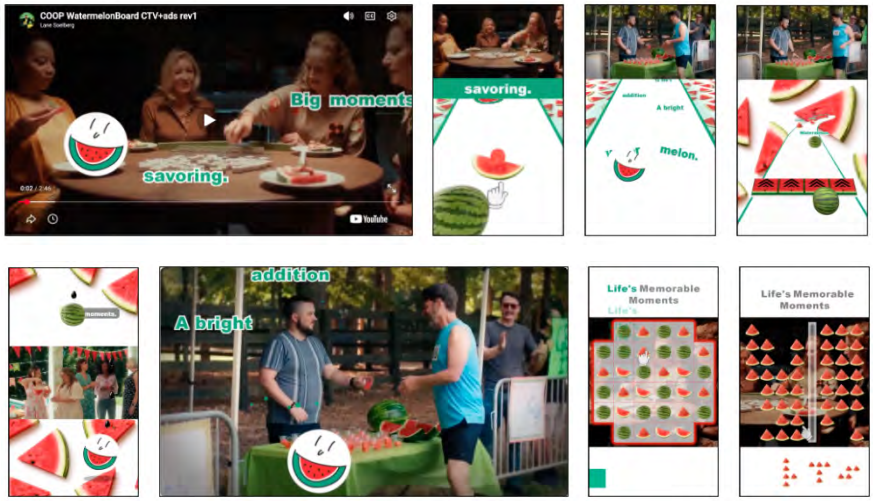
AUGUST 2026

Watermelon Update

NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTION BOARD



Gamified Mobile & CTV+ Campaign Drives Strong Engagement & Measurable Traffic Growth

NWPB's Gamified Mobile and CTV+ campaign, in partnership with COOP Ventures, is delivering impressive results midway through its summer run, demonstrating the power of combining connected television, interactive content, and data-driven attribution.

As of July 19, the campaign delivered more than 1.81 million impressions, reached 589,000 households, and generated a 7.13% click-through rate (more than 14 times the industry benchmark).

Continued next page

Inside this issue:

- Gamified Mobile & CTV+
- Last Call for Merchandising Contest Entries!
- Connecting Watermelon with the Next Generation of Consumers at IFPA Foodservice
- Memorial Day Market Recap
- Summer Influencer Partner Highlights
- Confidential Reporting Portal
- Summer Gas Station Pump Ads & CTV Campaign Update
- Registered Dietitian Samaria Garrett Talks Grilling Watermelon on Twin Cities Live
- Building Lifelong Watermelon Consumers Through Noncommercial Foodservice
- NWA Nook: Introducing the Inside the Melon Podcast, a New Way to Stay Connected
- Retail in Motion
- Watermelon Month Giveaway
- Watermelon on the Menu
- NWPB Connections

Gamified Mobile & CTV+ Continued

The campaign has also contributed to a **165% lift in website traffic**, driving consumers directly to watermelon.org for recipes, nutrition information, and seasonal inspiration.



Perhaps most notably, campaign data shows that two out of every three seasonal traffic increases to watermelon.org this summer can be directly attributed to the campaign. Pixel-level attribution confirms that nearly 600,000 households have engaged with campaign content, providing a level of measurable performance that is uncommon in produce marketing.

Several key metrics highlight the campaign's effectiveness:

- A top-performing creative achieved a 10.01% CTR with strong video completion rates and engagement.
- Landing pages have maintained a consistent 13% conversion rate across reporting periods.
- Campaign-driven website visitors have spent the equivalent of 187 human days engaging with watermelon content, recipes, and nutrition resources.
- Overall website traffic has experienced a nearly threefold increase compared to typical seasonal lift patterns.
- Independent analysis by the Board's agency partners confirmed the campaign's impact, aligning with internal website analytics findings.

With 62% of the campaign delivered and pacing ahead of schedule, early results indicate the initiative is successfully connecting consumers with watermelon-focused content while generating significant, measurable engagement. The campaign continues to build momentum as peak watermelon season progresses, reinforcing the value of innovative digital marketing strategies in driving consumer awareness and action.

Last Call for Merchandising Contest Entries!



Remind your retailers to boost their summer sales because there is **still time to enter the National Watermelon Merchandising Contest**! Running now, the National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB) is offering over $10,000 in cash and prizes, including a $5,000 Grand Prize. To enter, simply have your retailers build a creative watermelon display, share tips or recipes, and promote across stores or digital platforms. Plus, incorporating Tajín® into the display offers an extra incentive! Don't miss this chance to stand out and cash in. Click **here** for full contest details and have them enter today!

Connecting Watermelon With the Next Generation of Consumers at IFPA Foodservice



The NWPB participated in the International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA) Foodservice Conference in Monterey, California, where foodservice operators, produce suppliers and industry leaders came together to explore the future of fresh produce in foodservice.

One of the conference highlights was the K-12 School Foodservice Forum, which brought together **more than 100 school nutrition directors, menu planners, chefs and foodservice leaders from some of the nation's largest school districts, along with representatives from college and university dining programs.** These professionals make decisions that influence millions of meals each day and help shape lifelong eating habits for students across the country.



Throughout the conference, the Watermelon Board showcased recipes from its K-12 Watermelon Recipe Collection, including Sweet Watermelon Pizza and Watermelon Rind Coleslaw, while continuing to promote the Watermelon Welcome initiative. Designed specifically for school foodservice professionals, the program provides recipes, resources and practical ideas that make it easy to incorporate fresh watermelon into school menus.

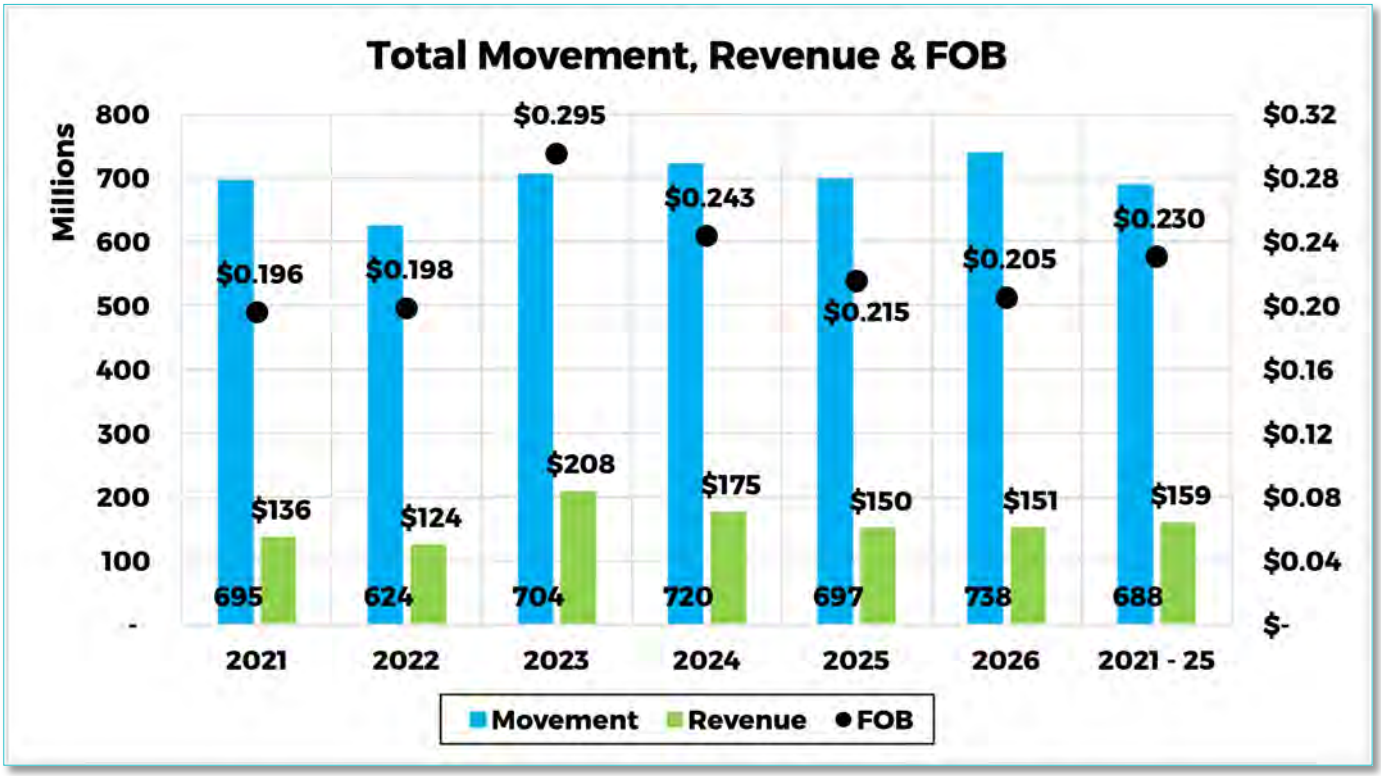


The Board also partnered with Syngenta to feature fresh watermelon throughout the conference. Watermelon was incorporated into Wednesday evening's networking reception and Friday morning's Ideation Breakfast, giving attendees additional inspiration for creative menu applications.

As schools continue looking for **fresh, nutritious and trend forward menu options, watermelon continues to demonstrate its versatility across meal occasions and menu formats**. From breakfast to lunch and grab and go offerings, watermelon delivers the flavor, nutrition and visual appeal that today's students expect.

The IFPA Foodservice Conference provides an important opportunity to connect the watermelon industry with the decision makers who influence purchasing and menu development in K-12 and college and university foodservice. By meeting operators where menu decisions are made, the Board continues to create new opportunities for watermelon to earn a place on school menus and introduce the next generation of consumers to fresh watermelon.

Memorial Day Market Recap

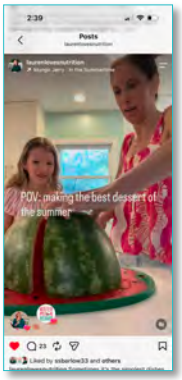


Featuring the second largest buildup of watermelon volume each year, trailing only the Fourth of July, Memorial Day is a pivotal part of every season. During the two weeks prior and one week following the holiday, volume has averaged 688 million pounds from 2021 through 2025. In 2026, volume was up 7.3% at 738 million pounds, while seedless FOB prices were also down roughly 11% at $0.205 per pound. This left revenue estimates 4.7% below average with larger gaps to the very strong years of 2023 and 2024.

Florida contributed 60% of the total with 444 million pounds, roughly 25% above their established average, while Mexico was down 24% at 173 million pounds. Texas provided the third most volume with 72 million pounds, down 15%. Per pound prices showed a narrow spread across regions. Estimated revenue was up 2% in Florida, though down 26% and 29% in Mexico and Texas, respectively.

Download the **FULL SLIDE DECK** here to gain insight regarding this critical time of year for each of the regions mentioned above from a production perspective. **The deck includes retail ad analysis to get a sense for promotional volume as well as ad pricing**. Lastly, utilizing Circana Retail Scan data there is analysis on how watermelon performed at retail relative to past years using a similar timeframe as above. This analysis includes maps showing sales by state comparisons and various looks at how many Total, Whole, Mini and Cut pounds were sold compared to the prior five years. For questions, reach out to Jason Hanselman at **jasonh116@gmail.com**.

Summer Influencer Partner Highlights







This summer, several influencer partners helped **amplify watermelon's nutrition and hydration benefits** through engaging content and media outreach.

Registered Dietitian Lauren Manaker highlighted watermelon as a smart hydration choice for swimmers and young athletes through Instagram content and expanded the conversation during a July 2 appearance on *Lowcountry Live* in Charleston, South Carolina. During the segment, she shared nutrition insights, recipe ideas, and practical tips on why watermelon deserves a bigger role in summertime routines.



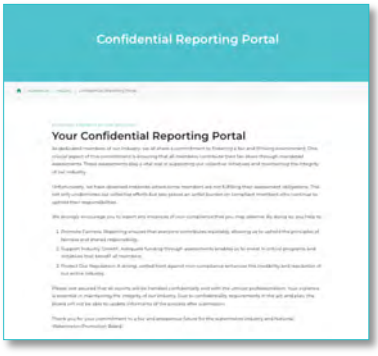
Nutrition by Chelsea showcased a refreshing Watermelon Salad with Feta and Mint recipe on both TikTok and Instagram, reaching her audience of more than 40,000 followers. The colorful recipe highlighted watermelon's versatility and provided followers with an easy, seasonal dish to enjoy at home.

Health, fitness, and running influencer Nick Davis connected watermelon's hydration benefits to active lifestyles through a post featuring his post-run routine while working out in his home gym during a visit with his mom. The content combined relatable storytelling with nutrition information, reinforcing watermelon as a refreshing choice for recovery and hydration.

Together, these partnerships helped reach diverse audiences with messaging about watermelon's nutrition, hydration, and summertime appeal.

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.

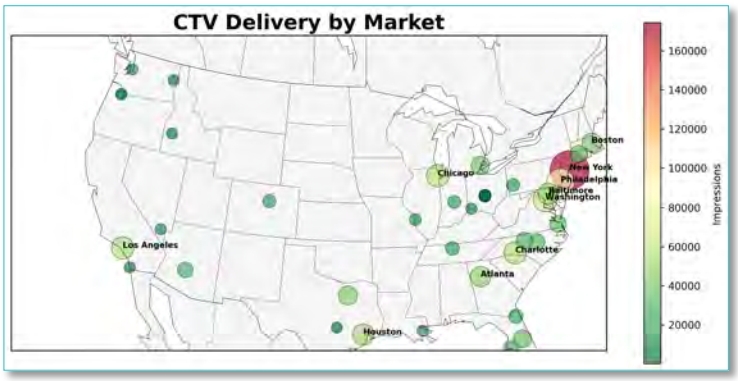


Summer Gas Station Pump Ads and CTV Campaign Update

The campaign is off to a strong start across both CTV and Gas Pump TV placements. On the CTV side, performance has been highly efficient, generating a 96% Video Completion Rate (VCR), indicating strong viewer engagement with the video content. A bubble map is included in this report to illustrate the **geographic distribution of CTV ad delivery and audience reach**.

For Gas Pump TV, the campaign is pacing to deliver in full. As of mid-July, placements have generated approximately 2.6 million impressions, providing substantial visibility across the U.S.

Note that these results reflect only the first four weeks of campaign activity. Final campaign performance metrics and analysis will be provided following campaign completion on August 15.







Registered Dietitian Samaria Garrett Talks Grilling Watermelon on Twin Cities Live

This month's sponsored media segment featured Registered Dietitian Samaria Garrett on *Twin Cities Live*, **highlighting watermelon's versatility and flavor in celebration of National Grilling Month and National Watermelon Month**. While many consumers may not think to put watermelon on the grill, Garrett demonstrated how grilling lightly caramelizes the fruit's natural sugars while keeping it juicy and refreshing. The segment featured both sweet and savory watermelon skewers, including combinations with cheese and angel food cake.



The recipes showcased how sweet, salty, and fresh flavors can come together in a single bite, creating simple yet memorable summer dishes. Grilled watermelon offers a sweet and spicy flavor profile that feels like dessert but is easy enough to prepare while the grill is heating up. Garrett also highlighted how protein-rich dairy foods such as cheese and yogurt pair well with fruits and vegetables to create satisfying summer meals and snacks. You can view the **full segment here**.

Building Lifelong Watermelon Consumers Through Noncommercial Foodservice



The NWPB recently participated in the Kinetic12 Collaborative Innovation Event in Orlando, Florida, joining foodservice operators and supplier partners from across the noncommercial foodservice industry. **Unlike many conferences that focus on a single segment, Kinetic12 followed the consumer journey throughout life, from K-12 schools to college and university dining, business and industry, and healthcare**.

That perspective closely aligns with the Board's **long term goal of increasing watermelon consumption**. The menu experiences consumers have in schools, on college campuses, at work and in healthcare settings help shape the flavors, ingredients and fresh produce they come to expect throughout their lives. By creating positive experiences with watermelon across every stage of that journey, the industry has an opportunity to build familiarity, encourage repeat consumption and increase demand both within and beyond noncommercial foodservice.





The Board participated in one on one meetings with operators representing each segment, discussing emerging trends and opportunities for watermelon. Conversations centered around breakfast innovation, grab and go meals, kid friendly offerings, wellness focused menus and products that support sustainability initiatives, all areas where fresh watermelon can provide practical menu solutions.



To bring those opportunities to life, the Board showcased **Watermelon Latin Salad and Watermelon Turmeric Pepper Juice, highlighting the versatility of watermelon across multiple menu applications**. Together, the recipes incorporated the flesh, juice and rind, demonstrating whole product utilization while showcasing creative ways operators can maximize value and minimize waste.

One of the strongest themes throughout the event was the importance of collaboration. Operators emphasized that they are looking for supplier partners who bring ideas, insights and solutions, not simply products. Those conversations help the Board develop recipes, resources and programs that address operator needs while creating new opportunities for fresh watermelon on menus.

As the noncommercial foodservice market continues to grow, building relationships with these operators becomes increasingly important. Every school lunch, campus dining hall, workplace café and healthcare menu represents an opportunity to introduce consumers to fresh, innovative watermelon applications. By helping operators successfully incorporate watermelon throughout the consumer's lifetime journey, the Board is not only expanding opportunities in noncommercial foodservice, but also helping create lifelong demand that benefits the entire watermelon industry.

NWA Nook: Introducing the Inside the Melon Podcast, a New Way to Stay Connected



The National Watermelon Association is excited to introduce **Inside the Melon: The Watermelon Industry Podcast**, a new member resource designed to bring the conversations shaping our industry directly to growers, shippers, researchers, retailers, and allied partners.

As the pace of the industry continues to accelerate, there are more opportunities than ever to learn from one another. **Inside the Melon** was created to make those conversations accessible wherever our members are—whether that's in the pickup, on the tractor, in the packinghouse, or at the office. Each episode features industry leaders and subject matter experts discussing the issues, innovations, and opportunities influencing watermelon production, promotion, research, advocacy, and the future of our business.

Our inaugural episode features **Dr. Nathan Boyd**, Professor and Weed Science Specialist at the University of Florida, for a conversation about how artificial intelligence, robotics, and computer vision are transforming weed management in watermelon production. Dr. Boyd explains how precision spraying technologies can reduce herbicide use while improving efficiency, and how AI-powered scouting and decision-support tools are helping growers make smarter, more targeted management decisions. The discussion also explores practical, field-ready technologies designed to address labor challenges, reduce input costs, and strengthen the competitiveness of watermelon growers.

This first episode also reflects NWA's continued commitment to supporting practical, applied research that benefits our members. While disease management and food safety remain critical priorities, the Association is increasingly investing in research that explores automation, artificial intelligence, and other emerging technologies that can help growers meet tomorrow's challenges.

Looking ahead, **Inside the Melon** will feature conversations with researchers, growers, policymakers, retailers, and other industry leaders from across the watermelon supply chain. Future episodes will explore topics ranging from agricultural labor and public policy to marketing, food safety, production practices, and the people whose work helps move our industry forward.

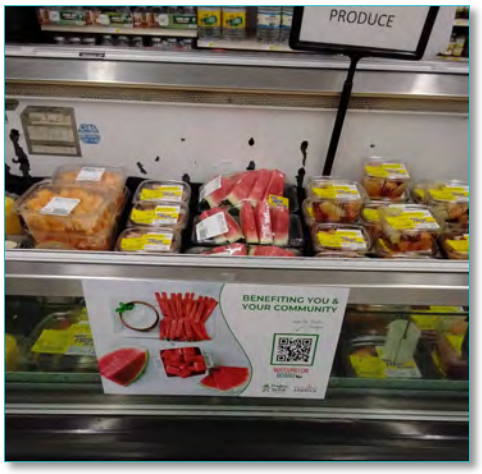
Whether you're interested in the latest research, emerging technologies, advocacy in Washington, or simply hearing from fellow members of the Watermelon Family, **Inside the Melon** is designed to keep you informed and connected throughout the year.

We invite you to subscribe, listen, and share **Inside the Melon: The Watermelon Industry Podcast** wherever you get your podcasts, and to visit **watermelon.ag** to learn more and find each new episode.

Retail in Motion

The retail marketing program is running at full speed, with a **diverse mix of digital and in-store campaigns actively pushing watermelon into grocery carts**. While we wait for the final data to roll in, here are some of the activities currently in motion:

- NWPB kicked off a long-term Healthy Family Project retail program with AWG Springfield stores that will maintain watermelon momentum all the way through November (pictured, top).
- The GroceryTV **in-store video campaigns** wrapped their run across Hy-Vee, Smart & Final, and Giant Eagle stores in late June with a final performance study to be ready in the next few weeks (pictured, second top).
- Chicory just concluded the spring/early summer in-line and pairings campaign with preliminary reports indicating that the top-performing creative has been seedless slice in-line and the chocolate watermelon pairing.
- Retail reps are working hard to drive visibility, keeping watermelon front and center through working with key retailers including Costco, IGA, Fareway and DECA.





Look for the complete campaign results and success stories in upcoming Watermelon Update Reports!





Watermelon Month Giveaway





In celebration of National Watermelon Month, NWPB hosted a fun Instagram giveaway featuring a watermelon-themed prize package that included a Swig tumbler, cooler bag, and beach towel. The campaign generated strong excitement among our audience, resulting in **437 giveaway entries and engagement from 19% of viewers**.

The post also earned 467 likes, 28 reposts, 48 saves, and 108 shares, helping extend its reach across Instagram. Thanks to the enthusiasm of our community, the giveaway attracted **132 new followers** and increased visibility for our brand during this seasonal promotion. Overall, the National Watermelon Month giveaway was a successful engagement initiative that delivered both audience interaction and follower growth.

Watermelon on the Menu

June, a MICHELIN-recommended restaurant in Orlando, FL, is currently offering a **Carpaccio appetizer** with yellowfin tuna, avocado, watermelon, poblano conserva, and puffed rice. Additionally, they are serving both a non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverage including a **Watermelon Fresca** and watermelon, tequila, jalapeno, cilantro and lime **Cocktail**.









NWPB Connections

The Flavor Experience – Newport Beach, CA – August 2 – 4

New England Produce & Floral Expo – Everett, MA – August 18 – 19