

My name is Ryan Van Groningen and I am Sales Manager at Van Groningen & Sons located in Manteca, CA. We grow, pack, and ship watermelons from various growing regions in California and Arizona. I am also the Research Chairman for the National Watermelon Promotion Board. As someone involved in the watermelon industry, I have been able to see first hand how the National Watermelon Promotion Board has been able to increase consumption of watermelons. One area that I find to be very important for the watermelon industry is research in the amino acid, Citrulline. Recent research conducted on Citrulline has shown to have a number of different health benefits to the cardiovascular system. One of the most valuable effects is that Citrulline has shown to reduce blood sugar levels for people prone to diabetes. Not only is this great for the consumer, but this is a marketable asset for the watermelon industry as there is no other fruit or vegetable that can come close to the amount of Citrulline that watermelons contain. Many fruits and vegetable don't even contain this amino acid.

Research on Citrulline in watermelon needs to be advanced and continued, however further studies will require more money than the National Watermelon Promotion Board can currently fund. This is just one reason our company strongly supports the proposed increase of the assessment rate. This increase will not only benefit the consumer, but also the watermelon industry.