OCTOBER 2026

Watermelon Update

NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTION BOARD



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USDA Adds Official Nutrition Profile for Watermelon Rind

We're excited to share an important development for watermelon nutrition research: the USDA has added an official nutrition profile for raw watermelon rind to FoodData Central. This new listing provides registered dietitians, researchers, recipe developers, foodservice professionals and other industry stakeholders with standardized nutrition data for an often underutilized part of the watermelon, making it easier to incorporate rind into recipes, nutrition education, meal planning and product development.

According to the new nutrition facts panel, a 50-gram (1/3 cup) serving of diced raw watermelon rind contains 10 calories, 1 gram of dietary fiber, 140 mg of potassium and 4 mg of vitamin C. The availability of this standardized data is an important resource as we continue to explore opportunities to make greater use of the whole watermelon and support innovations around the fruit.

Continued next page

Rind Nutrition Profile Continued

This **new profile** is the result of long-awaited research and adds to the growing body of research on watermelon nutrition. It also comes at a time when interest in whole-food utilization, nutrition profiles and reducing food waste continues to grow across the food and nutrition industries. Having reliable nutrition data for watermelon rind gives industry professionals another tool to confidently evaluate and communicate its potential, in addition to utilization on large scale foodservice operator menus.

Read the **full press release here**.



Nutrition Facts

Serving Size about 1/3 cup, diced (50g)

Amount per serving	
Calories	**10**
	% Daily Value
Total Fat 0g	**0%**
Saturated Fat 0g	**0%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	
Sodium 0mg	
Total Carbohydrate 2g	**0%**
Dietary Fiber 1g	**4%**
Total Sugars 1g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	**0%**
Protein 0g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 10mg	0%
Iron 0mg	0%
Potassium 140mg	4%
Vitamin A 0mcg	0%
Vitamin C 4mg	4%

*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Media Spotlight: Watermelon Rind News Makes Splash

The news of watermelon rind's new nutrition profile is **gaining strong national media attention, led by a highly syndicated Fox News Digital feature that highlights the Board's role in funding the research and spearheading the effort to add the data to USDA FoodData Central**. The story featured comments from Megan McKenna, Senior Director of Marketing & Foodservice, and Stephanie Barlow, Senior Director of Communications, and has been amplified across multiple platforms, including Fox News, AOL and other syndicated outlets.



In the Fox News Digital story, McKenna explained, "Because of increasing consumption of the rind, we wanted to explore what the nutritional benefits of the rind were," while Barlow highlighted the value of having standardized nutrition information available to health professionals. The coverage puts the industry's research investment and whole-watermelon story in front of a broad national audience. **Read the Fox News Digital feature here.**

New Watermelon Performance Hub Launches on Watermelon.org

The Board's new Watermelon Performance Hub, a resource designed to help industry professionals and everyday athletes alike, recently launched on the website with a goal of helping that audience see watermelon through a fresh lens: fueling, hydration and recovery.



Developed with Umo Callins, MS, RD, CSSD, LD, CPT, a board-certified sports dietitian and fitness coach, **the hub brings together practical nutrition guidance, recipes, videos, expert Q&A and downloadable resources**. And it's designed with real life in mind.

Whether it's a smoothie before a workout, a snack after a training session or a refreshing addition to an everyday meal, the hub explores the many ways watermelon can fit into an active lifestyle including watermelon's versatility including flesh, juice and rind.

For retailers and other industry partners, that creates an opportunity to connect watermelon with a consumer interest that goes well beyond the traditional summer season. Active lifestyles are year-round, and watermelon can be part of the conversation year-round, too.

The hub is also a useful resource for dietitians, coaches, athletic trainers and other professionals who help people make everyday nutrition choices. With six performance-focused recipes and resources built around fueling, hydration and recovery, there's plenty to explore and plenty of inspiration for finding new ways to put watermelon on the menu. Check out the new Watermelon Performance Hub at **watermelon.org/performance**.

Board Nutrition Resources Updated to Reflect New Dietary Guidelines

We've updated our nutrition resources on Watermelon.org to align with the 2025–2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the focus on eating real, whole, foods. Our Eat Real Food resources are designed to make **healthy eating and active living practical, engaging and fun** with helpful tools for educators, families and kids, including:



- Recipes and meal planning ideas
- Healthy eating and living tips
- Lunchbox and snack ideas
- Activity sheets and kid-friendly activities
- Coloring pages and lunchbox cards

Whether you're looking for resources to use in the classroom, at home or in your community, there's something for everyone. Explore the **updated resources here**.

(Water)Melon Mania Inspires Whole Watermelon Innovation



This summer, the National Watermelon Promotion Board partnered with StarChefs to challenge chefs, pastry chefs and bartenders across the country to rethink watermelon through (Water)Melon Mania. StarChefs is a leading industry resource and community for food and beverage professionals, connecting with emerging culinary talent across the country through original content, in-person tastings, industry events and its well-known Rising Stars program. The partnership gives NWPB an **opportunity to put watermelon directly in front of innovative culinary professionals who are helping shape restaurant menus and food and beverage trends**.

The competition generated 422 participation requests, resulting in 75 finalists and 53 original recipe submissions that showcased watermelon from rind and seeds to flesh and juice. Three culinary professionals ultimately took top honors, each receiving $1,500 in their respective category. Bartender Max Reis of Mírate won the cocktail category with his Sandiablo, featuring nopal-infused mezcal, watermelon seed orgeat, pickled watermelon rind and watermelon juice ice cubes (top left). Pastry Chef Anna Doole of Dedham Country and Polo Club earned the pastry prize with Watermelon Entirely, combining watermelon-coconut sorbet, granita, compressed watermelon and pickled rind (top right). Chef Michael Fraino of Restaurant Associates won the savory category with a spicy king crab crunch roll featuring tempura watermelon rind, compressed watermelon, watermelon-yuzu kosho mayo and toasted watermelon seeds (bottom).

From cocktails and desserts to savory applications, the submissions demonstrated watermelon's versatility across the menu while encouraging culinary professionals to think creatively about whole-fruit utilization. Programs like (Water)Melon Mania put watermelon directly into the hands of culinary decision makers, inspiring new applications and expanding the possibilities for watermelon in foodservice.

Sweet Success at Miami's Americas Food & Beverage Show

NWPB exhibited at the Americas Food and Beverage Show from September 14-16 in Miami, Florida. This event continues to be a major success for our efforts in exploring opportunities in the Caribbean.



Over the course of the event, NWPB **met one-on-one with importers and buyers, creating valuable opportunities to discuss U.S. watermelon's quality, versatility, and availability. Sampling was a standout highlight, with more than 800 samples shared that included crowd favorites watermelon limeade and sweet watermelon pizza**. Visitors were especially engaged by the "whole watermelon is edible" message, which highlighted creative ways to use every part of the fruit by also sampling watermelon rind pickles.



Watermelon went over so well with attendees that watermelon was featured twice during the "A Taste of the States" demonstrations hosted by the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture. During the demonstration NWPB was able to briefly talk about watermelon and export market opportunities.





The showcase concluded on a high note, with organizers expressing deep gratitude to all the industry leaders, chefs, and partners who dropped by to connect, discuss product opportunities, and sample the offerings. Beyond the tastings and demonstrations, our booth presence and promotional materials delivered a strong impact, capturing attention and sparking meaningful conversations.

Individuals with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations and or alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, LEP, etc.) should contact: Juliemar Rosado at jrosado@watermelon.org within three days of event. The National Watermelon Promotion Board is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

NWA Nook: NWA Looks Ahead to Research Opportunities



There is always plenty of excitement leading into the IFPA Global Produce & Floral Show, and this year NWA will once again take advantage of having so many industry leaders together by holding our fall committee and Executive Committee meetings alongside the show in Orlando.

These meetings are an **important opportunity** to set the course for the Association for another year, with discussions covering NWA programs, priorities and investments. They are also a time when we get particularly excited about the research opportunities ahead.

The NWA Research Committee is currently reviewing proposals for the 2027 growing season, with projects addressing many of the production challenges facing watermelon growers. In addition to longstanding priorities surrounding diseases and pests, NWA has expanded the scope of its research program in recent years to include technology—particularly labor-saving technologies and opportunities to incorporate robotics and artificial intelligence into production and post-harvest solutions.

This year, NWA has also placed special emphasis on virus research, recognizing the challenges viruses and their vectors have created for growers in different parts of the country.

The Research Committee will meet in Orlando to review this year's proposals and make funding recommendations to the Executive Committee. Those decisions are still ahead, but it is exciting to see researchers continuing to bring new ideas and potential solutions to the challenges facing our industry.

We look forward to sharing more about the projects selected for funding in the months ahead.

A Friendly Reminder: Don't Forget to Review Your Assessments!

watermelon.org

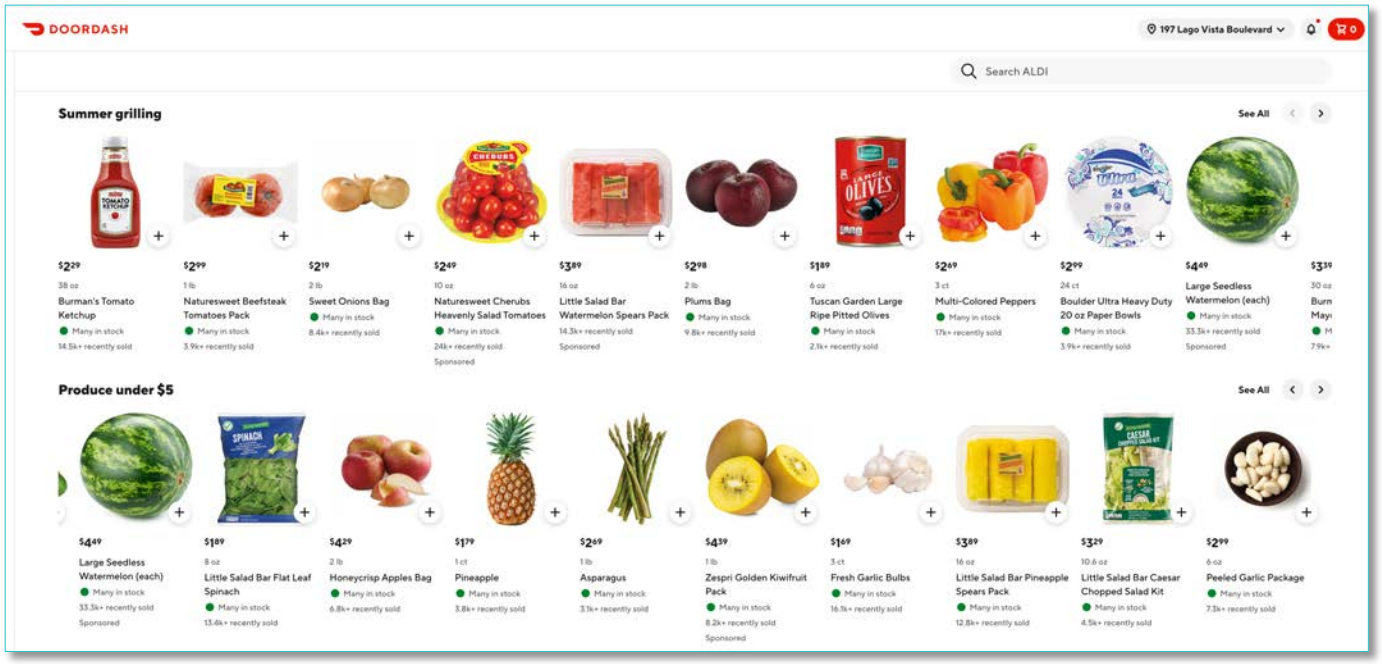
As we approach the end of the year, the National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB) reminds all watermelon handlers to review your records and ensure all applicable transactions have been reported and assessments have been paid.

If your company sold its own production, purchased watermelons from producers, or had other transactions subject to the assessment, please take a moment to make sure everything has been properly reported.

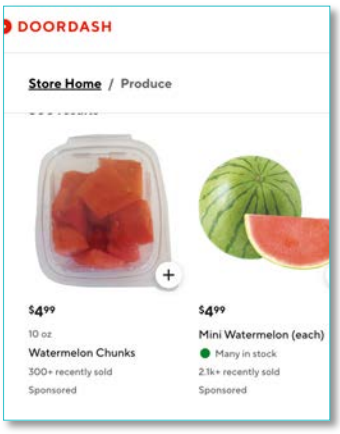
Addressing any outstanding assessments promptly can help prevent your account from moving further into the collection process.

Have questions about your assessment account or reporting requirements? Please contact the NWPB office at (407) 657-0261. We're happy to help!

Summer 2026 DoorDash Campaign Delivers Strong Results



The Summer 2026 DoorDash ad campaign proved that fresh watermelon is a big hit in online grocery orders. Running for **50 days from July 13 to August 31, 2026, the campaign rode a massive wave of shopper demand. Across the entire delivery platform, overall watermelon sales surged to $2.83 million in July—a 13.7% jump compared to last year—and reached $3.09 million in August, up a staggering 37.3%.** Together, July and August category sales grew by 24.9% year-over-year, contributing to an impressive 36.2% average monthly growth rate for watermelon through August.



Against this backdrop of strong category growth, the campaign itself delivered standout results. The summer run brought in $382.5K in total sales resulting in a 6.95 ROAS. The ads also caught shoppers' eyes during peak summer season, with the click rate of 2.97%. Most importantly, the campaign didn't just target the same repeat buyers. Over half of all campaign sales (50.3%) came from first-time watermelon buyers, proving that the visibility successfully brought in a steady stream of brand-new shoppers. On top of that, $54.7K in sales (14.3%) came from shoppers who were brand new to buying fruit in the category altogether.

Ultimately, the campaign's impressive numbers highlight the power of targeted digital advertising to move fresh produce. By combining strong seasonal consumer demand with smart ad placement, the summer push not only delivered an incredible return on investment but also expanded the market by putting watermelon into thousands of new shopping carts.

Southern Innovations Brings Fresh Ideas & Industry Connections

The NWPB continued its partnership with the Southeast Produce Council (SEPC) at Southern Innovations in Nashville, increasing its support of the event this year as a Silver Sponsor. Southern Innovations brings together produce professionals from across the supply chain to explore emerging trends, technologies and products while creating opportunities for meaningful industry connections. NWPB's presence keeps watermelon part of those conversations and strengthens relationships with partners throughout the fresh produce industry.



Attendees also had the opportunity to experience watermelon beyond the traditional slice with a refreshing **Watermelon Mint Agua Fresca** (pictured, left middle) served during the Educational Sessons, offering a simple example of watermelon's versatility and potential across beverage applications. The event also marked an exciting leadership milestone for NWPB, with **Senior Director of Marketing & Foodservice Megan McKenna named to the SEPC Board of Directors** after several years of involvement with the organization, including service on its Foodservice Committee.







Participation in Southern Innovations supports NWPB's continued focus on building strong industry partnerships, sharing new ways to use and promote watermelon, and keeping watermelon connected to the trends and conversations shaping the fresh produce industry.

From Flesh to Rind: Watermelon Inspires Chefs at Markon Summit







The NWPB continued its partnership with Markon as a sponsor of the 11th Annual Markon Chef Summit, held in California's Salinas Valley. The partnership provides an opportunity to **educate both foodservice distributors and operators about watermelon's year-round versatility and inspire new ways to use the whole fruit across the menu**.

Consulting Chef Rebecca Peizer represented the Board, leading an interactive watermelon tasting designed to move participants from education to hands-on ideation. Attendees included culinary, sales and produce professionals from major distributors, including Ben E. Keith Foods, Gordon Food Service, and Shamrock Foods, as well as **chefs and culinary leaders representing restaurants, hospitality, healthcare and other foodservice operations**.

Participants tasted watermelon flesh, rind and juice, then experimented with flavor pairings inspired by American, Mediterranean, Latin American and Asian cuisines. Pairings ranged from Old Bay and bacon to harissa, salsa macha, yuzu kosho and kimchi, giving participants the opportunity to compare how different flavors worked with both flesh and rind and consider where those combinations could translate to their own menus. Prepared applications, including Rainbow Watermelon Rind Slaw with Maple Peanut Dressing and Indian Spiced Watermelon Rind Pickle, further demonstrated how the rind can become a valuable culinary ingredient and expand the possibilities of the whole watermelon. Watermelon Ideation 1026

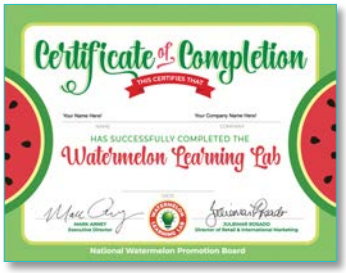
For the Board, the Markon partnership creates an important connection between education and potential adoption. By engaging the distributors who help influence and support their foodservice customers alongside the operators making menu decisions, the Board can provide practical inspiration that travels beyond the Summit. Through tasting, experimentation and ideation, attendees experienced firsthand how watermelon flesh, juice and rind can deliver new flavors, applications and solutions across the menu.

Retailer Tool: Brush Up on Watermelon 101 with the Watermelon Learning Lab

Whether a retailer is a seasoned produce professional or new to the category, staying sharp on watermelon best practices year-round can boost your confidence—and your sales. That's where the Watermelon Learning Lab comes in!

This free, on-demand training tool is designed specifically for retailers and produce staff to help **enhance their knowledge and build confidence in the watermelon category**. The Watermelon Learning Lab covers essential "Watermelon 101" topics such as:

- Selection and Handling
- Cutting and Storage Best Practices
- Health and Nutrition Information
- Tips for Engaging Shoppers



The modules are short and interactive —perfect for quick learning during the workday or pre-shift huddles. Upon completion, participants can even earn a certificate of achievement.
For retailers looking to improve customer service, educate team members, and grow watermelon sales, the Learning Lab is a simple and effective tool to make it happen.

Retailers can start learning today at **https://www.watermelon.org/audiences/retailers/retail-education/**.

Watermelon on the Menu

Flatbread & Butter in downtown Tampa, FL is offering a **Watermelon Cloud Matcha** with coconut water and house made fresh watermelon syrup, topped with matcha cold foam.



NWPB Connections

CIA Run for Your Knives – Hyde Park, NY – October 10

NWPB Fall Board Meeting – Orlando, FL – October 12 – 13

IFPA Global Show – Orlando, FL – October 14 – 16

Curious Plot Strategic Planning – Minneapolis, MN – October 26 – 27

Florida Watermelon Association Convention – Duck Key, FL – October 29 – 31

Texas Watermelon Association Convention – Fort Worth, TX – November 4 – 6

