

NEWS RELEASE

National Watermelon Promotion Board FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Juliemar Rosado, Director of Retail & International Marketing
Phone: 407-657-0261 ext. 208
Email: jrosado@watermelon.org



National Watermelon Promotion Board Announces Winners of 2024 Retail Merchandising Contest, Highlighting Creativity and Consumer Engagement

Winter Springs, FL – October 24, 2024 -- The National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB) has named the winners of its annual Retail Merchandising Contest, which drew over 140 entries from retail chains, independent retailers, and commissaries across the U.S. and Canada. Now in its 16th year, the contest encouraged retailers to spotlight watermelon's health benefits, value, and versatility through creative displays and marketing. New this year, the contest ran from June through August, aiming to capture the excitement of early summer watermelon demand.

Judging criteria included category visibility, point-of-sale materials, visual merchandising, messaging nutritional benefits, recipes, selection education, and the use of print, online, and digital platforms. Contestants demonstrated a wide range of tactics, from engaging in-store displays and take-home materials to social media posts sharing watermelon recipes, nutrition tips, and fun facts.

This year's Grand Prize winner, **Gelson's Market #23 in La Canada, CA**, made a triumphant return to the winner's circle after previously earning an Honorable Mention in last year's contest. Gelson's elevated their efforts this year, impressing judges with their creative displays and consumer education initiatives including in-store sampling events, social media recipe videos and selection and nutrition education, earning them the top prize.

"This year's entries were exceptionally innovative, showing watermelon's health benefits and versatility through various media," said Juliemar Rosado, Director of Retail and International Marketing at NWPB. "The winners stood out for their consumer education focus, with displays highlighting watermelon selection, recipe ideas and happiness. Whole, mini and fresh-cut watermelons were also featured to appeal to a wider range of shoppers."

In addition to the Grand Prize, **Wegmans Food Markets in Rochester, NY** took second place, and **Schnuck Markets in St. Louis, MO** secured third. Due to the remarkable quality of submissions this year, the NWPB awarded an additional Honorable Mention, recognizing a total of four retailers for their outstanding efforts:

- **Harps – Heber Springs, AR**
- **Riverside Market #1135 – Montrose, MI**
- **Tops Friendly Markets – Dunkirk, NY**
- **United Grocery Outlet – Knoxville, TN**

"The team at Gelson's #23 would like to express our gratitude for the opportunity to showcase the talent we have at Gelson's Market," said Thot Phommasaysy, Produce Manager at Gelson's Market #23. "We take great pride in creating impactful displays that excite our customers. Gelson's La Canada is proud to have won the Grand Prize this year in [NWPB's] Retail Merchandising Contest. A special thank you goes out to Catrice Taylor, Produce Clerk for her dedication, hard work, and merchandising skills. Thank you Catrice, for helping La Canada Gelson's become this year's winner!"

More than \$10,000 in cash and prizes will be awarded to the winners. Gelson's Market #23 will receive \$5,000 as the Grand Prize winner, Wegmans will take home \$2,500 for second place, and Schnuck Markets will receive \$1,000 for third. Each of the Honorable Mention winners will be awarded \$500 for their exceptional displays.

For a complete list of winning displays, including images, visit the [NWPB Retail Contest Winners](#) page at watermelon.org. For additional information, contact Juliemar Rosado at jrosado@watermelon.org.

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About National Watermelon Promotion Board

The National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB), based in Winter Springs, Florida, was established in 1989 as an agricultural promotion group to promote watermelon in the United States and in various markets abroad. Funded through a self-mandated industry assessment paid by more than 700 watermelon producers, handlers and importers, NWPB mission is to increase consumer demand for watermelon through promotion, research and education programs.

A serving of nutrient-dense watermelon provides an excellent source of Vitamin C (25% DV), a source of Vitamin B6 (8% DV), and a delicious way to stay hydrated (92% water), with only 80 calories per 2-cup serving. Watermelon consumption per capita in the United States was nearly 16.9 pounds in 2023. Watermelon consumption in the United States was nearly 5.6 billion pounds in 2023. The United States exported an additional 377 million pounds of watermelon. For additional information, visit www.watermelon.org.