



# Watermelon Update

NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTION BOARD



## Inside this issue:

- 2023 Retail Merchandising Contest Winners Announced
- Inspiration and Camaraderie at the IFPA Global Show
- October Watermelon Industry Outreach
- MenuDirections Connects Watermelon and Noncommercial Foodservice
- Healthy Family Project Partnership
- Fall Family Features
- Watermelon Movement Tools for the Industry
- Spring Board Meeting Planned in Conjunction with NWA Annual Convention
- The Fit Fork Partnership
- Fall Communications Programmatic Ads
- Watermelon on the Menu
- NWPB Connections

## Retail Merchandising Contest Winners Announced

The NWPB has named winners in its annual Retail Merchandising Contest which garnered over 115 entries from various retail chains, independent retailers and commissaries throughout the U.S. and Canada. This year's contest the 15<sup>th</sup> since its inception – continued to utilize mixed media marketing efforts in addition to in-store displays.

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## Merchandising Contest Continued

The contest started in July to honor National Watermelon Month and ran throughout the month of August to **encourage and identify retailers who are showcasing watermelon's benefits including health, value and versatility.**

Marketing efforts considered in judging included category visibility, point-of-sale materials, good visual merchandising, messaging nutritional benefits, recipes and/or selection education and use of print, online and/or digital platforms. This year's winners used mixed marketing tactics ranging from eye-catching in-store displays and take-home materials for store customers to social posts that shared watermelon nutrition, fun facts and recipe ideas.

This year's winners included:

**Grand Prize:** Heritage Co-Op – Brandon, Manitoba, Canada

**Second Place:** Greer's Hurley Market – Hurley, MS

**Third Place:** KJ's Market – Hephziba, GA

**Honorable Mentions:** Gelson's Market #23 – La Canada, CA;

Port Hueneme Commissary – Port Hueneme, CA; United Grocery Outlet– Shelbyville, TN



“This year's entries were all incredibly creative, showcasing watermelon's health and versatility through point-of-sale materials,” said Juliemar Rosado, Director of Retail and International Marketing at NWPB. “The winners this year emphasized consumer education, highlighting selection and recipes. In addition, whole and fresh cut watermelons were merchandised to reach more consumer archetypes.”

“Members of the Co-operative Retailing System have participated in the NWPB contest for many years, and we are excited that Heritage Co-op in Brandon Manitoba is a recipient of the Grand Prize this year,” said Joshua Hubert, Produce Retail Operations Manager at Federated Co-operatives Limited. “Each year, FCL and its Member Co-ops highlight watermelon through flyer and in-store features, and we encourage participation in the NWPB contest each year. We recognize that exciting and engaging displays continue to delight guests and drive in store experience. The NWPB display contest is an excellent opportunity for CRS Members to highlight their merchandising skills and highlight our focus on seasonal produce favorites. We are so proud of the Heritage Co-op team and their display, a big congratulations to them!”

More than \$10,000 in cash and prizes will be awarded to winners, including \$5,000 for Heritage Co-Op as the grand prize winner. As second place winner, Greer's Hurley Market will receive \$2,500; KJ's Market as third place will receive \$1,000 and each of the three honorable mentions listed above will receive \$500.

A complete list of the winning displays with images can be found [here](#). For more information, contact Juliemar Rosado at [jrosado@watermelon.org](mailto:jrosado@watermelon.org).



## Inspiration and Camaraderie at the IFPA Global Show

**Directors Megan McKenna, Stephanie Barlow and Juliemar Rosado attended the Global Show** in

Anaheim, CA, in mid-October. It was a jam-packed event seeing industry members and meeting with vendors, including Katie Manetti, the Board's Retail Account Manager who works a large part of the country and key contacts from Curious Plot, one of the

Board's key agency partners. There were great takeaways from the general sessions, particularly Cathy Burns' State of the Industry presentation and the Education Festival including generational marketing and Food as Medicine sessions. Keynote speaker Steve Wozniak shared great stories of his experience at Apple as well his favorite practical jokes. It was a successful show for IFPA and the NWPB!



## October Watermelon Industry Outreach

In October, the NWPB had time on the NWA Executive Committee and Florida Watermelon Association Convention agendas in Orlando, FL. **President Christian Murillo and Vice President Lee Wroten presented an update on the programs and other timely topics.** Many staff members attended the meetings as well. Next up is the Texas Watermelon Association Convention in November!



# MenuDirections Connects Watermelon and Noncommercial Foodservice

The Board sponsored Winsight's MenuDirections which ran October 8th-10th at The Ohio State University in Columbus, OH. This was the NWPB's noncommercial foodservice event of the year.

**Research shows noncommercial foodservice uses watermelon and they know how to handle the product but there is still a great opportunity to increase the volume.** This conference offered many great touchpoints with the attendees.

During the vendor fair on Sunday night, the Board **featured Moroccan Chicken and Grilled Watermelon Kabobs**. In addition to the **grilled watermelon, watermelon molasses was used on the chicken and in the yogurt sauce**. The breakout session on Monday was well attended with approximately 25 guests. The title of the session was *Watermelon Dynamics*. **Content covered everything from cultivation and nutrition to flavor pairings and real-world menu examples.** Chef Ben Flores, sous chef from Chapman's Eat Market in Columbus, also presented on how he is inspired to use watermelon. He served his watermelon granita topped with pickled rind and barbeque seasoning. He explained that some guests call it an appetizer, some call it dessert, but many love the flavor and texture the watermelon components bring to the plate. Lastly, during the vendor fair on Monday at lunch, the Board served the Burmese Watermelon Salad and Watermelon Rind Gazpacho.



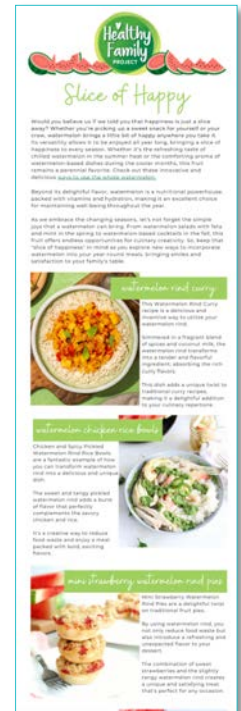
With more follow up to come, there were **great conversations with contacts from K-12, college and university and business and industry sectors**. With more than 100 attendees, some connections include the University of Texas, Chartwells Higher Education, ProHealth Care and the University of Texas.



## Healthy Family Project Partnership

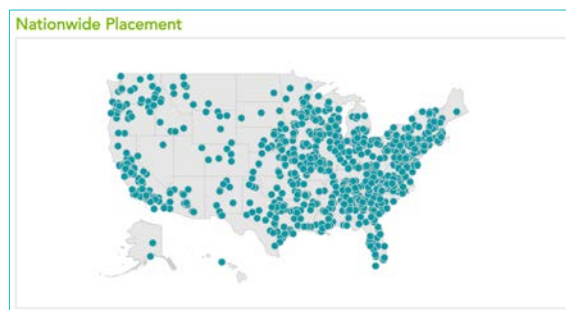
Longtime partner Healthy Family Project - a “team of parents who believes in creating a healthier generation through easy, fun and inspiring content” - has continued to deliver **impressive results with nearly 95,000 impressions across TikTok, Instagram, Pinterest,**

**Facebook, blog and e-news platforms.** From highlighting ways to use the whole watermelon to recipes like watermelon charcuterie boards and our very own Slice of Happy research, Healthy Family Project has successfully amplified the Board’s most important messages to key audiences.



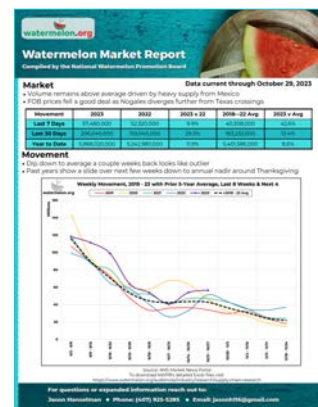
## Fall Family Features

Promoting consumers' enduring fondness for fresh watermelon as the weather cools down is currently bolstered by a consumer media release distributed through the Family Features Syndicate. Launched in late August, the article titled **"Fall in Love with Family-Favorite Autumn Recipes"** has **garnered an impressive 1,124 placements nationwide, accumulating over 125 million program impressions across both digital and print media.** This feature will remain accessible until the third week of November, after which it will be archived in the "Story Starters" section of our website. By harnessing established content like this release, we can maximize Board resources and present watermelon as an optimal solution.




# Watermelon Movement Tools for the Industry

Each week the Watermelon Board publishes the [Watermelon Market Report](#) as well as the supporting excel files. **These tools for the watermelon industry use AMS Market News data to track FOB, movement, origin, and more. The files can be downloaded for analysis.** Please reach out to Jason Hanselman at [jasonh116@gmail.com](mailto:jasonh116@gmail.com) with questions, to request a custom report, or to receive the Watermelon Market Report via email once it is updated (typically every week).



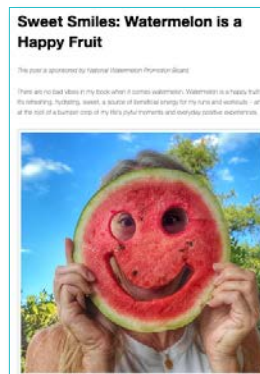
## Spring Board Meeting Planned In Conjunction with National Watermelon Association Annual Convention

During the fall NWPB Board Meeting, the Board **voted to hold the Spring Board Meeting in conjunction with NWA's National Convention at the WeKoPa Resort and Conference Center in Scottsdale, AZ, February 21-25, 2024.** NWA recently opened registration for the convention. Learn more about the event here: <https://nwa2024.my.canva.site/>. 



## The Fit Fork Partnership

The Board has partnered with fitness and lifestyle influencer Jennifer Fisher once again to support all things watermelon. First on the list? To promote The Slice of Happy campaign. Jennifer is known for her upbeat, positive and motivational posts, so sharing our 2023 campaign with her audience was a no-brainer! With more than **21,000 followers on Instagram alone, Jennifer also shares her watermelon content on her personal blog, TikTok, Facebook and Pinterest.**





## Fall Communications Programmatic Ads



Digital advertising is becoming more and more important, and this Fall the Communications program launched seasonal programmatic and remarketing ads. Developed and created in partnership with Curious Plot, the media buy estimated 1.2M impressions. Results so far, including September and October have easily surpassed **early expectations with more than 4M impressions, nearly 78,000 clicks and 1,426 website sessions.**



## Watermelon on the Menu

**Fuego Comida & Tequila Lounge** in Lakewood Ranch, FL is currently offering a Watermelon & Beet salad that comes with Baby Arugula, Mezcal-Cointreau Roasted Baby Beets, Tajin Dusted Watermelon, Pepita, Cotija, Aji Amarillo Aioli. The upscale Coastal-Mexican inspired restaurant also includes a Watermelon Margarita on their year-round cocktail menu consisting of fresh watermelon juice, a basil puree and a slice of watermelon dipped in tamarin.



## NWPB Connections

**Texas Watermelon Association Convention** – Ft. Worth, TX – November 9 – 11

**USAEDC Annual Conference** – Baltimore, MD – November 14 & 15

**Suwannee Valley Watermelon Institute** – Gainesville, FL – November 30

**Kinetic12** – Dallas, TX – December 5 & 6

**New York Produce Show** – New York City, NY – December 5 – 7

