca Partnership
 - *National Watermelon Promotion Board's Celebration of Disney and Pixar's Luca Makes for Unforgettable Summer* - Perishable News (15,214)
 - *Watermelon and Pixar's Luca make for unforgettable summer* - Produce Blue Book (23,504)

Communications

- *National Watermelon Promotion Board's Celebration of Disney and Pixar's Luca Makes for Unforgettable Summer* - The Packer (34,702)
- *The Joy Of Watermelon Meets The Thrill Of Pixar's 'Luca'* - Southeast Produce Weekly (2,909)
- *National Watermelon Promotion Board Collaborates With Disney and Pixar's "Luca" for Month-Long Celebration* - Laughing Place (69,255)
- The Luca and Watermelon Board collaboration was covered by Supermarket Perimeter (6,641)
- Showbiz Cheat Sheet (5,543,897) wrote about *Luca* and encouraged readers "To kick up [their] Luca-themed menu, [and] check out Disney's promotional partnership with Watermelon.org"
- In August 2021 Senior Director of Communications Stephanie Barlow visited with food and agriculture marketing agency and longtime partner Curious Plot (formerly FLM Harvest).
- Joined newly formed International Fresh Produce Association; Stephanie Barlow serving on the inaugural Global Produce & Floral Show Committee

Influencers and Experts

Worked with the following influencers and content creators specializing in diet and nutrition, food and recipes, fitness, sports, lifestyle and family:

- Bianca Dottin - Longtime NWPB partner and lifestyle influencer Bianca Dottin 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. More than 5,000 total impressions and 336 engagements with 4 post 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.
- Ana Quincoces – 6 Instagram posts and 9 IG Stories from October 2020 – March 2021. Total reach is 146,626, 157,845 engagements and 83,193 views. Recipes featured included:
 - Watermelon, Feta & Avocado Sandwich
 - Watermelon Coquito
 - Watermelon Poke Plantain Cups
 - Watermelon Pizza
 - Watermelon Chicken Drumsticks
 - Watermelon Cheesecakes
- Kim Rose – 15 Instagram posts from June 2021 to December 2021 totaling 66,833 reach and 2,205 engagements. Recipes included several watermelon-based, RD-approved meals including items such as Breakfast banana and watermelon split, watermelon and strawberry galette and watermelon "fries".

Communications

- Additionally, responded to press inquiries about the popularity of an all-watermelon three day “detox diet” with research-based, factual information. Story was written by Yahoo! News and picked up by other outlets including Shape Magazine online and Entertainment Weekly News
- Zach Coen – Partnered September 2021 – November 2021. 5 TikToks ranging from Hydration to how to create a Halloween-themed watermelon Jack O'Melon earned more than 500,00 plays, 37,522 likes, 996 comments, 2,015 shares and 3,402 hours of play time.
- Jennifer Fisher – July 2021 to March 2022 partnership included 57 posts with 72,112 impressions and 405 engagements. Each activation included blog post, IG carousel of posts and/or video, Pins on Pinterest, IG stories, Facebook and Twitter. Posts included:
 - Leftover ideas how to use the whole big summer watermelon
 - Fit is Fresh Workout
 - Fit if Fresh: Fueling Fitness with watermelon
 - Perfect Holiday Party Pairings with watermelon
 - Simple Pleasures – watermelon and happiness
- Chrissy Carroll – 14 posts including blogs, social and NWPB's first foray into TikTok. 41,517 impressions. 2,325 engagements. Recipes including Hot Watermelon Lemonade, Air-Fried Bacon-Wrapped Watermelon and a Watermelon Protein Shake were created and are housed on both Chrissy Carroll's blog (snackinsneakers.com) and watermelon.org. Additionally, Chrissy wrote an article for IDEA World e-newsletter promoting watermelon health benefits and a blog post for *The Slice* at watermelon.org
- Ross Chastain – 66 total posts tagging @watermelonboard on social channels including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter with 77,862 engagements and 1,489,334 impressions. Examples of activations included posts such as Ross with a watermelon queen at a raceway, growers in watermelon fields, Ross eating a slice of watermelon and watermelons in a school bus in a field.
- Amy Gorin - Partnered with media RD, Amy Gorin, on a summer seasonal Instagram giveaway promotion launched on July 22. With several other brands, Amy promoted the giveaway through her influential channels with a goal to increase awareness and also to receive traffic and followers on our own channel, @WatermelonBoard
- Sarah Haas - In honor of National Watermelon Month, NWPB partnered with Chef and Dietitian Sarah Haas who appeared on Chicago's Very Own WGN 9 to share recipes to make the most of the occasion. Haas demonstrated recipes for a Watermelon Salsa, a Watermelon Vinaigrette and Watermelon Agua Fresca and discussed how to choose a watermelon, how to use the rind and the nutrition benefits of watermelon.
- Lori Taylor, The Produce Moms
 - Created an IGTV video featuring one of the new Italian Summer recipes. The promotional video featured animated characters of *Luca* eating watermelon as they drive across the screen on a Vespa.
 - E-newsletter campaign (<https://bit.ly/watermelonislove>) that went out to their consumer network of more than 5,500. Themed “Watermelon is

Communications

- Love,” the e-blast shared watermelon.org and The Produce Moms’ own recipes of all things sweet including cocktails, mocktails and dessert boards. It also shared fun kid-friendly watermelon carvings
 - Created and posted Halloween Mummy Carving on Instagram, Facebook Premiere and IG TTV
 - Appeared on Indy Style morning show segment with 1-2-3 ingredient recipes highlighting watermelon – July 2021
 - Blog post with featuring a new recipe – Watermelon Elote Salad
 - Watermelon newsletter/email inclusion – 6/year
- Healthy Family Project – Fall 2021/Winter 2022 partnership included recipe creation blog post and photography (Halloween- -theme charcuterie snack Board), 1 regular social post, 2 Instagram Video Reels, which was shared and promoted across all platforms, Instagram sweepstakes, also shared across all platforms; and a dedicated consumer e-newsletter featuring HFP created content/giveaway plus NWPB content, newsletter inclusion and e-book inclusion (charcuterie-themed).
 - Total program results include 978,699 impressions, 3,921 views and 13,558 engagements
- Reilly Meehan – New for 2021, NWPB partnered with content creator Chef Reilly Meehan, known for his talent for 1-minute recipe videos made in the ultra-current style for Instagram Reels and TikTok. Reilly made 12 total recipe videos with one debuting each month on Watermelon Board channels @WatermelonBoard.
- Craving California – Created and posted two watermelon recipes – Watermelon and Jicama Salad in support of *Fit is Fresh* campaign and Watermelon and Rose in support of *Better Together* campaign. Posted IG Reels, Stories and TikTok.
- Produce for Better Health - A winter 2021 partnership with the Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH) helped to raise awareness and amplification to the watermelon year-round availability key message. In early December, the PBH channels will hosted and posted an Expert Advice column on year-round watermelon messaging, a festive holiday watermelon recipe suggestion in the Blackberry Martini, and an e-newsletter ad. The PBH digital ecosystem elevates fruit and vegetable messaging for Millennial and Gen Z consumers, with these digital stats:
 - 365K monthly website visitors
 - 1.1M social media fans and followers
 - 57K consumer and influencer e-newsletter subscribers
- Partnered with the following creator/influencers as part of our *Simple Pleasures* campaign:
 - Kanoa Greene @kanoagreene – In January 2022, created a joyful movement dance workout
 - Facebook: 503 views; Instagram: 446 views; YouTube: 60 views
 - Rhea Singh @illustrationsandviews – In February 2022, created and shared a paint-along escape of a beach scene with a watermelon slice. 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.

Communications

- Facebook: 503 views; Instagram: 1,260 views; YouTube: 55 views
 - Sara Auster @saraaustersound – In March 2022, created a guided meditation sound bath post.
 - Facebook: 2,900 views; Instagram: 446 views; YouTube: 60 views
- Launched Partner Friend Application for Influencers on watermelon.org - September 2021 with the goal of streamlining potential influencer partners and having a call to action for those who reach out on various channels
- Worked with third party vendor Kitchen Play to conducted Digital and Influencer Online Strategic Analysis Research - June 2021

Retail Operations & International Marketing

Tradeshow and Conference Participation

Most regional produce shows returned to in-person in 2021 and allowed for quality “face time” time with retailers, wholesalers, dieticians, and other industry professionals in attendance.

Retail Shows as Exhibitors:

- Viva Fresh Expo (Mar)
- Southeast Produce Council (Apr)
- West Coast Produce Expo (May)
- New England Produce Show (Sept)
- New York Produce Show (Dec)
- *Attending/Networking Opportunities:*
 - PMA Fresh Summit (Oct) – **Cancelled**

Retail Advertising & Educational Pieces

- Retail kit available in physical and digital (on website) formats on the retailers section of watermelon.org.
 - Translated to Spanish and Canadian French – also available watermelon.org/retailers
- Ongoing collateral material development
 - Reprint of point-of-sale materials
 - Logo'd giveaway items for networking events
 - QR code postcards that directly link to point-of-sale materials for ordering ease and efficiency at tradeshow and for retailers
- Advertised and provided editorial content in various trade media to keep watermelon top of mind year-round and promoted retail merchandising contest
 - Ads and content included digital e-newsletters and banner ads

Retail Promotions & Marketing

- Continued Retail Merchandising Contest that could include displays but also encouraged mixed marketing tactics. Judging criteria included overall merchandising and creativity, use of print, online, in-store and social media, etc. Winners to be announced in Watermelon Update.
 - Retail display contest received approximately 160 entries from domestic and Canadian retailers as well as commissaries
 - Prizing format: Grand prize, 2nd, 3rd, 4th places awarded and 4 honorable mentions
 - Incentives for the first 25 entries
 - Quote from Grand Prize Winner: “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.”
- Supported approximately 37 domestic watermelon queen promotions that including in-store retail and commissary appearances, festivals, foot race/athletic events, school promotions and farmer's market demos

Retail Operations & International Marketing

Retail Promotions & Marketing cont'd.

- Regional account managers (2 US, 1 Canada) fulfilled approximately 60 promotional agreements that included but were not limited to:
 - Recipe videos and other digital promotions posted on various social media platforms
 - Retail Dietitian promotional programs
 - Elevated exposure in circular ads
 - Support during retailers' critical promotional periods
 - Joint partnerships with other brands and commodities
 - Internal retailer contests
 - Merchandising materials and educational support, per individual retailer request
- Launched a Fall Ibotta|Shopping App campaign
 - 52,178 offers redeemed
 - 83% redemptions were millennials and gen-x
 - Most were new redeemers
 - Over 15 million brand impressions
 - Joust Results
 - Watermelon Limeade (67.9%)
 - Greek Salad (17.9%)
 - Grilled Watermelon (9.6%)
 - Rind Pickles (4.5%)
- DotDash (Formerly Fexy Media) Recipe Round-Up campaign
 - NWPB partnered with DotDash for five weeks featuring shoppable watermelon recipes on the Spruce Eats website
 - By utilizing a mix of both custom and editorial content, NWPB received heightened exposure throughout the two-month campaign duration
 - There were nearly 42k pageviews across both the custom and editorial content that featured NWPB banners
 - The top recipe (from clicks within the story and overall pageviews) was the Watermelon Smoothie editorial recipe
 - The performance of both the promotion of the custom story and engagement with the Relish (shopping) technology shows that readers were both interested and inspired by the content
 - The on and off-site promotion drove over 5,400 readers to the story
 - There was an above bar rate of readers adding the recipes to their shopping lists, along with a high level of intent to purchase the recipe ingredients
 - Readers wanted more watermelon inspiration!
 - There were over 930 clicks to watermelon.org

Retail Operations & International Marketing

International Marketing

Market Access Program funding was facilitated directly through Foreign Agricultural Service and totaled \$210,040

- Canada – Canadian PR efforts for 2021 were to continue to promote the availability, versatility and nutrition benefits of US watermelon so Canadians will seek watermelon; Some strategies included:
 - Using partners (influencers and digital media) to create content and reach the target audience
 - Using new survey insights that directly dictated an updated creative approach for each barrier of purchase
 - Tactical Overview
 - *Influencer Partnership:* NWPB's contracted agency engaged influencers to create customized content in formats that work best for their expertise and communication style that was shared directly with their online communities
 - *Results:*
 - Total impressions: 5.2 million
 - Total engagements: 5.6K
 - *Social Media Program:* Agency created various content pieces featuring timely settings incorporating watermelon to showcase seasonal fun and promoted to relevant Canadian audiences
 - *Results:*
 - Total impressions: 4.3 million
 - Total engagements: 2.1 million
 - *Online Media Partnerships:* Working in collaboration with influential news sites, the agency co-created an editorial-style advertorial piece and a watermelon recipe hub. Content was featured on the media partners' sites and shared via social channels to increase reach and engagement
 - *Results:*
 - Total impressions: 961K
 - Total link clicks: 2.5K
 - *Recipe Contest:* Agency hosted a recipe contest asking participants to showcase their seasonal watermelon recipes for a chance to win a backyard BBQ and watermelon swag
 - *Results:*
 - Total impressions: 1.2 million
 - Total engagements: 115K
 - Winning Recipe: Watermelon Kakigori
 - Highlights:
 - Clear overarching campaign concept allowed for delivery of a consistent social media campaign scale through all program elements
 - Social video content and the recipe contest resulted in high campaign engagement
 - Partnership with reputable media source allowed for strong consumer influence and recipe trial

Retail Operations & International Marketing

International Marketing cont'd.

- Japan – The main goal in this market is to create sustainable growth of US watermelon. The strategy to do this in the Japanese market is when both Japanese consumers and trade see US watermelon in a category by itself and not as an alternative to domestic watermelon; Retail, foodservice and digital media were the main strategies adopted in this market
 - Tactical Overview
 - **Website:** NWPB's Japanese language website underwent a complete re-design to update the outdated look and feel and to align more with the U.S. website to highlight branding uniformity on a global scale.
 - Simplified to make it more navigable and removed old and irrelevant information for Japanese consumers.
 - Consolidated much of the information into three sections: the homepage, recipes page, and trade information page.
 - **Retail:** Two separate retail promotional activities were implemented for 8 days in late September, 2021 to promote the U.S. watermelon in Japan:
 - Futaba Fruit Shop (1 location) in Tokyo and Farm Do produce markets (5 locations) in Tokyo and Kanagawa
 - The Futaba Fruit Shop had never sold US watermelon prior to the promotion
 - **Results:** Over 315K JPY in sales of whole, fresh cut and smoothies sold
 - **Foodservice:** Four foodservice establishments conducted US watermelon promotions for 9 days in late September 2021 with each creating unique items to showcase the quality, taste and versatility of US watermelon.
 - Seedless watermelon is of particular interest in the Japanese foodservice market
 - Byrd's Pizza & Ribs – watermelon juice and lunch special grilled watermelon
 - Bubble Over – watermelon juice and steak and eggs with grilled watermelon
 - FLOR – watermelon gelato
 - Troubadour – watermelon smoothie
 - **Results:** Over 670K JPY in sales of menu items; Menu items were also promoted on social media
 - **Social Media:** Facebook and Instagram posts were created on the Japanese US watermelon Instagram account
 - Recipe and consumer engagement content in the month of September 2021 including posts of the retail and foodservice promotions conducted
 - **Results:** Total reach of 225K across all platforms within that time period

Foodservice

Foodservice Committee

The Foodservice Committee is responsible for developing and implementing an effective foodservice marketing campaign. Built on a foundation of research, this includes outreach to culinary, marketing, purchasing and nutrition decision-makers with foodservice organizations through foodservice media, industry events, promotions, menu ideation sessions, culinary schools and organizations with the ultimate goal of getting more watermelon on foodservice menus, year-round.

Foodservice Program Wins 2021 *Produce Business* Marketing Excellence Award

Working with Watermelon, was recognized by *Produce Business* for a Marketing Excellence Award. This program was two-fold; first a home economist worked to better define watermelon yield for different formats (cubes, wedge, juice, etc.) and this information was turned into an easy to use guide. Next, we worked with Chef's Roll to create a video series on how to process watermelon to obtain those formats as well as innovative recipes highlighting the different formats.

Foodservice Media

Goal is to reach media to educate and inspire with watermelon messages and watermelon operator success stories.

Public Relations/Content Creation

- Distribute press releases throughout the year, conduct follow-up and targeted pitching as needed related to publications' editorial calendars, potential media product deliveries (possibly co-sponsored).
 - 2021 was a strong recovery year for watermelon on the menu and because of that there was good coverage in foodservice media
 - Examples of coverage:
 - School Nutrition Association May 2021: Butter Up to Nuts & Seeds (Circulation: 40,000)
 - RH Special Report June 2021: The Classic Mexican Beverage, Aqua Fresca (Circulation: 50,000)
 - Foodservice Director Barbeque and Smoking Recipe Report July 2021: Korean BBQ Watermelon Steak and Cucumber Salad (Circulation: 32,000)
 - Nation's Restaurant News Beverage Tracker August 2021: A Summer of Watermelon (Circulation: 92,000)
 - Restaurant Business On the Menu Recipe of the Week September 2021: Zucchini Cakes with Tzatziki-Watermelon Salsa (Circulation: 65,000)
 - Flavor & the Menu Magazine November/December 2021: Charred Watermelon Salad (Circulation: 40,000)
 - Catersource, December 2021: Holiday Appetizers (Circulation: 22,000)
- International Foodservice Editorial Council (IFEC) - IFEC brings editors and PR/marketing communications professionals together to exchange ideas, share resources and confer on editorial content for foodservice-engaged readers.
 - Sponsored IFEC's May Lunch and Learn Board

Foodservice

- Board president, Jordan Carter, took attendees on a virtual watermelon field tour to see how watermelon is being cultivated.
- Then the group “Zoomed” to Miami where Tony Pererya, of Spirits in Motion, showed the group how to cool off with watermelon:
 - Watermelon Blueberry Basil Lemonade
 - Spicy Watermelon Fizz
- Of the 22 editor targets, 20 were in attendance.
- Attended and sponsored IFEC’s Annual Conference that took place in Annapolis, Maryland, October, 2021.
 - During Chef Showcase the Board featured a compressed watermelon dish with mint, blueberries, toasted marcona almond crumble, feta, and honey presented by Matt Herron, Director & Melissa Hawkins, Instructor Specialist of the Hotel, Culinary Arts and Tourism Institute.
 - During lunch on the second day, watermelon was featured in a rind slaw and watermelon slushie – both regionally significant recipes for Maryland cuisine.
 - Editor meetings pitched watermelon for editorial calendars in 2022 with all of the Board’s media targets (more than 20 publications).
 - NWPB cosponsored an editor reception with California Avocados Commission, National Mango Board, Idaho Potato Commission and Barilla.
 - Megan McKenna, senior director of marketing and foodservice, serves on the IFEC Board as secretary to better keep in touch with editors throughout the year and was named the International Foodservice Editorial Conference’s (IFEC) 2021 Betty Bastion Outstanding Service Award winner.
- Invest in a photo shoot to shoot 3-5 menu items to use with media and use in future collateral and PR outreach as well as post on the website.
 - Not needed due to assets created in 2020 and the images received as a part of the StarChefs Discovery Week (see below).

Media Partnerships: Culinary Institute of America (CIA) Digital Media Partnership

- CIA continues to host and promote watermelon recipes as a part of this ongoing partnership
 - The program received 116,012 total video views, which was an increase of 34% compared to FY 2020/2021
 - 55 newsletter placements reached 1.1 million subscribers
 - Additional promotion through social media
- NWPB pitches these recipes to foodservice media and often they are picked up due to the CIA’s notoriety.
- Menus of Change Webcast Sponsorship: June 22-24
 - Watermelon videos were played 40 times
 - 20,634 webcast views
 - 2 eblasts with logo sent to approximately 700 attendees
 - Logo recognition on conference webcast webpage

Foodservice

Paid Media

- Watermelon doesn't traditionally garner as much coverage in the fall and winter so the Board invests in paid media to remind foodservice decision makers that watermelon is a year-round solution for their menus. Paid media ran from December to March in multiple publications' websites, e-newsletters and social media with more than a million impressions highlighting watermelon's opportunity with global flavor, beverages, techniques such as grilled, nutrition, versatility and other key messages.

Digital Outreach: The Foodservice section of watermelon.org received a facelift in Q1 2022 to include content created in 2020 and 2021 and make it accessible to those visiting the site.

Foodservice Industry Events

This part of the program includes efforts to reach decision makers through industry organizations and events to inspire with watermelon trends, usage ideas and more. Recipes and product samples will include fresh, fresh-cut and juice, as appropriate. Events are geared to all audiences in foodservice to help spread the watermelon message to various titles in commercial and noncommercial operators.

*Please note: most of these events include company/logo recognition onsite, online, etc.

Noncommercial Outreach

K-12 Foodservice: Healthy School Recipes (HSR, <https://healthyschoolrecipes.com>) is an essential, one-stop resource for school nutrition professionals who plan menus or prepare food for child nutrition programs. This community provides an extensive database of recipes developed to meet the unique needs of school nutrition programs.

- HSR took three existing watermelon recipes, edited them to meet K-12 foodservice requirements, and then promoted them through their social channels:
 - Roasted Rind Parmesan
 - Tajin Fruit Salad
 - Sweet Watermelon Pizza
- HSR hosted a webinar accredited by the School Nutrition Association and the Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics to educate about watermelon and demonstrate the recipes: *Fresh Fruit Concepts to Maximize Flavor & Minimize Waste*
 - The webinar was in February because this is when schools typically plan their menus and start purchasing for the following year.
 - The webinar highlighted:
 - Reducing waste by demonstrating the Rind Parmesan
 - Watermelon's versatility with the Tajin Fruit Salad (the most popular recipe with the audience!)
 - Availability of produce including watermelon, with the Sweet Watermelon Pizza
 - Other topics including cutting and yield.
 - The webinar had national reach with 345 registered, 168 attending and more views since it was posted to their website.

Foodservice

- Attendees gave it a 4+ out of 5 for being applicable to their jobs, increasing their knowledge, holding their attention and opportunities to participate.

National Association of College & University Food Services (NACUFS)

- Sponsored 2021 Fall Conference Learning Series attended by 300 operators

Worlds of Flavor: Now in its 24th year the theme was Cities of the Americas: Landscapes of Flavor, *Culinary Disruption and Renewal from the United States and Canada to Latin America*.

- Sponsored the event in November with more than 175 operators in attendance.
- Since watermelon is popular across the Americas, it was mentioned multiple times during the presentations.
- Board served:
 - Watermelon Salad with Poblanos and Pickled Rind
 - Watermelon Aqua Fresca

American Culinary Federation (ACF) National Convention: ACF is the largest professional chefs' organization in North America, made up of more than 14,000 members.

- The Board sponsored a Garde Manger (Carving) Workshop in August during the National Convention:
 - Hands-on workshop was open to 20 participants on a first-come-first-serve basis.
 - Interest was overwhelming – more than 70 requested to attend.
 - Many attended the session just to learn more even though there wasn't room in the hands-on area.
 - The instructor Patrick O'Brien, the Fruit Carving Ninja, did a great job educating and inspiring the attendees.

Distributor Outreach: Produce Marketing Association (PMA) Foodservice Show is the largest show in the country connecting produce and foodservice.

- Sponsored the event in July with more than 1,300 industry members in attendance
- The Board sponsored the closing reception at the Barns:
 - Information table featured branding, collateral and giveaways
 - Served a Watermelon Sumac Salad highlighting watermelon in a savory, global-flavored application using the flesh and pickled rind

Commercial Outreach

The Flavor Experience: This event is an extension of Flavor & the Menu Magazine. Each year, Flavor fills the pipeline with great operator contacts.

- Sponsored the event in September with more than 100 operator attendees.

Foodservice

- The Board showcased three trend-forward recipes and photography was shot onsite for future use:
 - Watermelon Mezcal Spritz: low abv, smokey, globally inspired cocktail
 - Watermelon & Chicken Roti Taco: global mashup handheld
 - Watermelon Breakfast Bowl: highlighted watermelon's health halo
- Watermelon was also used in other places during the conference:
 - To kick-off the conference a panel of operators tasted the watermelon and mustard TikTok trend.
 - Other sponsors used watermelon in their dishes for a total of eight menu items.
 - Watermelon was also highlighted in a breakout session.

Retail Foodservice Innovation Summit (virtual) hosted by Progressive Grocer (PG) (replaced the Retail Foodservice Forum which was cancelled)

- Sponsored virtual event in October with 50 high-level attendees.
- The sponsorship included:
 - Inclusion on a 30-minute panel on innovations in fresh and practical strategies for foodservice sales growth featuring Chef Jason Hernandez of Blade and Tine Culinary Consulting representing the Board.
 - 30-second promotion video ran once during the content sessions.
 - Inclusion in the Top Women in Grocery Gift Box that was sent to the homes of 437 winners.
 - 2 placements in PG's monthly retail foodservice newsletter that reaches over 45,000.

Very Important Beverage Executives (VIBE) Conference: Reaches 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.

- Sponsored September with more than 150 attendees from 90 operators.
- Board was there as an ingredient sponsor and featured two drinks:
 - Fancy That: no-abv cocktail featuring a watermelon shrub
 - Watermelon Mezcal Spritz: traditional cocktail with great garnishes including a rice paper crisp tossed in watermelon essence

Marketing & Innovation Leadership Exchange (MILE), a new event reaching foodservice marketing professionals (took place in 2021 due to cancellation in 2020):

- Highlighted watermelon as a part of the content including consumer and foodservice research to help the audience understand why to use watermelon as well as interesting product information to reach consumers through foodservice.
- Menu items highlighted use across the menu and highlighted trends:
 - Spicy Watermelon Fizz: fresh watermelon beverages are growing on menus and this one highlighted global flavors with some heat
 - Watermelon Bruschetta: a tried and true watermelon menu item operators can add their own spin on
 - Watermelon Poke: an opportunity to use more watermelon; this poke is half watermelon and half tuna

Foodservice

- Burmese Watermelon Salad: a great global savory menu opportunity
- Fall Watermelon Harvest Salad: highlighted watermelon's availability year-round and adaptability to fall flavors

Foodservice Support & Promotions

Once decision makers are influenced through media or during events, the Board offers support to purchasing, culinary, marketing, nutrition, etc.

- Engage chains who do not use watermelon or help those who do to expand watermelon menu items through education and ideation sessions, on and off-site.
 - Even when stretched thin, operators recognize the importance of new and exciting menu items and watermelon's consumer appeal.
 - Board reviewed menu and pantry lists to develop menu concepts that fit the brand without adding many new SKUs.
 - For chains with small culinary teams, the Board helped narrow down the concepts and demonstrate the selections in one of their restaurants or test kitchens to help them understand how to execute the recipes.
 - This is not limited to food menus but also includes beverage ideation.
 - Supporting Grill Concepts in June 2021 led to a Summer of Watermelon promotion with more than 10 new menu items across the two banners.
- Promotions support Limited Time Opportunities (LTO) with funds to move more of the menu item and get watermelon messages in front of consumers.
- 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 also tested 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.
 - Nektar Juice Bar (154 locations) promotion ran from June to September featuring Watermelon Berry Smoothie and Watermelon Cooler Juice. Nektar's co-founder hosted an Instagram Live to interview Board chef consultant, Chef Jason Hernandez, to help promote watermelon and their menu items.

Foodservice

- 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.
- Watermelon Discovery Week Partnership with StarChefs: StarChefs serves as a community, resource and platform for restaurant professionals and offers a backstage pass for food-savvy consumers.
 - Influential restaurants in eight markets across the U.S., showcasing watermelon on their menu from July 14-28
 - This custom on-premise promotion created long-lasting relationships with chef partners and developed original recipes and photos for future marketing use.
 - Watermelon Discovery Week included social and web amplification through StarChefs and assets for each restaurant to encourage their customers to post on social media to win a gift card to the restaurant.
 - There were nearly 1,500 watermelon dishes sold as a part of the promotion with six of the eight restaurants planning to keep the menu item on their menu throughout the summer.
 - The StarChefs social reach totaled more than 100,000 impressions not including each restaurants' own social engagement.
 - These menu items will be used with foodservice media to inspire chefs in the future.
 - The watermelon menu items were great examples showcasing the versatility of watermelon:
 - Tigertail + Mary (Miami): Grilled Watermelon with Thai Chile, Lime, Crispy Garlic, Pickled Watermelon Rind, Sesame Oil, Basil, Cilantro, and Sea Salt
 - Backstreet Cafe (Houston): Watermelon & Dragonfruit with Blackberries, Texas Honey, Watercress, Mint, Lemon, and Olive Oil
 - Rich Table (San Francisco): Bucatini with Pork Belly, Watermelon, and Green Coriander
 - Woods Hill Pier 4 (Boston): Fried Clams with Watermelon, Greek Yogurt, Honey, Habanero Sriracha, Lime, Shaved Sweet Peppers, and Mint
 - Mercantile Dining & Provisions (Denver): Grilled Watermelon with Prosciutto, Nam Pla, Grated Cashew and Herbs
 - Haymayer (Seattle): Watermelon Salad with Arugula, Feta, Greek Yogurt, Shallots, Lemon, Coriander, Chives, and Sea Salt
 - Redheaded Stranger (Nashville): Charred Watermelon Salad, Ancho Chile, Lime, Whipped Feta, Celery, Black Sesame Seeds, Pickled Watermelon Rind, Sea Salt

Foodservice

- Albi (Washington D.C.): Watermelon Fattoush, Fried Pita, Harissa, Smoked Feta, Whipped Labneh, Persian Cucumber, Mint, Lime

Foodservice Ongoing Opportunities

Ongoing Opportunities allow staff to respond to program needs such as design and printing of new collateral, recipe development and modification for events and media, etc. If funds exist, new initiatives can be explored with these funds as well. Specifically funds were used to develop new food and beverage recipes showcasing trends as well as expand our reach promoting the Culinary Curriculum (see below).

Culinary Education

Engage with culinary professors and students as well as chefs looking for ongoing education opportunities about watermelon.

- Continue to promote the American Culinary Federation (ACF) accredited, Watermelon Culinary Curriculum
 - Curriculum is approved for five ongoing certification credits with ACF for current chefs and it is promoted for use in culinary classrooms at the high school and college level.
 - In the 5 years since the launch of the Watermelon Culinary Curriculum, it has been submitted for ACF credit by current chefs more than 1,000 times, nearly 240 times in this FY.
 - These numbers do not account for the numerous times the curriculum has been used by culinary educators in their classrooms across the country.
 - 99% said the curriculum met or exceeded their expectations.
 - Nine digital ads executed with ACF throughout the FY
 - Partnered with Center for the Advancement of Foodservice Educators (CAFÉ) to reach their audience through their website, e-newsletters, etc. reaching more than 3,000 educators.
- Sponsored Coffee with CAFE
 - 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:
 - 20-minute session highlighted the Board's Watermelon Culinary Curriculum available 24/7 at watermelon.org.
 - The presentation highlighted video assets that can be used with the curriculum including cultivation, cutting and yield, menu solutions and more.
 - Nearly 40 foodservice professionals in attendance but the webinar is posted for viewing and shared with CAFE's membership of approximately 3,000.

Research

The National Watermelon Promotion Board's mission is to increase consumer demand for watermelon through promotion, research and education programs. The Research Committee is responsible for developing and implementing research to help the promotion and education programs, health and nutrition research, and other topics supporting the promotion of watermelon.

Consumer Research – Aimpoint Research

Each year the NWPB measures consumers' attitudes and usage of watermelon and compares it to year-over-year results. The research delves into topics such as purchase behavior, quality, and health and nutrition. Consumer research helps to focus consumer outreach and findings are used to educate retail and foodservice contacts to understand consumers' awareness of watermelon. For summer 2021 there were some new questions added to the survey to expand upon existing questions and takeaways. The survey was executed in August 2021 and completed by 1,127 consumers. The full report is posted on watermelon.org, under Consumer Research in the Industry section.

Survey key findings from the survey are as follows:

- Watermelon outperforms other melons (cantaloupe and honeydew) on purchase, taste, value, and healthiness. However, consumers like the taste more and purchase apples, bananas, grapes, and strawberries more frequently than watermelon.
- Liking the taste is always a key driver of foods purchased and taste ratings for watermelon are trending down.
 - Taste is the most common reason why consumers purchase watermelon.
 - Not liking the taste is also one of the most common reasons why consumers do not purchase watermelon.
 - Taste is the most commonly reported quality issue with watermelon.
- Most respondents believe that watermelon is priced where it should be with only 17% saying that watermelon is overpriced or too expensive compared to other fruits.
 - When compared to other fruits on value, watermelon is tied for 5th behind, oranges, bananas, strawberries, and blueberries.
- Watermelon consumption is being driven down by being too big/inconvenient, messy and the perceived waste.
- 61% of consumers primarily purchase their watermelon in a grocery store.
 - Consumers desire additional information displayed with watermelon in retail stores.
 - While most consumers who purchase say that they know how to pick a good watermelon, most consumers would still like information on how to pick a good one on a display in stores.
 - Consumers are also interested in health benefits, but there has also been a slight uptick in consumers' interest in recipe ideas, a possible trend to follow in the future.
- We see a clear age segmentation in several areas.
 - Younger age groups are less likely to like the taste of watermelon (and fruit in general).
 - Younger ages are more likely to consume watermelon in a recipe while older ages are more likely to consume watermelon plain.

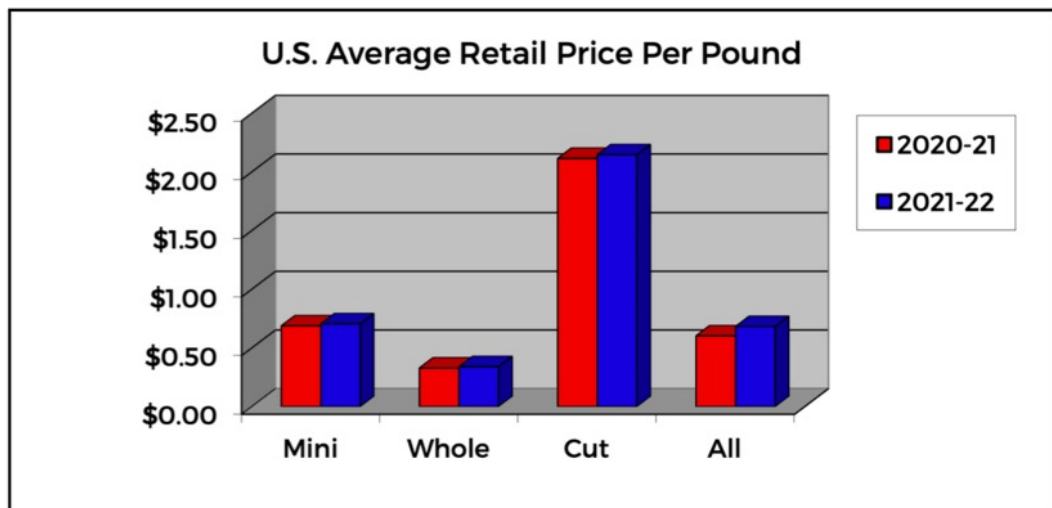
Research

- Among those aged 18-44 there is a disconnect between what they perceive about watermelon health benefits, specifically hydration, and what would encourage a future purchase.
- Younger respondents are more likely to experience external quality issues while older respondents are more likely to encounter internal appearance issues.

Retail Scan Data – IRI, Inc.

The NWPB works with IRI to provide a snapshot of the retail scene using retail scanner data. IRI receives produce scan data directly from 76% of retailers in food, mass and club channels then applies projection methodology to estimate 100% coverage. The report includes regional and market-level data for whole, mini and cut watermelon. These markets represent over 208 million people in over 78 million households. The Board publishes scan data reports compiled by a third-party vendor when the data is updated, every 4-6 weeks. There is an historical base that highlights trends in the retail grocery environment by region, types and formats. Data below is for year ending April 17, 2022 versus previous year.

| Retail Sales in Pounds | | | | |
|------------------------|---------------|---------------|----------|---------------------|
| Category | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | % Change | 2021-22 Sales Share |
| Mini | 279,452,499 | 292,166,453 | 4.5% | 9.1% |
| Whole | 2,572,930,553 | 2,360,978,243 | -8.2% | 73.8% |
| Cut | 450,607,446 | 548,016,528 | 21.6% | 17.1% |
| Total | 3,302,990,498 | 3,201,161,223 | -3.1% | 100.0% |

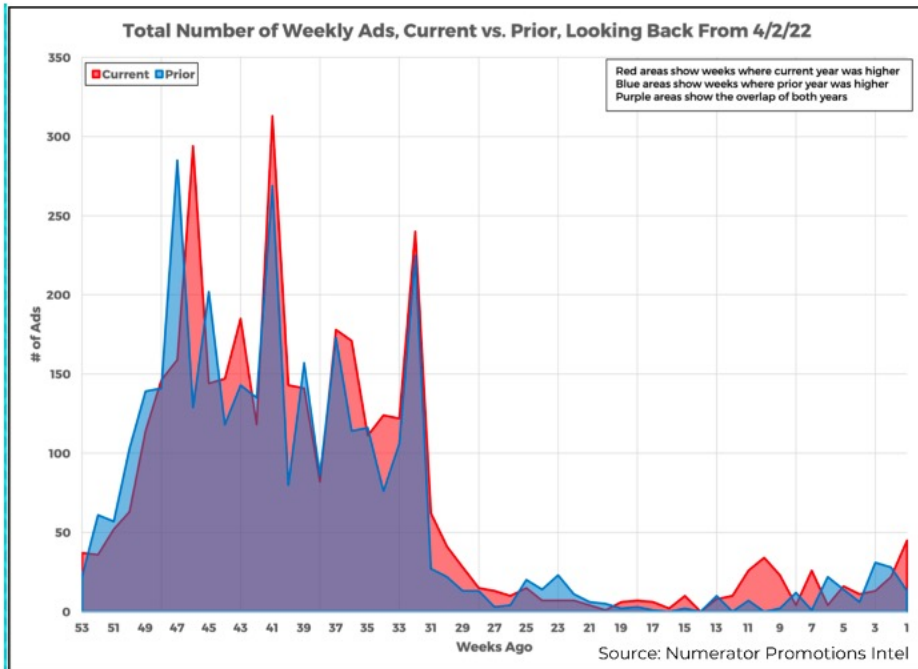


Retail Ad Tracking – Numerator

NWPB works with Numerator Promotions Intel for Retail Ad Tracking. Numerator's database is a great tool that allows us to go deeper into the retail space. It uses an ad-tracking system that ensures real-time analysis of what the largest chains are promoting. The data goes into a

Research

database that can run reports and queries and includes images of the ads. Each week, NWPB updates the Retail Ad Tracking Report that utilizes this data to compare ad activity over the past 52 weeks to the year prior calculating price per each and pound for mini and whole watermelon. Ad volume for both periods, as well as, price per each is calculated for all markets covered using an easy-to-grasp map. Further analysis changes the timeframe to the past four weeks in order to gauge how more recent periods compare. Below data is from year ending April 2, 2021 versus previous year.



| Number of Ads & Dollar per Each for Current & Prior 52 Week Periods | | | | |
|---|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| | Mini | | Whole | |
| Term | Number of Ads | \$ per Each | Number of Ads | \$ per Each |
| Current | 1,042 | \$ 2.95 | 2,221 | \$ 4.28 |
| Prior | 775 | \$ 3.03 | 2,179 | \$ 4.16 |

| Number of Ads & Dollar per Pound for Current & Prior 52 Week Periods | | | | |
|--|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Mini | | Whole | |
| Term | Number of Ads | \$ per Pound | Number of Ads | \$ per Pound |
| Current | 12 | \$0.99 | 328 | \$ 0.53 |
| Prior | 5 | \$0.95 | 293 | \$0.45 |

Research

Analytics Study on Watermelon Price & Trade Response – IRI, Inc.

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?

COVID-19 controls were a key factor in the 2020 study. Here is a summary:

- Excluded weeks that include abnormal/outlier behavior to ensure unbiased coefficients and lifts that are not influenced by irrational consumer purchase behavior associated with hoarding that took place regionally between March and April of 2020.
- Included turbulent weeks, but build a set of indicator variables at a store/week level to capture COVID-19 incidence. Weekly Panic Buy Indicator captured deviations in sales and did not allow the COVID-19 momentum impact price and promotional response.
- Display data collection was halted due to safety concerns between March and July of 2020. Display impact in those missing months was not explicitly measured, but calibration timeframes are 3 or more times longer and that additional data will need to be relied upon for display lifts.
- Used Google Workplace Mobility data to understand the demand shifts due and consumers limited ability to leverage foodservice (restaurants, on-site cafeterias, etc.), supply chain constraints, and workforce underemployment.

Everyday Shelf 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.

Implications

1. Low price sensitivities present an opportunity to protect profit margin and to pass along cost of goods inflation with corresponding adjustments of price to retailer customers and consumers.
2. Cut and mini watermelon are a low risk, low reward product set. Price adjustments will be more manageable, but trade promotions lifts will also be limited. Whole watermelon

Research

should be considered the “fighter” product worthy of promotional allocations to move inventory and drive incremental purchases.

3. Inelastic price response does not translate into risk-free price actions as there will still be volume loss due to list price adjustments.

Competitive 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%)

Implications

1. Most of the price gaps identified are within the watermelon category and can be used to optimize sales or margin contribution. Price gaps should be interpreted as the consumer's perceived willingness to pay the difference.
2. Understand that price gaps are not reciprocal and they cannot be expected to be equal when reversed. i.e. cut watermelon to cut apples \$2.50 (-21.3%) does not equal cut apples to cut watermelon -\$2.50 (-21.3%)

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%)

Implications

1. Lower promotional price response is a symptom felt widely in the industry and should be considered in promotional planning.
2. The identification of promoted price thresholds enables bonus incremental volume, boosting promotion return on investments that would otherwise go untapped and allows retailers to avoid deeper discount levels that cause consumer subsidization.

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.

Research

Implications

1. When investing in quality merchandising or “plussing|up” simple temporary price reductions, understand the estimated lifts associated with each vehicle and related retailer costs. These inputs allow for simple return on investment calculations and straight-forward decision making on trade event components.
2. Reliable estimates of promotional lifts allows for partnership with retail customers on expected units. Collaborate on ideas to support on floor inventory levels including secondary locations in high traffic and complementary usage occasion aisles (lobby displays, seasonal aisle, alcohol department) is recommended.
3. Retailer ad or feature support typically provides significant lift enhancement, but these lifts should be confirmed prior to committing trade allocations to ensure above breakeven returns on those investments.

MenuTrend Research – Datassential

The Board conducts menu trend research to understand the opportunity watermelon has in foodservice and to benchmark watermelon's presence year-over-year. In 2021, the NWPB invested in Datassential MenuTrends Research. This database includes menus from more than 4,800 restaurants including independents, regional chains, and national chains in all restaurant segments collected from September 2020-July 2021. This research includes all mentions of watermelon, not just fresh usage.

Note: Prior to COVID, the number of menu offerings/items increased in recent years. Menus shrank by 10.2% during COVID. All of the top fruit varieties have declined on appetizers, entrées, and sides in the past year as well. All trends were impacted to varying degrees, but all signs point to trends bouncing back as the industry recovers.

Research Highlights

Watermelon perceptions from Datassential's Flavor database (collected July-September 2021):

- 98% of consumers know it
- 94% of consumers have tried it
- 82% like or love it
- 23% of consumers have had it many times
- More loved by women, Gen Z, and Hispanics

Watermelon Overview

- Watermelon is found on just over 12% of all restaurant menus, and while it has declined by 6% in the last year, it has grown by 8% in the past 4 years.
- In the Fruit Menu Adoption Cycle, watermelon is in the ubiquity phase – it's found just about anywhere.
- Watermelon has grown in all segments, most notably in fast casual, in the last 10 years.
- Nearly 17% of casual dining menus feature watermelon, making it the leading segment.

Research

- Watermelon appears most often on beverage menus, especially within cocktails.
- Watermelon has grown the fastest within non-alcoholic beverages over the past 4 years.
- Watermelon on appetizer, entrée, and dessert menus has declined the in past 4 years.
- Restaurants in the South are more likely to offer watermelon than other regions. It has grown on menus in the South by 14% in the last 4 years.
- All day menus have shown the strongest growth of usage in the past 4 years at 66%.
- Lunch and dinner menus have also experienced growth (29% and 7%).
- Chain operators are more likely to serve watermelon than other restaurant types.
- While independents are less likely to offer watermelon, it is growing the fastest at these operators (62% in 4 years).
- New watermelon items and LTOs shine in the summer but there have been menu launches in each month of the year in the last decade, highlighting watermelon's transition to a year-round product.

Watermelon on Savory Menus

- Watermelon is featured on 3% of all appetizer, entrée and side dish menus and growing, with casual dining driving much of this growth.
- Fine dining has the highest penetration but has fluctuated throughout the past decade.
- Watermelon is offered more often in appetizers than entrées and sides.
- While appetizers with watermelon are declining, they remain a vehicle for innovative dishes like salads, gazpacho, and poke bowls that can feature watermelon.
- Watermelon side dishes are growing, often served by itself or in a fruit cup.
- Over the past 4 years watermelon appetizers, entrées and sides have declined across all regions of the U.S.
- The West and Midwest are more likely to serve watermelon with lighter offerings like quiche and salad, while the South leans towards BBQ combos and sandwiches.
- While menu penetration is less than 1%, chains are the only restaurant type where watermelon has grown over the past 4 years.
- The top dozen ingredients paired with watermelon on savory menus would make a great fruit or savory salad; strawberries, cantaloup, pineapple, grapes, honeydew, feta, tomato, chicken, potato, onion, vinaigrette, cucumber.

Watermelon on Dessert Menus

- In the Dessert Flavors Adoption Cycle, watermelon is in the adoption phase – it's found in trendy restaurants and specialty grocers.
- The majority of watermelon dessert offerings are featured in frozen treats like sorbet, Italian ice, frozen yogurt, and shaved ice.
- QSR dessert menus featuring watermelon outpace all other segments, but watermelon desserts are trending at midscale operators.

Research

- National chain menus are more likely to offer a watermelon dessert than other restaurant types and these offerings are growing.

Watermelon on Non Alcoholic Beverage Menus

- In the Non Alcoholic Beverage Flavors Adoption Cycle, watermelon is in the proliferation phase – it's found in chain restaurants and mainstream grocers.
- Watermelon is featured on over 4% of non-alcoholic (NA) beverage menus and has grown 6% in the last year and 39% over the past 4 years.
- Fast casual has the highest menu penetration of NA beverages featuring watermelon, where it has grown by triple digits over the past decade in a variety of applications, from lemonade and agua frescas to smoothies and watermelon water.
- Watermelon in NA beverages has grown in all segments over the last 4 years.
- One fourth of NA watermelon beverages are blended drinks, including smoothies, milkshakes, and slushies.
- Other non-fizzy drinks featuring watermelon include trendy agua frescas, coolers, and flavored water.
- In smoothie flavors, watermelon menu penetration is 7.6%, having grown 16% in the last year and 40% in the last 4 years.

Watermelon on Cocktail Menus

- In the Cocktail Flavors Adoption Cycle, watermelon is in the proliferation phase – it's found in chain restaurants and mainstream grocers.
- Watermelon is found on more than 10% of alcoholic beverage menus and although that has decreased by 6% in the past year, it has grown 15% the past 4 years.
- Casual dining operators are most likely to offer watermelon alcoholic beverages.
- Watermelon-focused alcoholic beverages have grown in all segments except fine dining the last 4 years.
- More than a quarter of watermelon offerings are in margaritas and showcased with bold, spicy flavors like jalapeno and Tajin.
- Watermelon has been paired with both classic and up-and-coming cocktails such as frosé, French 77, and smashes.

SCORES Concept Testing – Datassential

Every month SCORES concepts testing tracks and tests all new menu items and LTOs launched by national chains with consumers, providing robust benchmarks to gauge proprietary concept tests against. SCORES was utilized by operators we worked with on innovation and for new recipes developed for foodservice media, events, etc.

Nutrition Research – Various Organizations

Evaluating Health Benefits of Watermelon Flesh and a Value-Added Watermelon Product in Human Subjects – Oregon State University

The specific objectives are based on important findings made from 2017 to 2019 studies, demonstrating significant improvements in blood glucose regulation, remediating symptoms of

Research

diabetes, and a very novel finding, demonstrating reductions in the level of pro-inflammatory compounds in the liver, most notably with consumption of watermelon flesh. A third important finding to follow-up on is the demonstration of reduced levels of bile acids within the liver, an indication that consumption of watermelon is favorably influencing cholesterol metabolism. 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.

Update: Due to COVID complications this project was cancelled by the researcher.

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.

Update: Data indicates that short-term watermelon supplementation did not significantly augment muscle oxygen saturation and brachial artery diameter during an acute bout of upper-body resistance exercise compared to PL. Extension granted into 2022 to publish and present data.

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. This will be achieved by completing the following two objectives.

Update: As of April, no cost extension granted for manuscript submission and conference presentations. Results to come.

Target Media Relations to Promote Results of Studies – Wild Hive

In September 2020, in light of the planned nutrition research focused on human trials being postponed due to COVID, the Board funded a project titled *Summary of Research: Database and Research Paper for Watermelon*. The lead investigator, Dr. Britt Burton-Freeman of Illinois Institute of Technology, presented at the Board Meeting in September and an *Appetite for Health* event for consumer media previewing the research. The research paper was published in December of 2021 in *Current Atherosclerosis Reports* titled *Watermelon and Citrulline in Cardio-Metabolic Health: Review of the Evidence 2000-2020*. Next, a press release on the paper with the headline: Scientific Literature Review Confirms Watermelon's Health Potential was distributed. The release was distributed on the PR Newswire for broad distribution and Eurekalert for targeted distribution to nutrition/science writers. The release was reposted to 324 outlets, totaling 218,796,833 impressions. This project was a great way to review what had taken place for watermelon in nutrition research in recent years, discover new messages to share with the Board's audiences and a resource to revamp the Board's RFP for future nutrition research.

*Resubmitted projects delayed due to COVID in 2020/2021 fiscal year.

Watermelon Market Report

Although not a budget item, the Board offers customized market analysis opportunities to help the industry with their business. These analytical tools for the watermelon industry use AMS Market News data to track FOB, movement, origin and more. The Watermelon Market Report

Research

and supporting Excel files are updated weekly, and can be downloaded for analysis. The below is a clip from the April 2, 2022 report.

