

NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTION BOARD



FISCAL YEAR 2022 – 2023
ANNUAL REPORT

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

National Watermelon Promotion Board

STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

March 31, 2023 and 2022

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 521,354	\$ 1,072,208
Assessments receivable	136,567	119,070
MAP receivable	6,002	2,370
Prepaid expenses and other assets	84,888	78,651
Certificates of deposit	<u>704,000</u>	<u>704,000</u>
Total current assets	1,452,811	1,976,299
Operating lease right-of-use-assets	203,730	-
Property and equipment, net	43,164	71,630
Deposits	<u>5,007</u>	<u>5,007</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 1,704,712</u>	<u>\$ 2,052,936</u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 26,556	\$ 40,177
Accrued payroll and related expenses	135,821	127,725
Other current liabilities	5,671	761
Operating lease liabilities	<u>52,413</u>	<u>-</u>
Total current liabilities	220,461	168,663
Other long-term liabilities	7,351	-
Non-current operating lease liabilities	<u>153,636</u>	<u>-</u>
Total liabilities	<u>381,448</u>	<u>168,663</u>
NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS		
Board-designated for frozen reserve	704,000	704,000
Undesignated	<u>619,264</u>	<u>1,180,273</u>
Total net assets without donor restrictions	<u>1,323,264</u>	<u>1,884,273</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 1,704,712</u>	<u>\$ 2,052,936</u>

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

National Watermelon Promotion Board

STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES

Years Ended March 31, 2023 and 2022

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
REVENUES		
Assessments - domestic	\$ 2,026,412	\$ 2,188,424
Assessments - import	1,155,347	1,304,979
MAP revenue	307,909	200,892
Interest and other income	51,775	18,750
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total revenues	3,541,443	3,713,045
EXPENSES		
Program expenses	3,457,323	3,187,231
General and administrative expenses	645,129	591,239
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total expenses	4,102,452	3,778,470
Change in net assets without donor restrictions	(561,009)	(65,425)
Net assets without donor restrictions, beginning of year	1,884,273	1,949,698
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net assets without donor restrictions, end of year	<u>\$ 1,323,264</u>	<u>\$ 1,884,273</u>

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

National Watermelon Promotion Board

STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS

Years Ended March 31, 2023 and 2022

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Change in net assets without donor restrictions	\$ (561,009)	\$ (65,425)
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets without donor restrictions to net cash provided by (used in) activities:		
Non-cash rent	50,933	-
Depreciation and amortization	37,547	44,708
Loss on disposal of equipment	8,564	-
Cash provided by (used for):		
Assessments receivable	(17,497)	(94,345)
MAP receivable	(3,632)	11,287
Prepaid expenses and other assets	(6,237)	(27,133)
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	(13,621)	(57,093)
Lease liabilities	(48,614)	-
Accrued payroll and related expenses	8,096	14,287
	<u>(545,470)</u>	<u>(173,714)</u>
Net cash used in operating activities		
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Proceeds from disposal	1,450	-
Purchase of equipment	(19,095)	(4,446)
Purchase of certificates of deposit	(990,932)	(704,000)
Proceeds from maturity of certificates of deposit	990,932	495,127
	<u>(17,645)</u>	<u>(213,319)</u>
Net cash used in investing activities		
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Proceeds from finance lease	17,157	-
Payments on finance lease	(4,896)	(8,973)
	<u>12,261</u>	<u>(8,973)</u>
Net cash provided by (used in) financing activities		
Decrease in cash and cash equivalents	(550,854)	(396,006)
Cash and equivalents, beginning of year	1,072,208	1,468,214
Cash and equivalents, end of year	<u>\$ 521,354</u>	<u>\$ 1,072,208</u>
SUPPLEMENTAL DISCLOSURE CASH FLOW INFORMATION		
Cash paid for interest	<u>\$ 395</u>	<u>\$ 188</u>
SIGNIFICANT NON-CASH TRANSACTIONS - OPERATING LEASE		
Operating lease right-of-use asset	\$ 254,663	\$ -
Operating lease liability	(254,663)	-
	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT



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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

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, 2023 and 2022, 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, 2023 and 2022, 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 12, 2023 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 12, 2023



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS & SUCCESSES
FISCAL YEAR 2022 – 2023

THE FOLLOWING HIGHLIGHTS ARE NOT INCLUSIVE RESULTS OF ALL ELEMENTS

COMMUNICATIONS

Press Outreach – Earned and Paid

- Family Features paid releases in 2022-2023:
 - 1 Premium Lifestyle Release – “4 Springtime Skincare Tips”
 - Supported watermelon versatility and as ingredient in skincare/beauty space
 - 1,294 placements and 199,607,483 impressions
 - Total ad equivalency of \$779,947
 - 2 Premium Food Releases:
 - “Sweet Summer Treats that Beat the Heat”
 - Supported versatility and hydration, while also accommodating media editors’ requests for summer desserts
 - 1,373 placements and 194,897,717 impressions
 - Total ad equivalency of \$956,068
 - “Warm Up Winter with Watermelon Fun”
 - Supported year-round messaging, “wintermelon”
 - 1,553 placements and 324,571,711 impressions
 - Total ad equivalency of \$1,168,395
 - Also featured on the homepage of Family Features - Editors
 - Leveraged all stories by adding to “Story Starters” section of watermelon.org with downloadable copy and creative assets for media audience
- Media Monitoring
 - Media highlights sizzle reel created for September 2022 board meeting, highlighted watermelon in the media and UTWW campaign
 - Monitored consumer media outreach activities allowing us to move beyond regular mentions in the news and earn more robust watermelon coverage. Includes search building and updates with key and specific search parameters.
 - Weekly reports May – August,
 - Monthly reports April, September – March
 - Total Tracked Impressions: *9,430,589,172 (Based on April – September)
- Streaming Advertising Pilot Programs – Spotify and Hulu. The primary goal of both Spotify and Hulu pilot programs is awareness. Unlike YouTube preroll advertising with an immediate call to action, the majority of Spotify and Hulu users are not clicking out of the streaming platform during ads.
 - Spotify Campaign - Streaming audio performed well in terms of completion rate, hovering around 99%. Total impressions 558,749.
 - Summer – 505,301 impressions, 105 clicks, 0.02% CTR, \$21.77 CPM
 - Fall – 53,448 impressions, 5 clicks, 0.01% CTR, \$19.65 CPM
 - Hulu Campaign - Included summer-focused content and kids/hydration-focused ad that will run throughout the fall season. The Hulu ads delivered in total just under 500,000 impressions this year, with an average CPM of just over \$50. This is within standard range for CTV/OTT. The frequency for these ads is around 4, meaning users are seeing the ads around 4 times on average.
 - Summer - 445,911 impressions, \$50.46 CPM
 - Fall – 32,419 impressions, \$51.24 CPM
- Build Up Dietitians Ad – Social Ad aimed at dietitians and featured the Benefits of Watermelon that included all messaging pillars:
 - Facebook boosted post that ran for 8 days: 55,473 reach, 715 link clicks, 807 engagements and 16 shares
 - Facebook boosted post for National Watermelon Day – 2,805 reach, 136 link clicks

COMMUNICATIONS

- LinkedIn post – 6,314 reach 34 link clicks, 1 share
- Also shared in private/closed groups focused on pediatrics, foodservice and public health

Consumer Communications

- Largest consumer-focused campaign of the year, Use the Whole Watermelon, launched late May and ran through September 2. Aimed at showing the taste, health, economic and sustainable benefits of the full watermelon, inside and out. Multiple activations took place throughout the campaign including:
 - A new digital hub - Use the Whole Watermelon landing page on Watermelon.org, accessible through UseTheWholeWatermelon.com. The interactive microsite is a one-stop resource for everything about using the whole watermelon. It received 39,299 pageviews, more than 47,000 sessions and a time on site of 2 minutes 35 seconds.
 - An interactive watermelon “butchery” tutorial, with videos like “how to cut and use the rind,” “how to juice” and “how to use a melon baller”
 - Total Video Views: 16,529
 - Curated recipes that share refreshing and delicious inspiration for all parts of the watermelon
 - Tips and tricks for food prep
 - Gamification of food waste footprint tracker allowing users to calculate how much food waste they can save by using the entire watermelon
 - A call for consumers to pledge to Use the Whole Watermelon and enter the summer sweepstakes - encouraged watermelon fans to pledge to Use the Whole Watermelon because it is a sustainable choice that reduces food waste – minimizing the negative impacts on our environment. Those that pledged and shared why had access to download branded digital “I Pledged” stickers and was entered for a chance to win weekly watermelon prizes. Those consumer entries were captured and designed into special social posts quoting the best of the best Pledges to be shared across social channels, amplifying and inspiring audiences to use the whole watermelon. The first 1000 pledges received “I Pledged” stickers and “Use the Whole Watermelon” logo enamel pins. The UGC selects also received a limited edition “Use the Whole Watermelon” tote bag. Goal of 1,000 pledges was surpassed by mid-June. More than 2,000 consumers pledged by end of campaign. Of these, 1,644 users subscribed to the What About Watermelon monthly consumer e-newsletter - an 83% opt-in rate! Pledges came from watermelon fans in ALL 50 states and British Columbia.
 - Social media promotions - In addition to promoting the campaign on all NWPB social channels, we worked with influencer partners, both new and longstanding, whose activations include TikToks, long form blog posts, Facebook and Instagram posts, stories and reels, Pinterest posts and media appearances. Each month of the summer we focused on one part of the watermelon to inspire – June – Flesh, July – Juice, August – Rind, with a special celebration on August 3 for National Watermelon Day. Garnered more than **4 million total impressions** across all social platforms.
 - GIPHY sticker impressions: 656.1K
 - Social media impressions: 4,204,742
 - Organic impressions: 400K
 - Paid impressions: 3.8M
 - Social media engagement: 273,331
 - Rind post gained the most impressions across IG and FB

COMMUNICATIONS

- IG: Watermelon Stir Fry
 - Impressions: 30,113
 - Engagement: 618
- FB: Rind Cutting Tips
 - Impressions: 103,922
 - Engagement: 8,409
- FB: Watermelon Juice Recap
 - Impressions: 84,654
 - Engagement: 251
- Use the Whole Watermelon Video series – Included 7 in-house videos in the IG Reels/TikTok style from @WatermelonBoard accounts on Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and Pinterest totaling over 280,000 views:
 1. Introduction to Use the Whole Watermelon – Posted 6/17
 2. “How to” Flesh cuts – Posted 6/22
 3. Flesh Recipes – Posted 6/29
 4. Juice “How to” – Posted 7/13
 5. Juice Recipes – Posted 7/20
 6. Rind “How to” – Posted 8/10
 7. Rind Recipes – Posted 8/17
- Ad streaming
 - #UTWW ads were divided into general campaign ads and pledge ads, both driving to the website.
 - For the general campaign ads, the watermelon image with sticker overlay and watermelon animation were top performers in driving the most, lowest-cost link clicks to the UTWW website.
 - For the pledge ads, the green “I pledged” sticker creative was consistently the top performer across both Facebook and Instagram.
 - Pinterest - Ads featuring images of watermelon or a person with watermelon drove more link clicks to the website than ads featuring the UTWW and pledge stickers/stamps alone (though they did perform fine as overlays to images)
- Influencer partner shares – details can be found in Influencer section below.
 - Chrissy Carroll, RD – Snacking in Sneakers
 - Anne Mauney, RD – Fannetastic Food
 - Curly Cultivators
 - Chef Reilly Meehan
 - Bailey Van Tassel
 - Jennifer Fisher – The Fit Fork
 - Lori Taylor – The Produce Moms
 - Bianca Dottin
 - Healthy Family Project
- Content syndication
- A suite of new creative assets supported the campaign, including recipe and selection photography and video.
- Photography and video for recipe and cuts shots for use on watermelon.org, social media and asset library, including:
 - Tag Worldwide Virtual photoshoot – June 29 & 30 – New watermelon recipe content was created to promote rind versatility throughout the whole year. Shot 12 recipe photos and 10 recipe videos including Spicy Watermelon Rind Cocktail, Watermelon Rind Basil Lime Relish, Watermelon Rind Curry, Strawberry Watermelon Mint Salsa, Watermelon

COMMUNICATIONS

Granita Filled Lime Cups, Watermelon Rind Cake, Watermelon Rind Caprese Pasta Salad, Spiced Watermelon Rind Pie, Watermelon Rind Apple Hand Pies, Watermelon Rind Lentil Chili, Grilled Pineapple and Watermelon Skewers, Watermelon Rind Orzo Salad, Shrimp Crudit  with Pickled Watermelon Rind and reshoots of the Watermelon Sangria, Coconut Margarita and Watermelon Tarts. Videos include a new How to Pick a Watermelon and several of the new recipes above.

- Visual Cuisines – In January 2023, NWPB worked with longtime food photography partner Visual Cuisines to execute a watermelon recipe photoshoot with stunning and stylish watermelon imagery for recipes ranging from mocktails and cocktails to Thanksgiving fall-themed entertaining for a ‘gather and graze’ appeal. New recipes posted to Watermelon.org include mocktails such as the Watermelon Rosemary Lemonade Spritz, Watermelon Lime Mint Tonic and a Watermelon Ginger Vanilla Spritz. Reshoots to update photography of well-trafficked recipes included the Watermelon BBQ Sauce with brisket, Flank Steak with Watermelon Bourbon Glaze and Watermelon Cranberry Glazed Pork Chops.
- 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 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:
 - July 2022 - 45% Open Rate, 9% Click Rate.
 - August 2022. 42% Open Rate, 6% Click Rate.
 - October 2022. 42% Open Rate, 2% Click Rate.
 - December 2021. 43% Open Rate, 2% Click Rate.
 - March 2022. 43% Open Rate, 3% Click Rate.
- Jump with Jill Digital Tour – Spring 2022 (April 18 to May 27) Children’s Outreach and Education: Music-based nutrition digital education program in 23 schools from 21 states across the nation including: AL, AZ, CA, FL, IN, ID, IL, KS, MD, ME, MI, MO, NJ, NY, PA, TX, UT, VA, WA, WI, & WV. In mid-April, all participating schools were sent “Rock Boxes” - including educational tools that can be used throughout the course of the six-week program. Additionally, each school also received a cadence of communication including 10-15 coaching emails to help guide students through the curriculum.
 - Student Population Reached: 9,496
 - Teacher Accounts: 97
 - Coaching Email Open Rate 40.47% (average is 15-25%)
 - Coaching Email Click-to-Open Rate 23.28% (average is 2.5%)
 - Physical Deliverable Sets: 326
 - Social Media Impressions: 328,566
 - Watch Time Hours (Digital Tour + Youtube): 1,087
 - Views (Digital Tour + YouTube+Website): 42,450
 - Several Awards including Best Feature Film - KIDS International Family Film Festival, Official Selection, Best Feature-length Film, San Diego International Kids Film Festival, Finalist, Best Kids Films & Documentaries, The TASTE Awards and Semi-Finalist, Best Youth Music Video, Children Cinema Awards
 - Included watermelon in album artwork image of new album called Jump with Jill: The Movie! The Soundtrack
- Wintermelon toolkit landing page - November 2022. Added new webpage on watermelon.org (<https://www.watermelon.org/wintermelon-toolkit/>) to promote watermelon during the winter

COMMUNICATIONS

months. Designed as a resource for retailers, media and industry members, such as watermelon importers, to help position and promote watermelon year-round. Curated existing Board resources in support of winter watermelon marketing efforts in a user-friendly, easy-to-navigate format. All promotional materials are free to download and use and include:

- Lifestyle “sizzle reel” video
 - Fun and energetic Watermelon graphics and logos
 - Social media sample posts
 - Lifestyle images with people, including kitchen prep and grazing boards
 - Recipes, like a Watermelon Mule
 - Carvings, such as Christmas Tree cut outs and Snowman
 - Health and nutrition messages
- In April 2022, Partnered with The Education Center and Mailbox.com for a dedicated e-blast to teachers and educators to promote free resources, including lesson plans, skill sheets and videos from the Watermelon Board.
 - Consumer Research Takeaways – in partnership with Curious Plot, analyzed results of Consumer Research survey into digestible takeaways and communications priorities and strategies

Special Events

- Sponsored Florida Watermelon Queen during library/pedal-palooza with radio media activation in July 2022.
- The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Texas state chapter event , which took place in April 2022, included printed copies of NWPB’s Registered Dietitian toolkit to 300 attendees.
- St. Augustine Food and Wine Festival – May 6-7, 2023. NWPB partnered with the Florida Watermelon Association and Fresh From Florida on a consumer tasting event with over 4,000 attendees who enjoyed fresh cut watermelon slices and also a Chilled Watermelon and Gulf Shrimp with Smoky Chimichurri Sauce and Queso Fresco sample that was demonstrated live on the Southern Living stage. Guests also visited with the Florida and National Watermelon Queens and were educated about watermelon’s health, value and versatility benefits. National media exposure included Southern Living media and Taste of the South magazine.
- Adventure Aquarium Hippo Birthday Party – Camden, NJ – July 8 – 10, 2023. In partnership with Adventure Aquarium, NWPB celebrated one of their Nile Hippos’ 22nd birthday party, to throw “Genny” the hippo a watermelon-themed birthday weekend. “Genny’s Super Sweet Birthday Bash” had special appearances by National Watermelon Queen Bethany Barfield, a wild watermelon cake and carving by Chef Joe Poon, and celebratory birthday treats for attendees like watermelon ICEEs, watermelon cupcakes and special watermelon birthday cards for Genny throughout July 9th and 10th. Senior Director of Communications Stephanie Barlow and Director of Retail & International Marketing Juliemar Rosado were on hand to assist and help families take photos, play a game of hungry, hungry hippos, and actually watch Queen Bethany throw pieces of watermelon to Genny and her friend Button during the twice daily feedings. Local Philadelphia ABC News affiliate showed up Sunday to capture footage that was included on 30 television news clip mentions over the weekend and 11 online news mentions of the event. Both days had a sold-out audience and pictures with the Queen and free watermelon from Chef Joe were well-received.
- Shopping for Health (SFH) retail dietitian-focused event – July 2022. Sponsored a goodie bag inclusion of the Registered Dietitian Toolkit – Wide World of Watermelon - for watermelon education and information representation.
The conference incorporated watermelon at meals and snacks at no additional cost and also provided both pre- and post-event survey question opportunities.

COMMUNICATIONS

- International Food & Produce's New Global Produce & Floral Show – October 27 – 29 – Orlando, FL. Senior Director of Communication Stephanie Barlow is a member of the Global Show Committee and attended a committee networking event and meetings throughout the Show.
- Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo Satellite Event - October 8, 2022 – Orlando, FL. Hosted an invitation-only axe-throwing event for registered dietitians at Stumpy's Hatchet House. Scheduled to coincide with the Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo - the largest conference for nutrition professionals of the year - the Board enlisted the help of RD and influencer partner Chrissy Carroll. More than 70 RDs attended and threw axes, networked, and tried a few watermelon drinks and bites in different applications including the stacked jicama, chicken and watermelon salad, savory watermelon pizza, watermelon salsa and dessert dippers. Signage and photo props were placed throughout the venue in order to encourage social posts and each nutrition professional also went home with a goody bag including a usethewholewatermelon.com tote, RD toolkit, and other watermelon nutritional resources and goodies.
- 47th Marine Corps Marathon – October 30, 2022 - Washington, DC. The marathon consisted of 30,000 marathoners, 10,000 10K runners and 500 50K ultramarathoners. The runners come from all 50 states and over 50 countries of the world, and it's the nation's 3rd largest marathon. Team Watermelon included NWPB staff, all of the state associations Watermelon Queens and coordinators, and NWPB Board President Christian Murillo. The team handed out a whole truckload of fresh cut watermelon at the finish line, and not just to racers, but also to their supporters, friends, family and residents in the Rosslyn community where the Finish Festival is located.
- Hosted IFPA Leadership Class for Epcot's Behind the Seeds tour at The Land – March 3, 2023 – Orlando, FL. Class fellows were given an introductory lesson on how one of the smallest commodity boards representing one of the largest produce items was able to impact, influence and inspire watermelon usage for consumers for many years through event marketing opportunities with Disney over the past 10 years that drove education for the culinary team in park with watermelon menu items using flesh, juice and rind to this day.
- Trends and Strategy Meeting – Minneapolis, MN. June 27 & 28. Senior Director of Communications Stephanie Barlow and Marketing & Communications Manager Summer Walker met in person with the account team at communications agency partner Curious Plot to strategize on the current campaigns for Watermelon Board across media, digital, social and influencer partner programming. Meeting topics included performance media and advertising, website and interactive media, partner content consultants and writers, assets and resources.

Digital Communications

- Added Google Web Stories platform. Using individual story panels with videos, graphics, and other features, the Watermelon Board shared campaign narratives that users click through, or tap through on mobile, to experience the story we wanted to tell. In addition to viewing them on our website, people experienced Google Web Stories in a Google search, in Google images, or through the Google Discover app, available on Apple and Android devices. Tappable experiences available at <https://www.watermelon.org/web-stories>
- National Watermelon Day Scavenger Hunt – On August 3 NWPB activated its first-ever online Scavenger Hunt. The 24-hour campaign asked watermelon trivia questions via IG stories and encouraged followers to visit watermelon.org to assist with correct answers. The incentivized campaign, though short in duration, gave a snapshot about how the NWPB community chooses to engage/participate – and help to establish the likelihood for similar campaigns at a later date. Generated 1,250 Stories impressions, 20 clicks to website and 30 total entries.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Social metrics Y/Y results:

	2021 - 2022	2022-2023	% Increase
Website Pageviews	671,464	827,275	23.20%
Social Engagements	416,427	1,029,365	147.19%
Social Video Views	2,613,984	3,270,425	25.11%
Social Watermelon Community	286,259	297,999	4.10%
Social Impressions	19,036,952	24,610,194	29.28%

- Web traffic to Watermelon.org, the homepage of all things watermelon (which houses not only consumer-facing but also professional, industry and B2B audiences) surpassed the 5% goal of pageviews
- Social media platform *results for @WatermelonBoard channels. *Note that social metrics have moved to year/year results instead of fiscal year results, while social goals run through the fiscal year.

	2021	2022 Goal	2022	% of Goal
Social/Digital Impressions (+15%)				
Facebook	11,079,013	12,740,864	9,013,410	71%
Instagram	6,056,925	6,965,464	2,431,040	35%
Pinterest	11,139,494	12,810,418	12,620,000	99%
YouTube (Views)	1,625,045	1,868,802	476,555	25%
Social/Digital Engagements (+5%)				
Facebook	369,742	388,229	623,713	169%
Instagram	36,204	38,014	37,671	99%
Pinterest	325,957	342,254	272,563	105%
YouTube	1,589	1,668	1,701	102%
TikTok (NEW - not included in goals)	153	161	5,107	3179%

COMMUNICATIONS

	2021	2022 Goal	2022	% of Goal
Community Growth (+15%)				
Facebook	253,901	291,986	262,089	90%
Instagram	14,973	17,219	17,514	102%
Pinterest	7,078	8,140	7,787	96%
YouTube	963	1,107	1,090	98%
Enewsletter	15,497	17,822	15,858	89%
Website (+5%)				
Pageviews	671,464	705,037	827,275	117%
Enewsletter				
Open Rate (+%)	16%	20%	27.3%	137%
Clicks (3%)	10,843	11,168	12,052	108%

- Watermelon.org website: Editorial calendar for content across all social channels, monthly
- *What About Watermelon* consumer e-newsletter distributed 13 issues (monthly issues plus a special Use the Whole Watermelon issue) with a 27.3% average open rate
- LinkedIn continued to amplify industry-specific news including weekly Watermelon Market Reports, events and campaigns. Ended fiscal year with 1,713 followers.
- Created monthly animated graphics that support monthly editorial themes, holidays and other calls to action throughout the year. The excitement and movement that animation incorporates not only guarantees more engagements, but helps “stop the scroll” as us social media users approximately scroll the height of the Eiffel Tower daily. Making gifs and animations on existing still photography of recipes, carvings or other beauty shots can be used to point out ingredients, health benefits or just add some movement to get consumers attention.
- Grower Stories – Added Dan Van Groningen to watermelonstory.com, as well as created and amplified social content
- Added Instagram LinkInBio tool, used to drive traffic directly to content posted in Instagram feed to make it easy for followers to find recipes, carvings and blog
- Dashboard Reporting – Monthly meetings to monitor and optimize owned audiences on website, as well as all social platforms

Industry Outreach and Communications

- NWPB hosted the annual queen media training and communications seminar April 9 & 10 in Orlando, FL. The two-day training included a half-day session on storytelling and media interview prep with Gallo Communications, an introduction to watermelon that included consumer and retail communications presentations by NWPB’s Stephanie Barlow and Juliemar Rosado and presentations from former national queens Brandi John (2014) and Katelyn Miller (2012). Day two included a “social media bootcamp” and former national queen (2020-2021) Paige Hudson presenting on “a day in the life of a watermelon queen” and social media posting and promotion. Day two concluded with video presentation practice, an interactive session spotlighting various scenarios for video content.
- Watermelon Update e-newsletter distributed 12x/year to nearly 600 key industry and assessment-paying organizations with a pdf version on website. Also posted on LinkedIn.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Monthly newsletter:
 - Average Open Rate: 42% (10% increase year/year)
 - Average Click Through Rate: 6%
- Four Special Edition Watermelon Updates: Econometric Evaluation (2), Consumer Research (2)
- American Heart Association heart checkmark certification for fresh watermelon PLUs: seedless, seeded, mini watermelon
- Alliance for Food and Farming – paid members
- Trade Press Coverage – Wrote and distributed trade press releases:
 - *Use the Whole Watermelon* summer consumer campaign. Release was picked up and ran in the following media outlets:
 - Produce Blue Book Online (23,504)
 - The Produce News (6,232)
 - Vegetable Growers News Online (9,662)
 - Fruit Growers News Online (7,540)
 - Grocery Insight Online (500)
 - *Team Watermelon Returns to MCM*. Release was picked up and ran in the following media outlets:
 - Team Watermelon rehydrates Marines at DC marathon - Vegetable Growers News (9,662)
 - Team Watermelon returns as MCM sponsor, bringing message of hydration – The Produce News (6,232)
 - NWPB sponsors Marine Corps Marathon - Produce Blue Book (23,504)
 - Team Watermelon returns to rehydrate at The People's Marathon- Morning Ag Clips (25,606)
 - Team Watermelon Returns to Rehydrate at The People's Marathon – Perishable News
- Nonthermal Processing Division Think Tank Competition – May 2022 – Senior Director of Communications Stephanie Barlow served as judge for Use the Whole Watermelon contest
- FoodTrack Food Safety and Defense Alerts Subscription

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** – Use the Whole Watermelon Series. Orlando-based mom-fluencer, lifestyle and homeschool blogger Bianca Dottin aligning with our overall *Use the Whole Watermelon* campaign, Bianca created a video series of several recipes from one watermelon and an additional Sunday family dinner showcase of watermelon on the table. Recipes will included a mocktail, a watermelon barbeque sauce and a watermelon salsa appetizer. Videos launched live on her Instagram Reels the week of June 13 – 17 and garnered nearly 10,000 impressions and 352 engagements. Content was also posted on TikTok and YouTube.
- **Reilly Meehan** – Chef Reilly was a influencer partner for the *Use the Whole Watermelon* summer 2022 campaign with a focus on recipe development, cooking inspiration and ASMR. From June through August, Reilly created 6 recipe and how to videos, featuring the Green Goddess Salad, Watermelon Cosmo, Watermelon Feta Salad, “How to Cut a Watermelon,” National Watermelon Day punch bowl, and Watermelon Gelato with Candied Watermelon Rind and posted them on his own Instagram and TikTok channels. His combined audience is over 297,000 followers and 1.9 million TikTok likes. As of August 2022, Reilly’s watermelon content earned 341,237 plays, 17,283 likes, 5,940 saves and 4,298 shares. As a non-sponsored value

COMMUNICATIONS

add, Chef Reilly posted the Watermelon Cranberry Sauce video that he created in LY partnership with new VO on IG Reels and Tiktok, crediting us with the recipe as part of his cranberry sauce week leading up to Thanksgiving

- **Anne Mauney** – Registered Dietitian and influencer Anne Mauney from Fannetastic Foods to support our Use the Whole Watermelon campaign theme, Anne created three rind-focused recipes in June, July and August and included Fermented Watermelon Rind Pickles, Watermelon Rind Salad and a Watermelon Rind Smoothie. Anne’s recipes were all posted on her blog, social accounts including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, IG Stories and Pinterest and included newsletter inclusion, garnering over 100 impressions per network. As an added bonus, Anne also participated in the Marine Corps Marathon 10k and mentioned watermelon at the finish festival.
- **Jennifer Fisher** – Exercise and Wellness influencer known as “The Fit Fork” created 4 watermelon “activations” in her partnership with the Board this year. These included a Use the Whole Watermelon-themed recipe of Cinnamon Rind “Fries,” a Watermelon Juice 101 tutorial, a Quick and Easy cutting tutorial and a year-round themed “Watermelon Fit Every Season” guide. These were posted on her blog, Facebook Instagram, IG Stories, Pinterest and TikTok. Additionally, Jennifer created and amplified non-sponsored watermelon content as a value add. These included a watermelon gazpacho with feta recipe post on all her previously listed channels and a series of 8 watermelon basics for Spring on her Instagram Reels. She also included two watermelon recipes in her Cooking for One for Dummies e-cookbook including Watermelon Feta Mint Salad and Watermelon Smoothie Bowl.
- **Chrissy Carroll**, Registered Dietitian and influencer from Snacking in Sneakers (the blog) and ChrissytheRD (on social) to support our Use the Whole Watermelon campaign theme, Chrissy created two rind-focused recipes including Mini Strawberry and Watermelon Rind Pies and Coconut and Watermelon Rind Muffins in the summer. In January, Chrissy posted a Vegan Watermelon Tartare recipe as well. Chrissy’s recipes were all posted on her blog, social accounts including TikTok, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, IG Stories and Pinterest. As an added bonus, Chrissy also posted an Instagram Reel and recap from the fall’s FNCE “Axe Me About Watermelon” dietitian networking event that she coordinated on behalf of Watermelon.
- **Healthy Family Project** - Previously known as Produce for Kids, and the 2022-2023 program year report saw diverse posts and activities across all social media and digital platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, TikTok, YouTube, Twitter, eblast newsletters and blog posts. Ranging from ‘Use the Whole Watermelon’ rind posts, how-to’s and recipes with Facebook Lives and TikToks on how to use the rind in the spring and summer all the way to Valentine’s Day heart pops to Holiday grazing boards featuring watermelon and a winter watermelon newsletter in January, in total HFP delivered 25 pieces of inspired, educational and delicious watermelon content throughout the program year with a consumer-facing audience of over 275,000 followers.
- **Ross Chastain** – More than doubled his follower count this year due to race season. Posts tagging @watermelonboard on social channels including Facebook (428,909 impressions and 102,094 engagements); Instagram (428,345 impressions and 16,354 likes) and Twitter. 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. Leveraged several value-adds as part of 2022 season, including:
 - In May, 2022, Forbes published an article on Ross Chastain titled “Sweet Spot: Nascar Driver Raises Awareness Of The Watermelon”. NWPB was favorably mentioned in the article and Senior Director of Communications Stephanie Barlow was also quoted.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Updated community page, honed in on Ross promotions as he went through finals. Created a new bio for Ross on NWPB website to reflect new race record and accolades – September 2022.
- Custom graphics to support Ross in playoffs (3 rounds)
- **Lori Taylor, The Produce Moms**
 - Created custom video and blog post in support of Use the Whole Watermelon featuring a watermelon rind churro made with an air fryer – July 2022.
 - Appeared on Indy Style morning show segment highlighting summer flavors like watermelon and plums – July 2022. Also included on blog on WishTV blog.
 - Created and posted a custom Reel/TikTok – I bought a whole watermelon – now what?. Posted June 2022.
 - One custom newsletter - January 2023 - Watermelon in the winter, owned and shared recipe inspo
 - One custom recipe blog – August 2022. Long form blog post – 7 Recipe Favorites with a Unique Watermelon Twist
 - Watermelon newsletter/email inclusion – 6/year
 - 57K consumer and influencer e-newsletter subscribers
 - NWPB partner marks on website
- **Lauren Manaker, RD** – Two Instagram posts and Reels focusing on watermelon during pregnancy and one watermelon recipe (watermelon-infused iced green tea). Garnered 2,600 impressions and 122 engagements. In July 2022, Lauren commented in Eat This Not That (1,558,986) and Yahoo Lifestyle (149,324,783) articles on five secrets for picking the best watermelon. Manaker’s advice included looking for the ground spot on the skin, seeing where the fruit is in the produce section of the grocery store and don’t spend too much time evaluating the skin pattern. In November 2022, Yahoo Lifestyle released an article called “Eat These Fruits To Lose 5 Inches of Belly Fat, Dietitian Says” (149,324,782) where Lauren mentioned vitamin C and hydration message points.
- **Cara Harbstreet** – For a year-round winter-themed focus, Cara had a Instagram takeover of Watermelon Board channels December 2022. Additionally, Cara post IG stories and Reel focusing on nutrition, Vitamin C-eason, snack board building with watermelon on her own channels.
- Partnered with the following creator/influencers as part of our *Use the Whole Watermelon* campaign only:
 - **Curly Cultivators** – Recipe development and sustainability focus. 3 Reels/TikToks, 55,128 views, 4,496 engagements.
 - **Bailey Van Tassel** – Recipe development and sustainability focus. 3 Reels/TikToks, 60,352 views, 2,994 engagements.

RETAIL/INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

Tradeshow and Conference Participation

In-person regional produce shows continued to flourish in 2022-2023 and allowed for even more quality “face time” time with retailers, wholesalers, dieticians, and other industry professionals in attendance.

Retail Shows as Exhibitors:

- Viva Fresh Expo (Apr)
- West Coast Produce Expo (May)
- New England Produce Show (Aug)
- New York Produce Show (Dec)
- Southeast Produce Council (Mar '23)
- *Attending/Networking Opportunities:*
 - PMA Fresh Summit (Oct)

Retail Advertising & Educational Pieces

- Launched new Watermelon Learning Lab in an effort to combat the high turnover rate of employees at food retailers as well as provide accurate and knowledgeable product information as a path to purchase opportunity
 - The Watermelon Learning Lab is an online tool with lesson plans and videos for retailers seeking to educate employees that work with watermelon
 - Upon completion of the quiz, the “students” will receive a certificate of completion via email
- Retail kit available in physical and digital (on website) formats on the retailers section of watermelon.org.
 - Also available in Spanish and Canadian French
- 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 included 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 120 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
 - Additional incentives in partnership with Tajin for any entries that included them in their submission
 - Quote from Grand Prize Winner: "The team at Schnucks Richmond Center would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to showcase the talent we have here at Schnucks Markets. Bringing ideas to life for our customers to get excited about is something we take great pride in."
- Supported approximately 40 domestic state regional that primarily included watermelon queen

RETAIL/INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

promotions in-store retail and commissary appearances but also included festivals, athletic/sporting events, school promotions, farmer's market demos and a digital ad campaign

- Regional account managers (2 US, 1 Canada) fulfilled approximately 58 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
- Completed a mid-summer Ibotta Shopping App campaign in
 - 54,216 offers redeemed which equates to actual product sold nationally
 - 42% of the new redeemers were millennials
 - 8.3 million brand impressions
- New Genesis App>Less digital retail experience
 - From September 1 to October 31, NWPB engaged a new digital retail experience with partner Genesis
 - APP>LESS is a pay-for-performance that ensures content connects with relevant consumers
 - Guaranteed engagement with an immersive "app-like" experience without the need for download and install
 - Consumer engages with the targeted ad and are then taken to a custom watermelon web experience, richly designed to deliver immersive and engaging information focusing on nutritional benefits and year round availability
 - Promoted nationwide
 - Aimed to increase awareness and consumption of watermelon outside of the key summer season
 - Over-delivered with 36,783 unique activations and 15,608 unique clicks
 - 42.2% click through rate to "Learn More" content
- Implemented shoppable recipe tech on Watermelon.org in via Chicory, NWPB to allow recipes on the website to be commerce enabled so that ingredients can be shopped directly on the website - connecting consumers to retailers with just a few clicks

International Marketing

Market Access Program funding was facilitated directly through Foreign Agricultural Service and totaled \$297,962

- Canada – Canadian PR efforts for 2022 were to inspire new (and existing) watermelon consumers during the planning/trigger stage of the customer journey to purchase US-grown watermelon through meal inspiration and demonstration the ease of preparing and storing the fruit as well as motivate foodservice to incorporate watermelon in their menu through education and inspiration
 - Some strategies included social media advertising, organic TikTok content, media, influencer and foodservice partnerships, email marketing and landing page and CFGIF partnership
 - Results:
 - Social media advertising – Created content pieces for TikTok and Pinterest and promoted them to relevant Canadian audiences

RETAIL/INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

- 1.4 million engagements / 8.2 million impressions
- Influencer partnerships – Engaged influencers to create customized content in formats that work best for their expertise and communication style that was shared directly to their online communities on TikTok and Instagram
 - 960,538 engagements / 2.9 million impressions
- Owned TikTok content – Partnered with a Gen-Z Canadian influencer to develop and publish organic TikTok content on NWPB's owned channel
 - 285,976 engagements / 844,726 impressions
- Media partnership – Partnered with the Toronto Star to create a digital page view-focused campaign with sponsored content
 - 787 engagements / 457,529 impressions
- Email marketing and landing page – Developed an owned Canadian audience database by adding a unique form on a watermelon.org landing page where Canadian consumers were directed through Pinterest ads
 - 159 signups
- Foodservice partnership – Engaged a key foodservice partner Restaurants Canada (RC) to educate the industry about watermelon and inspire chefs with original and economical menu solutions by including ads in an RC newsletter and on its website
 - 59 engagements / 96,978 impressions
- CFG (Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers) partnership – Engaged a key industry stakeholder (CFG) to target independent grocery retailers and educate the industry about watermelon including ads on CFG's website and a newsletter
 - 784 opens (33.5% open rate) / 4,202 impressions
- 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
 - Results
 - FOODEX Kansai – Fresh-cut US watermelon samples were handed out at this international food trade show
 - Attendees who tried the samples were skeptical of the quality of US watermelons, but were ultimately pleasantly surprised of the quality after sampling
 - Costco – In-store demonstrations were conducted in 30 Costco Japan warehouse locations across Japan at the height of the summer on August 10th
 - Samples of U.S. watermelon were passed out, driving sales of US watermelons in Costco stores
 - Additional in-store activities took place in select Costco locations on September 10th
 - FarmDo – Produce market chain dedicated to providing the freshest, in-season fruits and vegetables conducted another round of in-store demonstrations in seven of their stores between Aug. 27th – Sep. 2nd, up two stores from 2021

FOODSERVICE

Foodservice Committee

The Board invests in foodservice to move more watermelon through the supply chain and get more watermelon messages in front of consumers. Research tells us after a consumer tries a watermelon menu item they are more inclined to buy a watermelon the next time they go to the grocery store.

The Foodservice Committee is responsible for developing and implementing an effective foodservice marketing campaign. The foodservice program is built with direction from Strategic Direction from the Board, considering external influences and knowledge that come from research and trends. Built on a foundation of research, the program 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 placing more watermelon on foodservice menus, year-round.



Note: Foodservice Research is budgeted in the Research Program.

Watermelon Foodservice Program Key Messages

These educational and inspirational messages address foodservice's opportunities and concerns about using watermelon and were used throughout the program.

- Cultivation
- Types & Formats
- Selection & Storage
- Cutting & Yield
- Health messages
- Value (accessible price point year-round)
- Versality (flavor pairings, inspiring recipes, think outside the peel, beverage recipes)
- Year-round availability
- Takeaway/Delivery (menu concepts and packaging recommendations)

FOODSERVICE

Foodservice Media

Influence the media to educate and inspire with watermelon messages and watermelon operator success stories. Publications reached have their own targets such as quick service, full service, education, etc. and the publications also target different decision makers such as culinary and marketing.

Public Relations

- 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)
 - Two placements in Datassential publications – 20,000+ member reach
 - Nation's Restaurant News – 85,000
 - NRN a.m. – 92,000
 - Food Management Today – 32,000
 - Food Management Culinary Insights – 32,000
 - Foodservice Director Recipe Report (many throughout the year) – 119,000
 - Flavor & the Menu Flavor Flash – 7,800
- 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 the Bubble Party at the Restaurant Show
 - Sampled the Charred Watermelon Salad and Watermelon Tiki Punch
 - Nearly every publication in attendance the Board targets each year – more than 20 titles
 - Attended and sponsored the annual conference to reach foodservice editors with watermelon education and inspiration
 - During Chef Showcase the Board featured Watermelon Poke marinated in yuzu sauce with furikake on a nest of pickled watermelon rind topped with watermelon 'caviar' presented by Chef Manny Juan
 - During lunch on the second day, watermelon was featured in the refreshing Watermelon Poblano Salad
 - Editor meetings pitched watermelon for editorial calendars in 2023 with all of the Board's media targets - more than 20 titles
 - NWPB co-sponsored an editor reception
 - Megan McKenna, Sr. Director of Marketing & Foodservice was elected president of the organization for 2023

Media Partnerships

Culinary Institute of America (CIA) Digital Media Partnership – The CIA is the world's premier culinary college teaching the chefs of tomorrow but also inspiring current chefs. The partnership will leverage existing content found at ciaprochef.com/watermelon featuring more than 30 watermelon recipes with how-to videos.

- 82,747 total video views across all platforms (website, iTunes, etc.)
- 1,111,895 total impressions on all platforms (digital, social, etc.) – for example:
 - More than 10,000 video views and 45,000 impressions on LinkedIn
 - 53 inclusions in SmartBrief newsletters reaching 992,000 subscribers

FOODSERVICE

Content Creation

In 2019, the Board invested in the Year Round Story by creating and sharing more about where and when watermelon is grown, and the fruit's cultural connection to Florida and Mexico. To add to that story, California was added to the library in the fall of 2022. Beautiful photography and a video help tell the story of watermelon grown in California and how it is used on menus, both food and beverage. Staff will use this content across the program into 2023.

Paid Media

- Paid media October through March complement earned media in the spring and summer when there is more watermelon on the menu
- Campaign messaging includes:
 - Versatility including using the whole watermelon and global flavors
 - Health and wellness
 - Beverage applications
- Running in multiple foodservice publications, the campaign reached NWPB targets more than 300,000 times through print, digital and social media placements

Digital Outreach

Additions to watermelon.org/foodservice included:

- Foodservice Research
- New recipes
- Expanded Menu Ideation page including the new *Watermelon Flavor Dynamics*
 - Three new sections help to highlight watermelon's versatility
 - Watermelon Warriors showcase the work the Board has done with the Culinary Institute of America and Chef's Roll
 - Menu a Watermelon Promotion highlights seasonal recipes to inspire year-round watermelon menuing and spotlights trends and handling techniques to further elevate watermelon's versatility
 - Watermelon on the Menu are current menu items in the US

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. in addition to access to the attendee list for follow-up.

Distributor Outreach

International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA) Foodservice Show - the largest gathering connecting fresh produce and foodservice in the country

- Record attendance with nearly 2,000 present, including approximately 900 buyers from 250 companies
- Sponsored a sampling station outside the show floor offering Watermelon and Feta Salad and an Indian Watermelon Rind Stir Fry which touch upon trends such as sustainability, global flavors, and year-round availability

FOODSERVICE

- Megan McKenna IFPA Produce Foodservice Chair, participated in the Foodservice Think Tank bringing together suppliers, distributors and operators to discuss industry hardships and opportunities
- Megan also was a mentor through the Career Pathways Program
- Some operators in attendance included: Brinker, Denny's, Hello Fresh, Texas Roadhouse and Tropical Smoothie Café

Noncommercial

K-12 Foodservice

Partnership with Healthy School Recipes - Healthy School Recipes is a one-stop resource for school nutrition professionals who plan menus or prepare food for child nutrition programs.

- Adaptation of 3 recipes to meet school foodservice requirements: Watermelon Dippers, Red, White and Blue Parfait, and Greek Pita Flatbread
 - Publication of the recipes on the HSR website in perpetuity
- Social media post highlighted "10 Tantalizing Watermelon Recipes"
 - Facebook: Reach = 1548, Engagements: 155
 - Twitter: Reach = 277, Engagements = 66
 - Instagram: Reach= 46, Engagements = 4
- Logo included in sponsorship crawl on website home page and on sponsor page through calendar year 2022
- The recipes created through this partnership are used to reach K-12 professionals because they are formatted for their menus – they will be used in future programming

Summer Noncommercial FoodOvation

- This event reaches multiple facets of the noncommercial space including Business & Industry, College & University, Healthcare and more
- Sponsorships include the opportunity to invite up to 40 target operators to attend the event featuring 12, 45-minute, 1-on-1 ideation sessions with operators (ranked by preference ahead of the conference)
- The Board received 11 of the top 12 selections and ended up with 15 meetings total
- Meetings featured the new Watermelon Flavor Dynamics and Pairings with watermelon flesh, seared flesh, rind and seared rind
- Four global recipes featured:
 - Watermelon Chirashi Don
 - Indian Watermelon Rind Stir Fry
 - Fried Watermelon Rind Pickles (Frickles)
 - Watermelon Pibil
- In a post event survey, 10 operators ranked the Watermelon Board in their top three meetings
- Watermelon was also included on the dinner menu on Tuesday, reaching all attendees
- Some operators in attendance included: Sodexo, Morrison Healthcare, Chartwells Higher Education and the University of Washington
- The organizations the Board met with represent more than 3,500 foodservice locations across the country

Remained a member of School Nutrition Association and National Association of College and University Foodservice to help stay connected with trends effecting these foodservice audiences.

FOODSERVICE

Commercial Outreach

The Flavor Experience presented by Flavor & the Menu Magazine – Bought to you by *Flavor & The Menu* magazine, is the foodservice industry's ultimate celebration of flavor, offering inspiration to high-volume food and beverage menu developers.

- Board President Christian Murillo was in attendance to provide insights on the watermelon industry to the foodservice operators in attendance
- The Watermelon Board, a long-time sponsor, highlighted three menu items:
 - Watermelon Braised Machaka Breakfast Tacos – watermelon was used to braise the meat and the taco was served with a Dried Chili Watermelon Salsa
 - Watermelon Greek Salad Cup – watermelon was the star with flesh being the predominant ingredient, topped with watermelon rind pickle
 - Jalisco Watermelon Beef Taquito – watermelon was used to braise the meat and the jicama shell taquito was served with watermelon mole and watermelon pico de gallo
- Watermelon was featured in six other food and beverage menu items highlighting consumer's demand and watermelon's ability to fit current foodservice trends
- There were more than 200 attendees from more than 100 operators present, representing more than 80,000 foodservice locations across the country
- Some brands that were in attendance included Applebee's, Bloomin' Brands, Morrison, Nordstrom, Rubio's, Fat Brands, and Jason's Deli

Fall Commercial FoodOvation

- This event reached multiple facets of the commercial space including quick service, full service, chains and more
- The sponsorship included the opportunity to invite up to 40 target operators to attend the event featuring 12, 45-minute, 1-on-1 ideation sessions with operators (ranked by preference ahead of the conference)
- The Board received 9 of the top 10 selections and ended up with 14 meetings total
- Meetings featured the new Watermelon Flavor Dynamics and Pairings with watermelon flesh, seared flesh, rind and seared rind
- Four global recipes featured:
 - Watermelon Chirashi Don
 - Indian Watermelon Rind Stir Fry
 - Fried Watermelon Rind Pickles (Frickles)
 - Watermelon Pibil
- Leftover Watermelon BBQ sauce was included on the dinner menu on Tuesday, reaching all attendees
- Meetings included companies such as Torchy's Tacos, Logan's Roadhouse, Fat Brands and Pret a Manger
- In total, the organizations the Board met with represent nearly 2,000 foodservice locations across the country

Hospitality Executive Exchange (HEE)

- HEE is a small, dynamic program made up of 40-50 select supplier partners with a focus on beverage and 40-50 food and beverage professionals with purchasing power from regional and national brands and hotels

FOODSERVICE

- The Board served a Watermelon Mezcal Paloma, highlighting trend-forward Mezcal with approachable watermelon, during the opening Showcase
- HEE's foundation is the 12, one-on-one, meetings
- The meetings consisted of:
 - Tastings: Fresh watermelon juice, low-abv Spicy Watermelon Fizz, Watermelon Negroni
 - The combination helps to highlight watermelon's versatility with different flavors but also the opportunities across the menu, from breakfast to brunch and poolside to dinner
 - Many are looking for more information on how to handle the product, like cutting and yield, shelf life and more on the different types
 - The Watermelon Flavor Dynamics and other beverage recipes inspired great conversation around the variety of uses of watermelon in foodservice
 - Some operators in attendance included Texas Roadhouse, Uno's, Ford's Garage, HEI Hotels & Resorts, Smokey Bones, and Marriott

Mise Conference (bonus opportunity that came out of Ongoing Opportunities)

- Designed with hotel food and beverage professionals in mind, the Mise Conference is intended to inspire, educate and create definitive action
- There was an opportunity for the Board to co-sponsor the event
- The Board shared a station featuring a watermelon and a mango salsa with tortilla chips, naan and a sugar cookie to highlight the diverse uses of just one salsa
- Carvings highlighted the product and were used in later sessions on food photography
- Watermelon was included in multiple menu items throughout the three day conference
- There were more than 150 operators representing nearly 50 companies in attendance

Foodservice Support & Promotions

Once decision makers are influenced through media or during events, the Board offers support to purchasing, culinary, marketing, nutrition, etc. to get more watermelon on menus. This support is available to both commercial and noncommercial organizations.

Foodservice promotions often support limited time offers (LTOs) with funds to move more of a watermelon menu item and place watermelon messages in front of consumers.

- First Watch Restaurants: Watermelon Wake-Up available June 6th-August 14th, and promoted through in-store signage, digital e-blasts, and social giveaways in approximately 450 locations
- Robeks Corporation: Wailea Watermelon Smoothie available June 13th-September 16th, and promoted through in-store signage, digital e-blasts, and social giveaways and paid social as well as third-party delivery apps in 93 locations
- Another Broken Egg: Fruit side available during the summer and the Brunch Short Rib featuring Pickled Watermelon Rind available August 23rd-January 9th, and promoted through in-store signage, digital e-blasts, and social giveaways in approximately 90 locations

FOODSERVICE

StarChefs Promotion

- In June, the Board partnered with StarChefs on a two week foodservice promotion.
- StarChefs serves as a community, resource and platform for restaurant professionals who have an intense passion for food, beverage, and industry trends as well as a backstage pass for food- savvy consumers.
- Spanning across the country and utilizing market level scan data, eight markets were chosen across the country with one restaurateur in each market:
 - Atlanta, GA - Kimball House with a Watermelon Spritz (Navy Strength Gin, Watermelon, Aperol, Lime, and Mineral Water)
 - Austin, TX - L'Oca D'Oro with a Grilled Watermelon (Burrata, Toasted Almonds, Italian Vinaigrette, and Basil)
 - Chicago, IL - Bar Sotano with a Shrimp and Scallop Aguachile (Watermelon, Pickled Watermelon Rind, Coconut Granita, and Avocado)
 - Los Angeles, CA - Bar Restaurant with a Watermelon Carpaccio (Heirloom Tomatoes, Watermelon Leche de Tigre, Red Onion, Cucumber, and Feta)
 - New York, NY - Leyenda with a Slow Jams (White Rhum Agricole, Amontillado Sherry, Watermelon, Jalapeño, Lemon)
 - Portland, ME - REGARDS with a Watermelon Ceviche (Leche de Tigre, Swordfish Lardo, Scallop Garum, and Meyer Lemon)
 - Portland, OR - St. Jack with a Watermelon and Veal Tartare (Watermelon Vinaigrette, Whipped Chèvre, Toasted Hazelnuts, and Herbs)
 - Richmond, VA - Alewife with a Nixtamalized Watermelon (Salsa Macha, Pickled Watermelon Rind, and Crushed Peanuts)
- Four of the eight participating restaurants planned to keep the watermelon dish or cocktail on the menu following the campaign
- All the partners stated they are more likely to put watermelon dishes or cocktails on their menu in the future following this campaign.
- StarChefs and the restaurants promote the dishes through social media mainly a social media contest, to further support restaurants and engage diners
- The Board received images, recipes and the rights to utilize the menu items with foodservice media and for events

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 participate in the Mise Conference detailed under Events.

Onsite Coordination: Staff attendance at events in the foodservice program and others.

Postage & Shipping

FOODSERVICE

Culinary Education

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

- Continued to promote the ACF accredited, Watermelon Culinary Curriculum:
 - Accredited by the American Culinary Federation (ACF), we know more than 1,250 chefs, educators and students have used it in their classrooms or for continuing education since 2017, 220 in the 2022/2023 FY
 - 99% of participants said the curriculum met or exceeded their expectations
 - The curriculum is promoted through a paid media program with ACF and a partnership with the Center for the Advancement of Culinary Educators (CAFE)
 - CAFE's publication, *Gold Medal Classroom*, published a story on watermelon and global flavors, *Building the "Why" Behind Global Cuisine Flavor Harmony* featuring an interview with Chef Rebecca Piezer and the 2022 Watermelon Flavor Dynamics
- Sponsored Center for the Advancement of Foodservice Educators (CAFÉ) Conference reached foodservice educators (high school through college and university institutions)
 - Watermelon cocktail and salad served at the opening reception
 - Well visited InfoFair table
 - Co-sponsored panel on the Future of Food
 - Panel featured Cathy Holley of Flavor & the Menu Magazine, Maeve Webster of Menu Matters and three local foodservice operators
 - Discussed produce on the menu and topics such as sustainability
 - Closed by speaking directly to the audience on what they expect from culinarians coming out of culinary programs
 - 62 schools from 28 states in attendance

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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 2022, there were some new questions added to the survey to expand upon existing questions and takeaways. The survey was executed in August 2022 and completed by 1,096 consumers. The full report is posted on watermelon.org, under Consumer Research in the Research section.

Survey key findings from the survey are as follows:

- Watermelon continues to outperform other melons (cantaloupe and honeydew) on purchase, taste, value, and healthiness. However, consumers like the taste more and purchase apples, bananas, grapes, oranges and strawberries more frequently than watermelon.
 - Bananas, apples, grapes, and strawberries have been purchased by roughly 90% of respondents in the past year, while watermelon has been purchased by 83%.
- Liking the taste is always a key driver of food purchases and is still the main reason consumers buy watermelon. The bulkiness/inconvenience of watermelon as a reason for not purchasing is at a 2 year high (38%).
- While most respondents believe that watermelon is priced where it should be or see it as a bargain, the percentage of those who see it as over-priced or too expensive rose from 17% to 27%, likely due to inflation. This corresponds to a declining number of consumers who cite 'budget friendliness' as a reason for purchasing watermelon.
- 63% of consumers primarily purchase their watermelon in a grocery store
 - Locally grown foods along with foods that can be used in multiple recipes and meals continue to be important
 - There has been a steady decline in those who blame retailers for food safety issues (36% from a high of 50%).
 - While likelihood to use grocery pick-up/delivery services has dropped since the height of COVID-19, over half of those who have used this service are very likely to continue using, with 76% of those people saying they will continue to use it in the future.
 - There is a steady increase in those who use their mobile device to assist in grocery shopping. Keeping track of their grocery list, obtaining coupons, and finding recipes are the primary functions of consumers' mobile device while shopping.
 - 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 to be presented information on how to pick a good one, as well as the health benefits of watermelons.
 - There has been a steady uptick of those who would like to have watermelon recipes available to them at retail stores. 72% of total respondents are at least somewhat likely to try a new recipe that includes watermelon.
- There continues to be differences by age in several areas.

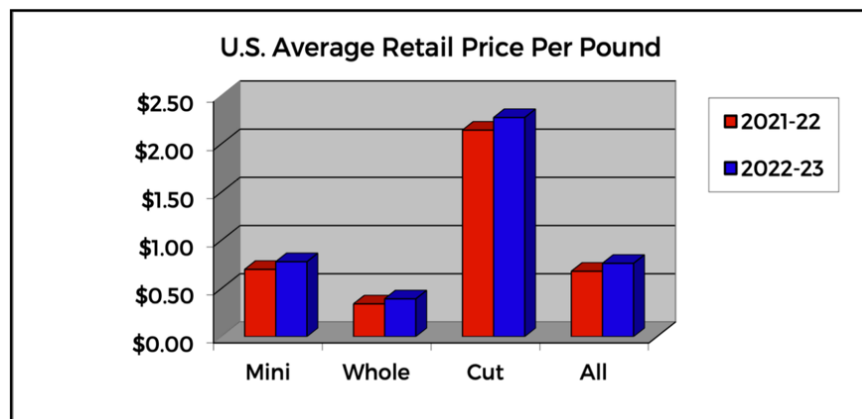
RESEARCH

- Younger age groups are less likely to like the taste of watermelon (and fruit in general).
 - The number of consumers 18-24 who like the taste of watermelon has increased from 55% to 61% since last year.
- Younger ages are more likely to consume watermelon in a recipe while older ages are more likely to consume watermelon plain.
 - Consumers 18-34 are over twice as likely as those 65+ (55% vs. 23%) to try a new recipe that includes watermelon.
- Younger ages are more likely to consume watermelon in a restaurant.
- Younger age groups 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 on the website, under Research, Retail Research, 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 March 26, 2023 versus previous year.

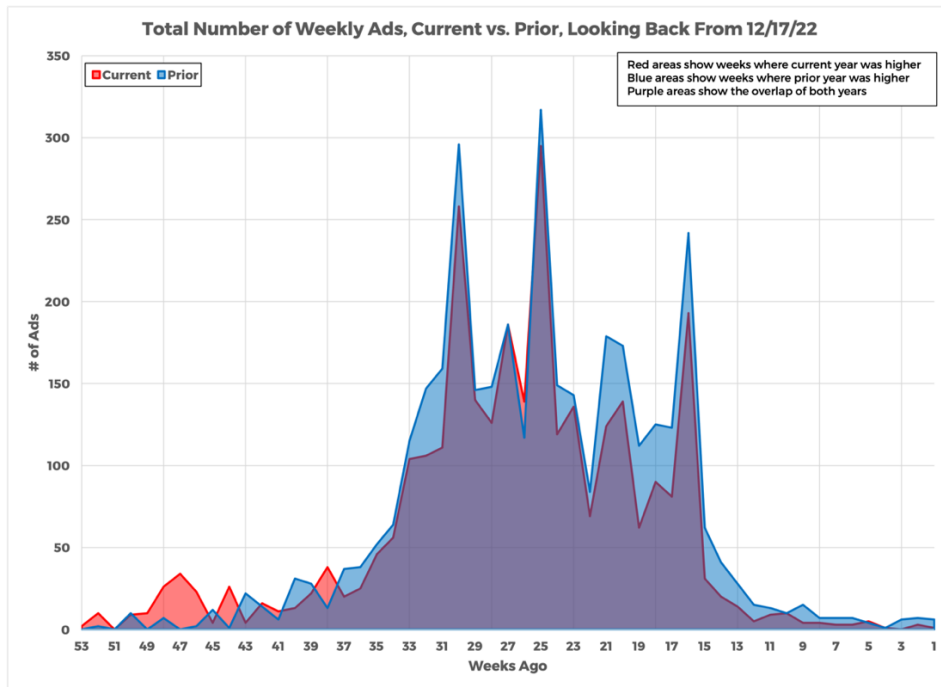
Retail Sales in Pounds				
Category	2021-22	2022-23	% Change	2022-23 Sales Share
Mini	296,565,577	306,852,171	3.5%	9.9%
Whole	2,376,603,573	2,249,474,680	-5.3%	72.5%
Cut	546,232,072	545,150,188	-0.2%	17.6%
Total	3,219,401,222	3,101,477,039	-3.7%	100.0%



RESEARCH

Retail Ad Tracking – Numerator & USDA-AMS National Retail Report

NWPB worked with Numerator Promotions Intel for Retail Ad Tracking. Numerator’s database is a tool that allows the Board 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 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 December 17, 2022 versus previous year.



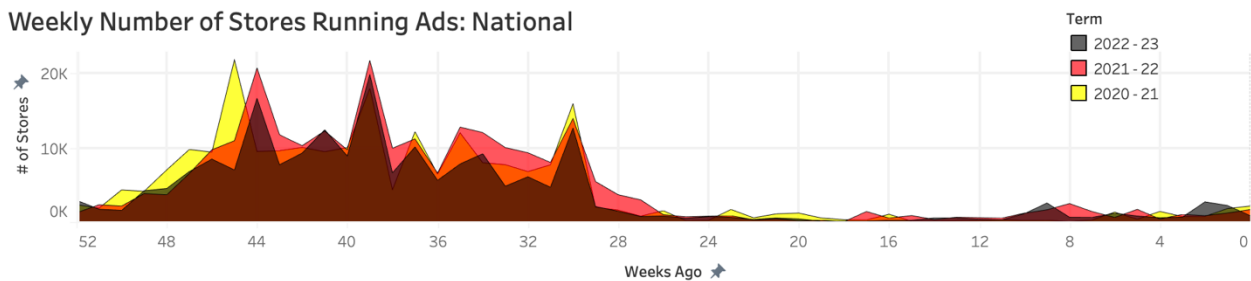
Number of Ads & Dollar per Each for Current & Prior 52 Week Periods				
	Mini		Whole	
Term	Number of Ads	\$ per Each	Number of Ads	\$ per Each
Current	787	\$ 3.21	1,854	\$ 4.83
Prior	990	\$ 2.93	2,211	\$ 4.28
Number of Ads & Dollar per Pound for Current & Prior 52 Week Periods				
	Mini		Whole	
Term	Number of Ads	\$ per Pound	Number of Ads	\$ per Pound
Current	2	\$ 1.14	343	\$0.60
Prior	12	\$0.99	316	\$0.50

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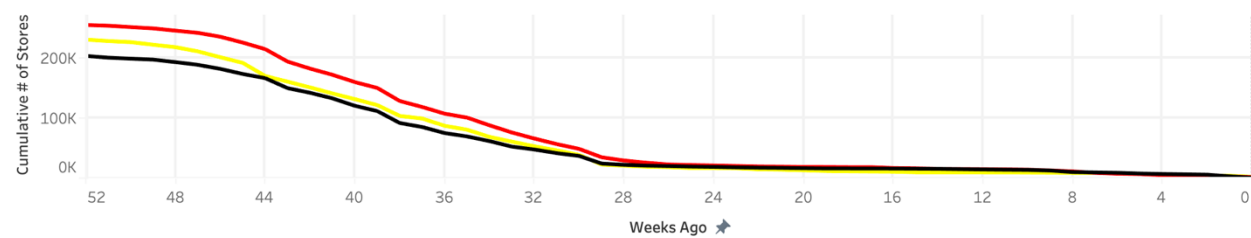
In 2023, NWPB made a change in this program to utilize the USDA-AMS National Retail Report to track advertised promotions at retail. The free database is a great tool that allows us to go deeper into the retail space using survey data from more than 500 retailers who comprise more than 29,000 individual stores. The data goes into a database that can run reports and queries at national and regional levels.

Below is a snapshot of the weekly report with the information provided by USDA-AMS. This report reflects the 52 weeks up to March 31, 2023 versus the same period for the two prior terms. In addition to time-series data of the total number of stores advertising, seedless and mini watermelon pricing is available for both conventional and organic designations. The Board publishes this reports on the website, under Research, Retail Research.

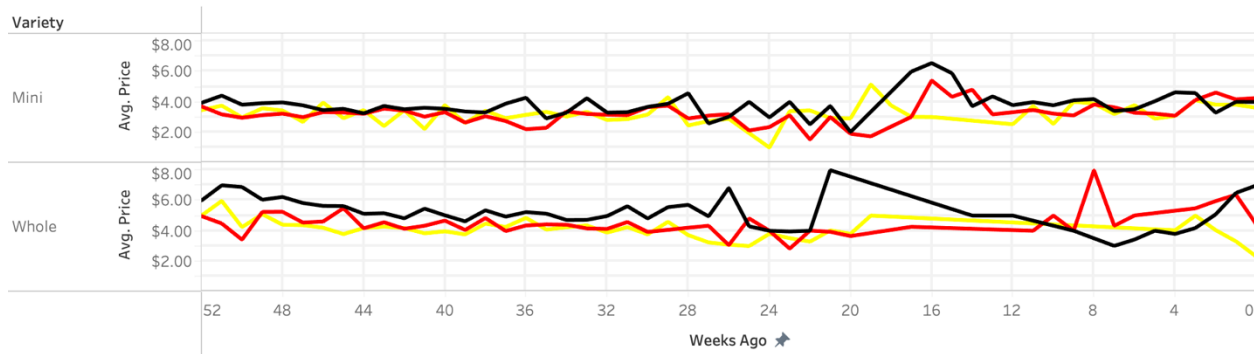
Weekly Number of Stores Running Ads: National



Cumulative Number of Stores Running Ads: National



Weekly Average Price for Mini and Seedless Watermelon: National



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Foodservice Research: Consumer & Operator Surveys – Menu Matters

In 2022, the National Watermelon Promotion Board (NPWB) invested in updating the consumer and foodservice operator research to better understand the shifting opportunities and challenges to growing watermelon use and consumption in foodservice in the future. This research built upon past efforts to track shifts in both consumer and foodservice operator use and perceptions, as well as identify new issues that may have arisen as a result of the COVID pandemic and economic issues in the behavior and needs of both audiences.

More specifically, the consumer survey's objectives were to:

- Measure awareness, interest and engagement with watermelon away from home
- Understand appeal of potential watermelon applications, pairings, preparations
- Gauge impact of potential watermelon messaging, positioning
- Determine impact of away from home watermelon menuing on at home use and purchasing behavior

The following methodology was used to complete this project and meet stated objectives:

- Online survey fielded to a nationally representative sample of consumers
- 1,000 consumers between 18 and 70 were qualified to participate with 1,168 completes
- The online survey was fielded in July 2022

The operator omnibus' objectives were to:

- Understand current use of fresh watermelon overall and by format
- Identify pain points or hurdles to use
- Identify opportunities for driving increased use of watermelon
- Measure perceptions of watermelon
- Gauge opportunities for NPWB messaging and activities

The following methodology was used to complete this project and meet stated objectives:

- Online survey fielded to operators across all commercial, noncommercial and retail segments
- 400 operators were qualified based on purchase responsibility
- The online survey was fielded in June 2022

To best utilize the findings, the results were overlapped to look for consumer and operator insights that support each other. Here are some key findings:

- The pandemic temporarily impacted years of consistent penetration gains.
- Current use of fresh watermelon has increased significantly since the last study in 2020.

RESEARCH

- Most operators will continue using watermelon in their operations.
- Growth in menuing is likely driven and supported by consumer interest.
- Summer is peak watermelon season, but opportunities exist to extend the season.
- While main menu features are up, foodservice is still leveraging watermelon as a seasonal LTO ingredient.
- Of consumers surveyed 72% agree, “Fresh watermelon is under-appreciated, and restaurants should be doing more to use fresh watermelon in new and interesting ways.”
- Foodservice, and retail innovation around watermelon is shifting perceptions away from strictly nostalgia/old-fashioned.
- Most consumers believe watermelon can be an on-trend ingredient, and operators agree.
- Watermelon can occupy every trend stage, depending on application.
- Grilled watermelon is an untapped prep opportunity, as well as a potential prepared product innovation area.
- Whole ingredient meat alternative options, including fresh watermelon, are on-trend.
- Of consumers surveyed 60% believe watermelon is a healthy fruit option.
- Hydration is very important to consumers, with room to grow watermelon’s functional association with this health benefit.
- In foodservice, watermelon rind has potential, but consumer acceptance will likely be pushed by foodservice use.
- Consumers are interested in prepared options with watermelon at retail, particularly – as with restaurants – desserts and salads.
- Away from home innovation and access will impact retail purchase behavior.
- NWPB can help raise awareness on options available that address several of these key issues for foodservice.
- NWPB can educate foodservice on how best to leverage fresh watermelon on the menu in the most impactful ways.

Current Research Analysis & Evaluation – Menu Matters

In 2022, the Board invested in a research project to leverage current research across consumer, retail and foodservice. The product was a summary report based on the analysis of the research as well as relevant secondary sources to understand on a cohesive basis, the broad opportunities, hurdles and trends that will drive increased watermelon use in 2023 and beyond.

Findings were broken into Consumer Awareness, Trial and Purchasing, Purchase Dynamics, Use and Application, Health and Wellness Issues and Macro Food Industry Trends. Some key findings include:

- Watermelon appeal is extremely high – addressing appeal is not a priority.
- Watermelon’s greatest opportunity and focus should be on usage conversion – consumers know it and have tried, but the drive should be to increase the number of consumers who have had it many times.

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- Increasing availability and innovation at foodservice is not strictly a foodservice opportunity with 68% of consumers more likely to purchase watermelon at retail if seen/experienced at foodservice.
- Savory applications offer an opportunity and will support the most significant growth across foodservice and retail.
- Hydration is a key functional benefit for watermelon to leverage.

Econometric Evaluation – Armada Corporate Intelligence, Inc.

The USDA mandates the Board execute an independently produced economic evaluation every five years to better understand the affect the Board has had on the market. The report establishes the strong positive return on investment the industry receives from the NWPB. Below is the Conclusion & Implication from the 2017-2021 Econometric Evaluation executed by Armada Corporate Intelligence, Inc.:

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of the NWPB activities on the demand for watermelon, and consequently, what the ROI is for investment in the NWPB activities. A model is developed that explains the retail demand for watermelon as it is explained by the quantity of watermelon, the monthly expenditures of the NWPB, and the retail region in which the watermelon is sold: California, Great Lakes, Mid-South, Northeast, Plains, South Central, Southeast, and West.

There are several key findings from this report. First, the activities of the NWPB have a significant positive impact on watermelon demand. The study shows that funding the NWPB's activities at their actual levels versus funding them at the lowest monthly level experienced results in a 4.5% increase in the retail price of watermelon. Based on the demand model developed, the price flexibility coefficient for the NWPB's expenditures is 0.031 meaning that a 10% increase in expenditures on the NWPB's promotional activities would result in a 0.31% increase in retail watermelon price.

The study also demonstrates that the NWPB's promotional activities have a positive impact on farm prices. On average there is a \$0.012 per pound difference in farm price between when the NWPB's expenditures are set to their historically lowest level versus what was experienced using the actual expenditures. The result of this difference is a \$225.19 million increase in farm sales. The resultant ROI for the NWPB's promotional activities is 18.8:1.

The results indicate that spending on promotion by the NWPB potentially increased employment in the industry by 4,234 jobs (incremental grower income / median fruit and vegetable worker salary). Using economic multipliers from the USDA Economic Research Service for the melon segment of agricultural output, the total effect of the NWPB's spending likely also increased broader economic output in the nation by \$160 million.

The study, consistent with previous studies, clearly shows that the NWPB is having a significant positive impact on the watermelon industry. The nearly 19:1 ROI makes a strong case for increased funding to the NWPB.

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Nutrition Research – Various Organizations

Dose Response Effect of Watermelon Consumption on Ambulatory Blood Pressure in Adults with Pre-hypertension: A Randomized Controlled Pilot Trail – Illinois Institute of Technology

The primary goal of the proposed project is to evaluate the dose-response effects of watermelon flesh in regulating blood pressure in individuals with pre-hypertension. The working hypothesis is that watermelon being a unique source of various bioactive components including L-citrulline (signature compound), arginine and polyphenols, possesses vaso-dilatory activity and will help to regulate blood pressure in individuals at risk of developing hypertension. In addition, they also hypothesize that watermelon intake will enhance NO bioavailability, which will help to improve metabolic markers, lipid profile, nitrite/nitrate content, arginine/ADMA ratio in humans. (Study type: Human)

Update: This study is still ongoing.

Evaluating the association of watermelon consumption with nutrient intake, diet quality, and physiological parameters in children and adults – Nutrition Impact LLC

The primary objective of this study is to determine intake of watermelon and assess association with diet quality, energy and nutrient intake, and physiological parameters in children and adults. (Study type: National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) Analysis)

- Determine intake of watermelon of children 2-18 years of age (y) and adults 19+ y and trends in intake over time (from 2001 through 2018)
- Assess energy and nutrient intake of child and adult watermelon consumers compared to non-consumers and impact of various levels of watermelon intake on nutrient intake
- Determine whether diet quality, measured with the Healthy Eating Index 2015, of watermelon consumers is higher compared to non-consumers and whether various levels of watermelon intake influence diet quality
- Assess whether relationships between watermelon consumption and physiological parameters including cardiovascular and anthropometric risk factors exist and whether various levels of watermelon intake influence these relationships

Update:

- Research finalized and presented at the Fall 2022 Board Meeting
- Paper published *Nutrients* in December
- Presented at Nutrition 2023: Watermelon Intake Is Associated with Increased Nutrient Intake and Higher Diet Quality in Adults, NHANES 2003–2018
- Results as published in press release:

A recent study published in Nutrients suggests that watermelon can increase nutrient intake and overall diet quality in both children and adults.¹ The study analyzed National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) data and found that total diet quality was higher in watermelon consumers as compared to non-consumers. According to the study, children and adult watermelon consumers had higher intakes of dietary fiber, magnesium, potassium, vitamin C and vitamin A as well as lycopene and other carotenoids, while they had lower intakes of added sugars and total saturated fatty acids. Research analyst and author on the study, Kristen Fulgoni, will present the research findings at Nutrition 2023, the American Society for Nutrition annual meeting, held July 22-25, 2023 in Boston.

1. Fulgoni, K.; Fulgoni, V.L., III Watermelon Intake Is Associated with Increased Nutrient Intake and Higher Diet Quality in Adults and Children, NHANES 2003–2018. *Nutrients* 2022, 14, 4883

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Target Media Relations to Promote Results of Studies – Wild Hive

This program focuses on leveraging the results of published research studies through targeted media relations to promote the results of the studies. In February a trade release went out promoting the results from the NHANES study (see above). It received very strong pickup in many produce publications including The Packer and AndNowUKnow. 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 (NHANES) 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.

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 and supporting Excel files are updated weekly, and can be downloaded for analysis. The below is a clip from the March 26, 2023 report. Subscribers of the Watermelon Update also receive recap reports following Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Fall/Winter and Spring/Summer utilizing this data, retail scan data and ad tracking data.

