

California Prune Board

2023-2024 U.S. Interim Marketing Communications Plan

AUGUST 1, 2023 – JULY 31, 2024



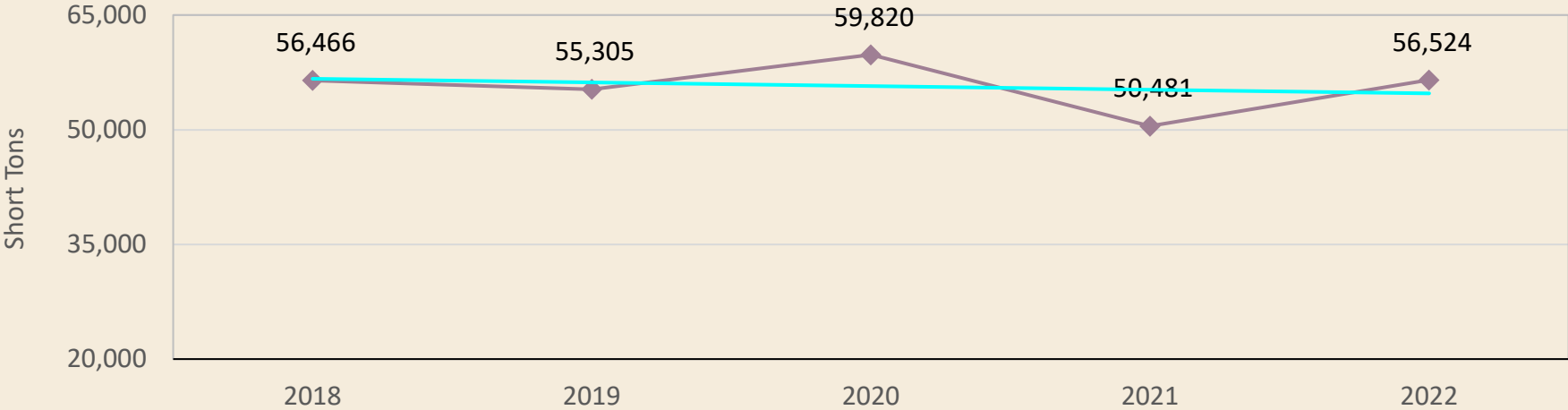


Table of Contents

- Domestic Shipments Page 3
- CPB Strategic Priorities Page 4
- U.S. Marketing Communications Goals & Strategies Page 5
- Challenges, Opportunities & FY23-24 Planning Imperatives Page 7
- (Interim) FY23-24 Target Audience Page 10
- How We Reach Our Target Page 12
- Campaign Platform Page 13
- Consumer Research Page 15
- Program Implementation Page 17

Estimated Domestic Demand, 5-Year Trend

The U.S. is the #1 Global Destination for California Prunes



Short Tons	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Beginning Inventory:	77,207	83,423	85,444	48,296	37,219
Production:	86,964	86,990	58,756	81,950	71,616
Imports:	12,931	6,563	6,586	8,118	14,547
<i>Available inventory:</i>	<i>177,102</i>	<i>176,976</i>	<i>150,786</i>	<i>138,364</i>	<i>123,382</i>
Exports:	33,064	38,468	40,533	46,379	29,302
Domestic volume:	56,466	55,305	59,820	50,481	56,524
Ending Inventory:	87,572	83,203	50,433	41,504	37,556
Consumption (T. inv. – end. stock)	89,530	93,773	100,353	96,860	85,826

Source: Processors' Reports, except Imports (FAS)



Strategic Priority Pillars

The California Prune Board's marketing communications efforts are aligned with and designed to support the following strategic priorities as determined by the Executive Committee.

- ✓ Expanding Visibility
- ✓ Nutrition Research
- ✓ Production Research
- ✓ Trade Policy & Market Support
- ✓ Industry Unification

The outward-facing consumer U.S. marketing program was created to support expanded visibility for California Prunes.



U.S. Consumer Marketing Communications Objective

Program Goal:

Support expanded visibility for California Prunes in the U.S.

Long-Term Program Objective:

Increase purchase frequency of prunes among existing light-to-medium prune consumers.

U.S. Marketing Communications Program Strategies for FY23-24:

- Improve the definition and understanding of a “light-to-medium-using” target consumer with whom the taste, versatility and health benefits of California Prunes will resonate for years to come.
- Target efforts with repetition of focused messages and usages.
- Align on an interim consumer target audience and a "bridge plan" of earned and paid tactics to surround the target with repetition of focused messages and usages in daily life via a mix of PR and digital to offer, compelling and valuable content.

U.S. Marketing Communications Program in FY23-24: Challenges, Opportunities & Planning Imperatives (slide 1 of 3)

Challenge	Opportunity	23-24 Planning Imperatives
<p>Broad Target Audience:</p> <p>The CPB domestic target audience to date has been a broad group, so it's been difficult to truly understand them, target effectively and raise awareness within budget.</p>	<p>CPB can more effectively target an audience by narrowing it to be smaller and more distinct.</p>	<p>Begin the year with a slightly narrowed target based on discussions and insights to date; focus media targets and partnerships more narrowly than in the past.</p> <p>Conduct consumer research to define a new, more focused target audience. Learn as much as we can about her current prune usage, overall snack and meal prep habits, attitudes toward food, actions regarding healthy aging (or not aging!).</p>
<p>Low T.O.M. Awareness and Perception:</p> <p>Consumers' top-of-mind awareness for prunes is low, and some consumers still perceive prunes as a just constipation solution.</p>	<p>Target low and medium prune consumers with some additional demographic and psychographic parameters.</p> <p>Shift approach from top-of-mind awareness to improving overall perceptions.</p>	<p>Consider tactics that allow target consumers to experience and taste prunes in different ways.</p> <p>Be sure to fully mine existing assets and insights on what messages and usages have resonated best to date and may resonate best with a new target.</p>

U.S. Marketing Communications Program in FY23-24: Challenges, Opportunities & Planning Imperatives (slide 2 of 3)

Challenge	Opportunity	23-24 Planning Imperatives
<p>Nutrition & Health Benefits Awareness:</p> <p>Though CPB research shows that consumers perceive prunes as healthy, awareness of their nutrition and multiple health benefits is low. Many consumers just associate prunes with being a constipation treatment.</p> <p>Nutrition research in some areas is in early stages (animal studies).</p>	<p>Consumers already know prunes are healthy and have wide awareness of their function as a constipation treatment. We can build on this/use if as a credible bridge to discuss other benefits.</p> <p>CPB’s gut, bone and heart health benefits are strong. Anecdotally, we see that consumers like the pairing of gut health and bone health messages. Precise messaging may be refined during consumer research.</p>	<p>Use consumer research to define how to focus messaging on the strongest areas of research that resonate best with the target.</p> <p>Once we have a new target, educate CPB’s Nutrition Research committee about her and encourage research that’s directly relevant to her for the benefit of U.S. market growth.</p> <p>We should not message any findings of animal studies to consumers or even RDs; however, we can share published findings via announcements to the scientific community as appropriate.</p>
<p>Top Health Professional Targets:</p> <p>CPB has trialed participation in tactics targeting a variety of health professionals: RDs, the menopause research community, other research communities. But the budget to reach health professionals is very limited.</p>	<p>CPB can narrow its health professional target audience to be smaller and more distinct, and then more effectively target them for increased awareness.</p> <p>Our target consumer should be at the center of all U.S. external communications efforts; all roads should lead to increasing the core consumer’s perceptions of prunes and their benefits.</p>	<p>Use consumer research to help CPB define which types of health professionals should be the top, most focused targets to reach our target consumer.</p> <p>Upon defining the health professional target, consider baseline research that can be repeated in 2-3 years.</p> <p>We should also consider targeted outreach to certain HP groups based on nutrition research outcomes.</p>

U.S. Marketing Communications Program in FY23-24: Challenges, Opportunities & Planning Imperatives (slide 3 of 3)

Challenge	Opportunity	23-24 Planning Imperatives
<p>Usage Awareness/Resonance Gaps:</p> <p>Consumers have low awareness of how many prunes they can/should eat, how to use prunes, and sometimes even where to find them in the store. They commonly fear they can't eat too many at once, or they will have adverse effects.</p> <p><u>Snacking:</u> The healthy snacking landscape is crowded, and it takes time and focus to foster the creation of a new snacking habit.</p> <p><u>Recipes:</u> The CPB team is uncertain of how much prep and cooking our target is/will be willing to do.</p>	<p><u>Snacking:</u> 4-6 prunes a day (which is under 100 calories) is the recommendation for benefits related to serving size and scientific evidence of health benefits. Consumers can eat up to two servings a day (8-12 prunes) without seeing adverse effects.</p> <p><u>Recipes:</u> Prunes are a versatile ingredient and easy to find in stores. CPB has strong existing assets.</p>	<p>Probe in consumer research how our target is currently using prunes, and their current snacking and meal-prep behaviors.</p> <p><u>Snacking:</u> Test among consumers the best way to convey serving size and recommended number of prunes. 4-6? A handful? Is asking 4-6 a day too much? Or is it too limiting? How can we be emotional and not too prescriptive/clinical?</p> <p><u>Recipes:</u> Probe in consumer research what usage ideas our target might use most frequently and determine how to further focus recipe/usage messaging.</p> <p>Though CPB should always be the authority on all ways to use prunes, we should consider what <u>few specific prune usages we can promote repeatedly to our target</u>, so repetition of message can inspire trial.</p>
<p>PR/Social Media Integration:</p> <p>To date, the public relations and social media programs have not been integrated very closely.</p>	<p>CPB can create a more integrated marketing program that connects PR and social media tactics to surround the target consumers with narrower, more focused messaging and usage ideas.</p>	<p>As noted above, the PR and social media teams will work together to determine a focused content calendar for the year that surrounds the target with a unified set of messages and narrowed usage ideas. We will also explore social influencer/media spokesperson integration.</p>

Our Interim Target Audience

Based on insights from CPB consumer research from 2013 to 2022 and recent discussions about narrowing the target to be more effective in surrounding it in multiple ways with our key messages, using repetition of message to increase awareness, we are now planning FY23-24 consumer research to further define our best target audience – a demographically and psychographically distinct group that will hear our messages, perceive them as relevant and buy more prunes.

In the meantime, here is who the CPB U.S. marketing team has decided to target. This group is slightly narrowed from previous years.

- **Primary food-shopping women:** For food items, primary-shopping women tend to be easier to target through traditional and social media than men.
- **Ages 35-54:** Previously at 40-75, we have shifted the audience to be younger, still spanning a relatively broad age range between older Millennials and nearly the top of Gen X. This is an age group that tends to have food buying and decision-making power while considering long-term food and health habits for themselves.
- **Health/wellness minded:** To establish a prune buying habit and ideally a habit of eating 4-6 prunes every day, our target will need to be receptive to California Prune nutrition and health benefits. She is conscious of health trends, and receptive to trying new approaches in health, beauty, and weight and often talks about health topics with her friends. She is interested in eating foods that have health benefits.
- **Passionate about healthy aging:** Our target sees the long game and wants to be healthy and vibrant both now and in her later years. She stays up on healthy aging trends.
- **Kitchen friendly:** With prunes being so versatile to use, our target will be receptive to easy, memorable, everyday ways to prepare them in addition to eating them out of hand. She's busy, but she likes to make a nice dinner and bake when she has the time. She watches food content on social media and TV and likes to talk with her friends about food.
- **Light and medium prune users:** Our target is familiar with prunes, but we want her to buy them more often.
- **Higher education & income:** Our target tends to have at least some college under her belt and be in a \$100k+ household.
- **Single, married, kids, no kids:** Our key messages about health will focus more on women than on men or kids – so California Prunes are something our target will tend to choose primarily for her own needs in mind. The needs of male partners and kids can be in consideration as well, but likely secondary.
- **Working, SAH:** Our target can be in any kind of work situation while still falling within all the parameters above.
- **Urban, suburban:** Like most Americans, our target lives in cities and suburbs.





Who Should Surround Our Target in FY23-24?

Who are the top media outlets, registered dietitians and social media influencers we want to surround our target consumer this year, ideally getting her to say, "Huh, I've been hearing so much about prunes lately ... I should buy them more often!"

How We'll Reach Our Interim Target



Consumer Media

- Online, broadcast and print outlets that cover 35-54 year-old women's lifestyle, health, fitness, cooking and baking



Nutrition Experts & Influencers

- Registered dietitian nutritionists
- Other nutrition influencers
- Possibly other health professionals (as explored in FY23-24 consumer research)



Media Spokespeople & Social Media Influencers

- Food/culinary and healthy living experts/enthusiasts and content creators who are like our target (per parameters on slide 10) or otherwise likely to resonate with our target

Note: the U.S. marketing program also reaches out to science and nutrition media and ag/industry media.



Campaign Platform

Connecting the elements to each other
and everything to the brand



A Continued U.S. Campaign Platform

- While we conduct consumer research in FY23-24, we will continue to use the existing consumer campaign platform, which is consistent with addressing our FY23-24 planning challenges, opportunities and planning imperatives. We know we want to elevate the message that 4-6 prunes every day can provide health benefits related to healthy digestion and gut health, strong bones and heart health ... and that in addition to choosing prunes as an easy snack, there all kinds of other delicious ways to prepare and eat them.
- Our FY23-24 consumer research and tighter targeting will likely result in a new campaign platform to be launched for FY24-25.

Supports both emotional and
rational appeals: rooted in taste
AND in health

Gives permission to
enjoy more
frequently

Promises versatility in
usage AND in benefits

**Good
every day
in so many
ways.**

 **california[®]
prunes**
Prunes. For life.



Consumer Research

We will conduct consumer research in Q1 of FY23-24 to define our longer-term target and get to know how to best target them with our tactics. We will then evolve our tactical plan beyond this interim version.



Consumer Research

CPB will conduct consumer research to explore:

- **Consumer Attitudes and Perceptions Towards Prunes:** Through this research, we aim to delve into consumers' attitudes towards prunes as well as their perceptions. These insights will illuminate areas of strength and potential.
- **Utilization Patterns:** We will aim to better understand how prune consumers utilize prunes – whether as snacks, in recipes, smoothies, grazing boards, lunches, and their willingness to use prunes as an ingredient for sauces, dips, or baking. We are interested in uncovering the likelihood, frequency and significance of these choices in their diets and lifestyle.
- **Barriers and Growth Opportunities:** Determining the strength of our opportunities and confirming the barriers we need to overcome for prune consumers. This study will offer a deeper understanding of our target audience profile and illuminate any blind spots to the problems we can help solve for them, and the messages that resonate most.
- **Relevance of Attributes:** Attributes such as taste, quality, functionality, nutritional value, and the broader health and wellness context will be examined closely. These insights will enable us to align our offerings with a deeper understanding of our consumers' attitudes and behaviors related to food and health, as well as sources of food and health information.
- **A New Consumer Target Definition:** We want to learn what demographic and psychographic parameters result in a population that CPB can effectively surround and reach repetitively with messages about California Prunes.
- **Target Consumer Behaviors:** Refining our understanding of our consumer everyday habits and behaviors of our new target consumer will provide a solid foundation for our marketing and communications strategies.

Program Implementation

Bridge activities to support the program implementation based on current insights and knowledge.





Consumer PR Overview

Objective: Ensure a steady cadence of newsworthy, relevant and compelling prune content is surrounding our interim target

Strategies:

- Refining messages to meet current target “where they are” both in culinary and nutrition
- Leverage key holidays and occasions for prune culinary and snacking integration
- Identify key spokespeople to communicate key consumer messages
- Develop content that connects with consumers at key milestones through the year

Consumer PR Overview

Bridge Activities/Tactics:

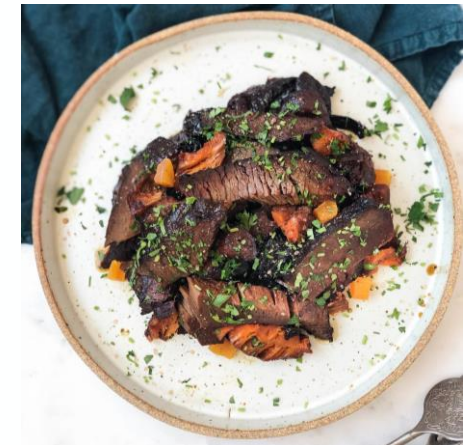
- **Sept. – Oct:** Outreach to food writers and editors using the 2023 harvest as a milestone and reason to introduce new PR contacts; focus on flavor pairings and versatility message
- **Nov. – Dec:** Dinner Party Project Campaign with spokesperson Natasha Feldman
- **March:** Nutrition News consumer media event paid sponsorship to include:
 - Product integration into meal; educational session to present to the media; chef demo; attendee survey
- **Ongoing:** Proactive outreach to trade media throughout the year in support of CPB activities (campaign announcements, research news, etc.)
- **Ongoing:** Reactive media relations; responding to media requests



Nosh
WITH TASH



Natasha Feldman
aka Your 35-year-old
Jewish Grandmother



NNU
NUTRITION NEWS UPDATE
SPRING 2024

The secret to her famous brisket?
It's prunes!



Consumer Program – Content Development & Production

Objective: Produce articles, photos, videos, and social content that will resonate with the Interim Target Audience and support the overall goals of the Marketing Program

Strategies:

- Produce content that echos or supports high-performing pieces, and where CA Prunes can "win" search traffic and/or be a trusted authority
- Continue collaboration with high profile chefs to legitimize prunes as a premium ingredient, increase visibility and to normalize usage
- Develop content and related materials that work for domestic and international audiences related to grower stories, sustainability, etc.
- Consumer PR and Digital/Social Media teams to collaborate on year-long editorial calendar selecting themes relevant to target audience
 - Entertaining – Fall/Winter
 - Healthy eating – Winter/Spring
 - Baking – Year-round
 - Global flavors – Year-round
- Assess content vehicles including social platforms, website, blogs, and newsletters to determine best approach for target once new target is defined. Continue to leverage owned channels to support as content platforms.

CONTENT PRODUCTION: Recipes, Lifestyle Images, Articles and In-Field Video Content

Our SEO-driven content production has yielded success on social channels, and we expect to see greater website traction with the update to californiaprunes.org. Our team is actively updating existing content, with completion expected in October, and several new recipes and articles will be published in advance of our October-January holiday push. We'll continue to work closely with the Wild Hive team to share SEO and digital deployment practices to maximize the reach of CA Prunes owned content, as well as using our digital platforms to lift visibility for key media mentions.

Tactics:

- Repeat and support high-performing content with similar pieces
- Use social listening to predict performance and inform topic or recipe selection
- Continue to produce content with partners (chefs, CA GROWN) that reach retail, foodservice + media targets
- Stay nimble: to take advantage of food/social trends and change production styles (ex: cutting all videos in horizontal + vertical formats)
- Produce consumer-facing, SEO driven website pieces utilizing content produced for industry, nutrition + media to maximize expenditures and provide consistent messaging
- When complete, utilize consumer research to further inform content production, including usage types, styling and deployment plans
- Work with Wild Hive to develop list of recipe + lifestyle content that will be most effective for media pitches
- Consider needs of International teams and partners (ex: CDFA, FAS) within production plans



Chef Bronwen Wyatt of Bayou Saint Cake with her Almond Cake with Prune-Raspberry Butter



Natalie Kling Mariani + George Sousa Jr. as part of a grower feature video. The family also shared two Heritage recipes.

Social + Digital Consumer Program

Influencers + Partners:

Objective: Reach established and target audiences with compelling content and usage ideas to increase incremental sales and consumption of California Prunes

Strategies:

- Continue relationship cultivation and paid programming with creators who have developed high-performing prune content, and add new talent based on audience, authority and expertise
- Repeat or expand successful partner programs, such as "Show Us What You're Cooking With California Prunes" contest, CA GROWN content sharing and Cherry Bombe Media "She's My Cherry Pie" podcast
- Lift key owned and endorsement content via SEO and content sharing agreements with all digital partners

Social Media:

Objective: Increase top-of-mind awareness for California Prunes within owned and target audience via social platforms

Strategies:

- Continue promotion of owned content with focus on engagements + views, with audience narrowed to the Interim Target Audience
- Amplify positive media coverage, endorser and influencer content
- Engage with consumers, media, endorsers and influencers



INFLUENCERS + PARTNERS: Creator & RD Influencer Program, Digital + Podcast Media

This program is designed to create an ongoing relationship between CA Prunes and tastemakers, fostering advocacy for prune usage and our growers. We also look to maximize opportunities with partners like CA GROWN who advocate on our behalf and provide activation opportunities such as CGA and IFPA, as well as campaign partnerships like California Wine Month and California Farmer and Farmworker Month, and digital media partners who amplify our message to key groups.

Streamlined reporting for partners in 22-23 allows for clear, consistent information about which influencers, media outlets and content pieces are highest performing on an ongoing basis. We'll use this data to inform casting and partnership decisions, as well as evaluate new partners quickly and in creation of new owned content. We'll also consider the Interim Target Audience when making these decisions, but as the social + influencer program has largely skewed younger than the previous target, there likely won't be sizable changes here.

The updated californiaprunes.org website will allow for stronger SEO support of partner content, and we will add outbound links to key pieces on an ongoing basis.

Bridge Activities/Tactics:

- **Aug-Dec:** Cherry Bombe "She's My Cherry Pie" Podcast sponsor, Oct-Dec social features on Cherry Bombe channels + print ads
- **Sept-Dec:** Wave 1 influencer program casting + content, surprise + delight shipment, holiday baking + entertaining theme
- **Oct 24-Nov 20:** No Crumbs Left "Show Us What You're Cooking with CA Prunes" recipe contest
- **Nov 6:** "She's My Cherry Pie" live baking event with Cherry Bombe, Los Angeles



High-performing Brownie Cookies by Displaced Housewife, author of *The Cookie Book*



CA GROWN Creators demonstrating a prune recipe + wine pairing at a live event

SOCIAL MEDIA: Management + Promotions

Paid Digital Integration & Amplification Tactics:

- Promotion of owned content + channels will continue focus on engagements + views, valuing "quality" over "quantity"
- Use highest performing organic content for paid amplification
- We'll continue to use Pinterest as a core platform for boosted recipe content, and continue boosting of pro-prunes editorial content and recipes on Endorser, Media and Power Influencer websites, with a narrowed focus on those that reach the Interim Target Audience

Digital Platform Management Tactics + Duties:

- Adding owned TikTok channel to maximize reach of produced content and connect with Interim Target Audience: deploy weekly videos to gauge performance and assess
- Continue to evaluate Threads and X to provide appropriate efforts (and any other emerging or changing platforms)
- Regularly review analytics for californiaprunes.org following update with CPB staff to catch trends and measure performance of paid social amplification of owned content
- Review social listening and performance reports with Director of Communications quarterly with focus on program performance and any needed adjustments
- Perform ongoing social media community management, content curation, optimization, and reporting
- Website content updates, publishing of new content and special project development



California Prunes

@CAPrunes

🌐 californiaprunes.org · Perfected from California sunshine, prunes support bone, gut + colon health. Follow us for fun facts, tasty ideas + delicious recipes...[more](#)

1.3k followers · 274 following

687.9k monthly views



Nutrition Communications Overview

Objective: Establish prunes as a whole food snack/ingredient solution to common ailments affecting our interim target

Strategies:

- Educate RDs on key health benefits of prunes using research studies as evidence
- Refine messaging to RDs to better enable them to communicate to their target audiences
- Employ RDs as spokespeople for media opportunities, social media ambassadors and subject-matter experts

Nutrition Communications

FNCE Integration

What: Partner with RD and other brands to reach influential RDs at FNCE

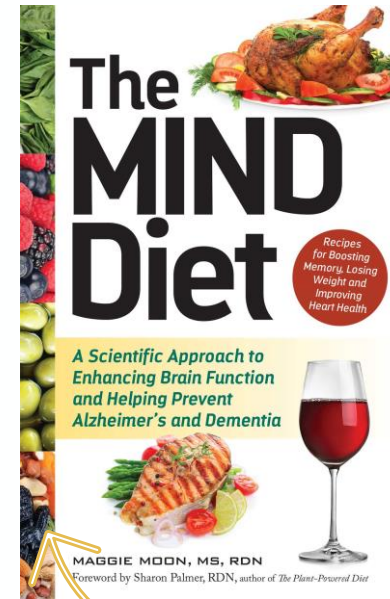
Why: Event complements existing efforts from industry

Timing: Sunday, October 8 from 6-8 p.m.

Sponsorship Includes:

- Menu integration (will work with venue chef on development)
- Logo on step and repeat, save the date, invitation, reminder and thank you note
- Swag Box inclusion (this will likely be mailed post-event)
- Three Instagram Stories featuring prunes and key prune messaging
- Possible broadcast opportunity

Nutrition Focus: Event is in partnership with Maggie Moon, MS, RD who wrote the “The MIND Diet”



Check out those prunes on the cover!

Nutrition Communications

Culinary Nutrition Collaborative Webinars

What: Reach hundreds of highly engaged RDs and health professionals through interactive webinars highlighting prune versatility and cooking techniques

Why: Blend nutrition science with on-trend culinary techniques to communicate key nutrition messages

Timing: Winter and Spring



Nutrition Communications

Paid RD Activations

What: Coordinate with influential RDs that reach our target audience both in media relations efforts but also in peer-to-peer engagement

Timing: Ongoing

Examples Include (but are not limited to):

- Online and broadcast media opportunities
- RD education events
- Health fairs, events

Material Refinement

What: Assess and develop/edit materials for nutrition professionals

Timing: To begin in September; ongoing with a plan developed for each quarter

Materials Include (but are not limited to):

- Research overview
- Converting online PDF content to searchable website content
- RD one-sheets on: bone health, digestive health, brain health, culinary medicine
- Improved SEO of nutrition content

Nutrition Communications – Opportunistic Event Sponsorship



Hotel del Coronado, San Diego, CA
April 29 – May 1, 2024

What: California Prune Board platinum sponsorship

Why: This symposium is focused on the role of nutrition, exercise, bone (osteoporosis) and muscle (sarcopenia) including methods of assessment. With a portfolio of bone research to share, the CPB can connect a range of health professionals, researchers and industry across many disciplines to inspire further interest in researching the role of prune in bone health and foster relationships with the scientific community.

Sponsorship & Nutrition Focus:

- One-hour speaker symposium to address: Diet Interactions and Bone Health: The Protective Power of Prunes
 - Session Moderator: MaryJane De Souza (The Pennsylvania State University, USA) and Ailsa Welch (UK)
 - Prunes and bone health: Are there sex differences? - Shirin Hooshmand (San Diego State University, USA)
 - Prunes in glucocorticoid-induced osteoporosis and gut microbiota composition in animal models – Laura McCabe (confirmed, Michigan State University, USA)
- California Prunes exhibition booth with priority display location
- Prominent logo display and acknowledgment in all conference promotional materials

THANK YOU!

