

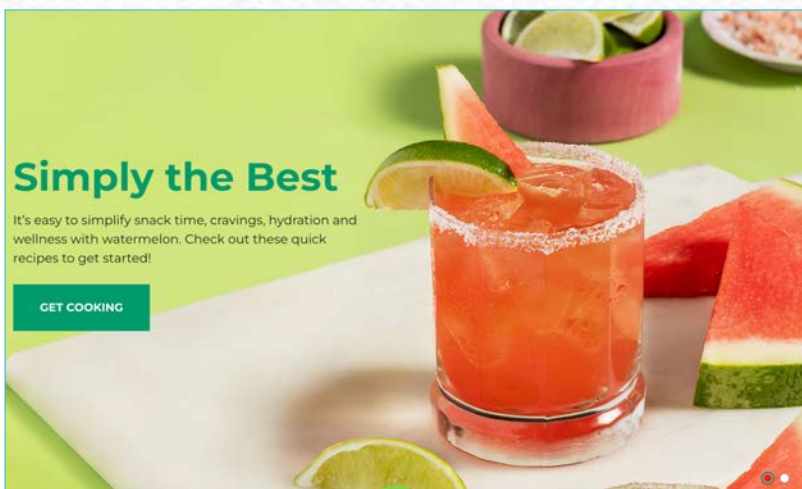


Watermelon Update

NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTION BOARD

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Simply Watermelon Campaign

In 2024, NWPB is focusing on positioning watermelon to consumers as a simple and essential kitchen staple under the theme “Simply Watermelon.” The aim is to ensure watermelon becomes a regular item on weekly grocery lists by promoting easy-to-make snacks and recipes with watermelon as the star ingredient, as well as watermelon basics on selection, storage and cutting.



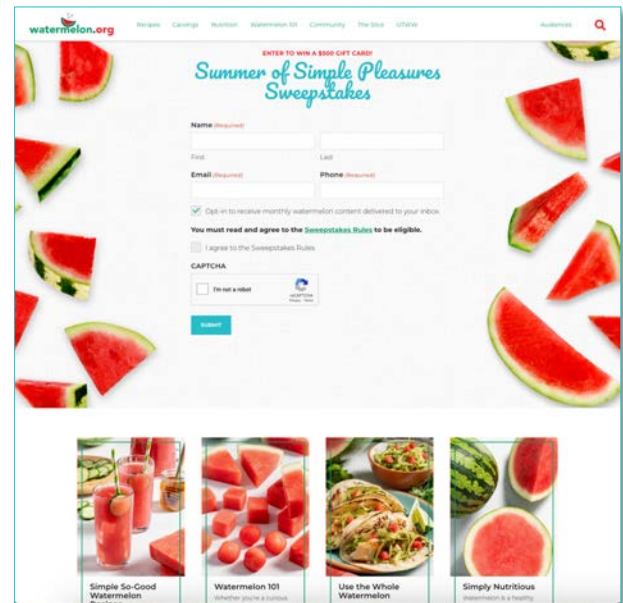
Simply Watermelon Campaign Continued

Key Messaging

- Watermelon is delicious and versatile: slice, dice, blend, carve, freeze, top, or mix it.
- Fresh, juicy watermelon is craveable and easy to incorporate into daily routines, like morning smoothies or on-the-go snacks.
- Watermelon is a year-round kitchen staple that simplifies snacking, hydration, and wellness.

Brand messaging, or the watermelon benefits that are emphasized when educating consumers across channels under the Simply Watermelon theme are aligned with overall consumer communications message priorities.

- **Flavor:** We emphasize the craveable taste of watermelon with simple, delicious recipes.
- **Watermelon 101:** Educate consumers on selecting, storing, and cutting watermelon.
- **Value:** Highlight the number of servings and cost-effectiveness of using the whole watermelon.
- **Happiness:** Connect watermelon with emotional benefits like happiness, nostalgia, and comfort.
- **Sustainability:** Promote zero food waste by using the entire watermelon, each part offering unique flavors.
- **Nutrition:** Share key nutritional benefits, focusing on hydration and vitamins.



Activation and Amplification

- **Content Creation:** We've developed 20 new simple recipes and vibrant vertical videos featuring 5 or fewer ingredients. Sharing these on web and social media, including blogs, Reels, and TikTok the visibility and amplification especially during peak season are paramount.
- **Podcast Ads and Sweepstakes:** Ads promoting Simply Watermelon and a sweepstakes through iHeart podcasts are running from June to August, directing listeners to WatermelonSweeps.com which redirects to watermelon.org/simple (pictured above) for more than just a form to enter but also suggested pathways to explore more Simple watermelon benefits.
- **Social Media Partnerships:** Collaborating with partners on Instagram and TikTok to create engaging content, 5 new watermelon friends are going to be posting Simply Watermelon content in their own voice on their own channels throughout June, July and August. Stay tuned for InfluenceKit reporting highlights later this summer.

By emphasizing simplicity, craveability, and sustainability, the Simply Watermelon campaign aims to make watermelon a go-to fruit for consumers year-round. If you are interested in receiving any of the assets developed for the campaign, recipes, images, or videos, for your own company's marketing purposes, reach out to Stephanie Barlow at sbarlow@watermelon.org.



Industry Member Spotlight: Get to Know Blake Mouzin

Name: Blake Mouzin

Company: Mouzin Brothers Farms

Time in the Industry: I grew up working in the fields since I was seven. I have been back full time in the industry since graduating college in 2017.

Time on the Board: October 30, 2019 – Present



What’s your favorite thing about the Watermelon Industry? The connections made to people who have a similar background in growing/dealing with watermelon. Growing watermelon seems like such a niche thing to share. Being able to relate to groups of people who grew up similar to me in different parts of the country is really cool. I also love having the ability to eat unlimited watermelon during the season.

What’s your favorite item on your bucket list? To watch an MLB game in every major league ballpark.



Retail Merchandising Contest

Have your retailers show their merchandising talents, both those in-store and in print/digital spaces! All entries should showcase watermelon’s benefits including health, value and versatility. Marketing efforts considered in judging will include 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.

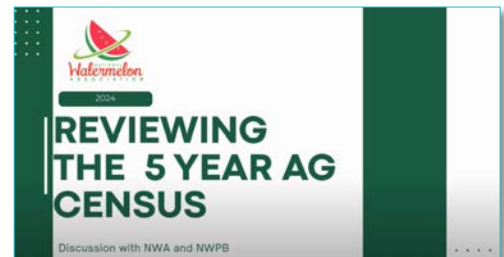


Entries are open and will be **accepted until September 13th!** Visit <https://www.watermelon.org/audiences/retailers/retail-contest/> for more information or email retail@watermelon.org.

NWA Executive Director George Szczepanski Explores the Five Year Ag Census with Jason Hanselman

Recently, NWA Executive Director George Szczepanski interviewed watermelon industry analyst Janson Hanselman to discuss and review the USDA-NASS Five Year Agricultural Census. During the discussion, Hanselman highlights the unique aspects of the Ag Census, explaining how it provides an extensive overview that includes not just production figures but also economic, environmental, and social aspects of farming.

Unlike annual reports, the Five Year Agricultural Census captures long-term trends and shifts, offering invaluable data for researchers, policymakers, and industry stakeholders.



Hanselman shares detailed maps and tables that reveal where watermelons are predominantly grown, showcasing the diversity and reach of watermelon farming. This deep dive into the statistics provides a clearer picture of how different regions contribute to the national supply. Additionally, Szczepanski and Hanselman examine interpreting data, demonstrating how it can be used to make informed decisions and drive strategic planning.

[Watch the full interview here.](#) 



West Coast Produce Expo

The NWPB exhibited at the 11th annual West Coast Produce Expo held in Palm Desert, CA May 30th-June 1st. NWPB's Juliemar Rosado attended the event along with NWPB retail account manager Katie Manetti. The three-day event included a Sustainable Produce Summit that included topics that covered fighting food waste and sustainable packaging. Additionally, the show **provided various networking opportunities and educational sessions** in addition to the full expo. This event is hosted by The Packer and Farm Journal Media, Inc. and connects the produce industry with the West Coast buying community. The event was well attended and a great opportunity to discuss the board's latest retail, foodservice and communications programs and resources.





Southeast Produce Council's Foodservice STEPP UP Tour

The Southeast Produce Council's Foodservice STEPP UP class trip took place in Southern Georgia in mid-June and **watermelon was one of their stops!** The Watermelon Board was asked to host the group and with support from Foodservice Chair Rachel Syngo and Consulting Chef Jason Hernandez, the group experienced watermelon from plant to plate. The morning started with a **tour of a watermelon field** to learn about watermelon production and a shed to better understand the packing process. The tour was **followed by a watermelon flavor-pairing tasting and watermelon-filled lunch** including pulled pork cooked in watermelon juice, watermelon BBQ sauce baked beans, watermelon rind slaw, a chunky watermelon salad, watermelon juice and a watermelon bundt cake. Chips were the only option if an attendee didn't like watermelon! Attendees included foodservice distributors and operators from influential fine dining to large distributors.

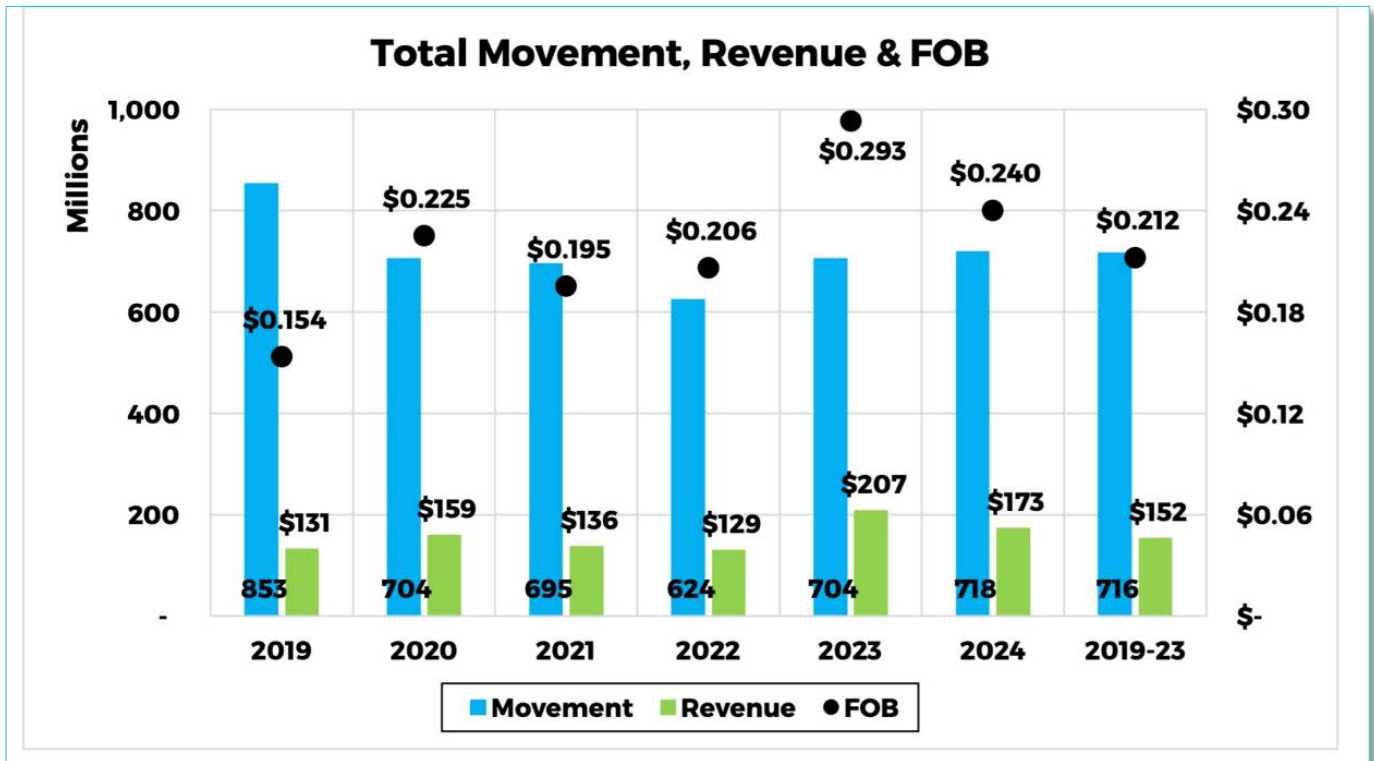


Assessment Increase Update

The proposed rule on the three cent per hundredweight increase to the Board's assessment level is making its way through the clearance process with USDA. The industry will be notified through an e-blast when the comment period is open. Communication will include the deadline and steps on how to make a comment. We encourage all industry members to engage during the comment period. Please keep an eye out for more information.



2024 Memorial Day Recap: Production, Retail Ads and Retail Sales



Memorial Day features the second largest buildup of watermelon each year trailing only the Fourth of July. During the two weeks prior and one week following the holiday, volume has averaged just around 716 million pounds from 2019 through 2023. In 2024, volume was up 0.3% at 718 million pounds, while seedless FOB prices were more than 13% higher at \$0.24 per pound. Typical volume with higher prices led to strong revenue estimates.

Florida contributed over half of the total with 381 million pounds, roughly 7% above the established average, while Mexico provided the second most (245 million, up 10%), and Texas placed third (84 million, down 23%). Out west, Arizona was down by over half. California was not in the market at this time for the second consecutive year. Per pound prices were a couple of cents higher in Florida and Texas.

[Download the Full Workbook here](#) to gain insight regarding this critical time of year for each of the regions mentioned above from a production perspective. Additionally, find retail ad analysis to get a sense for promotional volume as well as ad pricing. Lastly, utilizing Circana Retail Scan data will highlight how watermelon performed at retail relative to past years using a similar timeframe as above. It also shows 50 different nationwide markets and looks at how many Total, Whole, Mini and Cut pounds were sold and how that compares to the prior five years.

NWA Nook: NWA Advocating for Watermelon Industry Priorities at IFPA's Washington Conference

The National Watermelon Association (NWA) proudly participated in the International Fresh Produce Association's (IFPA) Washington Conference in Washington, D.C., from June 10-12. Our delegation engaged with policymakers to address key issues impacting the watermelon industry.

Key Highlights:

- **Industry Coalition:** Brought together watermelon leaders from various regions and organizations.
- **Policy Engagement:** Attended education sessions and coalition meetings, relaying priorities to congressional offices.
- **Watermelon Queens:** Included all state and national queens in our advocacy efforts.
- **Joy of Fresh Activation:** Hosted an event offering watermelon slices to congressional members and staff, sharing industry priorities and opportunities to follow up in-district.
- **Labor Reform Advocacy:** Focused on addressing issues with the H2A visa program, crucial for our workforce needs.



NWA's participation underscored our commitment to advocating for policies that support the watermelon industry. We are grateful to our members for their dedication and look forward to continuing our efforts to secure a prosperous future for all.



DYK Heart-Check Certification – American Heart Association

Did you know that watermelon is Heart-Check mark certified by the American Heart Association? According to the AHA, the Heart-Check mark helps guide consumers when shopping in the grocery store to easily spot heart-healthy foods with confidence and **the logo can be used by industry members on packaging, labels and other marketing materials**. Please contact Stephanie Barlow, Senior Director of Communications at sbarlow@watermelon.org for more information.



Quality Connections with Foodservice Operators

In the [May Watermelon Update](#), first quarter Kinetic 12 research was highlighted, but what else is included in that investment? The Board is partnering with Kinetic12 to sponsor the Emergence group for the second year in a row. The partnership offers **emerging and growth chain reports, operator connections, and live regional roundtables**. The Emergence Operator Group consists of more than 150 chains with 20-500 units. Emerging and growth chains are essential to the foodservice industry offering newer brands and smaller, more nimble teams. **Two, 24-hour meetings with quality 1-on-1 operator meetings with more than 35 chains provide a platform to connect with each operator.** The first meeting took place at the end of April in Charlotte, NC. Some larger operators present include Piada Italian Street Food, Eggs Up Grill, Pieology Pizza, Pollo Compero and Chicken Salad Chick. The second meeting was at the end of May. Costa Vida out West, Grimaldi's in the East, and Salad Collective in the Central region, help to highlight how these regional chains can help the Board reach across the country in more approachable menu applications. Both meetings found a lot of operators who are thinking about watermelon for summer 2025 and looking for culinary support. Some operators are diving into watermelon this year, offering menu promotion opportunities.

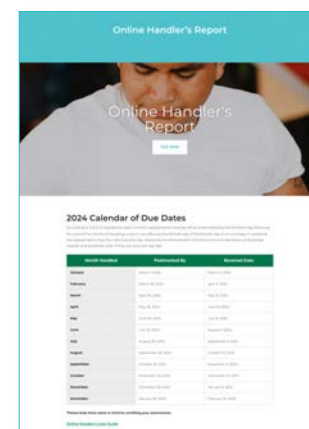


2024 Assessment Due Dates

Please note the following **due dates** for 2024:

- Product handled in May, must be postmarked by June 30, and received by July 10, 2024
- Product handled in June, must be postmarked by July 30, and received by August 9, 2024
- Product handled in July, must be postmarked by August 30, and received by September 9, 2024

The full calendar can be found [here](#). At the same link handlers can file their online Handler's Report. Never used the online Handler's Report? Check out the step by step [Online Handler's Report Users Guide](#).



Teaching Watermelon in the Culinary Classroom



Teachers don't teach what they don't know so the Board makes sure culinary educators know about watermelon! The Center for Advancement of Foodservice Educators annual conference took place mid-June in San Antonio, TX. The Watermelon Board served the Watermelon Sparkler, a low abv cocktail, and Watermelon Sushi at the opening reception. The Board had a tabletop display during the trade show



time, the InfoFair, and donated the bags for the gift bags so watermelon branding was everywhere. Lastly, **Megan McKenna presented *Watermelon Brings the Wow*, an hour-long Trend Session on all things watermelon highlighting tools and resources available at watermelon.org**, specifically the **Culinary Curriculum**. Candied Watermelon Rind drizzled with chocolate was shared at the end to compliment the juice and flesh recipes shared the night before. This is an important group to get in front of for the future of foodservice.



July is National Watermelon Month!

Let's help spread the word and let everyone know by sharing on your own social channels. Remember all assets - like the graphic on right - created by the NWPB are **free and available for industry use!** Reach out Stephanie Barlow at sbarlow@watermelon.org for files and/or more information.





IFIC 2024 Food & Health Survey Results

International Food Information Council, an educational non-profit organization that disseminates science-based information on food, has recently released their annual Food & Health Survey. A few highlights from this year’s survey include:

- 21% of respondents that snack in the evening/late night choose fruit
- Rising Consumer Stress & Food Cost Likely Impact Food Decisions
- Americans Define Healthy Food As Fresh, Protein-Packed & Low In Sugar
- Taste Tops The List When Its Comes To Purchase Influence Followed By Price & Health
- Health benefits sought from food differs by generation (graphic right)

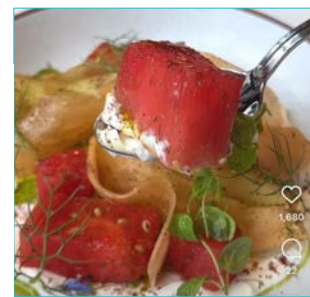
Top 4 Health Benefits Sought From Food by Generation			
Gen Z	Millennial	Gen X	Boomer
40% Energy/less fatigue	44% Energy/less fatigue	45% Energy/less fatigue	52% Healthy aging
35% Weight loss/weight management	37% Weight loss/weight management	38% Healthy aging	43% Energy/less fatigue
34% Improved sleep	36% Emotional/mental health	37% Weight loss/weight management	42% Digestive health/gut health
32% Emotional/mental health	35% Digestive health/gut health	34% Digestive health/gut health	38% Weight loss/weight management

To view the full survey results from IFIC visit: <https://foodinsight.org/2024-food-health-survey/>



Watermelon on the Menu

Charred Melon and Smoked Labneh is now offered at Sifr - a Middle Eastern cocktail bar in Chicago, IL. The new dish is made by **charring watermelon** and honeydew melon, and also includes cantaloupe, and a vinaigrette of orange juice, skhug (sauce), Aleppo pepper, mustard, and olive oil on top of smoked labneh. The dish is topped with sumac, pomegranate seeds, and a spice blend of dried dill, garlic, and onion, and salt.



NWPB Connections

USAEDC Attaché Seminar – McLean, VA – July 11

IFPA Foodservice Show – Monterey, CA – July 24-26