



Watermelon Update

NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTION BOARD



Eat Watermelon, Be Happy

Slice of Happy Project Launches

Here is fresh news that will make you smile – the biggest consumer campaign of the year – coined The Slice of Happy Project – launched in late May and it's all about HAPPINESS. For years the NWPB has shared key messages with happiness and healthiness always at the core, but this year there's a big boost. The campaign aims to educate consumers about a recent NWPB study that found that eating watermelon can improve your mood.

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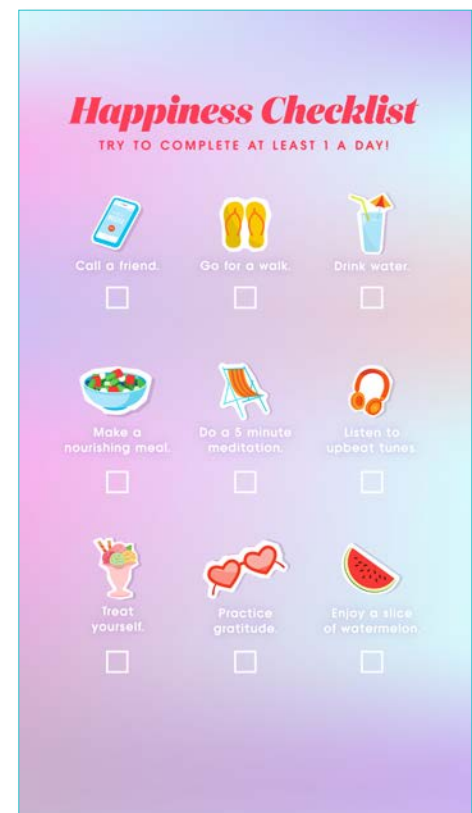
Project messaging includes:

- Eat Watermelon, Be Happy!
- Watermelon: The Official Happy Fruit
- No matter how you slice it, adding watermelon to your plate will add a smile to your face.
- Happiness is only a slice away.
- **Your recipe for happiness includes watermelon.**
- Comfort food comes in all shapes and slices.

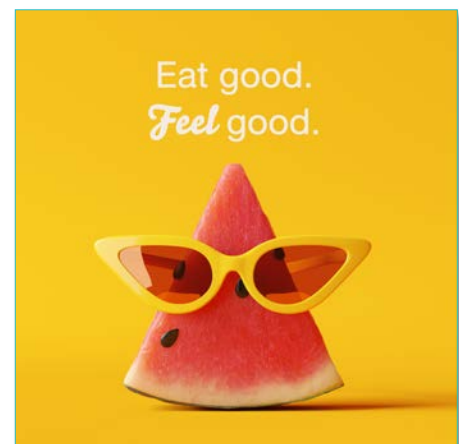


Throughout June, July and August, various campaign elements will include:

- “Slice of Happy Project” landing page featuring:
 - Statistics sharing **watermelon’s contribution to happiness.**
 - Interactive quiz that curates recipe inspiration based on personal preferences and moods
 - Mood-boosting playlist on Spotify.
 - **Digital happiness kit including stickers, backgrounds and more (shown, right)**
- Social media promotions to highlight key messages to shoppers nationwide.
 - Created and owned Instagram Reels and TikToks
 - Amplification of User Generated Content
- What about Watermelon e-newsletter inclusion
- Consumer and trade media outreach to promote recent research.
- Influencer partnerships to amplify messaging
- Digital banner ads
- Programmatic advertising through podcast ads
- Unique SliceofHappyProject.com URL



The campaign will run through Labor Day. **All digital assets and resources are free for industry use.** For access to these or questions about the campaign, reach out to Senior Director of Communications Stephanie Barlow at sbarlow@watermelon.org.



Industry Relationships Remain Strong with ARS Charleston, US Vegetable Library

In June Mark Arney and George Szczepanski visited with researchers at the USDA-Agricultural Research Service Vegetable Laboratory (ARS) Charleston, S.C., to discuss **industry initiatives and how the organizations' partnerships can continue**. It was interesting to tour the facility since the last visit for Arney was previous to the pandemic and it was Szczepanski's first visit.



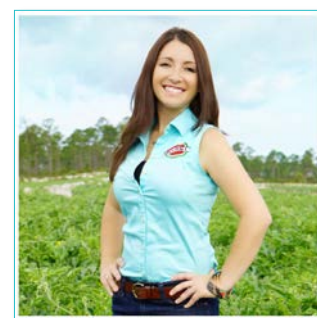
From left to right: NWA Executive Director George Szczepanski, NWPB Executive Director Mark Arney and USDA Research Leader/ Location Coordinator Dr. Chandrasekar "Shaker" Kousik.

Dinner with USDA researchers (not all were able to attend) in downtown Charleston, following site visit at USDA-AMS facility. From left to right: USDA Research Geneticist Dr. Amnon Levi; USDA Research Leader/ Location Coordinator Dr. Chandrasekar "Shaker" Kousik; NWPB Executive Director Mark Arney; NWA Executive Director George Szczepanski; USDA Research Plant Pathologist Kai-Shu Ling; and NWPB Senior Director of Marketing and Foodservice Megan McKenna.



Congratulations to Rachel Syngo!

Congratulations to Board Member Rachel Syngo, Chief Marketing Officer of Melon1, on her **Produce Business 40 Under 40 recognition!**



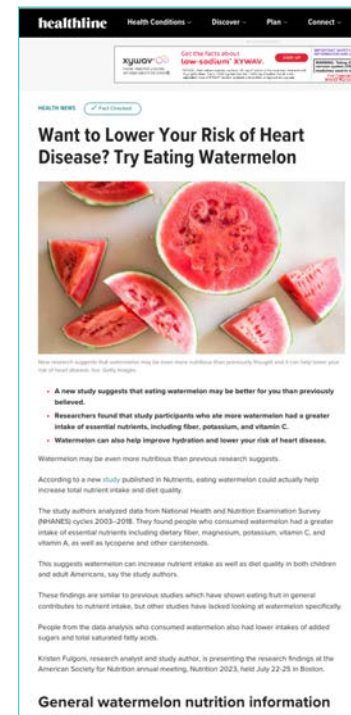


Watermelon Nutrition Research Extends Health Messaging

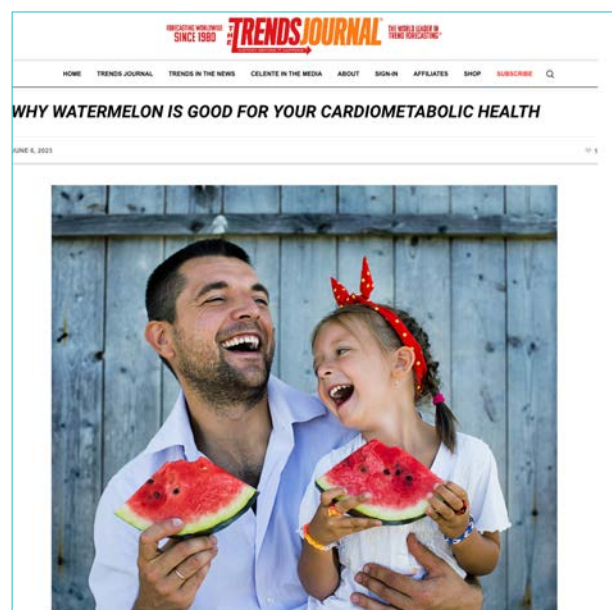
The Board invests in nutrition research to extend watermelons' health messaging. As an extension of the nutrition release sent to trade media earlier this year, the Board targeted consumer media with a nutrition release: **Nutrition Research Continues to Support the Health Benefits of Regular Watermelon Consumption**. The release highlighted two new studies that look at watermelon and higher diet quality in children and adults and the role watermelon juice plays in cardio-metabolic health that were published in *Nutrients*. The strongest results came from Heartline featuring more than 114 million unique visitors per month. It is always inspiring to see the headlines these releases generate.

In addition to research being published, **another goal is to present at nutrition conferences**. This month watermelon will have three poster presentations at Nutrition 2023 in Boston, MA:

- Watermelon Intake Is Associated with Increased Nutrient Intake and Higher Diet Quality in Adults, NHANES 2003–2018
- The Effects of Whole Blenderized Watermelon Consumption on Microbiome in Children and Adolescents with Overweight and Obesity
- Watermelon Intake and Amino Acid Supplementation Impact Gene Expression Patterns in Male Mice and HepaRG cells



MEDICAL NEWS TODAY



Watermelon Retail Merchandising Contest Call for Entries

NWPB Revisits Updated Contest Format & Continues Additional Incentive with Tajín®

The National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB) invites **all retail chains, independent retailers and commissaries to submit entries** to their 15th annual Watermelon Retail Merchandising Contest. More than **\$10,000 in cash and prizes** will be awarded to top entrants, including \$5,000 for the grand prize winner. The second place winner will receive \$2,500, third place will receive \$1,000 and three honorable mentions will each receive \$500. An additional incentive of a \$15 gift card will be awarded to the first 25 entries.

Additional prizes will be awarded thanks to a continued partnership with Tajín® for the 2023 season. The first 100 entries that include watermelon and Tajín® seasonings in their in-store display submissions or in their mixed merchandising tactics in social, digital, print and web marketing will each receive a \$20 Amazon digital gift card.

NWPB's partnership with Tajín® will add to the chance for incentives for stores to enter and will **increase the reach of the contest while offering retailers a great cross-merchandising opportunity**. Fresh watermelons and Tajín® – a chili/lime seasoning – are a perfect complement, as the flavor profile of watermelons combined with the 'zing' of Tajín® creates a new eating experience for many consumers.

"We couldn't be more thrilled to 'add a little zing' to our contest with Tajín®," said Juliemar Rosado, Director of Retail and International Marketing. "Watermelons and Tajín® lend themselves to many flavors and cuisines. Cross-merchandising promotions are always a great opportunity to showcase more than one item AND the benefits of both."

"We have partnered with the NWPB for several years," stated Eric Patrick, Partnership Brand Manager. "Consumers always love the experience, and we look forward to seeing the creative merchandising and marketing efforts that retailers big and small will create this year. Watermelons and Tajín® are a delicious combination, and these joint efforts create a ton of interest in both products."

The contest will **start in July to honor National Watermelon Month and run throughout the month of August** and is used by NWPB to encourage and identify retailers who are showcasing watermelon's benefits including happiness, health, value and versatility.

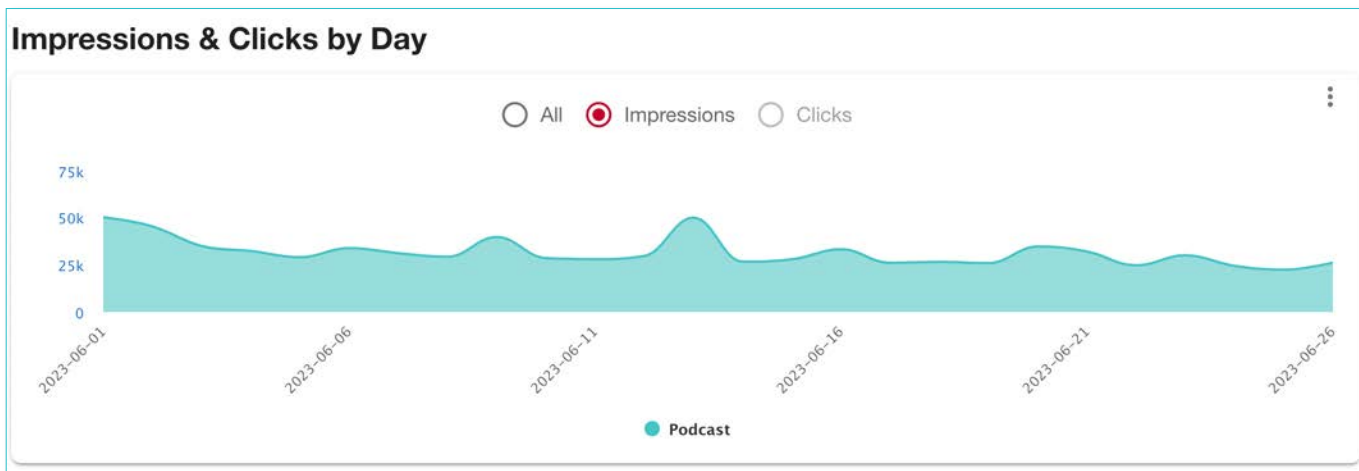
If you have retailers that are interested in entering a promotion, retailers can submit their entry and photos, links, screenshots, etc. online, via email or postal mail beginning July 8, 2023. All entries must be submitted/postmarked by midnight Eastern on September 15, 2023. Visit:

<http://watermelon.org/Retailers/Retail-Contest> for more information, including official contest rules and entry form, or email NWPB at retail@watermelon.org.





June iHeartMedia Podcast Results



Our partnership with iHeartMedia, which started June 1 and will run throughout the summer, is **already seeing fantastic results with our :30 podcast spot!**

Aimed at building awareness of watermelon with a national footprint while also conveying that watermelon is a happy fruit, the campaign is using specific psychographic audience targeting including Shopper, Viewer, Nest, Intrepid, Conqueror, Thriver, Decider and Cultivator groups and **has garnered 826,739 impressions** so far. The creative for the spot will be updated monthly to differentiate June, July and August flights and is optimized weekly by the team at iHeart to maximize reach of our watermelon messages. Let us know if you hear it!



IFIC 2023 Food & Health Survey Results

International Food Information Council, an educational non-profit organization that disseminates science-based information on food, has recently released their annual Food & Health Survey. Of particular interest this year, is consumer attitudes towards foods where the survey found that **“three in four**

Americans (74%) believe that the food and beverages they consume have a significant or moderate impact on their overall mental and emotional well-being.” This finding is in-line with NWPB’s own consumer research and reiterates the importance of this year’s **Slice of Happy Project consumer campaign**. To view the full survey results from IFIC visit: <https://foodinsight.org/2023-food-and-health-survey/>.

Executive Summary

Key Findings

Food and beverage choices are interconnected with mental and emotional well-being



Center for Advancement of Foodservice Educators

Culinary Educators help the Board **reach the chefs of tomorrow with watermelon education and inspiration.**

The Board works with the Center for Advancement of Foodservice Educators (CAFE) to reach their members year-round through their digital magazine, e-letters and more. CAFE's annual Leadership Conference took place at the end of June in Charleston, SC. To kick off the event, the Board sponsored a garde manger or carving class, led by the Fruit Carving Ninja, Chef Patrick O'Brien. The session opened with a **quick watermelon 101 but most of the 3-hour window was spent hands-on, learning carving techniques these educators can use in their classrooms.** That evening the opening reception featured some of the carvings in addition to Watermelon Rind Gazpacho and Burmese Watermelon Salad. Lastly, the InfoFair showcased all of the watermelon resources available to this audience, including the watermelon culinary curriculum accredited by the American Culinary Federation. There were **more than 100 teachers from over 30 states in attendance.**



Watermelon on the Menu



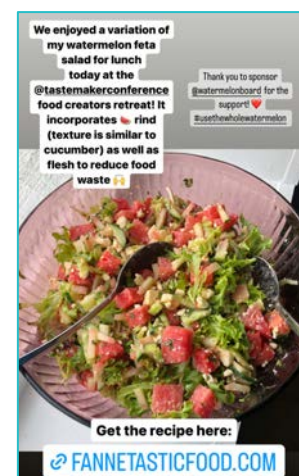
Mediterranean seafood restaurant Kyma, which is based in Atlanta, GA, offers their version of a **Watermelon Salad which includes fresh watermelon, feta, red onions and oregano topped with watermelon sorbet.** One Yelpster commented "If they have watermelon salad, by all means order it. What a great combination of flavors ... they all blend together in odd and luscious ways on your palate."

Tastemaker Workshop Retreat with Anne Mauney of Fannetastic Foods

Tastemaker Conference offers a variety of ways to network and engage with their highly influential community of food content creators that fit our strategy and partnership range for 2023. Tastemakers' audience are **highly influential food bloggers and content creators whose target audience are individuals in charge of household purchasing decisions and preparing meals.**

In May, through the Tastemaker network, Anne Mauney of Fannetastic Food hosted an intimate and niche in-person event that offered a unique and **experiential opportunity to integrate watermelon** into the event with access to higher influencers.

Over the course of an immersive weekend, attendees received watermelon swag items like the Use the Whole Watermelon tote bag, a watermelon cutting board and a Watermelon.org apron along with other goodies and also were served up Anne's watermelon recipes for a rind salad and the watermelon salsa served with enchiladas!



NWPB Connections

USAEDC Attaché Seminar - McLean, VA - July 13

Commodity Roundtable Admin, Marketing and Research Meetings - Denver, Co - July 25

IFPA Foodservice Show - Monterrey, CA - July 26 - 28

