



# Watermelon Update

NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTION BOARD



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## Watermelon at the National Restaurant Show

The National Restaurant Show highlights anything needed in and around a restaurant so it is a large trade show. The trends seen on the show floor were also large and dynamic. Labor and the opportunity with AI was a hot topic, in addition to more plant-based foods and ready to drink beverages. As always, there was a lot of pizza, hot dogs and soda (both traditional and healthy). Watermelon was seen throughout the floor – in salads, flavors of many drinks a vessel for Tajin, and more. Since the show is so large the Board focus on sponsoring smaller events that take place adjacent to the show to reach foodservice operators and media targets. Board President Christian Murillo was in attendance to represent the industry with these key targets.

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As a **co-sponsor of the eMerge event during the Restaurant Show on the evening of May 21st, the Board invited key operator contacts to attend.** In addition to a watermelon menu item served by another sponsor, the Board served:

- **Watermelon Summer Punch:** Fresh Watermelon Puree, Peppercorn Infused Vodka, Apricot Liquor, Yuzu, and Agave garnished with a Watermelon Slice, Pink Peppercorn
- **Garden Patch Spritz:** Fresh Watermelon-Mint Shrub, Vanilla infused Dry Vermouth, Honey-Chardonnay, Topped with Prosecco garnished with Compressed Watermelon, Mint Sprig



On May 22nd the International Foodservice Editorial Council (IFEC) hosted the Bubble Party as a part of the National Restaurant Show in Chicago. The **Bubble Party had nearly every publication in attendance the Board targets throughout the year.** The Board **served Watermelon Rind Gazpacho to highlight using the whole product.** Additionally, the Watermelon Burmese Salad highlighted watermelon's ability showcase trendy global flavors. Megan McKenna, senior director of marketing and foodservice for the Board (pictured below), **also serves as the IFEC President** which met earlier in the day. This is just the beginning of foodservice editorial coverage in the coming months!



## NWPB Launches Online Watermelon Education Course for Retail Employees

The National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB) has launched an online watermelon education course for retail employees on [watermelon.org](http://watermelon.org).

**The Watermelon Learning Lab is designed to help retail employees enhance their knowledge of watermelon and educate them about cultivation, consumer insights, nutritional benefits, merchandising tips and more. The lessons are available to all retail employees seeking to educate employees that work with watermelon, free of charge, and can be accessed on the Retailers' section [watermelon.org](http://watermelon.org).**

"Providing accurate and knowledgeable product information is a path to purchase opportunity," said Juliemar Rosado, director of retail and international marketing. "We wanted to create a resource that would help retail employees better understand the watermelon category and how to promote it best to their customers."

The Watermelon Learning Lab is an online tool complete with five lesson plans, mini quizzes and videos, making it easy for retail employees to learn about watermelons. Upon completion of the quiz, a certificate of completion will be sent to you via email. While this is designed to learn at your own pace, the whole learning lab completion to certificate can be done in less than 30 minutes.

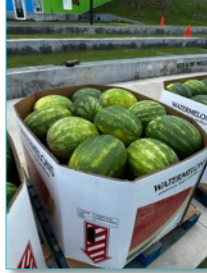
"We are thrilled to launch this online education tool and look forward to seeing the positive impact it will have on retail employees across the country," added Juliemar. "We hope this resource will inspire retail employees to share their knowledge with customers and help promote the many benefits of watermelons."

For more information about the online watermelon education course, please visit <https://www.watermelon.org/audiences/retailers/retail-education/>.



## Florida Children's Museum Watermelon Festival

NWPB's Executive Director Mark Arney recently attended the first-ever Watermelon Festival at the Florida Children's Museum in Lakeland. The event drew a crowd estimated at 5,000 people who were eager to taste the refreshing summer fruit and participate in the family-friendly activities organized throughout the day.



NWPB Executive Director Mark Arney and Board Member Steve Nichols, Global Produce Sales

The festival was a **resounding success and provided a unique opportunity for visitors to learn more about the watermelon's history and importance to the Florida community**. The new Florida Children's Museum, which boasts a special Watermelon section, provided a perfect backdrop for the event.

The Florida Watermelon Queen Alyssa Armentrout was also in attendance, handing out watermelon and promoting the importance of this iconic fruit. Her presence added an extra level of excitement to the festival and helped to raise awareness of the role that watermelon plays in Florida's agricultural industry.



## West Coast Produce Expo



NWPB Retail Account Manager Katie Manetti, Board President Christian Murillo, Cactus Melon and NWPB's Director of Retail & International Marketing Juliemar Rosado

The NWPB exhibited at the 10th annual West Coast Produce Expo held in Palm Desert, CA May 18th - 20th. NWPB's Juliemar Rosado attended the event along with NWPB retail account manager Katie Manetti and NWPB President Christian Murillo. The three-day event included a Sustainable Produce Summit that included topics that covered fighting food waste and sustainable packaging. Additionally, the show provided various networking opportunities as well as the full expo. This event is hosted by The Packer and Farm Journal Media, Inc. and connects the produce industry with the West Coast buying community. The event was **well attended and a great opportunity to discuss the board's latest retail, foodservice and communications programs and resources**.

## CRCEO Meeting

The CRCEO\* met in Coral Gables, Florida, on May 2nd and 3rd. NWPB Executive Director Mark Arney participated in the meeting and is pictured sitting in the far right corner.

**Attendance was excellent with representation from many of the Research & Promotion Boards as well as Federal Marketing Orders** – all under USDA oversight.

USDA-AMS Administrator Bruce Summers joined the group virtually in a question and answer session. The end results were very beneficial for all in attendance. Summers is in charge of USDA-AMS and many other departments, including the one that has oversight of our program.



\*The Commodity Roundtable is an informal group Chief Executive Officers and Executive Directors of mostly agriculture promotion groups who share information to help their organizations achieve efficient and effective program implementation. The group comes together periodically to discuss best practices in the areas of finance, administration, marketing and research. The Roundtable has no authority to act on or speak on behalf of its members or take positions on issues.



## Watermelon Day DIY Activity Guide

Newly launched and in time for end-of-school year parties is an educator and parent Pinterest-inspired Watermelon Day activity guide! Designed to inspire creativity while encouraging healthy eating habits among children, the guide provides a wide range of hands-on educational crafts, décor ideas, coloring pages and activities that feature our favorite fruit – watermelon!

**The new guide is part of the NWPB's ongoing efforts to promote healthy nutrition and highlight the important role that watermelon can play in a healthy diet.** Watermelon is a sweet, delicious and nutritious fruit, making it an excellent choice for people of all ages.



The activity guide includes a variety of fun and educational activities, some of which include creating watermelon-inspired decorations, coloring pages featuring watermelon characters, and making healthy snacks using watermelon as the main ingredient. The crafts and activities offered will serve as an excellent resource for individuals looking to host a watermelon-themed party this summer. Whether it's creating suncatchers or engaging in an outdoor watermelon bowling game, the vibrant and refreshing ambiance that watermelon brings will undoubtedly generate delightful summer memories. Check out the guide at [watermelon.org/watermelonday](https://watermelon.org/watermelonday).

## Banner Ads Drive Impressive Results in April

23-NWPB-0870 Spring Programmatic Ads



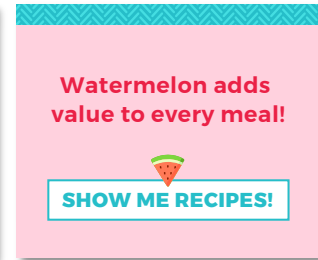
FRAME 1



FRAME 2



FRAME 3



FRAME 4

In April, a gif banner ad featuring the slogan "Watermelon adds value to every meal" proved to generate remarkable results capturing the interest of a targeted audience. It highlighted the versatility and affordability of watermelon with the messaging, "Slice, dice, juice and ball on a budget. 16¢ a serving, 100% edible," and clearly resonated with viewers, leading to an impressive number of impressions. Over the course of the month, the ad garnered an **astounding 3,082,398 impressions**, ensuring that it reached a wide and diverse audience.

While generating a high number of impressions is fantastic, the true measure of success for any banner ad lies in the number of clicks it receives. In this regard, this ad exceeded all expectations. **With a staggering 30,954 clicks, it emerged as the biggest driver of website traffic in April. Compared to the same period in the previous year, the number of users visiting watermelon.org increased by a remarkable 180%. This surge in traffic can be directly attributed to the banner ad's captivating design and compelling call-to-action.**

Users who arrived at the website through the banner ad spent an average of just under 6 minutes on the recipes page, indicating that the ad successfully reached and captivated the intended audience. This ad specifically targeted individuals interested in food, health, nutrition, and home and garden topics. By focusing on affinity categories such as Cooking Enthusiasts and Foodies, as well as employing retargeting techniques, the ad reached a highly receptive audience, effectively conveying the message that watermelon is a versatile and budget-friendly addition to any meal.

Banner ads continue to be a potent tool for NWPB in the digital space. This ad serves as a shining example of how a well-crafted banner ad can capture attention, drive website traffic, and engage the right audience.



# Produce Trade Media Embraces Econometric Evaluation Release Results

On May 10th the Board shared a press release: *NWPB Announces Significant Positive Impact for Watermelon Industry with 19:1 ROI*. The release shared:

*National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB) has released the findings of a new study, conducted along with research partner Armada Corporate Intelligence, Inc., that demonstrates the significant positive impact of the NWPB's activities on the demand for watermelon. The study also shows that investment in the NWPB's promotional activities results in a strong return on investment (ROI) of 19:1. Additional findings of the study included the NWPB's significant impact on the retail and FOB price of watermelon from 2017 – 2021 and its impact on the general economy.*

**Pickup in the trade media was phenomenal with most of the major publications running stories on the research and its strong results** including *AndNowUKnow*, *The Produce Reporter* (Blue Book), *The Produce News* and *The Packer*.



# Retail Merchandising Contest

Have your retailers show their merchandising talents, both those in store and in print/digital spaces! All entries should showcase **watermelon's benefits including health, value and versatility**. Marketing efforts considered in judging will include category visibility, point-of-sale materials, good visual merchandising, messaging nutritional benefits, recipes and/or selection education and use of print, online and/or digital platforms.

The contest will start on July 8 and run throughout the month of August. [Visit the Retailers section of watermelon.org](https://www.watermelon.org) for more information.



# Today's Dietitian Spring Symposium

At the 10th annual dietitian event called Today's Dietitian Spring Symposium, the **Watermelon Board** partnered with Bayer to offer a **unique spin on a happy hour event to offer attendees a relaxing end to a long day of sessions and to kick up some excitement for the Slice of Happy Project launch.** There were over 150 dietitians who came by and tasted the new Watermelon Rosemary Lemonade Soda mocktail while listening to the Slice of Happy Playlist and had some interactive engagements with joyful props for photo opps. Bayer had Marshal Sewell of *Mind Your Melon* speak for a few moments about the mental health awareness campaign and for an hour there was mixing and mingling for our dietitian friends who share education, awareness and information about watermelon to patients, clients, audiences and the media throughout the year. Thanks to our friends at Bayer for the event partnership and to Tsamma for donating the watermelon juice that helped tremendously in budgeting.



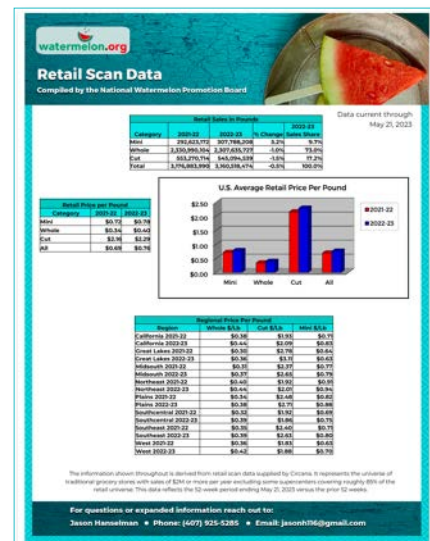
NWPB Senior Director of Communications  
Stephanie Barlow and Hilary Long, Frey Farms

While at the event, Watermelon Board senior director of communications was able to network with other produce and product friends such as California Strawberries, Honey Board, American Pecans, Pistachios and the Mushroom Council and RDs Kim Rose, Vandana Sheth, Toby Smithson, Lauren Manaker and Stephanie Hodges, to name a few.



# Retail Scan Data Report

The NWPB works with Circana to provide a snapshot of the retail scene using retail scanner data. Circana 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 focus of the report is on the past 52-week period and how it compares to the prior period of the same length and it is updated monthly. [Click here to see the most recent report updated with data as of May 21.](#)





## Curious Food Leadership Program

Stephanie Barlow traveled to Minneapolis in May to take part in the first Curious Food Leadership Program, hosted by Curious Plot. Over two days **15 leaders from many industry sectors were shared previews of Consumer Curiosity Research and discussed insights, challenges and opportunities. Networking with other products, other produce and other senior level food professionals was an opportunity to share with likeminded collaborators for future promotional partnerships and more.**



Among the categories of research responses shared were culinary, nutrition and sustainability, specifically from consumer perspectives on actionable takeaways and what people want to learn more about. Food waste was the most important topic across all generations on the sustainability category, so there was a great discussion about the how's the why's the **Use the Whole Watermelon** campaign by NWPB is and was a compelling and relevant movement to introduce.

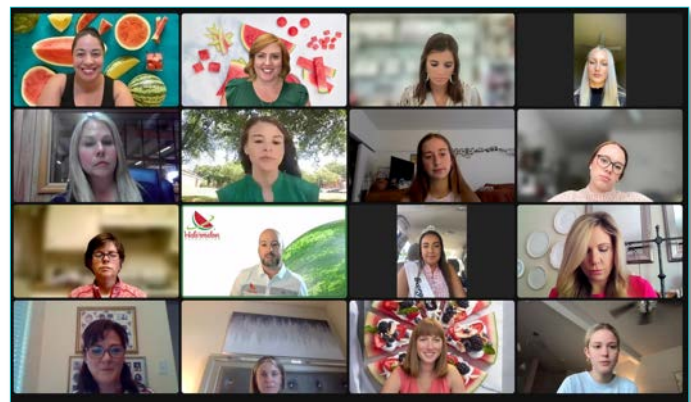


NWPB's Stephanie Barlow and Chef Andrew Zimmermann



## NWA and Watermelon Queens Meeting

In early May, NWPB hosted a zoom meet and greet for the National Watermelon Association's new executive director, George Szczepanski and the state chapters' Watermelon Queens and Promotions Coordinators. It was a terrific opportunity to meet face to face and educate about how **the two organizations collaboratively and collectively support the watermelon industry.**



## May Social Graphics and Animations Spotlight



## Watermelon on the Menu

Elevated fast casual restaurant chain Mendocino Farms, which has locations throughout California, Washington and Texas, is currently serving a **Watermelon Street Cart Salad** on its summer menu, which launched May 9. The side consists of watermelon, cucumber, jicama, fresh mint, green onion, chile-lime vinaigrette.



## NWPB Connections

Center for the Advancement of Foodservice Educators Annual Conference -  
Charleston, SC – June 21-23