



# Watermelon Update

NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTION BOARD

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## Inspiring Foodservice with Watermelon's Versatility

NWPB Gold Sponsor at The Flavor Experience

"The Flavor Experience brings together the brightest in the foodservice industry to inspire with trend-forward ideas and experiences, all through the lens of flavor. With the high-volume food & beverage menu developer in mind, the 2024 Flavor experience promised three days of flavor and menu innovations, trends, strategies and solutions."



## The Flavor Experience Continued

As a gold sponsor of the 20th Flavor Experience in August, the Watermelon Board benefitted from guaranteed and additional menu items and product awareness throughout the event and afterwards via LinkedIn and conference follow-up. For the guaranteed brunch station the Board served:

- Watermelon Kraut Reuben Croquettes with Watermelon Island Dressing: This menu item utilized the whole watermelon with flesh and juice in the Watermelon Island Dressing and a lacto-fermented watermelon rind kraut.
- Thai Watermelon PB&J: A very approachable bite, it helped attendees think differently about watermelon in Thai applications.



The Flavor Team wanted to add some wellness initiatives, which is a growing trend at conferences. For the price of presenting watermelon breakfast items and watermelon swag, the Board featured three breakfast items with stations both mornings:

- Watermelon Cinnamon and Rosewater Rice Pudding with Crushed Pistachios: At a breakfast full of yogurt and chia seeds, this “parfait” stood out with rice pudding as the base and the combination of watermelon and cinnamon took watermelon to a time of year not often considered by foodservice
- Watermelon “Matcha” Mochi Cake: This cake used the rind and from the watermelon used in the parfait the day before in a delicious candied application. Additionally, the dehydrated powdered watermelon skin “matcha” took using the whole product to a new and trend-worthy level
- Whole Watermelon Breakfast Boba: Exemplifying using the whole watermelon, compressed watermelon “boba” was delicious in a rind juice and coconut tea, scented with fresh herbs.

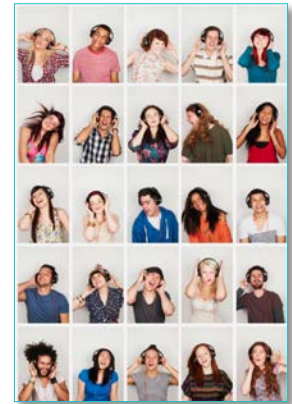
**Not only did the Board serve these inspiring bites, the Board owns the recipes and rights to recipe images taken at the event. They will be used for other events and in media.** Watermelon was also the official sponsor of the Zen Room featuring morning sound baths and a watermelon filled room (watermelon essential oil as diffused all day!) used for relaxation throughout the event. Messaging from The Slice of Happy Project was used in the room to drive home great reasons consumers love watermelon. Additionally, other companies used watermelon in a half a dozen great menu items helping to tell the strong story of watermelon on menus.

As a part of the “Best Bite” section of the operator survey after the event, the Board heard **great feedback** including, “Anything watermelon. That team did a great job!” and “Toss up between any of the watermelon.org offerings and the Dole pineapple croutons. Two years running that I loved Watermelon’s offerings. Still thinking about that donut from last year.” Watermelon was loved even when the Board wasn’t the main reference, “Lots of watermelon, spicy seasoned cotton candy, hot honey caprese at Tribute Pizza.”

With more than **100 regional and national chains in attendance representing more than 100,000 foodservice locations**, The Flavor Experience is a great event to educate and inspire a large part of the foodservice industry about watermelon. Many relationships, menu items and promotions have come from this event over the years - we’ll see what’s next!



## Summer Podcast Campaign Drives Impressive Results for Watermelon




This summer, NWPB once again partnered with iHeart Media to elevate the awareness and appeal of watermelon through a highly targeted podcast campaign. Running from June 15th to August 15th, 2024, the campaign was designed to **capture the attention of health-conscious consumers, food enthusiasts, and anyone looking to refresh their summer** with the sweet, juicy taste of watermelon.

The campaign's success exceeded all expectations, particularly in the number of podcast impressions delivered. Originally aiming for 2.75 million impressions, the campaign soared to **over 4.4 million impressions—an impressive over-delivery of more than 60%**. New this year, the investment in the campaign also included a "Summer of Simple Pleasures" sweepstakes, adding an engaging element that drove traffic to the dedicated website, [watermelonsweeps.com](https://watermelonsweeps.com). The site garnered nearly 9,000 visits, reflecting the strong interest and engagement from the target audience across 10 of iHeart's psychographics, with an added opt-in to sign up for our consumer e-newsletter, *What About Watermelon*. The top psychographic audiences were *Rising Star*, *Shopper*, *Decider*, *Progressive*, and *Thriver*. If you'd like to learn more about the psychographic audiences and their attributes, reach out to Stephanie Barlow at [sbarlow@watermelon.org](mailto:sbarlow@watermelon.org).

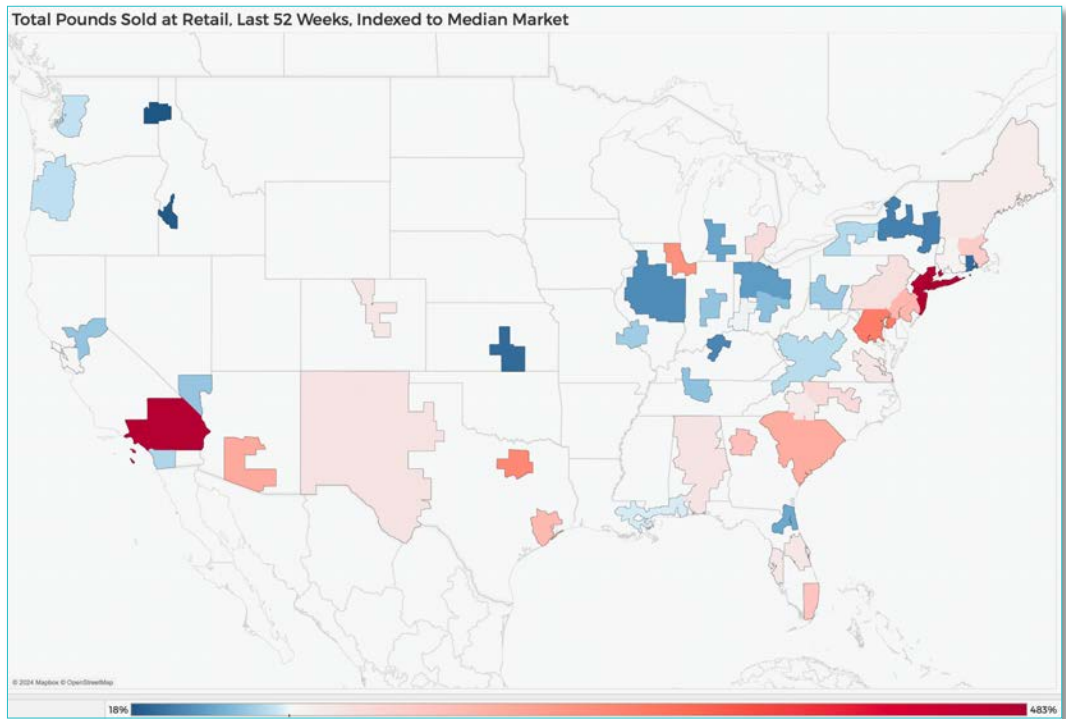


## Proposed Assessment Increase Process is Moving Forward

The 30-day comment period for the proposed assessment increase closed on August 8th. There were 33 comments. They can be reviewed here: <https://www.regulations.gov/document/AMS-SC-24-0020-0001/comment> . The comments and associated documents will be reviewed by the appropriate USDA officials before the Secretary of Agriculture makes the final determination. There is no specific timeline for the Secretary's ruling.

## Retail Scan Data Report Highlights YOY Retail Shifts

For the past 15+ years NWPB has worked with Circana (previously IRI) to provide a snapshot of the retail scene that heavily relies upon produce scan data. Utilizing a mix of data directly received from retail outlets, and sophisticated statistical techniques to cover the few remaining gaps, Circana's goal is to provide an accurate read on the totality of the retail environment.

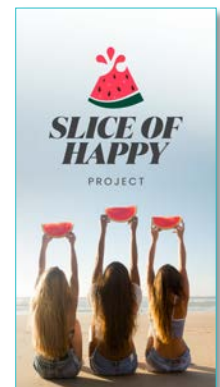


**NWPB melds these perspectives at national, regional and market levels for mini, cut and whole categories into a report that is released roughly once a month.** The Retail Scan Data Report allows the reader to get a grasp for changes within and across regions or markets, as well as how national data compares for the most recent 52-week period to that which came prior. [CLICK HERE](#) to see the most recent report which runs through August 11, 2024. Please reach out to [Jason Hanselman](#) for archived reports or if you have any questions.



## Produce Business Marketing Excellence Award Winner

NWPB has been **honored once again by Produce Business**, a publication focused on the fresh produce industry, **for its work on last year's Communications campaign - The Slice of Happy Project**. The activation included research and content about watermelon and happiness, grower-focused social stories which were amplified on Instagram, YouTube and Board website, and a first-of-its-kind Spotify playlist, to name a few. We will continue to innovate and reach consumers in multiple ways across all our awesome programs - all in the name of watermelon!



## Industry Member Spotlight: Get to Know Jordan Carter

**Name:** Jordan Carter

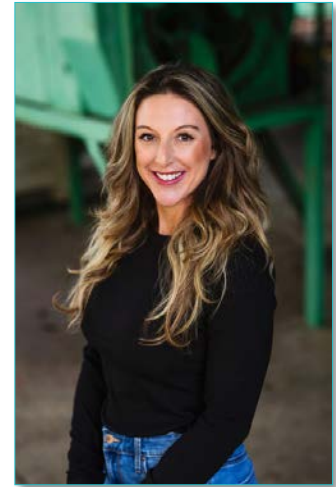
**Company:** Leger & Son Inc.

**Time in the Industry:** 11 years

**Time on the Board:** Currently serving the last year of my 2<sup>nd</sup> term; 6 years

**What's your favorite thing about Watermelon and/or the Watermelon Industry?** Watermelon is exciting. Fun and delicious. It's my favorite fruit and the people in this industry make it even sweeter! I work with the best!

**What's your favorite item on your bucket list?** Attend a yoga or wellness retreat in Costa Rica.



## New Watermelon Selection Infographic Available

NWPB recently created a new, visually appealing infographic designed to help both consumers and retailers select the best watermelon. This resource is part of the NWPB's ongoing efforts to educate the public and promote the consumption of watermelon across the country.

The infographic provides clear, easy-to-follow “look, lift and turn” guidelines on choosing a watermelon. For retailers, the infographic serves as a valuable tool to enhance customer satisfaction by helping store staff assist shoppers in making informed choices.

**Available for download on the NWPB website, the infographic is part of a broader educational campaign aimed at increasing consumer confidence and boosting watermelon sales.** Whether displayed in stores or shared on social media, this new resource is set to make selecting the best watermelon easier and more enjoyable for everyone.





## NWA Nook: The National Watermelon Queen's Summer of Festivals, Tours & Advocacy

Jules Singley, the National Watermelon Queen, has had an exciting and busy summer, traveling across the country to **promote watermelons at various events**. From engaging with communities to advocating for the watermelon industry, her summer was filled with memorable experiences. Here are some key highlights:

- Participated in the Mar-Del Queen Tour, engaging with customers at Harris Teeter and Fresh Market, sharing the benefits of watermelons, and distributing watermelons at a concert in Baltimore. (The NWPB supported this initiative.)
- Joined the Watermelon Festival at Poplar Head, where she handed out watermelon samples, judged recipe contests, and participated in watermelon eating competitions.
- Visited several Piggly Wiggly locations in Birmingham, Alabama, teaching customers how to pick the best watermelons and sharing creative watermelon recipes. (The NWPB supported this initiative.)
- Engaged with Canadian families at Freson Bros. Watermelon Fests, hosting activities such as seed spitting competitions and watermelon eating contests. (The NWPB supported this initiative.)
- Promoted watermelons at various farmers' markets, offering free samples and recipes, and participating in local events to celebrate the watermelon season.
- Advocated for the watermelon industry during the Washington Conference, meeting with Senate and House staffers to discuss critical issues such as labor, food safety, and agricultural policy, and engaging with policymakers to raise awareness about the industry's needs.



Jules' summer has been a whirlwind of events, spreading joy and love for watermelons wherever she went. Her dedication to promoting this refreshing fruit has truly made an impact, bringing smiles and delicious watermelon to communities far and wide.



## In Memory of Wally Amos

Former NWPB partner and **Watermelon friend** Wally Amos has passed away. Mr. Amos was a TV personality, businessman and author of "Watermelon Magic: Seeds of Wisdom, Slice of Life." Pictured here with National Watermelon Queen Maggie Bailey at PMA in 2009.



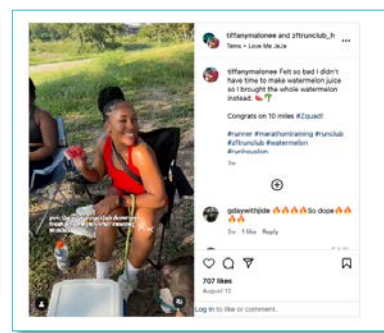
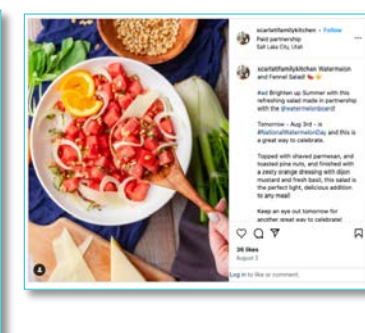
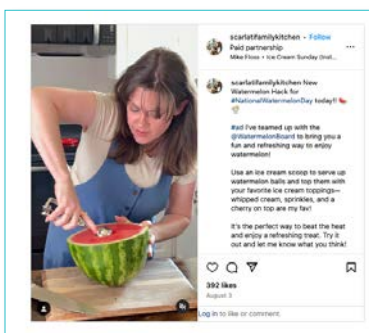
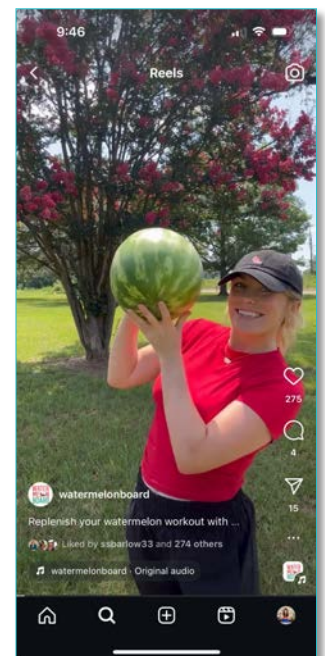
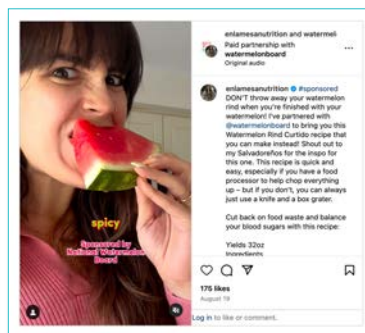
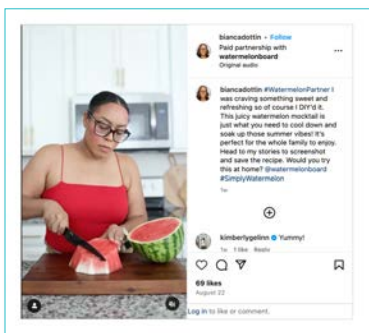
## Commodity Roundtable

On Wednesday, July 31st, NWPB Directors Juliemar Rosado and Megan McKenna attended The Fresh Approach's annual Commodity Roundtable (CR) meeting in Chicago. Hosted at the American Egg Board offices, the group brings together members from Marketing & Communications as well as Admin & Finance representing various CR members. Collaborative and constructive conversations about how each commodity board's organization, board and programs' work within **research, budget and trends changes** were the highlights of the day. Other attendee commodities with Watermelon and Eggs included Potatoes, Sorghum, Peanuts, Pork, Avocados and Mangos. Lunch was hosted but the KungFu AI company, who did a presentation on the State of AI, discussed potential use cases and provided a demo of possible solutions.



## August Influencer Roundup

We're excited to share a glimpse of our incredible August influencer partners who helped spread the love for watermelon in creative and inspiring ways. From mouthwatering recipes to a celebration of National Watermelon Day, these influencers captured the essence of what makes watermelon the ultimate versatile treat! Check out the posts below to see how they brought their unique flair to our partnership and **inspired their followers to crave watermelon!**





## Grower Stories

Consumer communications and promotion for watermelon heavily rotate around health, value and versatility year-round, touching on happiness, sustainability and this year *simplicity*. An additional pillar in the social media content creation foundation has been capturing and sharing grower stories on social media, in small, “snackable” sound bites captured in the field or packing shed, that showcase a grower (or importer) putting a face to watermelon focused on who is growing the watermelons. With over 20 grower story spotlights shared across social media in recent years (and more on the way, thanks heavily to the watermelon queens), these posts achieve high views and engagements with just a simple Q&A style in a short vertical video. Why are these an important part of our content marketing mix?

1. **Builds Trust and Authenticity:** Consumers are increasingly interested in knowing where their food comes from and the people behind it. Sharing snapshots of growers adds a personal and authentic touch to the watermelon content mix, which builds consumer confidence and trust with the watermelon they’re buying at the store.
2. **Highlights Quality and Care:** Grower stories can emphasize the quality and care that goes into producing watermelons. This helps convey that watermelon is not just mass-produced like other products, but is the result of dedicated effort, attention to detail, and expertise by real people on real watermelon farms and packing sheds.
3. **Connects Consumers to the Source:** By featuring growers, these posts can create a direct connection between consumers and the source of their food. This connection can foster a deeper appreciation and loyalty to watermelon, as consumers feel more involved in the story of how their food is made. After all, watermelon producers are feeding their families the same watermelons they’re growing for retail sales.
4. **Supports Local Seasonality:** Grower stories can highlight local seasonality and production, which is increasingly important to consumers. This can differentiate watermelons from others in the market and align with consumer values.
5. **Educates Consumers:** Sharing the challenges, innovations, and processes involved in watermelon cultivation can educate consumers, making them more informed and appreciative of watermelon. This knowledge can lead to increased demand and consumer loyalty, enjoyment and, importantly, repeat purchases.



## Meeting with BASF Nunhems

In August Senior Director of Communications Stephanie Barlow and Director of Retail & International Marketing Juliemar Rosado met with the local BASF Nunhems team members including Dr. Ruhyyik Dyrdaahl-Young, Mattie Boyles and Cory Eskra to **discuss all things watermelon, watermelon industry, consumer challenges, retail opportunities** and the history and purpose of the National Watermelon Promotion Board.





# Reminder – Watermelon Merchandising Contest Entry Deadline is September 13!

There is still time for retailers to enter! The deadline to submit entries for the Watermelon Merchandising Contest is fast approaching. All entries must be **submitted by September 13**.

This is your retailers' chance to showcase their creativity and merchandising skills, with a focus on promoting our delicious product. Whether it's an eye-catching display or a unique promotional strategy, we're excited to see their innovative ideas.

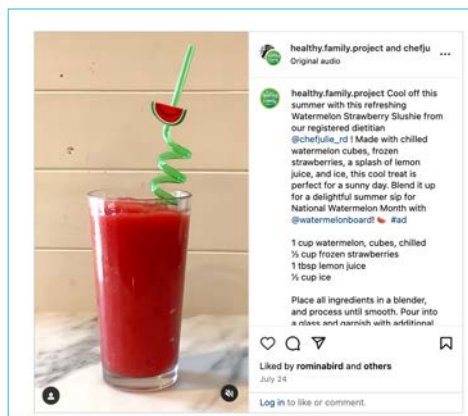
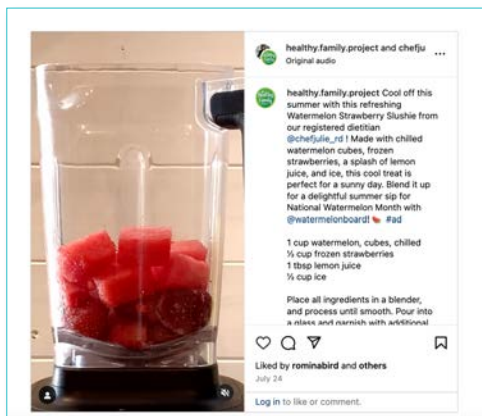
Remember, their entry could win them some fantastic prizes! Don't let your retailers miss out – have them submit their entry by September 13 and stand out in the competition! Visit

<https://www.watermelon.org/audiences/retailers/retail-contest/> for more information.



# Healthy Family Project Partnership

The Board has once again partnered with trusted industry media house Healthy Family Project (HFP). This summer, HFP produced a watermelon-focused e-newsletter (pictured, right) that went to **nearly 20,000 consumers**. Additionally, HFP created a brand new RD-approved Watermelon Strawberry Slushie, which was amplified on social channels.



# Board Districts: What do they mean and how are they created?

The NWPB is composed of producers, handlers, importers, and one public representative appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture. The Board consists of an equal number of producer and handler representatives nominated by watermelon producers and handlers around the nation. Importers participate in the nomination of importer members of the Board. The public representative on the Board is nominated by members of the Board and appointed by the Secretary.



Today, there are five geographic districts in the contiguous states of the United States. Each of these districts is represented by two producer and two handler members on the Board. The number of Importer seats on the Board is proportional to the percentage of assessments paid by importers to the Board, except that at least one representative of importers shall serve on the Board.

**Every five years the Board reviews this structure based on watermelon production, shifts and trends in quantities of watermelon produced, and other relevant factors.** As a result of this review, the Board may realign the districts subject to the approval of the Secretary. The realignment is recommended by a subcommittee to the Board and then to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Board is currently conducting this review often referred to as Redistricting. More to come once the process moves forward.



## Ketchum Nutrition Newsflash

Ketchum - a full-service communications consultancy - recently hosted their in-house nutrition team to **explore conversations surrounding watermelon and identify potential opportunities.** During the event, 24 media RDs and nutrition experts enjoyed watermelon sandwiches and fresh cut watermelon while a focus group was conducted to gain valuable insights into current perceptions and usages of watermelon, helping to uncover future communications opportunities and avenues.

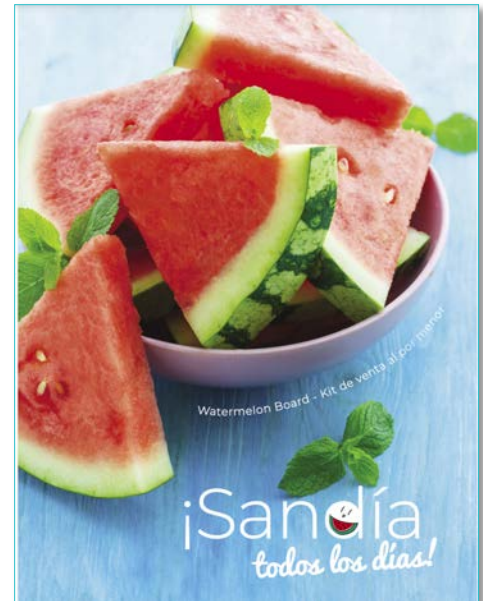




## Don't Miss Out: NWPB's Retail Kit Available in English, Spanish and Canadian French!

The retail kit is designed to support and invigorate watermelon marketing efforts with a variety of resources, including eye-catching merchandising ideas, consumer research, and marketing resources available. The kit is crafted to educate produce professionals, encouraging them to engage customers to include watermelon in their diets.

Whether you're brand new to the produce industry or a seasoned veteran, this **tool is a great resource to have and refer back to on all things watermelon**. By incorporating these resources into their stores, retailers can create engaging displays and effectively promote watermelon, boosting sales and consumer awareness. Download the digital kit at [watermelon.org/retailers](https://watermelon.org/retailers) today!



## Now Available: 2023/2024 Annual Report

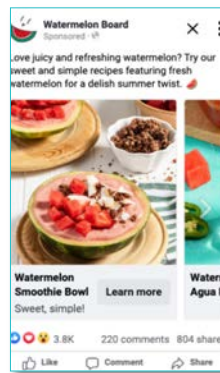
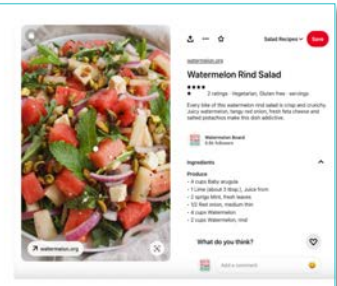
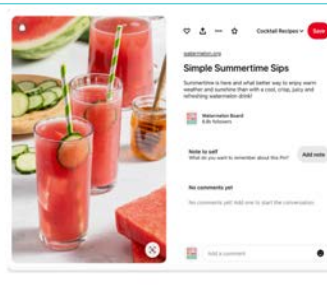
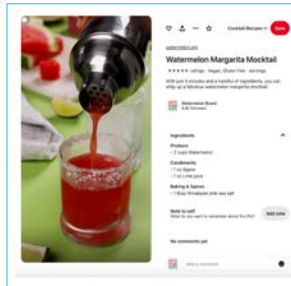
NWPB's 2023-2024 Annual Report is now available! This year's report provides an **in-depth look at our department highlights and key initiatives** that have shaped the industry over the past year.

Inside, you'll find detailed reports from each department, showcasing the team in promoting watermelon consumption and supporting industry growth. Whether you're interested in marketing strategies, research developments, or community outreach efforts, the annual report offers valuable insights into the NWPB's accomplishments and future goals.

We encourage all stakeholders to **review the report** to stay informed about the progress and direction of our initiatives. Your feedback and continued support are invaluable as we strive to continuously elevate the watermelon industry.

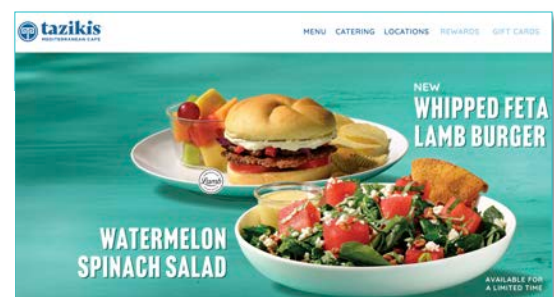


## Top Social Posts



## Watermelon on the Menu

Southern-based fast casual chain Taziki's Mediterranean Café summer limited time only menu features a **Watermelon Spinach Salad** including watermelon, basil, roasted pecans and crumbled feta cheese on a bed of spinach.



## NWPB Connections

**Southern Innovations** – Nashville, TN – September 12-14

**CRCEO Meeting** – Portland, ME – September 24-26

