

# NEWS RELEASE

## National Watermelon Promotion Board FOR DISTRIBUTION

Contact: Stephanie Barlow, Senior Director of Communications  
Phone: 407-657-0261 ext. 202  
Email: sbarlow@watermelon.org



## Watermelon Board Celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> Year at Marine Corps Marathon

*Thousands of watermelons served to refresh, refuel and rehydrate runners*


Winter Springs, FL – November 9, 2023 -- The National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB) is proud to announce its continued sponsorship of the Marine Corps Marathon, marking a decade of support for this iconic event. The 48<sup>th</sup> Marine Corps Marathon, held in late October, witnessed an astounding turnout with over 20,000 dedicated runners finishing the challenging course. As the third-largest marathon in the country, the event drew athletes from every corner of the United States and 63 countries, truly living up to its reputation as "The People's Marathon." This year, Team Watermelon made a triumphant return to the marathon by distributing a whopping 17 pallets of crisp, hydrating watermelon to both runners and supporters.

The NWPB's President Christian Murillo and National Watermelon Association Executive Director George Szczepanski joined the enthusiastic Team Watermelon in the Board's largest promotion of the year which also included watermelon queens, coordinators, and Class Produce representatives, in delivering the refreshing fruit to participants. Despite the unseasonably warm weather in Washington D.C., the runners were thrilled to be greeted with hydrating watermelon, a testament to the fruit's popularity and its vital role in promoting a healthy and active lifestyle.

"One of the unique aspects of Team Watermelon is the collaborative effort of every queen from every watermelon association, along with dedicated staff, coming together to promote our favorite fruit," said Stephanie Barlow, Senior Director of Communications at NWPB. "This collective endeavor not only strengthens the watermelon community but also underlines the fruit's significance in promoting health and wellness."

Terra Eby, the 2012 MarDel Watermelon Association Queen and current promotions coordinator, added an extra layer of excitement to the event by running the marathon and showcasing the enduring legacy and dedication of watermelon queens in promotion and education.

In a delightful new addition to this year's promotion, the NWPB distributed complimentary Tajin® packets, a perfect complement to the naturally sweet and juicy watermelon. The response from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, further highlighting the synergy between watermelon and popular flavor enhancers.

For more information about the Board's participation in Marine Corps Marathon, contact Stephanie Barlow, Senior Director of Communications at [sbarlow@watermelon.org](mailto:sbarlow@watermelon.org). Images are available in this Google Drive folder: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1gnD76PIFdv5d5cpyb7lfgdo3UkDtXngRv?usp=sharing>. 

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### About National Watermelon Promotion Board

The National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB), based in Winter Springs, Florida, was established in 1989 as an agricultural promotion group to promote watermelon in the United States and in various markets abroad. Funded through a self-mandated industry assessment paid by more than 700 watermelon producers, handlers and importers, NWPB mission is to increase consumer demand for watermelon through promotion, research and education programs.

A serving of nutrient-dense watermelon provides an excellent source of Vitamin C (25% DV), a source of Vitamin B6 (8% DV), and a delicious way to stay hydrated (92% water), with only 80 calories per 2-cup serving. Watermelon consumption per capita in the United States was nearly 15.5 pounds in 2022. Watermelon consumption in the United States was nearly 5.2 billion pounds in 2022. The United States exported an additional 328 million pounds of watermelon. For additional information, visit [www.watermelon.org](http://www.watermelon.org).

