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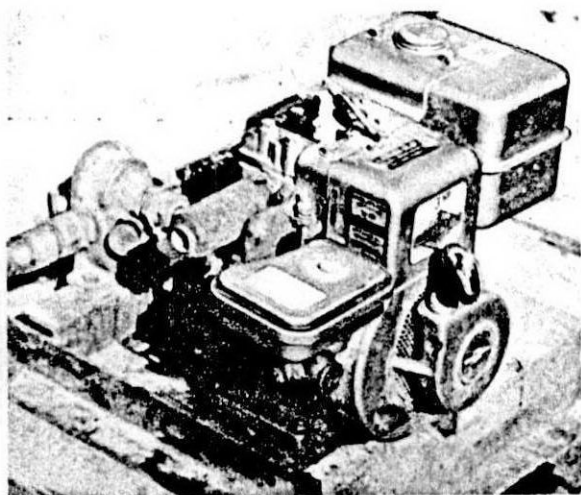


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October, 1973

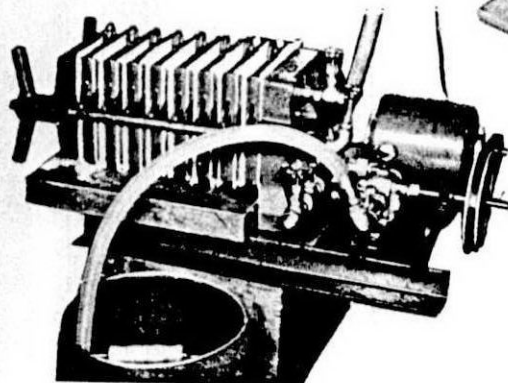
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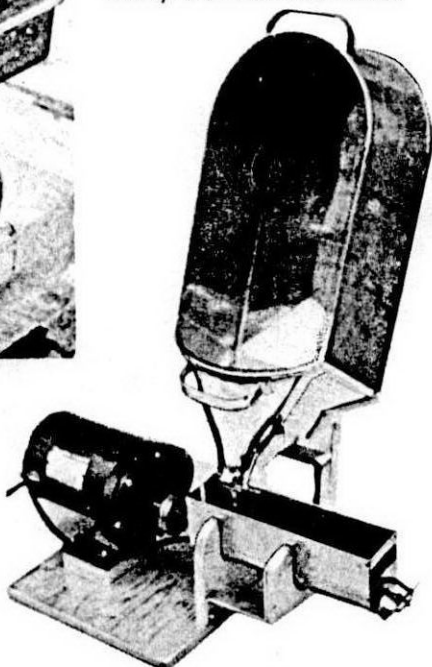
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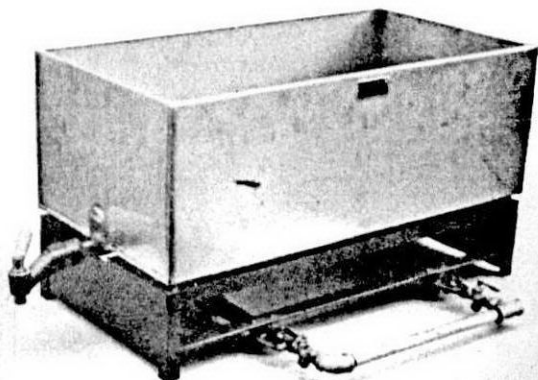


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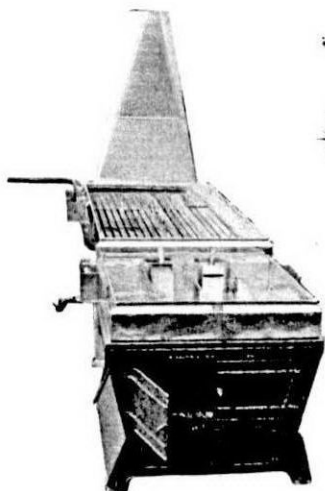
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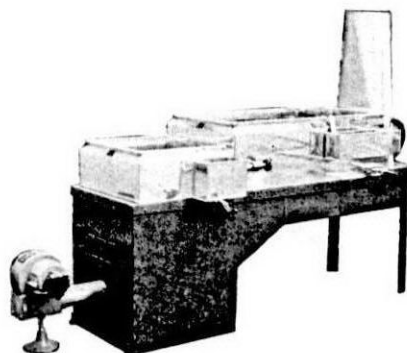
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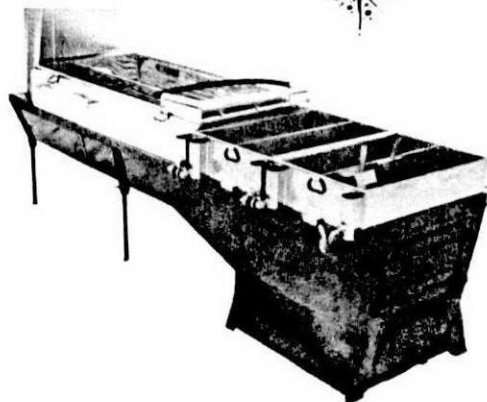
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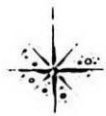
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# Editorial

Last spring, about the time of the "big run", Bill Clark, president of the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers Association, called me to pass the time of day and possibly cry on someone's shoulder who was having as poor a crop as he was. In the conversation he mentioned he had tapped a tree in January and during the warm spell the latter part of that month, it had produced 3.5% sap. He said that at that time he was afraid something was going wrong because the sugar content of that tree was usually only about 2% in January. He figured the sap reached its peak sometime between the first and middle of February, another warm spell, and during the normal season, the sugar content was on the decline right from the start.

And did it decline! I remember, early in the season, I accused some of my sap producers of filling up their tanks from the Unadilla river and before the season was over, I told them it would be better if they did, except that they should use the Susquehanna, it's thicker.

What should we do to guard against this situation in future years? Nothing, I guess. Sure, I admit we would have had a better crop if we had tapped in January last winter. All the experts preach "tap early." But when you get a few warm days in the winter, our normal "January Thaw", how do you know, the minute you get them tapped it won't freeze up and stay frozen for two months? By the time it warms up enough they won't run anyway because the bacteria's got the best of them.

The solution to this problem is as follows: Build a walk-in Freezer around the sugar bush. Then you can keep the trees frozen all winter like they ought to be. The top should be built so that when the time comes and you're all ready, it can be opened up to let the sun in to make the trees run. With this system you could even wait until May when the snow is all gone and it's easier to get around. You might even have it electrically heated so you wouldn't have to open the top. By freezing the trees periodically you could even keep them from budding and make syrup all summer.

Disadvantages: In the first place it will be expensive, but according to the newspapers, with the price of food the way it is, you farmers are rolling in dough this year. And anyway, it's only money. If you haven't got it you can borrow from a bank for as little as 10% interest (if you hurry before their rates go up again).

In the second place, what with the power shortage the way it is, you might not be able to get enough electricity to warm it and freeze it the way you should which could cut down the amount of sap produced. However, this shouldn't bother because, in the third place, you won't be able to get enough oil next spring to boil down very much sap in the first place.

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# BUDDY SAP FERMENTATION

## -A COMPLEX PROCESS

J. C. Kissinger

Eastern Regional Research Center<sup>1</sup>  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19118

With the unseasonably warm spring of 1973, maple producers were deluged with "buddy" sap. The Eastern Regional Research Center also was deluged with queries regarding the ERRC-developed fermentation procedure to remove this unpleasant flavor component from sap. The questions brought to light a number of misconceptions regarding this process which might bear some tidying-up by way of the Digest, since we can't hold a general meeting of maple producers.

A few flat statements can probably settle the whole problem. First of all, the fermentation of "buddy" sap with the *Pseudomonas geniculata* to remove the acrid flavor of buddiness is a rather simple process in the hands of an experienced operator who has the equipment to do the job. Secondly, late-season sap and buddy sap inevitably

yield a low-grade sirup, and exposure of a mediocre sap to microbial action (fermentation) won't yield a high-grade final product. Finally, since "buddy" sap really has no flavor which could be identified with the taste sensation we call "true maple flavor", it is doubtful that any fermentation could remove the "buddy" flavor component and substitute a full-bodied maple flavor.

The fermentation process was developed from the observations of Dr. Joe Naghski, a man well-known to the older maple producers. It was developed with the expectation that it would be a means of making a low-grade sirup at the end of a season when any sirup production means profit. However, it was never envisioned as a small-scale or hobbyist operation. At the time this process was worked out, it was thought that canneries, cheese plants, and dairies might enter the maple business as large central evaporator plants, and there were a few short-lived operations of this type in that period. A big central sirup plant might

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end a season with 20,000 gallons of "buddy" sap on hand, and any of the above-mentioned processing plants would have the facilities for sterilization and the bacteriological know-how to run this fermentation without a hitch.

It might be clearer to run through this process for you.

1. Secure a dried (lyophilized) culture of *Ps. geniculata* (current price about \$10.00) from Northern Regional Research Center (NRRC) Culture Collection, Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Peoria, Illinois 61604.

2. Secure and sterilize "buddy" sap and keep it sterile until it is inoculated with the *Ps. geniculata*.

3. Add sterile water to the dry culture - transfer some of this rehydrated culture to tryptone glucose extract agar slants so that you will have a stock of the *Ps. geniculata* for the future. Refrigerate the slants and make up new ones monthly. Use the remaining *Ps. geniculata* to inoculate 1 pt. of sterile sap. Incubate for 48 hrs. at room temp.

4. Inoculate 5 gal. sterile sap with the pint of culture. Incubate 48 hrs. at room temp.

5. Inoculate 50 gal. of sterile sap with the 5 gal. culture. Incubate 48 hrs. at room temp.

6. At this point, the 50-gal. culture can be used as inoculum for 500-1000 gal. of sterile "buddy" sap. After 24 hrs. of fermentation, evaporate 1 gal. of the inoculated sap to detect the presence of "buddy" odor in the steam and sirup. Repeat this at 36, 48, 54, and 60 hrs. after inoculation. "Buddy"

odor should disappear at 48-54 hrs. When the odor disappears, evaporate the fermented sap to sirup density. You will not get more than a commercial-grade sirup from this process.

Any contamination by the ropy-sap bacteria, which grow all too well in "buddy" sap, must be avoided. One case in point was a ropy contaminant in a buddy sap fermentation which

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grew so profusely that the ropy sap would not enter the flues of the evaporator pan. This resulted in a burned-out flue pan.

It is obvious that this fermentation requires equipment which is not readily available in the typical evaporator plant. It requires a lot of hard work and even a little luck, and you would need a large volume of sap to turn a profit on your investment in a "buddy" sap fermentation. For these reasons, we have advised those who called us or wrote letters regarding this process not to attempt to carry out the fermentation. It is doubtful that there are more than 5 producers in the U. S. and Canada at present who might receive enough "buddy" sap, even in this exceptional year, to make this process pay.

Future research on this subject might change the situation drastically. Research on other, simpler methods to make a marketable product from buddy sap or sirup is in the planning stage and will be undertaken shortly.

I hope that this will clear the air a bit on the problem of sap fermentation. My last effort along this line at the N.M.S. Council meeting at Boyne Mt., Michigan in 1971 seems to have missed the target. After giving the same story presented here, a non-council member who sat in on the meeting congratulated me on my courage in admitting that the process which we had developed was a failure?! The process works very well, but it was not developed with the average maple producer in mind and is far too complex and demanding for small-scale use.

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<sup>1</sup>Agricultural Research Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture.





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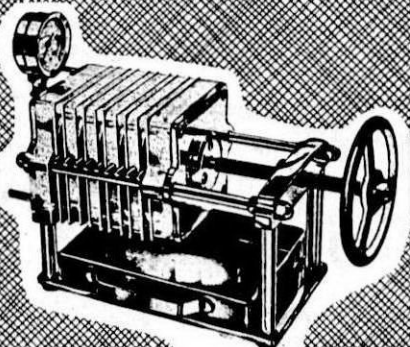
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# MAPLE SYRUP & THE BLENDS

by David R. Marvin

Formerly Research Forestry Technician,  
Northeastern Forest Experiment Station,  
Forest Service, U. S. Department of  
Agriculture, Burlington, Vermont.

If manufacturers of blended syrups stopped using pure maple syrup in their blends, the impact on the U. S. maple syrup industry would be very slight. This was one conclusion from a recent informal study made by the USDA Forest Service.

Blended syrups are made by combining cane syrup with pure maple syrup and other ingredients. The use of pure maple syrup has made the blenders dependent upon maple syrup makers for nearly a century. New market conditions are now changing the relationship between maple syrup makers and blend manufacturers.

To evaluate the impact of these changes, management personnel of the three largest blend manufacturing companies were interviewed. They were asked how much pure maple syrup they use, why they use it, and its value to the maple industry. Their responses are summed up here.

## EARLY MAPLE BLENDS

In the late 1800's, when pure maple sugar became more expensive than cane sugar, the two were blended to extend the highly valued maple flavor with a cheaper sweetener. Early cane and maple blends were combined carefully to imitate pure maple syrup. Formulas differed, but the product

usually contained 10 to 25 percent of pure maple syrup.

A dark, hearty, strong-flavored maple syrup was used so that the maple flavor would not be lost in the blend process. The price of the blended syrup was much lower than the price of pure maple syrup. Thus the maple syrup industry had a good opportunity to sell the pure darker syrup, which was not valued highly, and the blended-syrup industry kept the image of maple before the public.

In 1959, at the Fourth Conference on Maple Products, a representative of the blend industry forecast a bright future for the blend business. Technological advances promised increased efficiency for maple producers — increased profits without increased costs. Population growth was adding new consumers to the table-syrup market. The price and supply of pure maple syrup and competition from artificially flavored syrups were problems, but they were not enough to dim the future outlook.

## THE BLENDS TODAY

Industry market surveys and reports show that maple-flavored syrups are by far the most important in the table-syrup market. Maple-flavored syrups include pure, blended, and artificially flavored syrups. Blended maple syrups account for the greatest share of maple-flavored syrup sales. However, industry people point out that sales are not growing as rapidly as popula-

tion is, which reflects a change in consumer habits and a failure to develop new product uses.

Syrup is used almost exclusively with pancakes, waffles, and french toast. But now Americans are increasing their use of instant foods. Breakfast foods in particular must be easily and quickly prepared. The preparation of batter and the use of several dishes required to make pancakes is too time-consuming for many people. Frozen waffles and french toast are gaining favor, but their contribution to the market is scarcely enough to make up losses in the homemade type. Furthermore, in a nation of weight-watchers, a meal of pancakes and syrup is considered uncomplimentary to the waistline.

Most of the new uses being promoted call for maple syrup as an ingredient in recipes made up from scratch. Promotions to encourage this use usually accomplish only a short-term increase in sales. When the promotional efforts end, most people return to prepared mixes.

Today the market outlook is not as bright for the blended-syrup industry as it was a decade ago. Total profits cannot be increased by greater sales because the market is not growing. Strong price competition among few sellers in the market makes price increases difficult. One way to increase profits in this situation would be to decrease costs by using less of the most costly ingredient.

#### MAPLE SYRUP AND TODAY'S BLENDS

To complement its breakfast-food line, one blend manufacturer introduced a syrup that contained only 5½

percent pure maple syrup and also contained artificial flavors. Priced comparably with established straight cane and maple blends, this new syrup was accepted quickly. It was only a matter of time before the percentage of pure maple in other blended syrups was lowered and artificial flavor was added. Product cost was reduced, and prices remained at about the same level.

Cost reduction was not the only reason for changing the product formula. The blend companies have difficulty obtaining adequate supplies of pure maple syrup. They have to maintain large and expensive inventories to insure continuous syrup production.

Surveys made by the blend companies indicate that consumers prefer the taste of syrups made solely with artificial maple flavors! Why then is pure maple syrup included in their products at all?

The blend companies are not certain about how the consumer feels about pure maple syrup being in their product. The absence of the word *maple* on the label, even as small as it is in the list of ingredients, might cause an adverse consumer reaction. Another reason for retaining maple in the blends is simple market strategy. The first producer to drop pure maple syrup altogether could suffer in product comparisons through advertising by other companies. This is a real risk in a market where increased sales are gained at the expense of market shares of competitive products.

There are compelling economic reasons for eliminating pure maple syrup from blends. Pure maple syrup costs nearly five times as much as cane sugar by weight; and in short supply situa-



tions, the cost ratio may be much more than that. The cost benefits from eliminating the 5½ to 6 percent of maple ingredients presently used in the blends is significant.

The uncertainty of supply from year to year is irksome to the blend companies. An adverse consumer reaction to the removal of maple from the blends is not certain, as some surveys have shown that the taste of completely artificially flavored syrups may be preferred to that of blends. And, if one major company successfully eliminated pure maple syrup, it is likely that the other major blenders would follow quickly, thus removing the risk of advertising comparisons.

### THE FUTURE

It is likely in the near future that the blend companies will continue to use pure maple ingredients because the maple image has a sales value. It is also likely that the percentage of maple being used in the blended product will continue to be reduced until it reaches the 2-percent minimum allowable by law for inclusion of the word *maple* in the ingredients. However, it is probable that the major blend companies will stop using pure maple syrup if the supply and price continue to be unstable.

The maple industry should be aware of how a loss of the blend market would affect it. To determine that, we should know from where and how much pure maple enters this market. Unfortunately, there are no data available to provide a precise answer. Because of the recent reductions in percentage of pure maple syrup used in the blends and changes in normal inventory volumes by the large blen-

ders, no pattern for the total annual needs of the industry has yet emerged. There is, though, enough information to make an informed guess about what might happen if the large blend companies stopped using pure maple syrup.

Available data about the three major blenders indicate that they use at least 10 to 15 percent of the total U. S. and Canadian maple syrup production. It is very difficult to determine how much the small blend companies and non-brand-name syrups use, but a conservative estimate would be another 5 percent. Thus a total of about 20 percent of the total U.S. and Canadian production of maple syrup enters the blend market (based on 1970 figures). These estimates are conservative—the market in non-brand-name syrups may be larger than we know, and one source puts the consumption by the blend market at about 40 percent of total maple syrup production.

Nonetheless, several factors indicate that a loss of the blend market would have a less serious impact than might be anticipated. First, the U.S. maple production is less than it was years ago; and a greater proportion of the production is in higher grades. In 1963, more than 75 percent of U.S. production was in table grades, while about 70 percent of Canadian production was in the dark grades, which are most commonly used in blending. This supports information from the blend companies that the blend market is supplied largely by Canadian production. Consequently, Canadian producers would suffer the greatest impact from a loss of this market.

Furthermore, there is increasing interest in selling good quality dark grade maple syrup in the table-syrup



market. Several pure maple packers have also begun producing their own blends. These are generally formulated with 25 percent pure maple and no artificial flavor, as were the early blends. Both of these developments could increase the other market opportunities for the dark syrup that now is going to the large blenders.

### CONCLUSION

In the near future, the sales appeal of pure maple in the blends will probably insure its continued use, even if at a reduced percentage. In time, unless the supply and price of pure maple syrup to the blend industry stabilizes, it is likely that the major blend companies will stop using pure maple syrup. The greatest burden from a loss of the blend market would fall on the processors and large suppliers to that market. However, Canadian producers and local syrup-producing areas with a high proportion of dark syrup production might also suffer.

### References

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- Quebec Department of Industry and Commerce, Bureau of Statistics. 1963. *Maple Products*. 11 p. Quebec.

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

R. 1, East Jordan, Michigan, 49727

March 27, 1973

National Maple Syrup Digest  
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Today on my seventy-third birthday, I consider the relationship of the sugar maple tree and its products to our family experience on the farm.

Due to advancing senior citizenship my wife and I are retiring from producing maple syrup, from charter membership in the Michigan Maple Syrup Association, and from regular subscription to the National Maple Syrup Digest.

For a century at various times our farm produced maple syrup. We wish to give credit to the sugar maple tree and its products for enriching the lives of four generations of our family.

My grandfather applied for an An-

trim County, Michigan, homestead in 1870 and soon afterward made maple syrup and sugar. Nine years later he constructed a hewn maple log cabin. During the next six years the cabin was used by grandfather's large family and also as a social and religious community center.

Many years later my parents made some syrup in an iron kettle in the woods so that our family could enjoy a delicious spread on bread, pancakes and Johnny cake. The children helped with the labor in the woods and quickly learned that a cooperative effort was needed to help earn a hard but honest living.

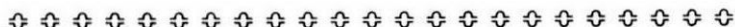
During the Second World War cane sugar was rationed but cooks discovered that honey and maple syrup could be used as substitutes in preparing food. My wife baked a cake at home. She took the cake to a 4-H Club Leaders' meeting at the county seat and placed

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the cake among other pot luck food on the table. Several guests at the table made sly remarks about the cake as though questioning my wife's patriotism. She explained to the amazement of several guests that the delicious cake was sweetened only by maple syrup but not by using any cane sugar.

Our daughter as a high school student of English composition wrote a term paper on maple syrup production and in college she wrote a more advanced article. She helped to compose a family Centennial History on our farm. Now she is teaching an elementary school and can tell pupils about her own experience in carrying sap to the boiling pan in the woods and testing syrup with a hydrometer before canning.

Now my wife, daughter and I feel a peaceful satisfaction in having a Michigan Centennial Farm marker in front of our home and possessing the well-preserved maple log cabin mentioned above. In this cabin we have family

heirlooms including a flail, butter churn and old pictures. A Centennial Farm Certificate signed by Governor William G. Milliken and presented to us by the Michigan Historical Society hangs on the wall.

The century old 80-acre homestead has produced three generations of organists for our local Catholic church and it also produced three school teachers with a total of twenty-nine years teaching experience. My wife worked twelve years as a registered nurse. She, our daughter and I have Bachelor of Science Degrees. On Sunday we attend church services as a family unit and lead the congregation with organ music and songs.

We wish to give much credit to the maple tree and its products for making life more abundant and worth living for four generations of our family. Indeed, we are grateful for the gifts of life and the precious sugar maple tree.

Ralph Josifek

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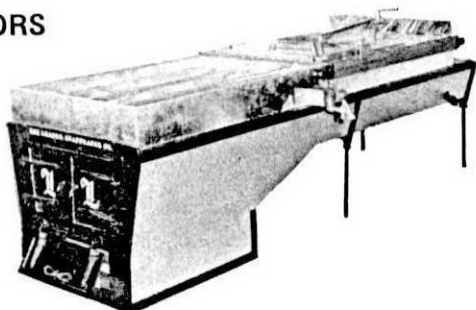
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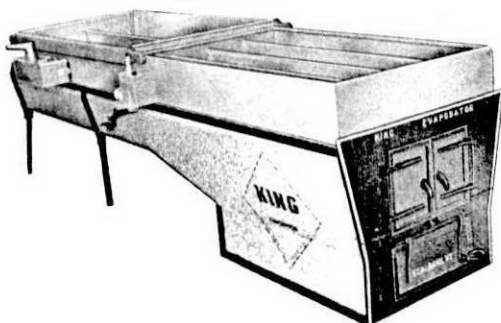
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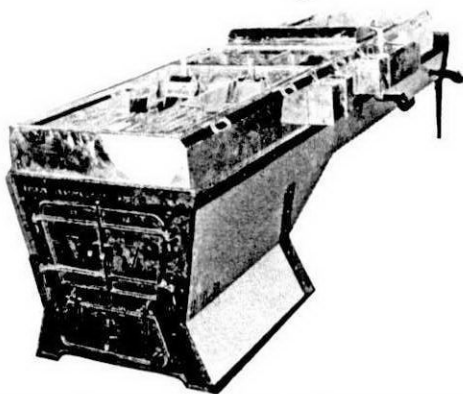
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# LAMB'S CORNER

October 1, 1973

Ontario Maple Producers Assoc.  
Ontario, Canada

Gentlemen:

The Lamb organization of distributors and dealers in the United States and Canada wish to express our appreciation to the Ontario Maple Producers Association for their willingness to host the 1973 annual meeting of the National Maple Syrup Council in Orillia, Ontario.

We are looking forward to a most enjoyable time and expect this meeting will intensify the relationship between the maple producers of our two countries.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bob Lamb". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent "B" and "L".

Bob Lamb