

Maple Syrup *Digest*



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MAPLE SYRUP DIGEST

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COVER: 2008 Hall of Fame Inductees:
Bill Brown and Sam Cutting.

GREETINGS FROM YOUR PRESIDENT



Crop reports from this past sugaring season varied from one extreme to the other depending on who you asked and what corner of the maple belt they were from! Mother Nature surprised many with outstanding crops while other sugarmakers were very disappointed. My son Mike and I tapped on March 8th in deep snow and four weeks later pulled the taps with eight inches of snow on the ground. The sugar content never dropped below 2% yielding 93% A-light syrup, our best season in 31 years.

Deep snow and long hours in the sugarhouse this season didn't bother us as much as the \$3.79/gal. we had to pay for fuel. With our last two seasons being 70% of expected crops we pre-bought just enough fuel to cover a "normal" season thinking that fuel costs were high last September and really didn't expect to be paying \$1.30 more per gallon this spring. For a brief moment switching back to cord wood passed through my mind but reality says that regardless of the type of fuel you use the cost of energy is likely to continue to increase in the years ahead.

Several questions come to mind. First, what's the future of an industry making a luxury food product through an energy dependent process? How high can the price of syrup go before consumers consider maple an unaffordable luxury? What do we need to do to improve production, keep costs in line and continue to provide a quality product to the consumer?

The answers are maybe to increase sap production per tap, improve tree health, develop and promote more efficient and widespread use of sap or syrup production methods or other improvements that could result in better utilizing energy to efficiently produce a gallon of syrup.

These solutions can be developed through maple research and education which is the purpose and mission of the North American Maple Syrup Council. The NAMSC Research Fund is a priority for the Council as it should be for every maple producer, syrup packer, manufacturer, forester, researcher and consumer if we expect to manage our industry effectively and address our future needs.

Your local maple association is part of the NAMSC and needs your support. Get involved at the local level, share your knowledge with others and learn what others have to offer. Take the time to learn more about maple by attending your local maple schools and tours this summer.

Encourage your local association to support the efforts of the North American Maple Syrup Council. The NAMSC Research Fund needs your full support to continue and to find answers to the issues we face industry wide. There is a larger picture and I feel it's reasonable to ask that everyone who shares in the benefits of the maple industry be committed to support research and education without exception to ensure its future.

Enjoy the summer months ahead and I look forward to seeing many of you at the October NAMSC Annual Meeting in Massachusetts.

Mike Girard

IMSI NEWS

On March 1, 2008, I assumed the position of Executive Secretary of IMSI. Larry Myott decided to retire after many years of dedicated service to the Institute. He will now have more time to spend with friends, family and the pursuit of other interests. Some might argue that Larry has entered into the ideal retirement lifestyle: enjoying his winter home in Florida and his summer home in the State of Vermont. I must admit that I thought of Larry a few times when we were in the throws of winter here in Ontario with some degree of envy. At the same time, I am very glad to be entering a new phase of my own life and am pleased that as part of it I am able to remain involved in the maple syrup industry. I am very much looking forward to working for IMSI in support of industry-led initiatives.

As you may know, the mission of IMSI is to promote the use of pure maple syrup and protect the integrity of the product while encouraging cooperation among all persons or groups involved in any aspect of the maple industry. The Board of Directors of IMSI met in early February 2008 at the CRDA Facility in St. Hyacinthe, Quebec for their quarterly board meeting. Some information on IMSI-led initiatives as well as information shared at IMSI's last Board of Directors meeting is provided below.

STANDARDIZED MAPLE GRADES INITIATIVE

Over the past several years, IMSI has supported important applied research which should ultimately help

with the finalization of IMSI's proposal for Standardized Grades for the industry. This involved support for Sensory Evaluation Research, which was carried out under the leadership of Centre Acer in Quebec. This study has provided us with a much better understanding of the unique flavor characteristics of pure maple syrup. IMSI is in support of a proposal to carry out consumer research as a follow-up to the sensory evaluation project. If completed, this consumer research will solicit consumer input in finalizing standardized descriptors for pure maple syrup. In 2007, an attempt was made to secure appropriate syrup samples for this consumer research project but we were unable to obtain the range of samples needed due to timing and other factors. At the February 2008 IMSI meeting, the Board agreed that IMSI would work cooperatively with the Federation of Quebec Maple Producers to secure the syrup samples needed from the 2008 syrup inventory. IMSI will also collaborate with the Federation and other potential partners to secure financing for this project. IMSI is hopeful that this research project can be carried out later in 2008. The results should be very helpful in finalizing the recommendations of IMSI's Maple Grades Committee and moving forward with that initiative. While arranging for and completing this groundbreaking research is challenging, requires a significant financial investment and takes time, its completion will provide a more objective basis for standardized maple grades and descriptors. Dave Chapeskie continues to Chair IMSI's Maple Grades Committee.

MAPLE GRADING SCHOOL

IMSI has supported the very popular Maple Grading School over the past two years. Course organizers of the School reported that the School conducted in Ohio in 2008 was very successful. Course participants armed with the information and know-how provided at the school are better able to help ensure that only maple products of good quality which meet regulatory requirements are produced and sold. This quality assurance objective is an extremely important goal of the Institute. The School organizers are in discussion with the Massachusetts Maple Producers Association regarding a Proposal to offer the School in 2008 either before or after the NAMSC/IMSI Annual Meetings.

ORGANIC CERTIFICATION

IMSI continues to monitor developments in the area of organic certification of pure maple syrup. Eric Prudhomme, National Program Officer - Maple with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, distributed some information on Canadian Organic Standards and Regulations.. The Canadian government has been active in developing National Standards for Organic Certification of Pure Maple Syrup as well as other agricultural products. IMSI is interested in exploring the feasibility of having one standard for Organic Certification of maple syrup in Canada and the United States. Several IMSI members mentioned at the Board meeting that markets for Organically Certified Maple Syrup are growing both in North America and around the world. IMSI will con-

tinue to have an Organic Certification Committee, which is chaired by Eric Prudhomme. This Committee will continue to serve the organization in an advisory capacity.

AIR INJECTION SYSTEMS

Over the past several years, applied research designed to evaluate air injection technology and its potential effects on the physical and chemical characteristic of maple syrup has been carried out in Vermont and in Quebec. Dr. Tim Perkins from Proctor Maple Research Centre in Vermont and Nathalie Martin, a researcher with Centre Acer in Quebec, presented findings at the IMSI Board meeting in February from the two scientific research projects, which have been carried out to evaluate air-injection technology. A committee of IMSI chaired by Dr. Patrizia Ramacieri was struck following the presentations to further review the findings and make recommendations to IMSI's Board of Directors regarding the appropriateness of using this technology in the industry (taking into account the research findings from both investigations). This review will be carried out in the context of other important technologies such as the use of RO and efficiency units such as Steam-Aways in the production of maple syrup, which are utilized in the mainstream of commercial maple syrup production.

REPORT ON STATUS OF MAPLE SYRUP INVENTORY

As of February 2008, IMSI members representing producer organizations including Quebec reported

severely depleted inventories of maple syrup heading into the 2008 maple production season. Charles-Felix Ross, General Manager with the Quebec Federation of Maple Producers reported that Quebec inventories were depleted due to double-digit growth in international markets for syrup over the past several years as well as lower than average syrup production in that province in 2006 and 2007. It was reported at the meeting that the Federation, which regulates the supply quota system in Quebec, has responded to this syrup supply situation by increasing the quota available to Quebec producers. This increase includes the addition of a significant number of new taps in 2008 and 2009.

At the end of the 2008 production season, preliminary crop estimates for Quebec, Ontario and some other jurisdictions suggest a below average harvest. As this issue of the Maple Digest goes to press, there are strong indications that the price of bulk syrup is headed upward due to this supply-demand situation. The average price of syrup at the retail level may also edge upward to some extent due to the increased cost of bulk syrup, increasing global demand for syrup and the escalating cost of fuel used in production. IMSI members will report on the status of the 2008 maple crop at the IMSI Board of Directors meeting in Croghan, New York in mid-May.

IMSI AWARDS FOR MARKET AND NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

IMSI's Board of Director's agreed that awards for Market and New Product Development would be con-

tinued in 2008. A committee of IMSI will be reviewing the contest format and rules and information on how to apply will be mailed to IMSI members as soon as possible in 2008.

NEW EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF IMSI

A new Executive Office of IMSI has been set up by the new Executive Secretary out of his home in Spencerville. The office address information is:

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International Maple Syrup Institute,
5072 Rock St., RR#4,
Spencerville, Ontario, Canada
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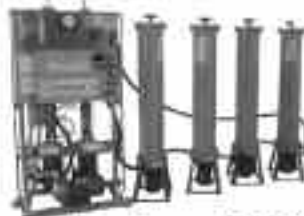
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MAPLE HALL OF FAME

On May 17, 2008 the Maple Hall of Fame in Croghan, New York inducted two new members.

BILL BROWN

Fredericktown, Ohio

"Sap runs through our veins" was written on a quilt made by a daughter and given to William "Bill" Brown on his 80th birthday. His life long passion for maple makes the statement seem true.

Bill grew up in Knox county on a farm near Fredericktown, Ohio watching his father make maple syrup. After a stint in the army he took over the business in 1946. In 1947 he married Katharine and began to manage and improve this aspect of the farming operation.

The operation has grown from tapping 200 or so trees and boiling the sap on a wood fired evaporator in a sugar house with a dirt floor to today's operation of 3500 taps on tubing and boiling the sap in an oil fired evaporator where a reverse osmosis machine and other up-to-date technology assures a quality product. The sugar house has been rebuilt several times in 60 years to accommodate these changes. While Bill has wanted to stay current with new ideas and equipment, he also looked to the future by planting super sweet maple trees at a time in his life when he would not likely reap the benefits. Even though two sons, Dan and Kelly, have taken over the labor and decision making, Bill continues to do the boiling of the sap.

Bill was instrumental in organizing the Ohio Maple Association and

served on the board for many years. He served as president and treasurer during this time. For several years he edited the Ohio Maple Newsletter. He was available to help with the Ohio State Fair booth always telling visitors the maple story. The Brown farm has hosted many maple tours for the organization. Bill has enjoyed mentoring "new" surgarmakers and has shared his knowledge as a volunteer at Malabar State Farm.

While serving on the Ohio Maple Board, he was a representative to the IMSI and the NAMSC. Bill has faithfully attended the annual International meetings. He often entered syrup in the contests and did quite well, a testimony to the quality product the farm produces.

It would be remiss to tell of Bill's accomplishments with the maple industry without citing his best "crop," his family. Bill and Kate have six children who contributed in labor and time so their father could pursue his love affair with maple so the dairy and field work did not suffer. They, too, love maple and all it implies. "Sap does run in the Brown families' veins!"

SAM CUTTING

Ferrisburg, Vermont

Sam Cutting fell in love with Vermont while studying agriculture at the University of Vermont. His maple knowledge grew rapidly after purchasing the Dakin farm in 1960. At that time it was a simple roadside stand across the main road from their big rambling farm house. He has been very active in the maple industry and he quickly became one of the leaders in the Vermont industry.

Sam quickly earned a reputation for honesty and outstanding work in the promotion and marketing of the highest quality Vermont farm products, with maple being anchor to their business. He has worked tirelessly in the development of marketing ideas and concepts. These efforts have been on behalf of the entire maple industry, always being the voice of reason in a sometimes volatile industry.

That small road side stand in Ferrisburgh has grown from the seasonal operation to a large multi-million dollar family business. They have two stores and a large catalog/mail order marketing and shipping business. They still market only the best farm products, which now include hams and other smoked meats, cheeses and much more.

The Cutting family runs a quality business. Sam III, at 74 years old, is still involved in the business on a daily basis. He makes or buys all the syrup marketed around the country. Every spring he is in the sugarhouse showing the thousands of visitors how maple syrup is made. He personally packages every container of syrup in their own packing plant.

His son Sam IV, is now president of Dakin Farm and is taking the farm business to new heights. His daughter Susan runs the very successful South Burlington store. His wife Joan is still active, working in the store on a regular basis.

He has served on the Vermont Maple Industry Council almost since it was founded in the 1960's. This organization represents all aspects of the Vermont maple industry, he was chairman for twenty years. He was a founder of the Vermont Maple

Promotion Board and served with always fresh ideas for over 20 years.

Sam Cutting is very well known in many layers of government. He has served on numerous statewide government committees and was appointed by two Vermont governors to task forces that studied and made recommendations for change to Vermont agricultural laws that affect the maple industry. His influence has extended beyond the state borders to Washington, DC. He has successfully lobbied, on numerous occasions, on issues that affect agriculture and the livelihood of farmers in Vermont and the northeast. Of particular note is the funding that UVM received for acid rain research in the northeast. Sam Cutting worked very hard to obtain that funding.

He has been instrumental in getting funding for many research and building projects at the University of Vermont's Proctor Maple Research Center. He was particularly successful in getting funding to rebuild the center after it was destroyed by fire in 1988. Sam was very instrumental in working with government to resolve the lead crisis in 1994.

Sam has taught many young sugarmakers how to become successful. He has worked with sugarmakers large and small, in the sugarhouse and in the woods. When a sugarmaker sees Sam Cutting arrive at the sugarhouse in the spring, they know they have made it. He only buys and markets the absolute best that Vermont producers can provide. It is an honor to sell your syrup to Sam Cutting.

Sam has been a regular at maple schools, although very shy, he has made himself stand up in front of the room and share why he has succeed-

ed. He has served on panels that share and teach the best information, around the state and at some interstate and international events, too.

He served many years on the advisory board of Butternut Mountain Farm in Morrisville, VT, one of the largest marketers of maple products in the State of Vermont. He has seen Butternut grow to be one of the larger maple packing and marketing companies in the United States.

Sam Cutting has been honored numerous times by his peers in Vermont. He was named outstanding maple person of the year by the Vermont Maple Industry Council. He received the President's Award for Outstanding Service to the Maple Industry from Bill Clark, then president of the Vermont Maple Sugarmakers Association. In 2002 he was honored

with Vermont's highest maple award, The Sumner Hill Williams Memorial Cup. This award is a lifetime achievement award for outstanding service to the Vermont maple industry.

If anyone can be called a maple expert it is Sam Cutting III. He has been producing maple syrup, buying bulk syrup and packaging the highest quality foods for nearly fifty years. Sam Cutting IV is quoted on the Dakin Farm website, about his father, "If anyone can be called Vermont's maple syrup expert, it's my dad. He's been collecting and canning Pure Vermont Maple Syrup for nearly four decades. I don't think there's anything he'd rather do more than go out to help with the tapping of the trees or spend time feeding the fires at the sugarhouse where we boil down the sap."



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2008 NAMSC/IMSI ANNUAL MEETING

Massachusetts welcomes the annual meeting of the North American Maple Syrup Council and the International Maple Syrup Institute.

The 2008 meetings will be held at the University of Massachusetts Conference Center in Amherst, Massachusetts. The dates are Friday October 24th thru Monday October 27th. Amherst is within easy reach of most of the northeast maple region, less than 20 minutes from both I-91 and the Massachusetts Turnpike. Air travelers fly into convenient Bradley Airport, about 45 minutes from the University. Amherst is at the foot of the beautiful Berkshires and near the heart of the Massachusetts maple producing region.

Responding to feedback we have received, the meetings will be scheduled so that the business meetings, trade show, tech sessions and workshops will be over the weekend. Monday will be an all day tour including stops at Hillside Plastics, local sugarhouses, and other places. The closing banquet will be Monday night. There will be a registration option that will allow for either the weekend session, the Monday tours, or both. This seems to be the option that most attendees from last years meeting requested.

Some of the shorter, local tour options may include a trip to a nearby computer controlled sawmill with an observation deck, Yankee Candle, Old Deerfield, a giant conservatory filled with exotic butterflies, a farm museum, as well as local sugarhouses, a brewery, the Amherst

College Natural History Museum, the local community kitchen for value added products, and other attractions we are working on.

Workshops are planned for the use of GPS in the sugarbush, animal damage control in the sugarbush, land use planning for maple farmers, proper bottling techniques demonstration, hosting school and educational tours at your sugarhouse, chainsaw safety, and others. You won't be lacking for interesting things to see and do!

Information and registration packets will be sent out soon. If you want to be sure you receive a mailing, please email the Mass Maple Association at info@massmaple.org, and include your name and address. You may also call or write for information: Mass Maple Association, Ashfield, MA 01330 Ph. 413-628-3268. Most likely we will have your name on a list, but let us know anyway. If you wish to be an exhibitor, please contact us for an exhibitor's packet.

We look forward to your visit to the Bay State this fall.

Tom McCrumm, Coordinator
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LARRY MYOTT AWARDED ONE OF COLLEGE'S HIGHEST HONORS

Called one the University of Vermont Extension's most versatile and valuable representatives, Lawrence B. Myott received the Robert. O. Sinclair Cup at the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Alumni and Friends Event May 3 on campus.

"The Sinclair Cup honors UVM faculty and staff who devoted most of their careers to the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and/or UVM Extension, and, in doing so, helped CALS or Extension fulfill their missions and capably serve the people of Vermont," said UVM Extension Dean Doug Lantagne in introducing the award for Robert Sinclair a dean and professor emeritus of the College.

Myott worked for UVM Extension from 1975-2004, first as Chittenden County Extension agricultural agent, then as fruit and vegetable agent and finally as maple specialist. He launched Vermont's Master Gardener program in 1991, which has since graduated 2,291 gardeners to date. A prolific writer, his name is still recognized as one of the leading authors about the maple industry in North America.

A native Vermonter from East Sheldon, Myott served in the Peace Corps in Nigeria from 1964-1966, where he helped develop poultry farms and palm oil plantations. He earned his bachelors' and masters' degrees from UVM in 1968 and 1992, respectively. In the early '70s, before

his 32-year UVM Extension career, Myott taught vocational education for the Department of Corrections.

Meanwhile, he served his communities well a Vergennes Chamber of Commerce and city council member, fire and police commissioner and EMT on the rescue squad. He was instrumental in converting a former "reform school" to a Job Corps training center. He served on countless boards for fairs and maple organizations across the region and won numerous other awards.

Rick LeVitre, UVM Extension associate dean noted that Myott demonstrated forward thinking by revamping fairs to educate fair-goers about agriculture and maple. "Larry is a UVM Extension pioneer, an inspiration, a colleague and a friend," said LeVitre.

Lantagne told how in the early days before marketing was widespread, Myott, who is affectionately called "Mr. Maple" statewide, wore a UVM bill cap, and for decades his car bore the license plate "UVM."

In accepting the award Myott quipped that he gave up the plate, figuring that over the years he had spent more than \$600 for the privilege of that vanity plate.

Other awards at this alumni and friends celebration at the Davis Center were: the Lawrence K. Forcier Outstanding Senior Award to Christa Sherburne-Law, the New Achiever Award to Milton veterinarian Emile Beaupré and the Outstanding Alumni Awards to Robert Roberts of Pennsylvania and Nancy Wood of Charlotte.

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July 27, 28, 29 2008

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The 2008 New York State Maple Tour will begin on Sunday July 27th at Finger Lakes Community College in Canandaigua with registration between 2 and 8 PM. A trade show will be open from 3:30 to 8 PM and a social time from 6 to 8 PM. Monday will begin with breakfast and tradeshow from 6:00 to 8 AM. Tour busses will depart between 7:45 to 8 AM to visit the various tour sites listed below. Busses return in the late afternoon. A reception and trade show are scheduled from 6 to 7 PM and the Annual Maple Tour Banquet begins at 7 PM. Tuesday will begin with breakfast and tradeshow from 6:00 to 8 AM. Tour busses will depart between 7:45 to 8 AM to visit the remaining tour sites. Busses return in the late afternoon concluding the tour. We hope you will join us for a scenic and informative New York State Maple Tour that will provide you with many ideas for your maple business.

TOUR STOPS

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Sugarbush Hollow LLC has been in operation for six years, owned by Chuck Winship and his children and operated by Chuck, Bruce Winship and Pam Masterson. The operation currently consists of 2647 taps all on tubing and vacuum.

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The Loomis Barn is owned and operated by Jim Loomis and Ginny Curtis. The Loomis Barn has been in business for 44 years as a furniture store, gift shop and café where pancakes and syrup is featured during the month of March. Paul Curtis heads the maple enterprise added eight years ago which currently operates with 600 taps on tubing.

Trout Creek Farm

Trout Creek Farm, located on Mattoon Road in Prattsburgh, is owned and operated by Dan and Dave Henning with the assistance of Jacquie Shellman and Geri Henning. Six hundred taps are currently operated with plans underway to expand.

Clute's Maple Products

Clute's Maple Products is owned and operated by Lane and Kathy Clute. This has been a family owned operation for generations. They have 2400 taps, all on vacuum and tubing.

Schiek's Maple Products

Schiek's Maple Product is owned and operated by Dave Schiek. Dave has 4,000 taps all but seven on tubing with vacuum, seven taps still have buckets.

Day Brothers Dairy and Maple Farm

Day Brothers Dairy and Maple Farm is owned and operated by Dick and Rick Day with assistance from Ernie Day, Steve Olsen, Mike and Tom Day and Dickie Howard. They have been making maple for 35 years and are a Century Farm. They have 2600 taps with all but a few on vacuum.

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Hunt Country Vineyards is owned by Art and Joyce Hunt. At Hunt Country Vineyards, our two great passions are crafting outstanding Finger Lakes wines and sharing them with you.

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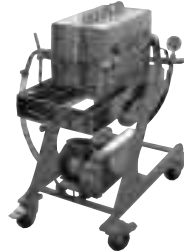
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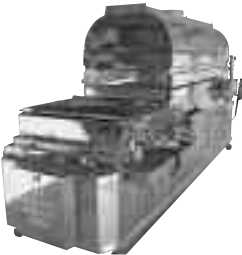
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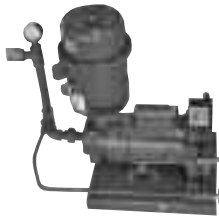
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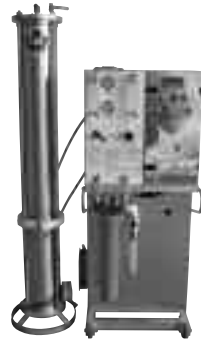
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THE TIMING OF TAPPING FOR MAPLE SAP COLLECTION

Timothy R. Wilmot

*University of Vermont Extension Maple Specialist
Proctor Maple Research Center*

Why do sugarmakers tap their trees on a certain date (around March 1st in Vermont)? For many producers, the date is selected to encompass what is typically the best 4-6 weeks of sugaring weather. Tap too early, so the theory goes, and the holes may run poorly later in the season when the weather is favorable for good sap runs; tap too late and miss some of the best early season weather.

Unfortunately, the weather is often unpredictable and uncooperative. At the University of Vermont Proctor Maple Research Center, for example, the winter and spring of 2006 was characterized by several episodes of ideal sugaring weather in January and February, followed by March temperatures that were initially too low, and then soon were too high for sustained sap flow. The following year featured a few days of favorable sugaring weather in early January, followed by cold temperatures until mid-March. In neither winter, at many locations, did the "best" 4-6 week period begin on March 1st.

There are a variety of reasons why sugarmakers might want to tap earlier than the traditional date: thousands of taps that take several weeks to install, lower snow cover and easier walking before mid to late winter, climate change generally moving the season forward and providing more sap flow weather in January and February. For most sugarmakers, the bottom line is simply this: what tapping time frame results in the highest sap yield? The experiments described below, which were performed between 2000 and 2007, were designed to answer this question.

Methods: Gravity Collection

All trees in these and subsequent experiments were located at the University of Vermont Proctor Maple Research Center in northern Vermont at an elevation of 1300-1500 feet. During the years 2000-2002, sap yields from trees tapped on different dates were studied using gravity collection. Sixty trees were divided into 3 groups of 20, with each group tapped 3-4 weeks apart. All trees had a single taphole and to reduce variability, all tapholes were on the same aspect (SW to SE, depending on the year). Trees were mostly in forest stands, with some open grown, and had an average diameter of 16". Sap and sugar content were measured whenever the sap ran, from the time of tapping until all taps had ceased running. For the sap collection, plastic spouts were connected to a short length of tubing which ran into individual covered plastic buckets. Spouts were new in 2000, they were washed and reused in 2001 and 2002. Half the spouts were 7/16" and half were 5/16". In 2001 and 2002, groups of trees were alternated so that the trees tapped first in 2000, were tapped second in 2001, then last in 2002.

Results and Discussion: Gravity Collection

Sap volumes are presented in Table 1. Although sap sugar content was also measured, sap volume was of primary importance in this study because it was directly affected by taphole "drying". Sap sugar content is unlikely to be affected by tapping date, with the exception that sap collected in January or early February may be less sweet.

The dates chosen for tapping were selected to be about a month early (first tapping date), near the "traditional" date (second tapping date) and about 2 weeks late (third tapping date). In 2001, very deep snow in March both shortened the season and pushed it back, as can be seen by the collection dates.

A. Gravity	Tapping date 2000		
	2/1	2/28	3/17
Sap run date	Gallons of sap collected		
2/20 - 2/28	1.1		
3/2 - 3/9	7.9	7.6	
3/11 - 3/16	2.7	2.5	
3/20 - 3/24	4.8	4.8	5.5
3/29 - 4/7	1.3	2.5	3.8
4/11 - 4/20	1.2	1.8	4.1
Total	19	19.2	13.4

B. Gravity	Tapping date 2001		
	2/1	3/5	4/4
Sap run date	Gallons of sap collected		
3/18 - 3/20	1.4	1.3	
3/29 - 4/2	4.1	4.2	
4/5 - 4/10	3.4	3.4	4.0
4/16 - 4/30	1.8	2.8	4.9
Total	10.7	11.7	8.9

C. Gravity	Tapping date 2002		
	1/31	2/28	3/21
Sap run date	Gallons of sap collected		
2/21 - 2/26	2.6		
3/7 - 3/9	2.8	3.3	
3/13 - 3/16	3.7	4.5	
3/29 - 4/2	3.2	3.9	4.8
4/9 - 4/16	3.2	3.3	6.0
Total	15.5	15.0	10.8

Table 1: A,B,C. Sap yield for the different sap flow periods of each year, collected by gravity. Yields, shown in gallons, are the average of 20 trees for each tapping date.

Three trends were evident in the results. First, the overall yields for the first two tapping dates were very similar, even though the tapholes in the first group were a month older than those in the second group. Second, the sap did flow less as the holes became older, as can be seen by comparing the yields in different columns in April, but for the most part this did not occur until the last week or two of the season. Third, tapping well beyond the start of the season resulted in tapholes that out-produced all others; however, production from these tapholes could not make up for the earlier lost sap runs. During these three years there was very little sap flow weather in February, so the advantage of tapping on February 1 was negligible in terms of yield . . . only in 2002 was a significant amount of sap collected before the "traditional" date. Thus, these experiments showed that while tapping early did not appear to hurt overall sap yields, neither did it supplement them.

Methods: Vacuum Collection

During the years 2006 and 2007, sap yields from different tapping dates were studied using collection by high vacuum. The study trees, which were growing in a forest stand and ranged from 10-16" DBH, were divided into 3 groups of 10 trees and each group was tapped on a different date. All trees had one taphole located on the south side of the trunk (to reduce variability-in our main bush we

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tap all sides of the tree). As was done with the gravity collection, the groups were alternated so that the trees tapped latest in 2006 were tapped first in 2007. Sap was collected in 3.2 gallon vacuum chambers (see June 2007 Maple Syrup Digest page 22 for a picture of a vacuum chamber). These chambers allowed collection of sap from individual tapholes under vacuum; the sap remained in the chamber for volume measurement and sampling for sugar content until it was manually emptied. New spouts and droplines were used each year. Vacuum was supplied by an oil-cooled liquid ring pump and was approximately 24" Hg at the taphole.

Results and Discussion: Vacuum Collection

The three groups of trees were tapped at widely spaced intervals, beginning in January (Figure 1); thus the difference in age from the newest to the oldest tapholes was considerable-61 days in 2006 and 76 days in 2007.

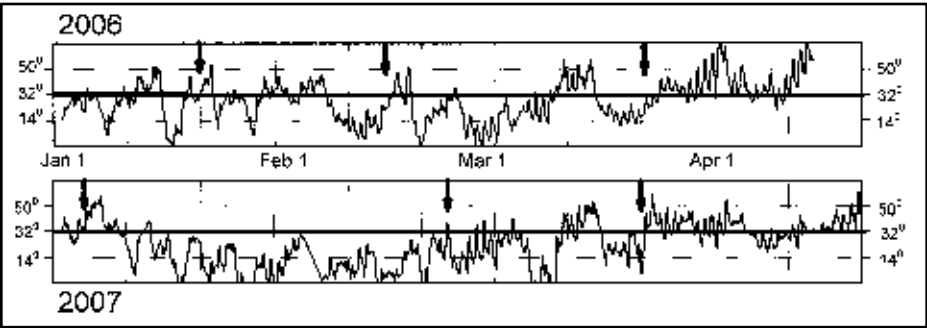


Figure 1. Air temperatures (degrees F) from January 1 through April 20 at the Proctor Maple Research Center. Arrows indicate the tapping dates for 3 groups of trees in 2006 and 2007. Note the number of days in January and February 2006 where the temperature exceeded 32 degrees.

Overall yields for trees of this size, or any size, were very large, as can be seen in Table 2, which illustrated the superior performance of both high vacuum, and the collection method which essentially eliminates any lateral line restriction by using only a 5/16"dropline connected directly to the chamber. These experiments tested the efficacy of tapping very early and in both years a fairly large amount of sap was collected in January and February. It is instructive to note the yields during the sap run of 3/24 in 2006 and 3/28 in 2007; in both cases, the earliest tapholes, which were 9 and 11 weeks old, respectively, equaled or nearly equaled the performance of tapholes that were much newer.

As was true with gravity collection, during the last week or two of the season the average sap flow declined in the older holes relative to the newest holes. During this time, some tapholes stopped flowing altogether, while others continued at a rate nearly comparable to earlier weeks. Warmer weather, particularly after the end of March 2006, was strongly correlated with the decline in flow from both the January and February tapholes. In another study in 2006, we recorded

A. Vacuum	Tapping date 2006		
	1/20	2/24	3/22
Sap run date	Gallons of sap collected		
1/20 - 1/28	2.1		
1/30 - 2/4	6.2		
2/15 - 2/23	2.4		
3/9 - 3/14	4.8	6.1	
3/24 - 3/27	5.6	5.7	5.9
3/28 - 4/2	4.8	5.6	5.9
4/3 - 4/6	2.1	2.8	3.8
4/7 - 4/12	2.2	3.5	5.7
Total	30.2	23.7	21.3

B. Vacuum	Tapping date 2007		
	1/4	2/22	3/21
Sap run date	Gallons of sap collected		
1/5 - 1/8	5.0		
3/11 - 3/15	4.0	4.0	
3/22 - 3/27	7.8	6.5	7.5
3/28 - 4/3	8.6	7.7	7.8
4/10 - 4/13	5.4	5.5	6.7
4/14 - 4/23	3.8	4.1	5.8
Total	34.6	27.8	27.8

Table 2: A,B. Sap yield for the different sap flow periods of each year, collected by vacuum. Yields, shown in gallons, are the average of 10 trees for each tapping date.

greatly reduced flow starting in late March from south-facing tapholes compared to north-facing tapholes, again related to heating of the trunk.

Sap sugar content in January, particularly in 2006, was low compared to sugar content in March. During the first runs in 2006, the sap averaged 1.3% brix, compared to 2.1% by mid-March. In 2007, the January sap run averaged 1.8% compared to 2% in March. Low sweetness translates to greater fuel consumption in order to make syrup, although for producers using reverse osmosis the difference in fuel consumption should not be large. Despite the differences in sap sugar between the earliest tapped trees and those tapped in March, syrup yield (sweetness x volume) was still much higher for the January tapped trees; in fact syrup yield for these trees in 2007 was over 0.7 gal/tap.

Why Do Tapholes "Dry Up"

If tapholes can run well for as long as 14 weeks, as many did in 2007 under vacuum, then the traditional wisdom that they will run for only 4-6 weeks needs to be re-examined. Actually, the term "dry up" is not an accurate description. Some people believe that air getting into the hole dries the wood tissue, much like a damp sponge dries when left in the sun. To further test this theory, gravity collections were made in 2007 using 7/16" Vermont type (rolled metal)

spouts, open to the air and not connected to any tubing. Trees were the same size as those used for vacuum collection and located across the road from the vacuum stand. Two groups of 10 trees were used, and all sap was collected in buckets.

Gravity-7/16" tin spouts	Tapping date 2007	
	1/26	3/16
Sap run date	Gallons of sap collected	
3/11 - 3/15	1.3	0.7
3/22 - 3/27	2.9	2.7
3/28 - 4/3	2.8	2.5
4/10 - 4/14	4.1	4.1
4/18 - 4/23	1.2	1.1
Total	12.3	11.1

Table 3. Sap yield for the different sap flow periods of 2007, collected by buckets using rolled metal spouts. Yields, shown in gallons, are the average of 10 trees for each tapping date.

The similarity of these results with those from experiments using tubing suggests that an open spout does not dry up sooner than a spout in a closed system. In this experiment, the two tapping dates were separated by 7 weeks, and no sap was collected from the January tapped trees for the first 6 weeks. Despite the difference in age, there was no indication that the yield from the older tapholes declined relative to the newer tapholes, despite being open to the air for a total of 12 weeks.

If air drying is not responsible for the cessation of flow, then what is the mechanism that causes the decline in yield near the end of the season, especially as the weather warms? Several microbiological studies of tapholes made in the mid-twentieth century are instructive. Sheneman et al. (1959) compared sap yields from tapholes inoculated with populations of microorganisms with tapholes that were relatively uninfected, and found that high populations of bacteria, fungi and yeasts, observed in the warmer portions of the sap flow season, were strongly correlated with cessation of flow. Ching and Mericle (1960), in similar experiments, identified common *Pseudomonas* bacteria, found in large numbers on the bark of un-tapped trees, to be the microorganism most likely responsible. The apparent mechanism involves an interaction between the bacteria and normal sap constituents, which resulted in the formation of a gummy substance which caused the physical blockage of sap conducting vessels within the taphole.

As a result of these and similar findings, the paraformaldehyde tablet, a registered pesticide, came into common usage as a way to prolong sap flow by killing or delaying the growth of microorganisms in the taphole. Unfortunately, paraformaldehyde, now illegal in maple production, also increased the size and severity of the taphole wounds. In addition the pesticide had the potential to introduce a toxic substance into a natural food product.

Morselli and Whalen (1991) attempted to keep tapholes from being infected without paraformaldehyde by using "aseptic" tapping practices, including chiseling the bark away from the hole, using sterile spouts and tubing, and flooding the wood and drill bit with alcohol. Despite these sanitary practices, which would be time-consuming and impractical for most sugarmakers, many of the aseptic tapholes still became contaminated by the second half of the season.

One of the underlying conclusions from these and similar studies is that infection of the taphole is inevitable, as bacteria, yeasts and fungi are present on the bark and throughout the forest, and that the populations of infecting microorganisms will increase as the temperature increases. As population growth of bacteria is exponential, one could expect their numbers to skyrocket as the temperature of the wood surrounding the taphole rises from 350- 400 degrees F, which is common in the early part of the sap flow season, to 450 - 500 degrees F later in the season. Sun exposed wood can actually warm far above air temperature, with taphole temperatures reaching 600 - 700 degrees F. January and February thaws may allow sap flow but rarely involve the prolonged warmth seen in April, thus populations of microorganisms may remain low for many weeks in tapholes drilled in early winter.

Our data do show that sap flow from the earliest tapholes does eventually slow down compared to tapholes drilled in March, so time is also a factor in the development of a significant microbial population. Thus, tapping in January or



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February may have provided a head start for bacterial growth. This did not have a notable effect on sap yield during periods of low temperature, but reduction in sap yield near the end of the season was observed. Related to this, but not thoroughly tested in these experiments, is the effect of any residual microorganisms on used spouts. While one and two year old spouts were used in the gravity experiments, new spouts and droplines only were used with vacuum. It is possible that a used spout could infect a taphole and cause reduced yields, further compounding the reduction seen in older holes at the end of the season. However, it is likely that this effect would be pronounced only at warmer temperatures that favor bacterial growth. Experiments at the Proctor Maple Research Center in the spring of 2008 comparing yields using new and used spouts placed in tapholes of the same age seem to support this interpretation.

Finally, it should be taken as a cautionary note that while this research showed that tapping as early as January may lead to increased sap yields in some years, this article did not address the possible problems entailed in processing sap to syrup throughout the winter. January and February thaws are often followed by sub-zero weather, which could lead to unforeseen difficulties in the pumphouse and sugarhouse.

Conclusions

Under both gravity and vacuum, sap flow from tapholes drilled in January and February was comparable to sap flow from much fresher holes during the cooler part of the sap flow season.

Toward the end of the season, when temperatures had exceeded 500 degrees F on several days, January and February tapholes yielded less sap than newer tapholes. In years when many of the sap flow periods involve relatively low temperatures, perhaps 400 degrees or less, the additional yield from early tapping may provide a significant advantage compared to tapping on March 1st.

The results from these experiments are consistent with the interpretation that microorganism growth during warm weather is responsible for the cessation of sap flow from tapholes.

Acknowledgements

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THE BEST AND WORST OF YEARS

By Barbara Lassonde

This year's maple season has ended in New Hampshire and a recent telephone survey revealed a mixed harvest. Producers in the southern half of the state enjoyed an average to outstanding crop with excellent flavor. The overall sugar content in the sap was high and many producers made a good amount of light amber syrup.

In the southwestern portion of the state, particularly Cheshire and Sullivan Counties, most producers harvested a bumper crop. One long-time farmer who keeps meticulous records, stated it was their best season in 75 years.

Producers in the northern half of the state, above Plymouth, were much less enthusiastic about their harvest. Some disappointingly acknowledged it was the worst season they could remember, and the most costly. With several feet of snow and ice on the ground, they had to hire extra help to dig out the tap lines, then temperatures often were not conducive to good sap runs with some days being much too warm. Although those up North did not produce nearly as much syrup as they would like, they all agreed the flavor was excellent.

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July 27-29 — New York State Maple Tour, Information posted at www.cornellmaple.com

September 6 — Maple Confection Workshop II, Sullivan County. **Contact:** Marianna Quartararo Cornell Cooperative Extension of Sullivan County, 64 Ferndale-Loomis Rd. Liberty, NY 12754. Phone: (845) 292-6180.

September 27 — Fall Maple Workshop, **Contact:** JJ Schell, jjs69@cornell.edu, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oswego County, 3288 Main St., Mexico, NY 13114-3499. Phone: 315-963-7286.

October 14 — Maple Confection Workshop II, Franklin County. **Contact:** Richard Gast, Education Center, Court House, 355 West Main Street, Suite 150, Malone, NY 12953. Phone: (518) 483-7403, Fax: (518) 483-6214, Email: rlg24@cornell.edu

October 18, 2008 — Maple Confection I Workshop Ontario County. **Contact:** Russell Welser, Cornell Cooperative Extension Ontario County, 480 North Main Street, Canandaigua, NY 14424. Phone: 585.394.3977, Fax: 585.394.0377, E-mail: rw43@cornell.edu

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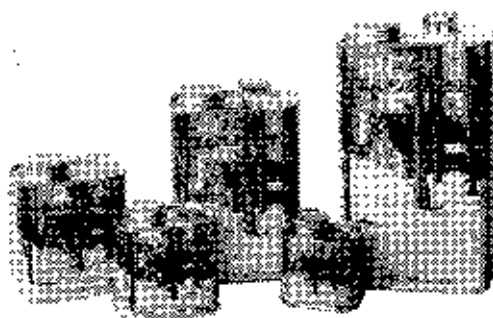
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CROP REPORTS FOR 2007 CONTINUED

Editor's note: Each year at the annual meeting each state and province provide crop reports for that year. We will publish their findings each year in the Digest, dedicating as few or many pages as space dictates.

OHIO REPORT

The Ohio Maple Producers Association has had a very busy year planning for the NAMSC/IMSI Meetings. I must say a special thanks to Dick Schorr the Chairman of the Planning Committee.

The 2007 season produced various reports from around the state (what else is new). The most common was the season started later than normal. Throughout the state the season was from two to four weeks later than normal. My question for all of you is what's a normal season? Once the season started it happened fast and quick. It was not uncommon for the season to be over in two to three weeks.

The central and southern part of the state had from 85% to a normal year's production. The northeast part of the state had 60% to 80% of a normal year's production. Once again we saw those producers with good vacuum tubing systems producing much more than those on buckets. Some producers on good vacuum systems reported 1/2 gallon per tap. All parts of the state reported very good flavored syrup with color varying throughout the state.

Ohio production for 2007 per the USDA-NASS report was 75,000 gallons. This is a 4% drop from the 2006 production of 78,000 gallons. Ohio

had 370,000 taps which is 10,000 more taps than the 360,000 taps reported in 2006. Yield per tap was .203 gallons per tap which was down 7% from the .217 gallons per tap reported in 2006.

Per Dr. Gary Graham's research of 2004, Ohio has the following sized operations.*

22 operations of less than 100 taps

296 operations of 101-500 taps

147 operations of 501-1000 taps

88 operations over 1000 taps

*responding to survey was voluntary and not all producers responded.

ONTARIO REPORT

In January, eleven Maple Information Days were hosted by OMSPA around the province.

The Maple season started in the southwest of Ontario the last two days of February with most of the province starting the 10th or 11th of March. Most areas of the province had a 60% - 80% of a normal crop with some individual producers reporting around 2 pounds of syrup per tap or a little better.

The Ontario Summer Tour was held in Algoma district on St. Joseph's Island, July 12-14, 2007. A very informative meeting was organized with speakers from Vermont (Rick March, Abby Van Den Berg, Glenn Goodrich, Bradley Gillian and Burr Morse). Mike Ross from Michigan and Luc Lagace and Gary Coppola from Quebec were on the program. Ontario speakers were Simon Lachance, Dave Chapeski, Jennifer Williams, Laurie Thompson, Chris Brown and Loretta Martellini. The tour included a steam workshop at Gilbertson's new pancake house and sugar camp and a tour of Thompson's sugar camp and packing facilities. The banquet was

held at the Legion Hall at Richards Landing and Ches Wallace was presented with the Ontario Maple Syrup Award of Merit for his outstanding contributions to the maple syrup industry in the Algoma area.

Dave Mathew of Powassan is the new President of the Ontario Maple Syrup Association.

Heather Kenny is Ontario's new Business Administrator and Promotional Coordinator. Her phone number is 705-939-6670, Fax number 705-939-1429.

QUEBEC REPORT

I am very pleased to be here with you today in Ohio, the state in which we were present for the first time as the official representative for Quebec on the North American Maple Syrup Council. Since then, much has evolved in our industry which is growing in importance as a result of the production and the amount of syrup purchased around the world.

For the last few years, we have had in Quebec a difficult period of time due to high production and growing markets which have not consumed as

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1025 Gallon horizontal plastic tank	\$ 850
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Airablo tubing washer w/11 hp Honda gas motor	\$ 2,000
Alamo vacuum pump w/gas motor on wheels (for 800-1000 taps) excellent	\$ 995
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Airablo RO machine, 500 gph (tested, runs great)	\$ 8,900
Goodrich tubing washer w/gas motor and separate gas powered air compressor (like new)	\$ 1,500

Bulk syrup bought and sold.



much as we had hoped. Mechanisms have been put into place to limit production in order to reduce the surplus of syrup which is becoming difficult to support over time.

This year, mother nature has helped partly with a small crop of 61.7 million pounds, based on the survey conducted by an independent agency, Ageco Groupe. This small crop has obviously affected certain producers financially due to a substantial loss of revenue. Production varied from region to region, from a high level to weaker than usual. Quality was present with a 9.6% of unacceptable flavour, based on an inspected level of nearly 50 million pounds as of August 31st. Different tests are done for our members, and technical assistance is provided when problems arise or the cause is difficult to find.

The industry has many challenges to face as well as basic research requirements, in addition to promotional activity around the world. We see the future with optimism knowing that hard work pays off. We also have time to rejoice as spring arrives and the maple fever begins.

WISCONSIN REPORT

This year Wisconsin experienced one of the poorest maple crops in recent memory. Total production was down 25% from 2006. Approximately 75,000 gallons of syrup was produced. The season began in mid-February in southern Wisconsin and ended the last of April in the central and northern areas.

The season started out with temperatures that were too warm for optimal sap flow. Then the weather turned too cold. When conditions

finally became favorable for maple sap the season was too far along and many producers experienced off flavor syrup.

Maple producers that used vacuum experienced a normal to slightly less than normal crop. Those without vacuum had a disastrous crop.

The Wisconsin Maple Promotion Committee placed radio ads on many stations across the state this year to raise the awareness of maple and encourage visitation to local sugar bushes during Wisconsin Maple Month. Members were asked to contribute \$25.00 to the promotion fund and they would be mentioned on air as open to visitors during Open House Weekend.

Holly Melander, current Wisconsin Maple Queen, has been active promoting maple at elementary schools as well as many maple and non maple events across the state.

The state fair continues to be the major fund raiser for our organization. Barry and Carol Stockwell, along with numerous volunteers, run the booth for 11 days. Attendance was down by 50,000 people but our profits remained the same as last year. Our booth is known for not only maple syrup but also granulated maple sugar, maple creme, maple mustard, maple barbeque sauce, maple nut corn, maple cotton candy and maple root beer.

The Adamski family was chosen as maple producers of the year. The second and third generations are making syrup on the same property and the fourth is less than one-year-old.

After many years as delegate to NAMSC, Lyle Stockwell has retired. Thank you Lyle for a job well done!

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Nick Bereznick or Anne Kennedy at:

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NEW YORK STATE MAPLE TOUR

July 27-29, 2008

For information go to:

www.cornellmaple.com

NAMSC/IMSI ANNUAL MEETING 2008

October 24-27, 2008

University of Massachusetts Conference Center

Amherst, MA

For more information contact:

tom@southfacefarm.com

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3x10 with 6' flue pan	95 gph	130-145 gph	220-245 gph
4x12 with 7' flue pan	162 gph	230-250 gph	385-425 gph
5x14 with 9' flue pan	305 gph	435-460 gph	725-780 gph
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IN MEMORIUM

JUAN L. REYNOLDS

Juan L. Reynolds, age 77, of Aniwa, died Wednesday, April 16, 2008 at his home.

He was born on August 8, 1930 in Aniwa, the son of the late Adin and Geraldine (Wheeler) Reynolds.

On August 28, 1954, he was united in marriage to Loretta J. Silver at the Aniwa Methodist Church. She survives.

Juan was a U.S. Army veteran, serving in the Korean War and was a member of the Birnamwood VFW Memorial Post #7933.

He owned and operated Reynolds Sugar Bush until his retirement. He was a previous Exalted Ruler of the Antigo Elks Club, was President of the Wisconsin Maple Council, served as Past President of the North American Maple Syrup Association and the International Maple Syrup Institute and was also a member of the Antigo Lion's Club. He was also an avid Packer and Brewer fan. Juan loved his family, they were his life. He enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

In addition to his wife, Loretta, Juan is survived by four children, Sherry Reynolds, Cindy (Dave Vaughn) Bisner, Jay (Patty) Reynolds and Mark (Linda) Reynolds all of Aniwa. He is also survived by other relatives and friends.

In addition to his parents, Juan was preceded in death by one daughter, Lori Reynolds and one brother, Lynn Reynolds.

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