



Watermelon Update

NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTION BOARD



Watermelon Discovery Week Brings Fresh Inspiration

This summer, watermelon took center stage during Watermelon Discovery Week, a nationwide program designed to spotlight watermelon on restaurant and bar menus. Partnering with StarChefs, a trusted industry platform with 30 years of experience in identifying emerging culinary and beverage talent, the Board curated top chefs and bartenders from across the country, giving diners a taste of watermelon's versatility in both food and drink applications. Known for trend spotting and chef driven storytelling, StarChefs provides the perfect stage to showcase watermelon to the foodservice community.

From June 18 to July 2, eight restaurants and bars across the country created inventive watermelon dishes and cocktails:

- Washington, D.C. – Chef Angel Barreto, Anju:
Watermelon Kimchi Aguachile with Shrimp, Cherry Tomatoes, Avocado Fresno Chiles, and Perilla Leaf

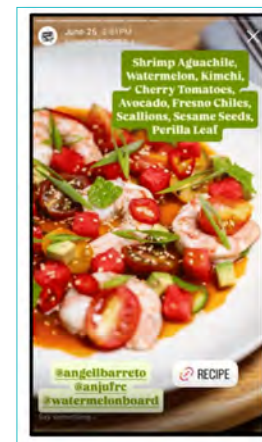
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Discovery Week Continued

- New Orleans – Chef Nina Compton, Compère Lapin: *Tuna Tartare with Curried Watermelon, Compressed Watermelon Rind, Cilantro, and Mint*
- Seattle – Chef Maximillian Petty, Eden Hill: *Kampachi Crudo with Compressed Watermelon and Sea Buckthorn Watermelon Aguachile*
- San Francisco – Chef Gaby Maeda, Friends + Family: *Watermelon Som Tam with Green Beans, Cucumbers, Watermelon Rind, Serrano Chiles, and Fresh Herbs*
- Pittsburgh – Chefs Jamilka Borges and Lizzie Sestito, Lilith: *Shrimp Ceviche with Grilled Watermelon, Avocado, and Watermelon Leche de Tigre*
- Houston – Chef Jacob Coronado, Nobie's: *Swine 'Em and Dine 'Em: Brined Pork Chop with Compressed Watermelon, Tomato Watermelon Vinaigrette, and Pickled Watermelon Rind* (pictured, left)
- Los Angeles – Bartender Mike Capoferri, Thunderbolt: *Echo Park Trash Can #2: Mezcal, Clarified Watermelon, Aperol, Lime, and Pasilla Chile*
- Denver – Bartender McLain Hedges, Yacht Club: *Watermelon Le Crawl: Gin, Blanc Vermouth, Watermelon, Lime, and Mint*



In just two weeks, more than 750 items were sold, generating over \$15,000 in revenue for participating businesses. Even more exciting, **80% of participants plan to keep their watermelon creations on menus beyond the campaign**, extending the program's impact.

Watermelon Discovery Week also delivered digital reach, with **more than 670,000 impressions through StarChefs' website, newsletter, and social channels**. This exposure not only engaged the foodservice industry but also reached consumers with foodservice focused watermelon messages, amplifying watermelon's presence across audiences.

Chefs and bartenders praised watermelon's adaptability: *"It was great to work with watermelon and show our diners it can be presented in so many different ways. I enjoyed participating in the program!"* — Chef Angel Barreto, Anju (Washington, D.C.)

The program created **innovative menu items, strengthened industry relationships, and built media ready content**. The combination of innovative menus, broad promotion, and positive chef and consumer feedback made Watermelon Discovery Week a strong platform for positioning watermelon as both a seasonal and year round menu standout.



Industry Spotlight – Get to Know Rachel Syngo

Company: Melon 1

Time in the Industry: 9 years

Time on the Board: 3 years

What's your favorite thing about the Watermelon Industry? I'm the 8th generation in my family to farm, and the 4th to grow and ship watermelon. My favorite thing about the watermelon industry is my family's legacy in it.

What's your favorite piece of technology? Being able to order groceries from my phone. I'm always on the go, and this has been a life saver for me for many years now.



New England Produce & Floral Expo

The New England Produce Council marked its 25th anniversary at this year's Produce, Floral & Foodservice Expo at the Encore Boston Harbor Resort. NWPB's Juliemar Rosado and Katie Manetti served as exhibitors at the event that was held August 18-19. The NWPB booth provided **watermelon flavor pairings and connected with retailers, industry professionals, and buyers**. The annual retail merchandising contest, product training opportunities, and a suite of resources designed to help partners boost sales and engage shoppers with watermelon was also promoted.



A **special highlight of the milestone event was the appearance of Cece Krumrine** (pictured, bottom with Rosado left and Manetti, right) one of NEPC's founders and a beloved member of the produce community. Cece spent many years with the NWPB as a retail account manager before her retirement in 2021. She was invited to return to join members, sponsors, and exhibitors in celebrating NEPC's 25-year journey, making the anniversary feel all the more meaningful.



Snack Duty Success with TeamSnap Partnership

This school year watermelon is taking the field with TeamSnap, the #1 youth sports platform trusted by over 25 million families and 3 million teams nationwide. From practices and games to snack duty assignments, TeamSnap is the go-to app for coaches, parents, and players to stay connected.

Through this new partnership, NWPB is reaching families right where they manage their kids' sports lives—with fresh, fun messaging around watermelon as the ultimate post-game or post-practice win.

The creative design, featuring kids on the soccer field and a platter of juicy slices under the bold tagline “Snack Duty Success with Watermelon,” will appear across TeamSnap’s most visible placements, including Home Screen Spotlights, App Banners and Interstitials.



Running August 2025 through March 2026, this national campaign will generate **more than 4 million impressions while positioning watermelon as a sweet, hydrating, and simple snack prep solution for active families.**

By teaming up with TeamSnap, watermelon is showing up in the everyday routines of youth athletes—making it the go-to fuel for practices, game day and beyond.



NWPB 2024-2025 Annual Report Available

The Board has released its 2024-2025 Annual Report, highlighting the work completed over the past year to promote watermelon and support industry growth.

The report provides updates from each department, including marketing initiatives, research developments, and community outreach efforts. It reflects both the progress made and the direction ahead for the industry.

We encourage stakeholders to [review the report](#) and share feedback, as continued collaboration remains vital to advancing the watermelon industry.



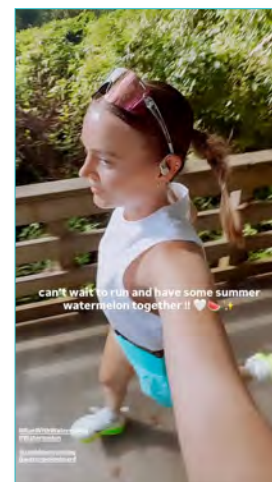
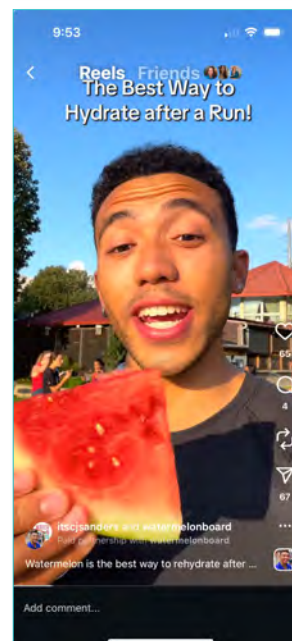
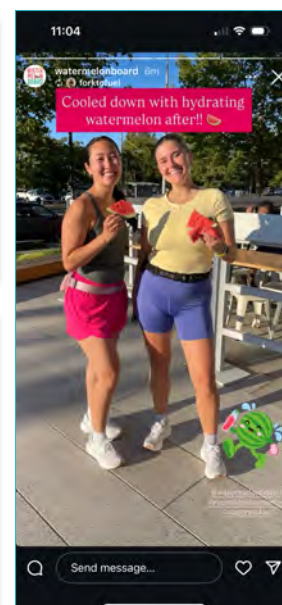
Run Club Results: Watermelon Fuels Runners Coast to Coast

NWPB hit the ground running the last week of July with a nationwide sponsorship of *Cool Down Run Club* events, bringing fresh slices of watermelon to runners across the country.

Cool Down Run Club—a social-focused running community with more than **3,500 weekly participants in 15 cities**—welcomed NWPB as its featured sponsor. From July 28–31, runners enjoyed watermelon’s natural hydration benefits after their workouts, while NWPB ambassadors and influencers captured the moment across Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube.

In partnership with 6 health and lifestyle creators, the *Run with Watermelon* campaign generated engaging social content highlighting watermelon as the ultimate post-run refresher. Posts and stories celebrated watermelon’s 92% water content, vitamin C boost, and feel-good vibes—plus provided helpful tips on choosing and serving the perfect melon.

The sponsorship not only **put watermelon front and center at meetups from Seattle to Austin but also reached Cool Down Run Club’s 65K+ online followers**. Together, the events and influencer coverage amplified a powerful message: watermelon is hydration, happiness, and summer fuel—all in one slice.



NWA Nook: Research Grant Program Drives Innovation in Watermelon

The National Watermelon Association is proud to continue its strong commitment to research that delivers practical solutions for our industry. **Through the NWA Research Grant Program, we provide targeted funding for projects that help growers, shippers, and partners overcome today's challenges and prepare for tomorrow's opportunities.**

In recent years, the program has funded a wide range of efforts, from combating plant diseases such as Fusarium Wilt and Phytophthora, to exploring the use of grafted rootstocks that strengthen plant health and improve yields. At the same time, we are expanding beyond traditional plant pathology into new frontiers of innovation. Recent projects include artificial intelligence and automation tools that can help monitor pests or track seedling vigor in nurseries, giving growers faster and more reliable information to guide management decisions. Together, these projects show how applied research can protect crops today while preparing the industry for the future.

Looking ahead, we are excited to share **that proposals for the 2026 Research Grant Program have just been accepted.** Our board and research committee will review them this fall, continuing our mission to support research that provides real-world impact for the watermelon industry. By funding applied research year after year, NWA is ensuring that innovation, science, and grower needs remain at the heart of the watermelon industry's future.



Nominations Updates

The Nomination Packet was sent to USDA last month. If you haven't sent in your forms yet, **please do so as soon as possible.** The USDA is ready to move forward, and we want to ensure your nomination is included.

We are hopeful appointments will be made by the end of the year. This will give appointees enough time to make travel arrangements for the Board Meeting in February 2026. Please reach out to Andrea Smith at asmith@watermelon.org with any questions.

The Flavor Experience Reaches Foodservice Operators



The Flavor Experience's tagline is *"igniting innovation with flavor"* and that is exactly what happened in August in Newport Beach, CA. The event is one of the largest investments the Board makes each year to **keep the pipeline full of contacts and increase watermelon presence on menus**. Focused on high volume food and beverage menu developers, The Flavor Experience produced by *Flavor & The Menu* magazine combines current trends with innovative tastings throughout a three day conference.

Although the Board is guaranteed two menu placements, this year's inspiring concepts earned three spots, including:

- **"Hot Jang!"**: Watermelon Ham and Ssamjang Watermelon Jelly on a Cottage Cheese Rind Pickle Biscuit
- **Fresh Watermelon Mint Salad** with Black Sesame Tahini Sauce on Pistachio Baklava
- **Poi/Taro Waffle** with Maple Ube Mash, Watermelon Fruit Salad, and Guava Syrup

Beyond these dishes, watermelon was also highlighted by other sponsors, reinforcing its growing popularity on menus. Additional visibility came through in stage presentations, logo presence at the onsite photo booth, and sponsorship of the Zen Room, which featured watermelon décor, scents, and giveaways to keep watermelon top of mind throughout the event.

For national and regional chains, The Flavor Experience has become a **high impact touchpoint that inspires menu developers** with trend forward ideas, which is exactly where watermelon's versatility shines. With **more than 100 chains in attendance representing over 100,000 foodservice locations nationwide**, the event provided valuable exposure that will lead to future menu features. The Board's continued sponsorship underscores a simple goal: converting flavor curiosity into menu placements and lasting partnerships.



Fruity Fuel for School: Family Features

The second paid media feature of the fiscal year launched August 18 through syndicate partner Family Features, spotlighting “Fruity Fuel for School.” This back-to-school layout showcases two easy watermelon recipes—Watermelon Fruit Salad with Cottage Cheese and Turkey, Cheese & Watermelon Kebabs—designed to inspire simple, nutritious snacking for the busy school year students.



In less than two weeks, the feature has already generated 169 media pickups and more than 1,300 paid digital placements nationwide. Local community newspapers, online outlets, and magazines are incorporating the layout and photography into their own publications, extending watermelon’s reach from the end of summer through the fall season.



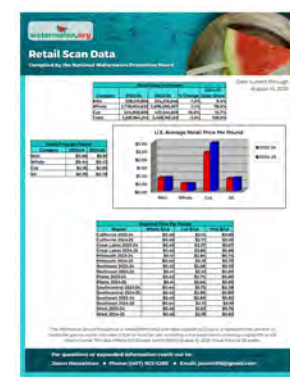
Confidential Reporting Portal

The Confidential Reporting Portal is in response to the Board collecting approximately 90% of available assessments. If you know of someone out of compliance, this is the confidential portal to help make it an even playing field for the industry. Please visit watermelon.org/industry to access the [portal](#). Thank you for your commitment to a fair and prosperous future for the watermelon industry and National Watermelon Promotion Board.

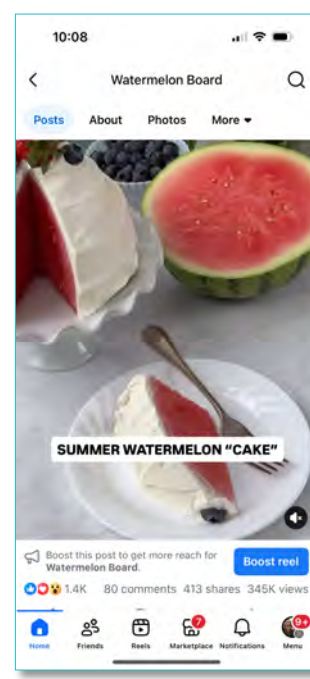
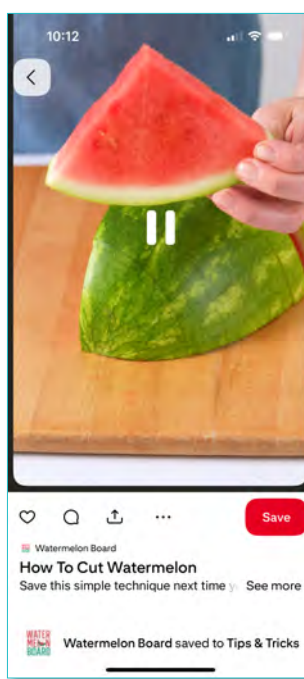
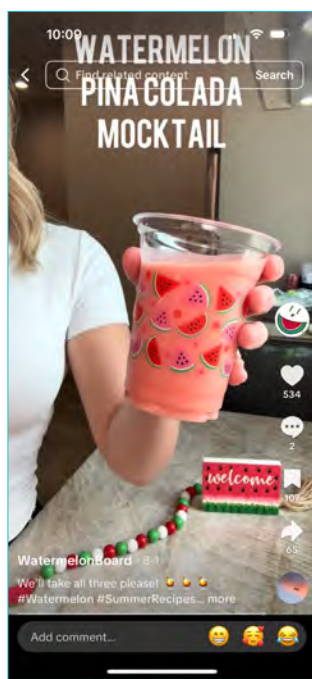


Retail Scan Data Report

The NWPB works with Circana to provide a snapshot of the retail scene using retail scanner data. Circana receives produce scan data directly from 76% of retailers in food, mass and club channels then applies projection methodology to estimate 100% coverage. The report includes regional and market-level data for whole, mini and cut watermelon. These markets represent over 208 million people in over 78 million households. The focus of the report is on the past 52-week period and how it compares to the prior period of the same length and it is updated monthly. [Click here to see the most recent report.](#)



August Top Social Posts



Watermelon on the Menu

The Beachcomber in Newport Beach, CA is currently offering a **Summer Melon Salad** with Mesclun Green Lettuce, Cypress Goat Cheese, Candy Pecans, Honeydew Cantaloupe, Watermelon, Ciabatta Croutons, Balsamic Roasted Red Onions and Herb de Provence Sherry Vinaigrette. Their cocktail menu also includes a Watermelon Mojito and Baja Breeze with fresh watermelon juice.



NWPB Connections



CRCEO Meeting – Washington, D.C. – September 8 & 9

American Food & Beverage Conference – Miami, FL – September 9 & 10

Southern Innovations – Charlotte, NC – September 10 – 12

ChefLab Denver – Denver, CO – September 17 – 19

NWPB Board Meeting – Orlando, FL – September 25

GroceryShop – Las Vegas, NV – September 27 - 29