



# Watermelon Update

NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTION BOARD



## New Watermelon Queens Hone Skills and Prepare for Yearlong Reign

Queens Receive Intensive Training in Public Speaking, Retail Promotions & Social Platforms

NWPB hosted the annual queen media training and communications coaching seminar April 22-23 in Orlando, FL. The two-day training commenced with a half-day session conducted by Gallo Communications on storytelling and media interview preparation, where new queens were given the opportunity to participate in mock interviews and learn about the psychology of body language. The next session was an introduction to watermelon, which included presentations by NWPB's Stephanie Barlow and Juliemar Rosado on consumer communications and retail promotions, respectively.

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Additionally, the training binder of resources was explained in detail, offering a Watermelon 101 product and history overview. On the first day, former queens Katelyn Miller and Kel Gibson imparted their knowledge to the young women about **what it means to be a watermelon queen**, who they are representing, and the importance of their role (pictured, right). The day was completed with an Image and Etiquette review with the National Watermelon Association's Kerri Wiggins.



Day two was **focused on social media marketing and how these promotional ambassadors can build skills to contribute to their respective channels for the associations and for Watermelon Board national channel amplification**. Stephanie Barlow kicked off presenting on Social Media Tips and Best Practices, Kel Gibson conducted a Content Creation and Social Media pace and promotion session that had hands-on Canva practice (pictured, right), and the day was rounded out with Curious Plot doing a TikTok training session.



Upon concluding the event, we are confident that all participants are now equipped to have a successful season of promoting watermelon! We wish all the ladies good luck and hope they have a fun time. Remember, we're all now part of #TeamWatermelon!



## Executive Director Presents at CucCAP2 Team Meeting

Mark Arney presented at the CucCAP2 Team Meeting that took place on April 13 & 14. The objectives of the CucCAP project are to develop genomic approaches and tools for cucurbit species, perform genomic-assisted breeding to introgress disease resistance into cucurbit cultivars, to perform economic impact analyses of cost of production and disease control, and to provide readily accessible information to facilitate disease control. Although a production research focused group, **Mark presented the NWPB research program highlighting consumer, retail, foodservice, supply chain and nutrition research resources available at [watermelon.org](http://watermelon.org).** As Dr. Amnon Levi of USDA-ARS, Charleston, SC, stated, although outside the group's charge, these topics are an important part of the watermelon research portfolio.



## Watermelon Industry Women Leaders Attend IFPA Women's Fresh Perspectives

Megan McKenna, Stephanie Barlow and Juliemar Rosado of the Watermelon Board attended the IFPA Women's Fresh Perspectives Conference in Orlando, FL in the middle of April. Jordan Carter, past Board president was also in attendance representing her company, Leger &



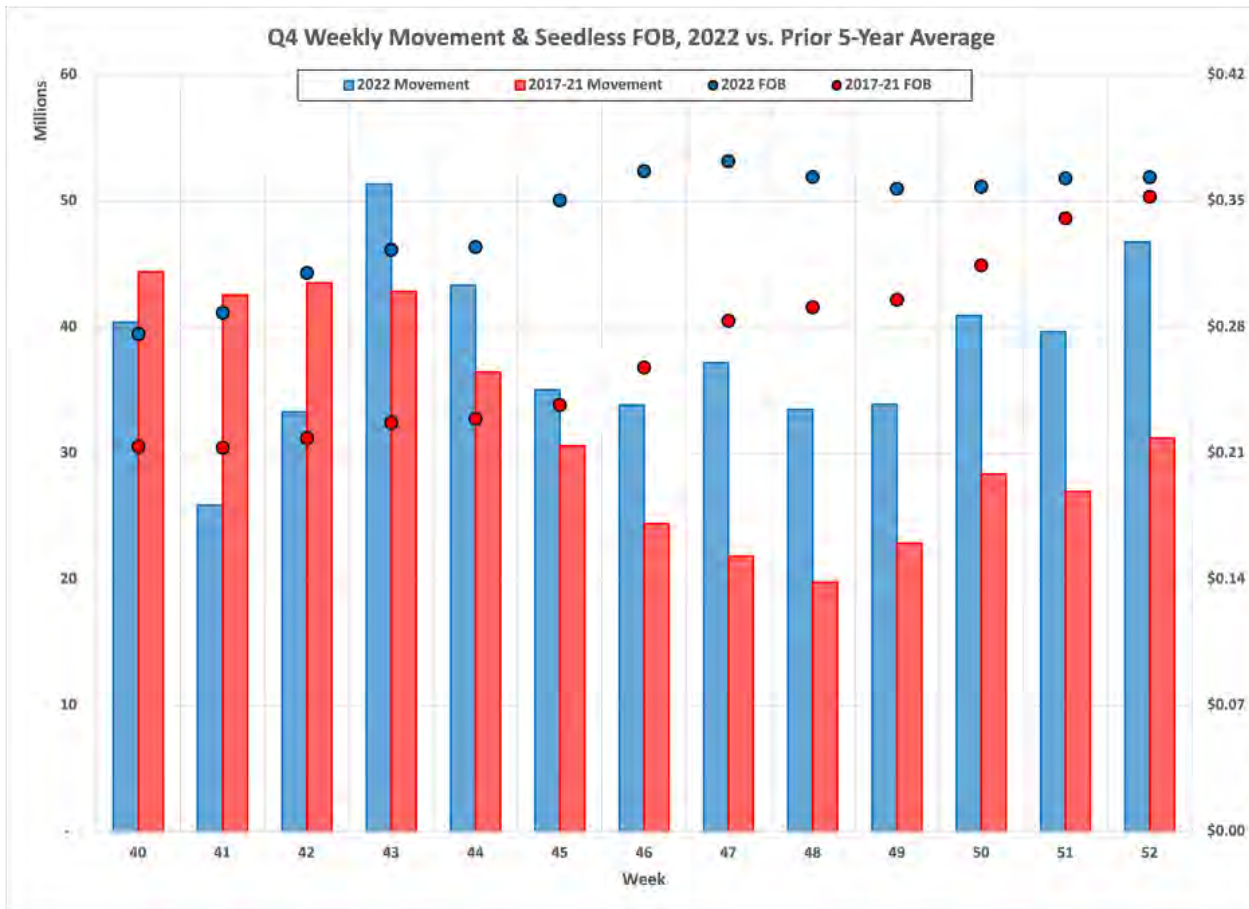
Sons. The event featured inspiring and educational general sessions on personality types and how they work together, mentoring, multigenerational workplaces, and inspirational speakers. Breakout sessions ranged from sustainability, conflict to collaboration, negotiating and more. Around the **beneficial sessions, there were great networking opportunities with produce suppliers as well as retail and foodservice contacts.**





# Volume and Seedless FOB Analysis for Q4 2022 & Q1 2023

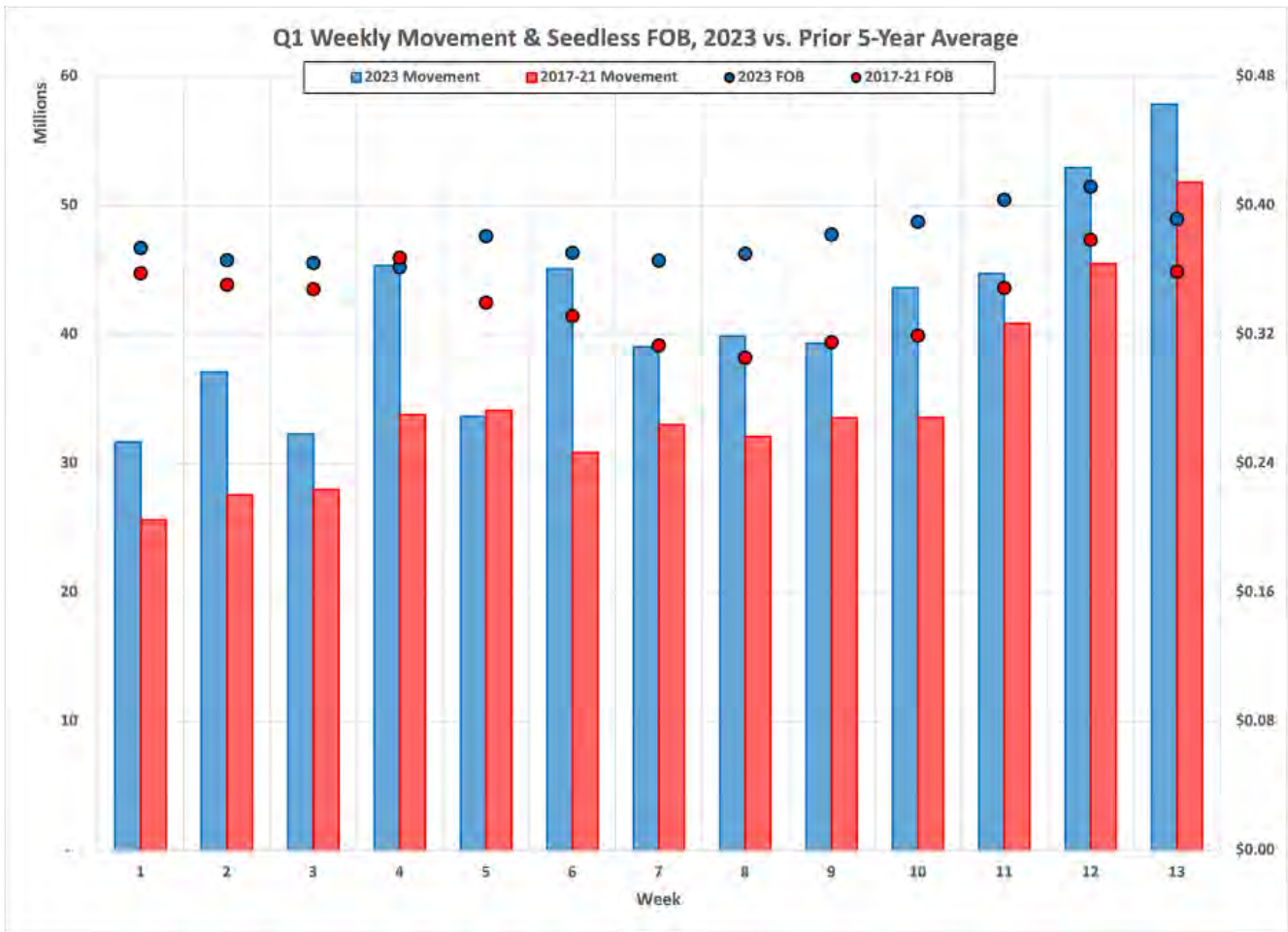
Data freely provided by Agricultural Marketing Services (AMS) Market News Portal makes it easy to analyze how the market compares to past years. The following charts compare the last quarter of 2022 and the first of 2023 to the prior five-year average.



The blue columns show weekly movement for 2022 and can be compared to the red columns showing the average. Color consistency carries over to seedless FOB pricing with the right-hand axis showing dollar per pound pricing. Supply over the first three weeks was muted with each week below average, but after that volume was much more plentiful with most weeks well above average. Seedless FOB prices were higher than average throughout the term with rather wide spreads, before narrowing to close out the year.

Flipping to the recently completed first quarter of 2023 on the next page, volume continued to be quite strong with nearly every week consistently above average. In addition to strong volume, seedless FOB prices were also typically above average levels. The gap was slight early in the new year, but gradually widened throughout much of the rest of the quarter. For more information visit the [Supply Chain Research](#) page at watermelon.org or reach out to [Jason Hanselman](#).

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## CTV Advertising

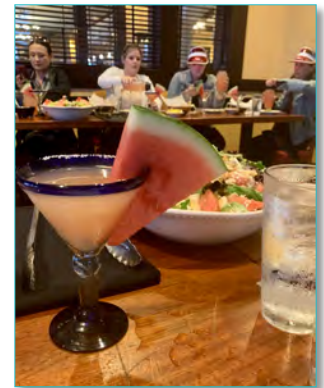
The first month of **streaming TV advertising, called Connected TV or CTV, is underway and performing above expectations. In the first week of April, the spring Watermelon Wellness ad had 61,221 views already, with an average cost of \$0.045 per view!**

What is also really exciting is that the video ad has been seen on major networks like TNT, Discovery Channel, and HGTV. Stay tuned to the Watermelon Update for more in-depth reporting information as the season progresses.



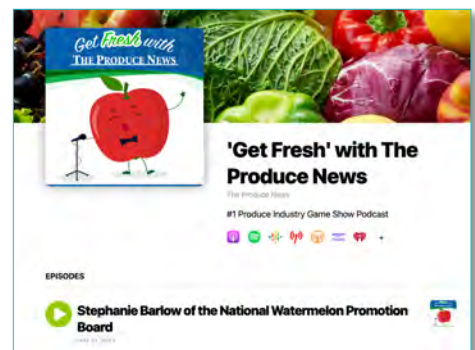
## Leveraging a Retail Investment to Reach Foodservice

The Board is a longtime member of the Southeast Produce Council and annually attends Southern Exposure. Both the organization and this event has expanded its foodservice reach over the last few years, not to mention the Southern Innovations event in the fall. This year the Southeast Produce Council held its **first-ever foodservice tour** April 10-13 in eastern and central Florida. Staff member Megan McKenna is a part of the SEPC Foodservice Committee and although there wasn't an opportunity for a visit to a farm or shed, there was an opportunity to **highlight watermelon on the menu**. The Board sponsored the dinner on April 12th at Abuelo's Mexican Restaurant in Lakeland, FL. The menu included watermelon margaritas, guacamole with watermelon and a salad with watermelon demonstrating the fruit's versatility. Attending companies included: National Produce Consultants, Ruby Co., Markon, Nordstrom, Royal Food Service, Senn Brothers, Jason's Deli, Produce Alliance, Performance Food Group, Buyers Edge/Produce Alliance, and U.S. Foods. This was a great opportunity to **take advantage of a retail investment to further the Board's reach in foodservice**.



## Get Fresh Podcast – Special Guest Stephanie Barlow

Get Fresh is The Produce News' unique take on a produce industry podcast, in a game show type of format, offering a fun and sometimes silly take on produce industry news. To help **amplify the domestic watermelon season ramping up and talk all things watermelon**, Stephanie Barlow was asked to be a guest and play along. Check out the episode airing now! <https://www.getfreshpodcast.com>



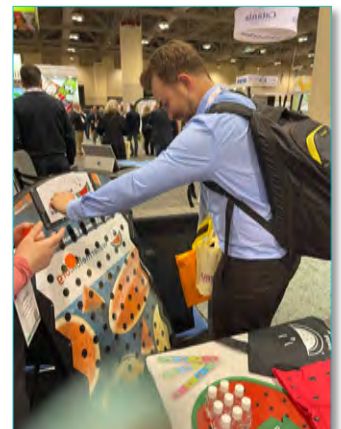


## CPMA

NWPB’s Juliemar Rosado, with the assistance of Argyle representative Michelle Gibson, was present at the Canadian Produce Marketing Association’s annual convention April 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> in Toronto, ON. The event provides a **unique forum for industry leaders to enhance their business opportunities in Canada through an exceptional combination of education and networking opportunities**. CPMA’s Annual Convention and Trade Show regularly attracts key decision-makers and customers from all segments of the fresh produce supply chain. Participants include industry executives, category managers, government representatives, and countless other notable staff who are involved in the Canadian fresh fruit and vegetable sector. Adding excitement in the booth, NWPB had a plinko game at the ready for booth visitors to come by and play for a chance to win prizes. As a result, NWPB was visited by Canadian retail merchandisers, foodservice professionals and watermelon category managers who played the game, engaged with the informational materials available as well as fielded opportunities to promote U.S. watermelon in Canada throughout the year. Exhibiting at the CPMA gives NWPB the opportunity to connect with retailers from all over Canada. This not only encourages watermelon consumption as a whole, but also supports our Market Access Programs in place to support U.S. watermelon exports.



Individuals with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations and or alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, LEP, etc.) should contact: Juliemar Rosado at [jrosado@watermelon.org](mailto:jrosado@watermelon.org) within three days of event. The National Watermelon Promotion Board is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



## Watermelon on the Menu

Fresno, CA-based Woodward American Grill, which opened in mid-April of this year, included three watermelon menu items on their opening menu. Making headlines for serving brunch 6 days a week, the upscale sports restaurant offers Bellmelon - a shareable appetizer consisting of sugar glazed pork belly, watermelon, tajin, microgreens and balsamic glaze. Other offerings include two cocktails from the libations menu - a Spicy Watermelon Margarita with a fresh watermelon wedge and a Backwoods Barbie (pictured) consisting of whipped pinnacle, watermelon, sweet and sour and pink sugar.



## Foodservice Industry Updates

The National Restaurant Association released their 2023 State of the Restaurant Industry in March. Key findings include:

- Growth will continue: The foodservice industry is forecast to reach \$997B in sales in 2023, driven in part by higher menu prices.
- Industry help wanted: The foodservice industry workforce is projected to grow by 500,000 jobs, for total industry employment of 15.5M by the end of 2023 and surpassing pre-pandemic levels.
- Rising costs create challenges: 92% of operators say the cost of food is a significant issue for their restaurant.
- Competition is heating up: In 2023, 47% of operators expect competition to be more intense than last year.
- Consumers want restaurant experiences: 84% of consumers say going out to a restaurant with family and friends is a better use of their leisure time than cooking and cleaning up.



The report, [which is linked here](#), is based on analysis and forecasts by National Restaurant Association economists and surveys of restaurant operators and consumers conducted throughout the year as well as external factors affecting the foodservice industry.



## NWPB Connections

**Today's Dietitian Spring Symposium - Savannah, GA - May 15 & 16**

**Curious Food Leadership Program - Minneapolis, MN - May 17 & 18**

**West Coast Produce Show - Palm Desert, CA - May 18 - 20**

**eMerge Event at the National Restaurant Show - Chicago, IL - May 21**

**IFEC Bubble Party at the National Restaurant Show - Chicago, IL - May 22**

**IFEC Conference Planning - Louisville, KY - May 30 - June 1**

