

Maple Syrup *Digest*

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GREETINGS FROM YOUR PRESIDENT



After returning from the Annual NAMSC meeting in Wisconsin, I thought it would be beneficial to all who receive the Maple Syrup Digest to get a better understanding of just what the NAMSC is and a little about the work we do. The North American Maple Syrup Council is a 100% volunteer group who have met annually since 1959. The Council, meets once a year in a different host state or province. Please take advantage of attending when it is held near you. We work together for the betterment of the maple industry. The delegate and alternate each state or province sends to the Council meetings are their official representative "charged" with or has the responsibility to report the news, issues and concerns of their local association to the Council, and to report back to their home associations on what the maple industry is doing and where its heading.

The industry is comprised of many segments; not only maple producers but syrup packers, equipment manufacturers, foresters, researchers and many others interested in producing, packaging and marketing all forms of maple products. The latest research is reported to the industry representatives at the Annual meeting and researchers look to the Council for input as to what research is needed in the industry and for seed money and endorsement for their future research projects. Major equipment manufacturers are well represented at the four day

event with the newest innovations. The Council collectively supports the interests of each and every sugarmaker.

Sugarmakers have the opportunity to attend an NAMSC annual meeting when it is hosted by their local state or province and that they are welcome to not only get involved but participate in the meetings, regardless of their level of industry involvement. The meeting will be in Ohio in 2007 and Massachusetts in 2008. You are urged to be involved in the planning with host committees. It's an opportunity to be a host and show off your maple state or province to other producers from out of your area.

The future of our industry relies upon research on production, marketing, insects, tree health, and many other topics. Research costs money. Many of us think that state and federal grants support research for our industry. This used to be more the case twenty or thirty years ago, but with escalating costs and budget cutbacks, outside funding is harder to get these days. This is why the NAMSC Research Fund is so important. One of the main jobs of the Council is to manage the Research Fund. This involves examining proposals for value to the industry, and granting funds to assist with research expenses. The results of the research are reported to you, the sugarmaker, via the Maple Syrup Digest. Please help support research for our industry by contributing to the NAMSC Research Fund.

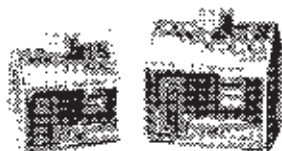
Here in New England the weather has been abnormally warm this winter with almost no snow at all. I don't make predictions, I just tell people I'll know more in May.

Sincerely,
Tom McCrumm

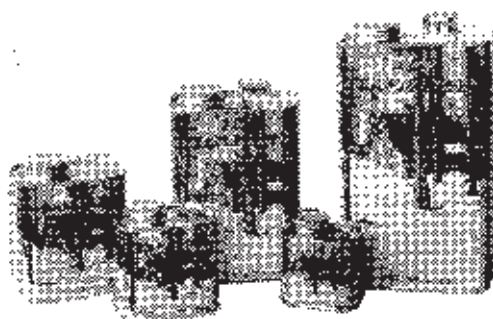
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IMSI NEWS

*By Larry Myott
Executive Secretary*

LEAD IS STILL AN ISSUE

The issue of Lead in maple syrup has not gone away, it will not go away until it is taken seriously by all sugar-makers around the maple world. It has become a serious issue in Ontario and Ohio, the potential is there to destroy some local industry producers.

It is reported that some states/producers simply ignore the issue. Sticking your head in the sand is asking for trouble. Looking for an inexpensive evaporator? That's the way to get in trouble. Reports from some states indicate that some equipment dealers specialize in used, in-expensive, equipment. Any producer who looks to buy inexpensive equipment must first do a lead solder test on that equipment. The testing sticks are available in many hardware stores. They are designed for use in testing water pipes or potable water systems. They work great for testing the solder of maple equipment.

Within the last few months reports have come in about the continued use of old milk cans for syrup storage, galvanized pans for boiling, lead soldered buckets and galvanized storage tanks with lead solder too. This is asking for trouble.

We know there is a lot of history in using this type of materials in the syrup industry. That doesn't mean that you should ignore common sense and potential health problems. When the issue came to Vermont in

the form of a lawsuit being filed, back in the 90's, it was an old backyard evaporator pan being used for making apple jelly. They were boiling the apple juice in the old evaporator pan and their children got lead poisoning. So far that is the only known case of lead poisoning from the misuse of lead soldered evaporator pans. We certainly would not want to have any more.

When buying used equipment for use in any food processing, make sure that no lead exists in that equipment. Being inexpensive or cheap doesn't mean that it would be good for your business or family health. I have heard many say that they will continue using their old lead soldered equipment as they only make maple syrup for their friends and family. Are you really willing to take that risk? If you have lead in any current equipment, get rid of it, up-grade to lead free equipment. Maple equipment that contains lead solder can cause non-reversible damage to not only your business but the entire maple industry. If the deal on that used equipment is too good to be true, then perhaps it is not so good.

The International Maple Syrup Institute continues to work on the abatement of lead in our industry. In the last few months I have received inquiries from Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana and Pennsylvania. Any questions on lead, contact Larry Myott, Executive Secretary.

IMSI Dues are Due

Members of the IMSI were sent dues notices for 2007 in January. All dues are due not later than March 1. Members are asked to fill out the form that comes with the notice and mail it

back with their check to Treasurer Steve Selby, 555 Route 78, Swanton, VT 05488.

Questions about the IMSI and its dues structure? Contact Executive Secretary Larry Myott, see below for contact information.

For information on the IMSI, call or write Larry Myott, IMSI Executive Secretary, 5014 Route Seven, Ferrisburgh, VT 05456. Email: Larry.Myott@uvm.edu, visit the IMSI at: www.internationalmaplesyrupinstitute.com

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Maple People Everywhere,

Something painfully obvious needs to be said, but so far I haven't heard anyone saying it. The cost of the National/International maple meetings has become so high as to be unrealistic. Most maple producers simply can't justify or afford it. With registration, hotel and travel expenses, it is easy to have a cost of \$1,000 or more in attending one of these meetings. Just the registration cost alone means that even maple producers living somewhere near where the meeting is held cannot afford to attend.

Yes, I'm aware that the cost of everything keeps increasing. I know that the dedicated people planning these meetings put in a lot of work. What I'm saying is that the concept needs to be changed. These meetings should not be a competition to see which state or province can throw the grandest party at the fanciest location. A first class convention

center and a first class hotel are NOT required. A slight upgrade of a typical state meeting would do nicely. They could be held at a much lower cost venue than has become the practice, with everything optional, including the meals. It's no secret that one can go down the street and find lower priced food than what is generally provided at a convention.

Here in the Midwest there are very, very, few people who make their entire income from maple. As you go east and north, there are more full time producers, but the numbers are still relatively low and I doubt that most of them can honestly justify the cost of one of these meetings as any kind of business expense.

If the average producer cannot afford to attend, then who are these meetings for? If Joe Producer cannot afford to attend, then who are the exhibitors to talk to? How long will the exhibitors be interested in these meetings if the number of potential customers attending is few or none?

Planning for the 2007 meeting is too far along to change, but I hope everyone connected with the International meetings in the future will reconsider what has become the standard practice, and do some reinvention in an effort to make these meetings economically realistic for everyone. Everything should be optional, so that a person only has to pay for as much as they are interested in. Yes, this will complicate the book keeping for those planning the meeting, but it is necessary to insure that people can attend.

Sincerely,
Don Dodd



2007 Maple Research

The North American Maple Syrup Council at its Annual Meeting at Green Bay, Wisconsin approved funding support for research projects in the upcoming year. They are:

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

- Insect Killing Fungi for Biological Control of Lecanium Scale
- Parasitoids of Native Longhorned Beetles for Biological Control of Asian Longhorned Beetle – Year II
- Biological Control of Lecanium Scale: Survey of Naturally Occurring Parasitoids
- Timing of Tapping Under Vacuum; Year II

PROCTOR RESEARCH CENTER

- Chemical Characterization of Sugar Sand in Maple Syrup Evaporators

ONTARIO MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

- International Grades & Quality Standards for Maple Syrup

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

- Comparison of Methods to Clean Sap Tubing

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE

- Maine Maple Syrup Production Costs

The future of the maple industry relies on research to provide us with good data regarding forest management, efficiencies and quality in sap collection and production, and the economies of various elements of the whole process. The list of valuable and essential research that can be provided is endless. In order for this work to continue, our industry must find ways to provide greater financial support.

For more information regarding the Research Fund contact:

Eric Randall, Chairman, 107 Granada Dr., Edinboro, PA 16412

E-mail: erandall@edinboro.edu

Kay Carroll, Treasurer, 79 East Chestnut Hill Road, Litchfield, CT 06759

Phone 860 567-3890, Email: kaycarroll@aol.com

The NAMSC Research Fund is a non-profit, volunteer managed committee of the North American Maple Syrup Council, Inc. (2-07)

NEWS FROM CONNECTICUT

By Jack Trumbull

The 30th Annual Meeting of the Maple Syrup Producers Association of Connecticut was held on November 11, 2006. The University of Connecticut Department of Agriculture was our host for the meeting. More than 65 producers attended the meeting.

President Ron Wenzel opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and spoke of the passing of two of our members in the last year; Bob Coombs, who was a founding member of our Association and Bill Gerner, who had been an active producer and member for the last seven years.

Treasurer Ken Sherrick gave the financial report, noting a smaller balance on hand than in many years. The Association had incurred one - time expenses for website development and for bulk buying of hats, signs and posters to be resold to members. The report was accepted by the members and a report from the audit committee was also accepted showing flawless record keeping.

A motion of appreciation for Ken's 25 years of service as treasurer of our association was unanimously passed with Ken getting a large round of applause. Ken's service has been greatly appreciated through all the years he put in. The minutes of our last meeting were read and approved. The next meeting of our association will be our annual pre - season workshop on January 20, 2007. The workshop and meeting will be at Northwest Park in Windsor, Connecticut.

Our newsletter "Drop in the Bucket" will publish an issue in January. The annual brochure of Connecticut sugar houses open to the public will be printed and available at the January meeting. Our membership committee reported 176 memberships as of our meeting. Annual dues are still \$20.00 for this year, but will go up to \$25.00 for the year 2007 - 2008

In accordance with the by-laws of the Maple Syrup Producers Association of Connecticut, the following offices were elected; President: Ron Wenzel, Vice President: Brian Atwood, Treasurer: Oliver Stanton, Secretary: Chuck Drake, Directors from the East: Rick Blauvelt and Robert Dubos, Directors from the West: Jack Trumbull and Kay Carroll.

Rich Norman reported on the annual NAMSC meeting and spoke of the maple manual being published. Rich was involved in the development and editing of this new manual and is mentioned in the preface to the manual. A motion was made and passed that the Association buy 100 copies of this new manual for resale to Association members. A motion was made and passed for the Association to buy a small number of hard copies of the manual for any one who wishes to get one.

Rich Norman gave a short report on the IMSI meeting he attended. He spoke of the ongoing research and development of the new grading standards. This process has been slow and steady, although no finish date was given. Rich also spoke briefly about the gap in prices closing between light and dark syrup and the shortage of dark syrup.

Our Association will continue to

donate to NAMSC Research Fund and IMSI in the same amounts as last year. The Board of Directors will make a recommendation at the January meeting about any additional amounts to be donated. We also voted to remain members of NAMSC and IMSI. There was discussion about the fungus that hit many of the maples in Connecticut this year. An extremely wet spring has allowed the fungus to really grow. Our State Forester tells us that we should not see an effect on sap production this year, but a continued infection may cause real problems for our trees. The recommendation is to continue this year as usual and make an assessment next fall.

Our association now has our own website — www.ctmaple.org or www.ctmaple.com. This website includes history, pictures, directions and lists sugar houses open to the public along with information about our Associations. Vice-President Brian Atwood was congratulated and thanked for his work on getting the website developed and running. He and his committee will continue to update the information as the year goes along.

Tim Bockus from MaplePro was our guest speaker to finish up the meeting. Tim spoke about the different add-ons that are available such as: air injection, steam -aways, pre-heaters and hoods and blowers for existing arches. Tim also talked about the use of a filter press and pre-coating the papers before running any syrup through the filters. He also spoke briefly about filling containers and how to get a good air seal, especially with plastic jugs.

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The entire complex - hotel, restaurants, and meeting facilities - are listed in the National Register of Historic Sites. Who would have guessed that a mill and silos built by Ferdinand Schumaker would become a hotel complex recognized around the world for its uniqueness?

Adjacent mill facilities now are the home of restaurants, coffee shops, the Mill Stores and offices. Some of the original milling equipment is still in place, and serves as a reminder of its historic origins. (We may be able to offer a 'back-stage' tour of the existing mill remnants.)

You will marvel at the 3-story-high 3-D murals that ornament the hotel lobby and elevator entrance. Akron sculptor/artist Don Drumm invented a procedure - "Sgraffitto" - to apply the multi-layered cement to silo walls.

While still wet, Mr. Drumm carved the images. The completed works both reflect the history of the buildings and entertain guests with his blend of the old with the contemporary. See it for yourself; you'll never forget it!

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FROM THE EDITOR

YOUR DIGEST LATE?

I'm sure most of you received your Digest late . . . if at all. It was not my fault. I mailed it in November. I always mail one to myself and when I didn't receive mine by December 12th, I contacted my postmaster, who I have to admit is one of the better ones we have had. He called Manchester - which is the distribution center for New Hampshire - and they didn't know where it was. They had misplaced all the issues. What can you do? Call your Congressman? I threatened to do that. I bugged my postmaster everyday and suggested he call Portsmouth, a new center they just opened up. He finally did and the next day I had my Digest.

The only thing I can do is complain, but it doesn't seem to help much. Since I have been doing the Digest, the price per copy has gone up \$.10 and the service has gotten poorer.

For the Snowbirds - the postoffice will not forward third class mail which the Digest is classified under. The Digest gets charged \$.63 for each Digest that is returned. We get quite a few Digest returned as "Temporarily Away," if you send me your winter address and for which issues you will be at this address I can send these issues to you at your new address. But I need to hear from each year you will be away.

A quick reminder, if you are not getting your Digest through an association, the price for a year's subscription has increased. It is \$6.00 per year in the United States and \$8.00 per year in Canada.

As I often do, I urge you to please support our advertisers. They make the Maple Digest possible!

Best of luck "Sugarin," it will be interesting to see how this season ends up.

Roy

MAPLE CHEMISTRY OF INTEREST

*Taken from the Massachusetts
Sugar Bush News Summer 2006*

The flavor defect in maple syrup referred to as "metabolism" has been traced to the presence of a compound 2,5 dimethyl pyrazine and to the reduction of normal maple flavor compounds. The 2,5 dimethyl pyrazine seems to be formed during boiling from precursor chemicals produced by the tree. Identifying the source of the problem is the first step to finding ways to reduce it.

Phenolic compounds and flavonoids are a complex group of 20-30 chemicals present in maple syrup. Some of them are connected to sugars, others are separate from the sugars. Some of them have important antioxidant effects and also include important flavor components. Antioxidants remove free oxygen from cells that can damage proteins and DNA. Phenolics develop during heating. Some increased slightly during the season; others increased a lot. Flavonoids tended to remain stable during the season. Phenolics and flavonoids attached to sugars are higher earlier in the season and seem to be responsible for early season syrups to have higher antioxidant activity than later season syrups.

UVM EXTENSION MAPLE WEBSITE EXPANDED

The Extension Maple website, www.uvm.edu/-uvmaple has recently been updated with features that maple producers should find useful. The "maple publications catalog" where producers could order reprints of UVM maple related articles has been retired, as most of these articles described outdated technology, and has been replaced by online publications in PDF format. These downloadable articles include some of the most-requested works from the publications catalog, in addition to works on maple ecology and physiology written by former UVM faculty and Proctor Maple Research Center staff, some of which were not available in

the old catalog. Some recent articles are also available at the website and more will continue to be added in the future. Online maple publications can also be found at the Proctor Center website www.uvm.edu/~pmrc/?Page=publications.html

In addition to the online publications, the Extension Maple website now has a Maple calendar. The calendar will feature not only Vermont county and state maple events but also meetings of county and state maple organizations, for the purpose of helping sugarmakers keep track of important dates. Representatives who wish to include a meeting or event on the calendar can contact UVM Extension maple specialist Tim Wilmot at timothy.wilmot@uvm.edu with the relevant information, including date, time, location and contact information.



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After 47 years as a distributor working with 3 companies, offering a wide variety of labels to maple syrup producers, at 94, I've decided to retire at the end of this maple season.

Many years ago, when I lived in Buffalo, many producers throughout the state attended 1 of the eleven producer's meetings throughout the state. I was part of a group — we called ourselves the maple producers traveling circus which included Lew Staats, Charlie Bacon and others who made up our group of 7 or 8. Beginning in early January we made four meetings in the first week, four meetings the second week and the final three meetings the third week. All of these during a January of Heavy snow which at times took us 3 hours to reach our motel where we stayed for the next nights meeting. We still made them a fun trip. If there are any of those dealers who made the trip with us — I would like to hear from them.

In later years, Lew Staats made his presentation by satellite TV tho many of us, including Charlie, still made our 11 meetings by car.

Fourteen years ago I moved my business to Cleveland and until 2 years ago I still attended many local and New York meeting. Now, due to vision problems, I will not be as active as I was, tho I will still take care of producers who need to reorder their labels.

Now — as a reward for those who have read my story.

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COMPARISON OF VISUAL GRADING METHODS

*Brian F. Chabot and Stephen L. Childs
Cornell University*

Visual determination of maple syrup color is the most common method for grading syrup. It is the only grading method approved by the USDA and by several states. Standardized color grading began in 1910 based on caramel solutions and the glass standards came into use in 1950. Over the years a variety of grading kits have been introduced. The most common kit in use is the Vermont Temporary kit. One using plastic color filters has replaced the USDA glass kit. Lovibond is still available in glass and a new glass kit is being manufactured by White Mountain Maple Products (Rimouski, Quebec).

There does not appear to have been a published comparison of the different grading kits subsequent to the research that introduced caramel standards followed by glass standards. Consequently, we undertook a comparison of most of the grading kits that are currently in use. These included USDA glass and plastic, Vermont Temporary, Grimm glass (for 2 oz bottles), Berliner glass, Lovibond (US and Canadian) and a White Mountain Maple Products glass kit.

METHODS

Two series of tests were conducted. In the first, we obtained 84 samples from New York; 33 directly from producers and 51 as coded samples collected by NYS Agriculture & Markets for lead testing. We used five different visual grading kits, three Hanna analyzers, and two laboratory spectrophotometers to classify the color density of each syrup. Results from the comparison of visual and spectrophotometric methods were published previously (Chabot and Childs, 2006). For the visual comparisons, we used two observers and different lighting conditions, including colored light from a computer-driven LCD projector. Syrup samples were placed in one-ounce bottles, which fit in the sample holders of most of the kits, except that we used the 3 cm cuvette for the US version of the Lovibond kit.

In the second series of tests, we used eight kits, including both the US and Canadian versions of the Lovibond kit. We used some of the same syrup samples as in the first test, but we obtained additional syrup samples from producers. In addition, we constructed samples by blending syrups. Samples were blended in order to have a greater number of samples close to the grade boundaries to create a greater challenge for any differences that might exist between the kits. We also used the type of sample container for which the kits were originally designed as we suspected that some of the differences between kits seen in the first series were due to inappropriate sample containers. New 2-oz bottles are too large for the older kits, which is why the 1-oz bottle was used in the first series of tests. We obtained 3-cm glass cuvettes designed for Berliner kits that fit in all the older kits designed for 2-oz bottles.

RESULTS

In the first series of tests, the biggest difference was between the grade on the container and the grades we determined with any of the visual grading kits (Table 1). All samples in Table 1 were graded against a clear bright northern sky by the same person. Seventy-five percent of samples were graded darker than the producer label, 20 samples were the same grade, and one sample was lighter. Samples obtained directly from producers and stored under refrigeration had slightly more grade differences than did those samples obtained from Agriculture & Markets. A few samples were more than 2 grades darker.

Table 1. Number of samples in four color grades using producer grade and five grading kits.

Grade	Producer	USDA	Vermont	Lovibond	Berliner	Grimm
Light	23	13	11	8	20	13
Medium	45	18	18	21	27	31
Dark	16	27	30	27	17	19
B	0	26	25	28	20	21

There were some differences among the grading kits in the first series (Table 1). The Lovibond kit graded somewhat darker and the Berliner kit somewhat lighter than the other kits. Only the Vermont and Lovibond kits used sample

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containers for which these kits were designed. We used a 1-oz container in the other kits, which has a shorter light path-length than the 2-oz containers, leading to lighter-appearing samples. The relative performance of the kits in these tests must be interpreted with this in mind.

Comparing the Vermont and Lovibond kits, grades were different in 18 cases; 21% of samples. There were three differences in the lighter grades; in each case Lovibond produced a darker grade. The other 15 differences were in the medium or darker grades and here the Lovibond produced lighter grades. We also compared two USDA glass kits where 5 (6%) differences in grade determination occurred, which was the fewest in any of the comparisons. Three differences were in the dark/extra dark grades. One kit produced darker grades in four instances.

We were able to rank the samples using the spectrophotometric measurements of light transmission. We also visually ranked the samples from lightest to darkest. Overall samples that were visually darker had lower transmissivity (%T), but there were many cases where the two rankings did not match. For example, a sample with a %T of 68% appeared visually darker than two samples with %T of 66.3 and 64.5.

The same person working with the same kit can obtain slightly different results in somewhat different bright sky conditions (Table 2). In this test, 22 samples (26%) were graded differently. Differences occurred at all grades. Although it seems obvious that the samples that differed must be close to a grade boundary, in only 3 cases was grade determination noted to be difficult.

Table 2. Number of samples in four color grades using the Vermont Temporary Kit on different days in different locations.

Grade	Vermont- campus sky	Vermont- Arnot sky
Light	11	11
Medium	18	12
Dark	30	32
B	25	29

Two individuals can grade differently under the same lighting conditions with the same kit (Table 3). There were 11 (13%) differences in grade determination. Steve produced a lighter grade in 8 cases and a darker grade in 3 cases. Five of these were judged to be difficult determinations by one or both graders. There were 7 other difficult determinations where both graders produced the same grade.

Table 3. Number of samples in four color grades for two people using the Vermont Temporary Kit with the same lighting conditions.

Grade	Vermont (Brian)	Vermont (Steve)
Light	12	11
Medium	12	18
Dark	34	30
B	26	25

Background light color can affect grade determination (Tables 4, 5). The USDA and Vermont kits were used for these tests. The bottom rows in the tables show the number of cases where the grade changed compared to skylight as the reference. With the USDA kit, 10 to 32% of the samples changed grade depending upon background light. White light produced roughly the same number of differences at all three color boundaries. Light blue and red had more differences at the medium/dark boundary than at the other boundaries. The other colors had most of the changes at the dark/extra dark boundary. The Vermont kit produced a somewhat larger number of differences, which might be expected because there is an additional grade to distinguish. There were two differences at the light/medium transition. Most of the differences were medium/dark or darker grades. More samples were placed in the darker grades with these artificial light sources.

Table 4. Number of samples in four color grades using a USDA glass kit and nine background light colors.

Grade	Sky	White	Purple	MBlue	LBlue	Green	Yellow	Red	Brown
Light	13	8	12	11	8	12	12	11	11
Medium	18	23	17	19	42	16	18	13	16
Dark	27	29	23	21	6	31	35	31	37
B	26	24	32	33	28	25	19	29	20
changes	0	15	9	12	27	11	13	12	14



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Table 5. Number of samples in five color grades using a Vermont Temporary Kit and nine background colors.

Grade	Sky	White	Purple	MBLue	LBlue	Green	Yellow	Red	Brown
Light	11	11	11	11	11	11	12	11	11
Medium	18	9	9	15	13	10	8	10	10
Dark	27	36	30	29	32	34	36	35	35
B	12	15	18	15	16	16	15	16	15
Substd	16	13	16	14	12	13	13	12	13
Changes	0	20	23	14	19	19	21	21	21

At the recommendation of Dr. Ellis Loew, we tested grading using a blue filter between our eyes and the samples to focus our attention on light amount rather than shifts in syrup color hue. The reduction in the amount of light reaching our eyes made grading more difficult.

In the second series of tests, we included additional grading kits. We also used the Berliner glass sample cuvette for all the kits designed for 3-cm light paths. All samples were graded against three light sources: open bright sky, and a 100 watt incandescent bulb, a color-corrected fluorescent bulb and a 23-watt compact fluorescent bulb all behind a white plastic diffuser. In addition to these light sources, the Lovibond samples were also evaluated with a white light source from Lovibond designed for color determinations with their kits. The percent transmittance of all samples were determined with a Hanna Analyzer.



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The kits in these tests gave more similar results than in the first tests (Table 6). This is indicated by the number of differences from the USDA glass kit as shown in the bottom row. Because a higher proportion of samples were made to be at a boundary between two grades and the difficulty of determining grade was noted, the differences shown are a conservative estimate. For example we didn't count it as a difference if one kit showed a sample to be on the light/medium boundary and another kit graded the syrup as light.

In general, samples seen as close calls with one kit were also close calls with other kits. The differences reflect those cases where the decision was not close, and these were few in number. There were no differences between any of the kits in determining which samples were light amber. There were two samples at the medium/dark boundary and one at the dark/B boundary that caused most of the discrepancies.

Table 6. Number of samples in four color grades using eight kits: White Mountain Maple (WMM), Lovibond Canadian (LovC), Vermont Temporary (Vt), Berliner (Berlin), USDA glass (USglas), USDA plastic (USpls), Lovibond USDA with fluorescent light (LovUf) and with Lovibond light unit (LovUI), and Grimm.

Grade	WMM	LovC	Vt	Berlin	USglas	USpls	LovUf	LovUI	Grimm
Light	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Med	8	10	9	13	12	7	11	10	13
Dark	20	14	14	14	13	18	14	15	12
B	7	11	12	8	10	10	10	10	10
Diff	2	2	1	2	0	2	0	0	0

Several different light sources were used in this research. Lovibond, color-corrected fluorescent, and compact fluorescent (23 watt) behind a white plastic panel gave results similar to that of clear sunny sky. Incandescent light (100 watt) was yellower in color and gave greater differences in grade determination.

DISCUSSION

Visual grading is not an exact method for classifying syrup color density. Color is based on how our brains interpret signals from four different light-absorbing pigments in our eyes. Human visual pigments detect light over a broad spectrum and are sensitive to both amounts of light and changes in the proportion of different wavelengths. Because our eyes differ in color sensitivity and our brains differ in how we interpret colors, two people can come to different conclusions about a sample grade. The color of background lighting can affect the results and there are slight differences in the color absorption of caramel, glass, and plastic standards. Additionally, the color hue varies between syrups and this can interact differently with different kits.

In the first series of tests we found some differences between the kits that we thought might be significant. However, these differences are most likely due to using incorrect glass containers for the samples. A second series of tests using

correct containers gave smaller and, we judge, not significant differences between grading kits. So using the correct sample container is important.

The original USDA caramel and glass standards were developed using sample containers with a 3-cm light path through the syrup. Lovibond (US) and the Berliner containers are 3 cm exactly. The USDA and other kit manufacturers adopted the 2 oz bottle as a close approximation of the more expensive 3-cm cuvette. Although the internal path length for light may be the same in the newer 2-oz bottles, the walls are thicker and we were unable to locate any current source of bottles that fit in the older kits. The new USDA kit is designed for the larger bottles.

We have found some producers also using the 1-oz bottles in kits designed for 2-oz bottles for the same reason we used them. The 1-oz bottle has a shorter light path length through the syrup causing the syrup to be graded lighter. There are Grimm kits designed around a 1-oz bottle that we did not test.

Lighting conditions are another factor of considerable importance in syrup grading. The original USDA glass color standards were developed using a National Bureau of Standards lighting source that is not commercially available. Lovibond sells a light source designed to produce a balanced white light. This light source is less bright and grade decisions are less easily made. It also is very expensive. Given the variation in grading decisions we found with various

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light sources, it may be preferable to use an artificial light source that is the same each time a grading decision is made. Of the light sources we used, a compact fluorescent lamp behind a white plastic diffuser was the best in terms of ease of use and cost.

The significant number of samples that were graded darker than the producer label merits further study. Causes may include a combination of oxidation in the container, optimistic grading of samples close to the boundary, and grading while the syrup is hot, which makes the syrup less dense. A better understanding of these grade differences seems necessary.

The kits differed in usability. The easiest kit to assess grade is the Lovibond, because the sample is placed next to the standard visually without any break and the sample is optically uniform. The most difficult to use is the new USDA kit, because there are wide black panels between the sample and the standard and the bottles are optically imperfect, which creates varying light density across the samples and standards. The sample and all the standards are relatively close to each other in space in the Berliner kit and does not require the sample cuvette to be moved to compare it with the standards. However, the sample is much larger than the standards and the greater amount of light from the sample made some comparisons difficult. The Vermont kit has the advantage of low purchase price and easy availability of inexpensive sample bottles. Comparison of kits of different ages suggests that the supplier's advice to use a new kit each year is probably correct, which removes the initial cost advantage.

The bottom line on the performance of different grading kits is that when used with the proper sample containers and good lighting all of the visual kits produced close to the same results.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We thank Prof. Ellis Loew for assistance in understanding the effect of light color on grading decisions, and Dr. Kathleen Rasmussen for editing the manuscript.

REFERENCE

Chabot, B. F. and S. Childs. 2006. Relating spectrophotometer readings to visual grading of maple syrup. *Maple Syrup Digest* 18A(2):34-37.

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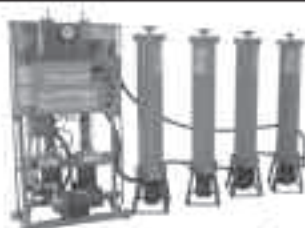
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2.10	.203	4.20	.495
2.20	.218	4.30	.509
2.30	.232	4.40	.522
2.40	.245	4.50	.537
2.50	.260	4.60	.550
2.60	.273	4.70	.564
2.70	.287	4.80	.579
2.80	.301	4.90	.592
2.90	.315	5.00	.606
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FROM HERE TO THERE

By Russ Davenport

It's December 26, 2006 and time for me to reflect on where we have been and maybe a little on where we are going. I am in Atlanta, Georgia where although the trees are bare it sure doesn't look like winter. Back in Massachusetts there have been just two snow flurries with enough to make the ground white.

People keep asking for my prediction of the maple sugar season for 2007. There is no reason to believe spring will come, or not come in its usual format. This thing we are calling global warming, in my estimation, is extremely important for our industry. It should be winter, but without snow or even frozen ground, the usual is not common this year.

With no snow cover the bare

ground reflects the warmth of the sun. What do the trees think when the temperature gets up to 50, 60, or even 70 degrees? Spring surely must be coming, but eventually cold temperatures will return. The question I raise is, does this unusual variation have any effect on the sap run?

I have always said a good season needs either deep frost or deep snow. Last winter was the first time in my seventy-five years we tapped 4,000 trees on bare ground. The global warming seems to be unhealthy for the maples, but maybe they will over many, many years adapt to this change. Many of the older trees have bare tops of the uppermost branches called "staghorn". I feel this is caused by the acid deposition in our air. It is in the best interest of our industry that this trend be reversed. Healthy air is most important for both trees and people.



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I realize that Georgia is far removed from maple, but this is where I am for a family visit. Maple syrup is found here in the south distributed by a chain called Whole Foods in glass 8 and 16 ounce containers. Both U.S. and Canadian syrups are quite common in the grocery stores.

To jump out on a limb and make a prediction for the upcoming season

would be a product of "guesstimation", but here goes. With snow or deep frost a little better than normal crop will be harvested. If this warm trend continues we will have to depend on the higher elevations and more northern bushes for even a mediocre crop. With a stressed season I predict a crop of mainly dark syrup and a shortage of light syrup needed mainly for candy and value-added products. Incidentally I find that whole cashew nuts coated with maple sugar very popular, along with maple coated cranberries, peanuts and soy-nuts.

Please remember the opening of the Maple Museum and installation of Luc Lussier and David Marvin into the Maple Hall of Fame on May 19, 2007.

Anyway, what ever will be will be. Best regards and Happy New Year.

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SWEET NEW ROLE FOR MOTHBALLED AGROFORESTRY CENTER

*By Tom VanDusen -
AgriNews Staff Writer*

A group of enthusiastic partners are working to upgrade the Agroforestry Educational Centre on the University of Guelph's Kemptville, Ontario Campus and reopen it for several purposes mostly connected to maple syrup production. Upgrades are to begin any day and a qualified coordinator will be assigned shortly to oversee the centre and the many activities planned for it, said Claude Weil general manager of the campus business development and training group.

More than \$187,000 has been raised through the college and partners to conduct \$38,000 worth of maple production upgrades and implement several other project components, said Jon Morgan, associate director, academics. Among partners already signed on are U of G, OMAFRA, Ontario Maple Syrup Producers Association, the Eastern Ontario Model Forest group, South Nation Conservation, Environment Canada, and the Grenville Land Stewardship Council.

At a recent meeting, several partners expressed the need to ensure that projects selected for the revamped centre support, not compete, with small business interests in the area.

Proposed streams at the center include youth and international programming, research, education,

maple industry interests, practical skills training, and agro and eco-tourism. As part of the project, there's talk of an annual Maplefest to be held at the center and surrounding trails to showcase products and activities offered by Eastern Ontario maple syrup producers partnering in the project. Possibly to combine with the existing two-day, student organized College Royal held in March, the festival would include sleigh rides, tours, cooking and specialty product demonstrations, story telling, and informative displays.

Another proposal with tourism potential is for an Innovations and Trade Day at the center when maple industry dealers and other specialists would be invited to profile and demonstrate state-of-the-art equipment and supplies, along with providing research seminars.

Set in the woods just outside the central campus, the fully-equipped center has been used in the past to teach maple syrup production techniques and other forestry skills. Three years ago, the syrup operation was shut down when lead was detected in the finished product.

Morgan said the traces of lead - which were below regulated maximums - are believed to have originated with solder in the boiling pan which will be replaced by stainless steel. It was decided it was better to bottle no syrup at all than syrup containing even minimal lead. Sugaring off equipment now in the center will soon be upgraded and tree taps and sap transmission lines replaced, all according to HACPP standards, putting the maple syrup program back on line next spring.

The wood-burning sap evaporator will be converted for firing with 100 per cent bio-diesel produced from crops, something already being done on campus as a pilot project.

"The quality - unlike that required for diesel engines - is not as critical when burned as a heating fuel and can be produced at low cost," Weil said in his brief. Much of the conversion work will be completed by students in the college's oil and gas burner technician program, Morgan said, adding the revamped educational center would offer something for everyone in improving skills in maple syrup production and forestry in general.

There's even a proposal for developing a nursery for medicinal and rare forest plants such as American ginseng to assist woodlot owners in economic diversification and in developing niche markets. Another proposal is for an energy efficiency study at the center for producers seeking reduced dependency on fossil fuels, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and increased profit margins.

Among other project components are a youth awareness and education program for area schools, groups such as Scouts and Girl Guides, and even family birthday parties to include workshops, tours and pancake meals; food safety training for students and maple producers; beginner courses and skills upgrading for producers; "Caring For Your Land", woodlot management, and fuel wood production training for landowners and other interested groups; maple production and forestry courses for international delegations; and an invasive species workshop series.

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Alice Potter - Tel: 705-924-2057 • Fax: 705-924-1673

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St. Albans, Vermont

April 27-29, 2007

For more information contact:

www.vtmaplefestival.org

NAMSC/IMSI ANNUAL MEETING 2007

October 21-24, 2007

Akron, Ohio

For more information contact:

Dick Schorr e-mail: maplemeister@fuse.net

IN MEMORIUM

CLARENCE FRANCIS COONS

Clarence Coons died suddenly at home on Saturday, December 16, 2006 at the age of 65. He was a graduate of the University of New Brunswick, with a B.A. in Forestry. After graduation he took an appointment as a forester with the Ontario Natural Resources in eastern Ontario where he worked with the Christmas tree growers and farmers to achieve better returns from their forest lands. After the Ontario Maple Syrup Producers Association was formed in 1966, maple became a passion for him, helping producers improve their maple bushes, setting up tours and programs for the January Information Day Meetings, all across Ontario.

In 1975, Clarence authored a booklet entitled "Sugar Bush Management for Maple Syrup Producers." In 1987, he authored a revised edition which many producers cherish.

Growing up on a dairy farm that bottled milk at Lakefield, Ontario, he was fascinated with machinery and their workings. Being around this machinery and his Dad's steam engines led to owning Model A's and T's and steam cars. This interest in steam encouraged him to author a paper on "Review and Evaluation of the Use of High Pressure Steam in the Production of Maple Products."

In 2000, he began contractual work to do research and a paper on "Safety in the Use of High Pressure Steam in the Production of Maple Products."

In 2001, he authored a paper on "High Pressure Boiler Selection for the Production of Maple Products," and in 2003 a follow-up paper on "Preliminary Economic Review of the Use of High Pressure Steam in the Production of Maple Products."

Clarence had a passion for research and taking pictures, a couple projects were: "Binders of Fire Trucks Noting Their Origin and Destination," plus "A Biography of a Timber Baron J.R. Booth," and recently "The History of Farm Tractors."

On May 11, 1991, Clarence was inducted into the North American Maple Museum's Hall of Fame (Croghan, NY). He also received many awards and recognition within the forestry and maple industry over the years.

Clarence is survived by his loving wife of 42 years, Joyce Raddon, son Donald, daughter Wendy, two grandsons and one brother, Herb. A memorial service was held December 18, 2006 at Kemptville, Ontario.

Condolences may be sent to Joyce and Family at RR #5, Kemptville, Ontario K0G 1J0.

IN MEMORIAM

CHARLES E. STEWART

Born on December 19th, 1929 at the age of 77, Charles E. Stewart of Sugar Hill, NH passed away following a long illness.

Charlie was a Korean War Veteran. He had been a baker at the Snell's Baker Shop in Lisbon, NH and worked on the family dairy farm in Sugar Hill. He built the Franconia Dairy Bar in 1963 which he ran for 15 years.

He also ran a successful maple syrup business and at one time became the 2nd largest independent producer in the state. He also collected antique maple artifacts, which he donated to the New Hampshire Maple Producers Association in hopes they build a museum to put them in. He was a great historian of Sugar Hill and the surrounding areas. He believed in preserving the land and donated it to the Land Trust Fund. He was a hard worker and always had a good funny story to tell. He was well liked and will be missed and loved.

He is predeceased by his father James Stewart and mother Alice Haynes Stewart. He leaves his sisters Katherine Bonor of Lebanon, CT and Lorraine Hunt of Sugar Hill, NH, a daughter Sheila Stewart Matthew of Bethlehem, NH and a son Mark Stewart of Lisbon, NH, many nieces, nephews, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

As for Charlie's request and wishes, he didn't want a funeral or services. He wanted to be remembered the way he was when he was alive. There will be a private service for family on a later date.

In lieu of flowers and cards, donations can be made to The New Hampshire Maple Museum Inc. c/o Howard Pearl, 409B Loudon Ridge Road, Loudon, NH 03307.



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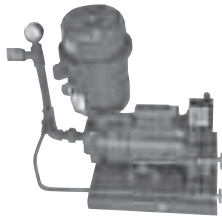
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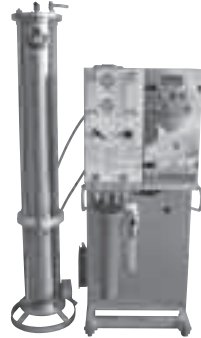
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