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**NWPB working to get more watermelon on more U.S. menus**

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With 14 percent menu penetration in 2022 (up from 8 percent in 2012), there is plenty of room to continue to grow the presence of America's favorite melon on U.S. menus, and that is a goal of the [National Watermelon Promotion Board](#).

The program's ultimate goal is to increase watermelon on menus, according to Megan McKenna, senior director of marketing and foodservice for the NWPB.

"Foodservice key messages focus on educating and inspiring foodservice decision makers," said McKenna. "Topics include cultivation, cutting and yield, health messages, value (volume with accessible price point year-round), versatility (flavor pairings, inspiring recipes, think outside the peel, beverage recipes) and year-round availability."

Earned and paid media keep watermelon top-of-mind with operators throughout the year, according to McKenna, and earned media is prevalent in the spring, summer and early fall when watermelon is on more menus.

The International Foodservice Editorial Council helps to connect the dots between foodservice editors and watermelon menu items, she added, and paid media in the fall and winter continue to inspire operators. An extension of the board's digital partnership with the Culinary Institute of America ([ciaprochef.com/watermelon](http://ciaprochef.com/watermelon)) will add more chef-created menu items to the existing library.

McKenna said sponsored events are geared to all audiences in foodservice to spread watermelon messages. The board will again sponsor the Flavor Experience and host a sampling station during the IFPA Foodservice Show but will expand watermelon's presence by sponsoring the K-12 Foodservice Forum.

Also new this year, the NWPB will sponsor MenuDirections to reach noncommercial foodservice and Kenetic 12 Emergence, eMerge (an event during the Restaurant Show) and the CIA's Latin American Cuisine Summit to reach commercial foodservice operators.

"Messaging will continue to utilize the 2022 Watermelon Flavor Dynamics highlighting watermelon's versatility and ability to fit into many global cuisines," said McKenna. "To reach foodservice educators and up-and-coming chefs, the board works with the American Culinary Federation and the Center for the Advancement of Foodservice Educators to promote the Watermelon Culinary Curriculum."

Lastly, McKenna said the board offers ideation and promotional support to both commercial and noncommercial operators. NWPB engages with operators who do not use watermelon or help those who do to expand watermelon menu items through education and ideation sessions, on and off-site. Promotions often support LTOs with funds to move more of the menu item and place watermelon messages in front of consumers.

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