

Maple Syrup Digest



Vol. 58, No. 2

June 2019



Annual Meetings: Come to Duluth!
Season Reports
Spotted Lanternfly: Another Invasive



The Newsletter of the North American Maple Syrup Council



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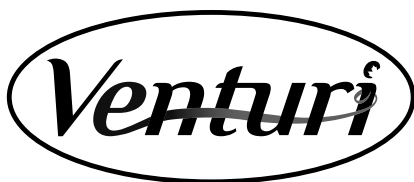
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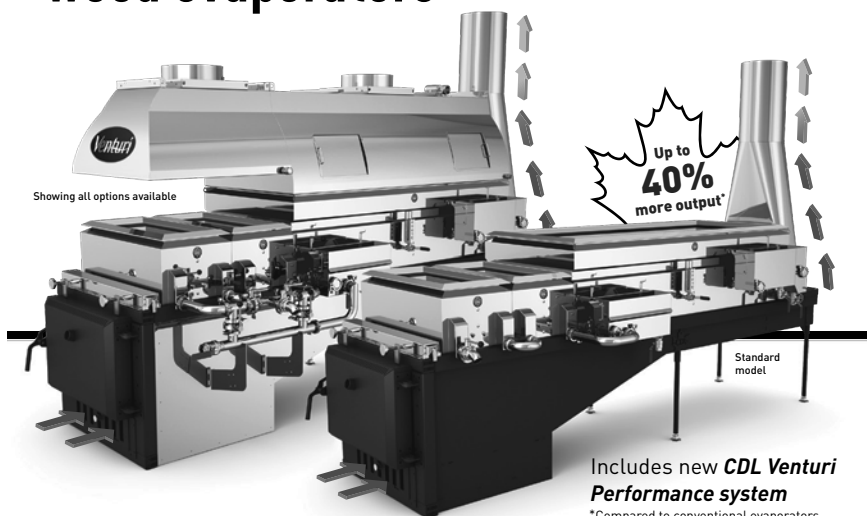
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Greetings from your President



I have just returned from Croghan, NY attending this year's induction ceremony for the Maple Hall of Fame. I would like to sincerely congratulate both of this year's inductee: Kathryn Hopkins, a University of Maine Cooperative Extension educator; and Michael Herman, Co-owner of Turkey Hill Maple Products.

I have known Kathy for quite some time. Kathy, along with Henry Marckres and others, puts on top-quality maple grading schools that have taught and shown hundreds of maple producers across the maple belt how to taste, grade and identify quality pure maple syrup. She has dedicated her life to education and helping out others in producing some of the world's finest quality maple syrup. Her extensive work in this industry has not gone unnoticed and her induction is well deserved.

Michael Herman, who I have just recently met, comes from a family-owned maple business that has pioneered top-quality maple syrup and maple syrup products that are sold throughout the world. Michael, along with his brother and family, has dedicated his life to providing the industry with very innovative maple products. Michael currently acts as a maple consultant to the International Maple Syrup Institute. Michael's hard work and maple expertise has made an impact on the maple syrup industry and his induction this year is very well deserved.

We had a number of delegates attend our biannual teleconference meeting in Croghan NY on May 10 and many others who could not attend called in. Although many items were discussed I will only touch on a few of them.

There will be some of our ever-popular *Digest* supplements coming out in the near future – topics are currently being discussed, so stay tuned. The revised *Maple Producers Manual* is on going and a timeline for the process is currently being worked out. There are still some discussions as to whether we will print hard copies, have it available for download, or both.

There was much discussion regarding the upcoming AGM in Duluth, Minnesota. Our meeting will again feature dynamic presentations and speakers – some ideas are being considered and we may have a presentation focusing on a project that utilized our education grant.

Crop reports are in and it looks like many had a very successful crop or yield. I know in Southern New Brunswick the maple gods were on our side. It was a later than usual start but the end result gave many in our area a bumper crop, with a lot of Golden to Amber grades being made.

Finally, I would like to officially welcome and congratulate the new Executive Director for the International Maple Syrup Institute, Jean Lamonagne. Jean brings close to 30 years of experience from his work in the food sector with a variety of companies. His leadership roles have included Director of Marketing, Product Manager, Senior Director of Food Services and, most recently, Atlantic General Manager for Sysco Corporation based out of Monc-

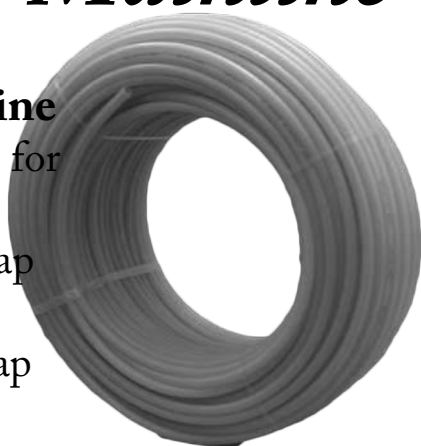
President: continued on page 7



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ton and Dieppe, New Brunswick. Fluently bilingual, Jean holds a Bachelor of Commerce and Masters of Business Administration from McGill University in Montreal. Being a fellow New Brunswicker and resident living near the Moncton area I am excited to meet Jean and share our experiences about how our two organizations work and what they mean to each other.

Many of the open houses are finishing up and the warmer weather is soon to be upon us. Enjoy the rest of the spring and have a wonderful and safe summer.

Regards,
David Briggs, President, NAMSC



Digest Online

The online archives of the *Maple Syrup Digest* at www.maplesyrupdigest.org are now accessible on your smart-phone and tablet devices, as well as on your computers.

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Cover photo: Kathryn Hopkins and Michael Herman were inducted into the Maple Hall of Fame on May 11.



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Industry: Annual meetings

Come to Duluth, MN for the 2019 NAMSC/IMSI Annual Meetings

The 2019 NAMSC/IMSI convention will be held October 21-24, 2019 in Duluth, Minnesota at the Duluth Entertainment Conference Center (DECC), an ideal convention facility that directly overlooks the Duluth harbor channel. The convention will bring together maple producers, processors, equipment manufacturers, researchers, and educators from more than 18 U.S. states and Canadian provinces where maple syrup is produced on a commercial scale.

The program will open on Monday, October 21, with meetings for delegates and board members of the two organizations. The largest maple trade show in Minnesota's history will open on Monday afternoon. Maple syrup/confections and photo contest entries will be accepted. For those not involved in meetings, there will be two optional special events on Monday: a guided bus tour of the city of Duluth in the morning, and an afternoon cruise tour of the Duluth shipping harbor. Monday will be capped off with a "Celebrating Minnesota Welcome Dinner" followed by a "Going To Be Fun" fundraiser for the NAMSC Research & Education Fund.

Tuesday will begin with the NAMSC Opening Ceremony followed by NAMSC Annual Meeting and keynote speaker. The IMSI Annual Meeting will open in the afternoon and will include a presentation by Dr. Navrinda Seeram of the University of Rhode Island on research of maple nutritional and health benefits. The day will conclude with a reception at the Duluth Curling Club,

located in the DECC. The reception will be on the observation level, overlooking the club's Tuesday evening live curling.

Wednesday will feature the NAMSC closing session and workshop, plus the trade show in the morning. Following lunch, the afternoon program will feature technical sessions, workshops and research updates, followed by the evening reception and closing banquet with entertainment. A special Wednesday (one-day) registration option will be offered.

On Thursday, optional all-day motor coach tours will visit Lake Superior north shore attractions, sugaring operations, wild ricing facilities and other specialty crop production. The Thursday tour will include a "Cooking With Maple" demonstration by Chef John Plante as a part of the luncheon program. The planned luncheon program was made possible with a grant from the NAMSC Research & Education Fund.

On Thursday and Friday, the IMSI Maple Grading School, organized by Kathy Hopkins of the University of Maine will be offered. It will be held at the Inn on Lake Superior, one of our official hotels. Class size is limited. A direct registration link can be found on the MMSPA website below.

Convention registration, schedule, hotel, trade show vendor information can all be found at the MMSPA website: <http://www.mnmaple.org/convention-home>.

Kathryn Hopkins

Kathryn Hopkins started out making syrup as a hobbyist in the backyard and sharing it with family. After graduating from the University of Maine with a Bachelor's degree in Plant and Soil Science in 1977, she began teaching elementary school in her hometown. Soon after marrying and starting a family, she started a 4-H club in Norridgewock and among the club's activities were forestry, maple production, gardening and geology. A life-long love of science and the natural world became a Masters Degree in Ecology and Environmental Science, also from the University of Maine. This led to a number of adjunct positions teaching science courses: Philosophy of Science – Unity College, Methods of Teaching Science – University of Maine at Farmington, and Fieldwork on the Family Farm, an Honors class at the University of Maine.

In 1997, she accepted a job with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension in the Somerset County Office as an Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator and County Coordinator. In the first week on the job two maple producers, Bob Smith and Al Bolduc, walked in and said, "Did you know that Somerset County is the largest maple syrup producing county in the country? What are you going to do

about it?"

Thus began a career working with the maple industry in Maine and across the maple producing region nationally and internationally. A primary focus of her work has involved quality control in maple syrup and value-added products. She collaborated with University of Maine Food Science Department researchers looking at some of the

conventionally held beliefs about mold and bottling temperatures in maple syrup production and some of the assumed, and not always true, food safety practices. The results of this work have led to publications and presentations across the maple producing region. She is also the co-creator, with Sumner Dole and Henry Marckres, of the IMSI Maple Grading School

which has been presented at various locations annually since 2004. The three grading school creators were selected as winners of the International Maple Syrup Institute's Golden Maple Leaf Award in 2011.

Kathy has been involved with the maple industry nationally and internationally since 1999. She has served on the Board of Directors of the International Maple Syrup Institute since 2008



Hopkins: continued on page 12

2019 American Maple Hall of Fame Inductee

Michael S.L. Herman

In 1972 Michael Herman, his father Lloyd B. Herman, and friends began experimenting with new methods of processing maple sap. They were early pioneers of vacuum pipeline technology as they built up a total of 25,000 taps, all on pipeline. By 1974 they founded Brome County Maple Products as a central boiling facility. In 1975 Michael and Lloyd were among the founders of the International Maple Syrup Institute, dedicated to the purity of maple syrup. Michael was Vice President of the IMSI in 1997 and 1998, and President in 1999 and 2000.

In 1976 Michael along with the rest of the Herman family: father, Lloyd; mother, Stephanie; and brother, Brian, launched Turkey Hill Sugarbush. With Brian's business acumen the family began a series of successful expansions. This solid and growing foundation enabled Michael, the company's president, to exercise his vision, creative spirit and shrewd business sense, which made this company a leader in the tourism industry.

Turkey Hill Sugarbush boosted the profile of maple syrup as a luxury gourmet product. They successfully marketed maple as a symbol and souvenir of North America. Turkey Hill became famous for innovative packaging that earned them the Golden Maple Leaf Award for Innovation in Marketing

from the IMSI in 2016.

As a dedicated conservationist, Michael has been the spokesman on the environment for the International Maple Syrup Institute, the maple syrup spokesman for the Canadian Coalition on Acid Rain, and the maple syrup spokesman for the Quebec Rainbow Coalition. Michael has been recognized for his significant influence on the passage of the Clean Air Act of 1992.



Michael Herman also spearheaded the sustained opposition to the use of the paraformaldehyde pill in the maple syrup industry, and worked to educate the public about its perils, thus leading to its complete eradication.

Turkey Hill Sugarbush, under the leadership of Michael Herman, has

won multiple awards including:

- International Maple Syrup Institute Award of Excellence
- Quebec Fleur de Lys Blue Ribbon of Excellence
- Nine-time winner Frontier Duty Free Association Supplier of the Year Award: 1998, 2003, 2006, 2007, 2010, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2018
- Gutenberg International Award - Gold Medal for Packaging

Herman: continued on page 12

Hopkins: continued from page 10

and has served on the IMSI Organic Standards Committee. She has been an Associate Member of the North American Maple Syrup Council since 2002. Her work has been recognized both outside and inside the maple industry. She was selected as the National Winner in the National Association of County Agricultural Agents Search for Excellence in Forestry and Natural Resources in 2015, and of the North American Maple Syrup Council's Richard G. Haas Distinguished Service Award for a Leading Research Professional in 2016. In 2019, she received a Maine Legislative Sentiment from Senator Bradley Farrin for contributions to the North American maple syrup industry.

Kathy and her husband, Bob, live in Norridgewock, Maine with seven homeless, stray cats that adopted them.

Herman: continued from page 11

- Seven time winner Frontier Duty Free Association Best Specialized Product: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018
- Moscow silver medal for best product at the Moscow Fine Food Show in 2012
- International Syrup Golden Maple Leaf Award for Innovation in Marketing, 2016
- Finalist, DFNI Supplier of the Year, 2018

Michael and his family are dedicated to the purity and excellent flavor of maple syrup following the company motto: "There will always be a market for the very best."

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Industry: Census

USDA/NASS Scales Back Annual Maple Count Dramatically

In March, the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) announced that they would reduce the number of states where they conduct their annual survey of maple production. Data will no longer be collected from Connecticut, Indiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Ohio, and West Virginia sugarmakers. Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Wisconsin will be the only states counted in the annual production census.

In response to objections from many state associations and departments of agriculture, NASS indicated they would not be revisiting their action, saying it was decided based upon a "regular review" to "ensure the most efficient use of NASS resources."

NAMSC submitted a letter, opposing the decision, reprinted here.

March 17, 2019

Dan Kerestes, Director,
Statistics Division
National Agricultural Statistics Service
US Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Director Kerestes:

In response to your March 2019 program review, the North American Maple Syrup Council requests that you reconsider your decision to remove six states – Connecticut, Indiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Ohio, and West

Virginia – from the annual NASS census of maple syrup production. While the preface to the report indicates that stakeholder input was requested in fall of 2018, feedback from the maple industry was not solicited at that time and we hope you will consider this as our contribution

Maple sugaring is one of the oldest agricultural practices in the United States, predating written history. Its historical significance to our early agricultural economy was recorded when Thomas Jefferson joined the 'Society for Promoting the Manufacture of Sugar from the Sugar Maple Tree' as a means to make the newly-formed nation independent of trade with the West Indies, where cane sugar was produced by slaves. Maple sugar quickly became the predominant sweetener in the U.S.

Since then the maple industry has had periods of growth and diminishment, just as other agricultural commodities have. Demand for pure maple products has been steadily growing in recent years, as consumers seeking natural, wholesome, single-ingredient products have discovered the versatility and health benefits of maple. Evidence of this growth is further strengthened by NASS's own decision just a few years ago to add three states to the annual census of maple production, states that are now slated for elimination.

The only region in the world where maple products can only be produced is in the northeastern US and southeastern Canada, making an accurate count

NASS: continued on page 14

NASS: continued from page 13

of all producing states even more critical. While the states NASS is eliminating don't produce as much product as the remaining states in your portfolio, they represent areas where direct-to-consumer sales are prevalent. These sales allow farmers to command fair prices for their products, in turn allowing them to better contribute to the local economy, and more sustainably care for their woodlands and other natural resources.

Thousands of maple syrup producers in the U.S. steward millions of acres of woodland, employ thousands of

workers, and generate millions of dollars in economic impact. They are committed to producing a wholesome product, using energy-efficient management practices to conserve and protect natural resources to everyone's benefit. In order to maintain this industry, accurate production data is critical to guide investments, outreach, and research. USDA itself administers the Acer Access and Development Program which provides grants for education and promotion, and the effectiveness of this excellent program will be diminished by the loss of this annual data.

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curate, unbiased information. Your agency already has the infrastructure and track record of doing so, and has gained the trust and respect of thousands of maple producers who return forms each year. By eliminating these states NASS will likely not only lose records from them, but may also see diminished participation from producers in other states who may lose confidence in the annual review's accuracy and thoroughness. Accurate data has been captured for some of these states from as far back as 1916. We urge you to reconsider your decision, and to continue capturing maple syrup production data from all states currently surveyed by NASS.

The North American Maple Syrup Council, founded in 1959, represents maple producer trade associations in 13 US states. We bring together industry leaders and affiliated groups to share common interests, experience and knowledge for the advancement and improvement of the maple syrup industry. Each year we fund research projects that improve the efficiency and quality of maple production, and support the thousands of farmers who carry on the uniquely American tradition of making pure maple syrup.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments. We welcome any questions or requests for further information as you consider our input.

Sincerely,

Michael Girard, Executive Director
North American Maple Syrup Council

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2018 Crop Reports

Connecticut

Connecticut's 2019 sugaring season was a slightly better than average year. Across the state, sugar content was much higher than last year, averaging a little over 2% which was a very welcome change from last year's low level. This season started in early February and, despite uncooperative temperatures in the middle of February, sap ran well into March for most producers. Tap count stayed steady throughout the state this year and the local retail market continues to be strong. With several new members joining the Association last season we are hoping to see an increase in production across Connecticut.

The Maple Syrup Producers Association of Connecticut annual membership meeting was held on November 10 at the Mansfield Middle School. We had several presentations centered on the regulation of maple products in the state and growing our sugaring operations. Kathy Hopkins from University of Maine provided information about new food safety laws and the production of quality maple products. This was followed by a short update about the USDA/NASS maple syrup statistics and reporting. To close out the day we had presentations from Tim Wilmont on 3/16" tubing and from Sam Bascom and David Butler on considerations one should address in growing their maple operations.

The MSPAC pre-season meeting was held on January 19 at Lyman Memorial High School in Lebanon. As in previous years, we had four workshops and a guest speaker. This year we were pleased to welcome Dr. Joe Orefice

from the Yale University Forestry program. Joe provided some excellent research on the timing of tapping along with what the Yale program is planning in the years to come. MSPAC is very excited to see the growth of maple research entering in the southern tier of the maple belt with Joe's leadership at Yale. The members then attended a demonstration on making maple cream, followed by three rotating workshops on building and operating a small scale RO, use of a filter press, and running an open house event at their sugar house.

Look for announcements of our 2019 membership meeting on November 2 at Session Woods in Burlington, and our pre-season meeting on January 18 at Lyman Memorial School in Lebanon.

Indiana

The Hoosier state had several snowfalls this past winter and some brutally cold temperatures. In most cases tapping took place around Valentine's Day, which in years past was typical for Indiana. In more recent years our state's sugarmakers were tapping in late January or early February. The season this year ended for most producers near the end of March.

A few sugarmakers were surveyed for this report and all reported an above average or record breaking season. Almost everyone reported sap sugar content of 2.0% or better, with one producer indicating it was closer to 2.4%. A lot of light to medium syrup was produced with very good flavor, and very little Dark syrup was made.

The number of Indiana Maple Syrup Association (IMSA) members partici-



Sterling Beachler helps bottle syrup to sell at Beachler's Sugar Bush during Indiana Maple Weekend.

pating in Maple Weekend continues to increase, as does the number of visitors during the second weekend of March. Kevin Hart does an excellent job of promoting this event on social media. I may have had the visitor during Maple Weekend with the most unusual occupation – a young man from Las Vegas told me that he was the human cannonball in the circus there!

IMSA has been involved in the Pioneer Village at the Indiana State Fair for over twenty years and had been using a converted corn crib as our sugarcabin and sales area. That building was in poor shape and too small for our needs, so during the first week of May it was demolished. Our association will construct a new, larger, and much improved sugarcabin on the same site. Part of the lumber is being donated by

Crop Reports: continued on page 18

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Crop reports: continued from page 17

the Pike Lumber Company and construction will begin in June. Art Harris is the chief architect of this facility, and the efforts of several members will be required to complete work before August when the 17-day run of the fair begins.

On May 18 sugarmakers from all over Indiana converge on the Harris Sugar House in Greencastle to process nearly 600 gallons of maple syrup for the State Fair. Sometimes we even have a volunteer show up from California. This provides opportunities for our members to compare notes on the past season, share a noon meal and for IMSA to conduct a board of directors meeting.

Profits from the syrup sold at the State Fair allow our association to keep our dues low, subsidize the meal and provide top notch speakers at the annual meeting.

The annual meeting of the Indiana Maple Syrup Association will be held in New Castle on December 7, with Mark Isselhardt of UVM as the featured speaker. In addition there will be about eight vendors on hand to display their maple equipment.. Usual attendance for this event is around 140 to 150 people.

Am I looking forward to the NAM-SC meeting in Minnesota? YOU BET!

Maine

Maine producers had mixed results across the state for the 2019 maple season. The southern and central part of the state had a very late start compared to other years, with may producers not making any syrup until the second week of March. Some southern produc-

ers saw a very poor production year, but most in the southern and central parts of the state finished with an average crop.

Northwest and northern producers also saw a little late start to the season, but nearly all reported good to very good production by end of season, which for some took them into the first of May. Most across the state reported better than normal sugar content, which held on most of the season.

Syrup grades varied across the state, but it appears that overall the state has ample supply of all four table grades.

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Massachusetts

As with most of the maple producing region, Massachusetts sugarmakers wondered if the season would ever begin. A few early tappers caught one or two runs in February, but for most it was mid-March before the sap really began to flow. And once it began, it ran consistently for several weeks.

Most producers reported high sap sugar content and excellent sap quality, thanks in part to the cold temperatures. Most reported higher production than last year, with lots of Amber and Dark, and very little Golden. No off-flavors were reported.

The season officially began with the annual kickoff ceremony, featuring Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources Commissioner John Lebeaux reading a proclamation from Governor Charlie Baker declaring March to be Maple Month in Massachusetts. The Commissioner and Senator Eric Lesser then tapped the ceremo-

nial first tree, and the sap was running! The Ferrindino family in Hampden were our hosts, giving them an opportunity to show off their beautiful new sugarhouse and their custom marketing efforts.

Our fifth Maple Weekend drew large crowds to dozens of sugarhouses around the state, with sugarhouse restaurants reporting long lines and many producers selling out of product that weekend.

For the third year in a row, the Association offered grants to teachers to help cover the costs of transportation for field trips to sugarhouses. This is a great opportunity to help teach children about sugaring, and to turn them into customers of pure Massachusetts maple products for life!

Michigan

Weather was very favorable statewide, with most producers reporting no big runs, just consistent and steady flows. Many reported non-stop syrup making during the season that averaged three weeks statewide. Sap sugar content ranged from 2.5% down to 1%. Throughout the season it was all over the place, although in most areas it started higher and gradually went down. Some areas stayed high for a longer than normal period.

Central Lower Michigan: Mid-March was the average first boiling time for this area, with the last boil between April 4 and 6. Crop averaged above normal with some producers at 10% above, and others saying near-record crop. Some producers say they produced mostly Amber with some Dark, and others saying mostly on the lighter side of Amber with gradual darkening.

Northeast Lower Michigan: Boiling start dates varied as much as 10 days between producers from first week in March to mid-March. Ending dates were pretty consistently April 5-8. Crop ranged from average to way above average. Lots of Golden for some and mostly Amber for others.

North Central Michigan: Average sap sugar content was 2.3% with larger than average crop by about 20%. First boil was March 15 and it was a 4-week long, very intense harvest. Mostly delicate syrup was produced.

Top of the Mitten: First boil was March 13 and last was April 14. Light syrup was made throughout, other than the last four days of boiling. Way above average crop reported.

Minnesota

From Minnesota's southern border with Iowa to the northern border with Canada (Ontario and Manitoba) is all of 400 miles (640 km). The distance from eastern border with Wisconsin to the western border with the Dakotas varies, but 250 miles (400 km) is a good working number. Maple syrup is produced on a commercial scale generally within the eastern two thirds of the state. With that large geographic area, it can be difficult to generalize how the maple season went for producers in Minnesota.

But it is safe to say that for 2019 our producers enjoyed a very strong production season. The producers in the northern counties generally reported excellent to record-setting syrup production. Heavy statewide winter snowfall starting in January made for difficult set up and tapping for most of us.

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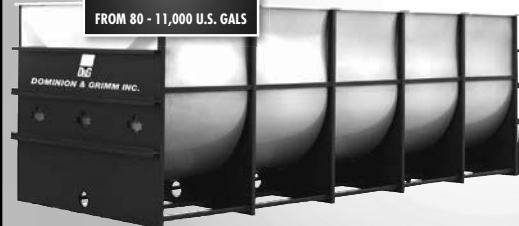
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The bad news: Two late winter “northern vortex” snow storms in March and April presented further challenges on top of already deep snow. The good news: The late storms also translated into a longer transition into spring, providing surging high-quality sap runs towards the end of the season.

It is a shame that NASS is dropping Minnesota and other “small maple states” from its annual maple syrup production survey. Minnesota would have reported substantial production increases for 2019.

Now that we have wrapped up our superior sugaring season, Minnesota’s attention is focused on hosting the 2019 NAMSC/IMSI “Celebrating Superior Sweetness” annual convention in Duluth, MN, October 21-25, 2019. The convention will be at the DECC convention facility, overlooking Duluth’s Lake Superior harbor. Our hotels are located in the heart of the city’s convention, shopping and restaurant district known as Canal Park.

Maple week is coming to Duluth, Minnesota! Please make plans to join us. Here is a program teaser: City of Duluth and Duluth harbor tours, Welcome to MN dinner, NAMSC research/education “Gonna-Be-Fun” fund raiser, maple syrup and confections contest, photo contest, maple technical sessions, industry updates, maple workshops, maple nutrition research update, Minnesota’s largest maple industry trade show ever(!), Cirrus aircraft plant tour, food and beverages, curling demonstration at the Duluth Curling Club, Wednesday banquet and awards, Thursday tours of the north shore and Duluth area attractions including wild rice processing, cooking with maple

demo and lunch, IMSI Maple Grading School, and so much more. This is going to be a good one!

Details are posted at www.mnmaple.org, click on Convention Information.

New Brunswick

This year New Brunswick saw moderate to average snow cover in the south, and heavy to above average snow in the north. Winter weather started around the first of November and never really seemed to let up. We had everything from severe cold, a few mild spells, and many snowstorms changing to rain. Our larger producers started tapping early as usual but most didn’t see any sap until very late in March. For the southern regions of the Province the sap started around mid-March and kept running late into April. The sap seemed to be much sweeter for many in the south and a huge crop was made for most southern region producers. Sap in the south is usually around 1% to 2%, but many producers saw much sweeter sap, some getting around 3%. Most producers in the south made Golden to Amber syrup with very little of the Dark to Very Dark grades.

The further north you progressed into New Brunswick the deeper the snow cover became. The snow accumulated to well over five and six feet in many areas of the north. The season started very late for those in the north. Most producers didn’t see much sap until late March. Once they started, many left the pumps running night and day, giving most producers a fair crop in the end. Again, with so much snow this year it made it very hard for the north

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to get great amount of syrup yields. Pounds per tap were up from last year, giving around 3-4. Not too bad for an area that usually sees between 4-5 lbs per tap. There were reports of a few producers boiling into the first of May and making more of the darker grades and some off-flavour.

With an amazing season in the south and a fair to moderate season in the north, this year's maple crop was a pretty good one.

New Hampshire

Granite Staters were reassured once again that Mother Nature rules the maple season. Sugarmakers who tapped in January hoping to catch some early bounty were disappointed by cold temperatures delaying runs for the most part until the first week of February. One or two early runs then gave way to more cold weather. The delay was like older times with first runs on town meeting day, the second Tuesday in March. A higher than normal sugar content helped to make up for the shortened season which petered out most everywhere by the second week in April, with no huge runs but steady flow once things got started.

Acorns were almost nonexistent this past autumn and the squirrel population disappeared as well. Some producers reported greatly reduced vacuum system repairs as a result. Even with a shortened season the production was above average. The majority of producers reported the lion's share of the crop was Amber, with Dark and Golden running second and third, with very little Extra Dark produced. South-facing bushes produced well, while north-

facing bushes produced poorly.

New Hampshire has fully embraced the concept of Maple Month, with the official Maple Weekend happening March 23-24. The Governor's tree tapping event was extra special this year. Trees planted by John Stark Regional High School students in 1999 were tapped for the first time, and some of those students were on hand to cheer Governor Sununu on as he drilled the first hole.

An effort to make Maple Month a family event is expanding each year with family activities such as the "Maple Passport," weekly "Maple Photo" contest, and the "Maple Activity Sheet" available to be used by any New Hampshire Maple Producers member desiring to do so.

An online list of all members open for visitors is available to all who viewed the website at www.nhmaple-producers.com.

Nova Scotia

Most producers started to tap around the middle of February, the usual time in most years. Taping in some cases stopped the third week of February due to the extreme cold which, coupled with the wind meant most people could not withstand the weather. The first boil in most cases did not occur until the middle of March. Most operations had several good runs. The rest of the time the runs were about what one comes to expect. A lot of producers had above average yield, some double what was expected. The syrup in some cases was darker than normal, but with the normal good taste.

Several snowstorms during and after tapping caused a few problems for

some. Up to the end of April the weather was unusual, with two weeks with nothing but rain.

New York

The 2019 maple season proved to be a sweet success for New York sugarmakers! Although a lot of producers were busy tapping as early as January, many reported a later production start due to consistently cold temperatures. The weather started to cooperate for most in early March. When the sap began to run, many producers noticed a higher sugar content than recent years. The season progressed through mid-April for the majority of maple producers. We predict the overall crop for NYS in 2019 will be higher than 2018.

The increasingly popular agritourism event, Maple Weekend, was held the last two weekends of March. More

than 180 sugarhouses across New York opened their doors and welcomed the public for tours, samples, and much more. Several locations provided additional entertainment such as pancake breakfasts, tapping demonstrations, and horse-drawn wagon rides. Maple Weekend is a heavily advertised event, through billboards, social media, television, radio, and, of course, word of mouth. This advertising helped to drive one of the most successful Maple Weekend events New York State has ever had. 43% of participating sugarhouses reported an increase in attendance this year, with sales mirroring that increase. More than half of the locations reported at least one media outlet featured their farm in an article or interview. Visitors are becoming more aware of local maple production and some are making it a tradition to experience the sweetness of maple, right on the farm.

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MAPLE RESEARCH.ORG

NORTH AMERICAN MAPLE SYRUP COUNCIL

NAMSC has launched mapleresearch.org, a new online resource for the maple industry. The site is a curated collection of research papers, articles, videos, and tools, representing the most current and scientifically accurate information for maple production, to help all producers make the best products possible using the most current and most sustainable practices.

From *Maple Syrup Digest* articles, to producers' manuals, to how-to vid-

eos, the site includes a collection of the best resources available online about all aspects of maple syrup production, at no cost. The site is searchable, and resources can be downloaded and printed.

The site was built in collaboration with the University of Vermont's Proctor Maple Research Center, and funding was provided by the U.S.



Ohio

In many ways maple syrup seasons are a lot like snowflakes – no two are ever the same. The 2019 maple season in Ohio was complete turnaround from the 2018 season. It was a traditional, almost old-fashioned type of season. There was very little talk of climate change, no abnormal spikes in temperature followed by predictions of an early end to the season. The early tappers were out right after the first of the year but a couple of late January-early February Polar Vortex storms tempered their enthusiasm.

As the season progressed, the cold weather returned. That weather pattern extended through most of February and the majority of producers waited until mid-February to tap. This was much

different from the 2018 season, when the thermometer topped 74 degrees on February 24. The cold returned on the last week of February and ran into the first week of March. March 7 kicked off a series of runs that extended through St Patrick's Day and beyond. Syrup production was almost non-stop for 20 days. Records were set on many farms and for the most part no one was calling this a poor season. Many producers produced one-half gallon of syrup per tap. The extended cold weather and snow kept the season going into the first week of April. The cold weather was also responsible for better than normal sap quality. The only negative in 2019 was niter. Producers seemed to have a normal to slightly above normal amount of the gummy slime to deal with.

Ohio producers found out last year

2019 a Record Year for Quebec

Quebec sugarmakers produced a record 159 million pounds of maple syrup in the 2019 season. Québec Maple Syrup Producers reported that 6,508 producers in the province averaged 3.43 pounds per tap. This is 41 million pounds more than was made in 2018 season.

Québec Maple Syrup Producers is targeting 185 million pounds in sales annually within five years.

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Deadline for ads and content for the next issue of the *Maple Syrup Digest* is September 1.

that when the sap sugar percentage drop, so does the syrup yield. Unlike last year, when we experienced abnormally low sugar content of 1%-1.5%, this year's sap sugar was normal to a little above normal, in the 2% to 2.4% range. Even the soft maples were close to 2%. Sap quality was excellent. The cold weather kept microbial growth to a minimum, maintaining the sap quality throughout the season. Good quality sap translates into good quality syrup. This was the story across most of Ohio.

Producers in the northeastern portion of the state produced large quantities of Delicate and Amber Syrup. Central Ohio produced the lighter grades early on but also produced some great tasting Dark Robust later in the season. Southern Ohio producers tapped in late January and early February. Their season extending into the third week of March. The southern part of Ohio may have also experienced a larger percentage of the darker grades.

It is refreshing to sit here and report a good season for a change, but this story has both a good news and bad news side. In 2013, Ohio produced more than 150,000 gallons of maple syrup and ranked fourth in the nation. Ohio had not had a stellar season since 2015, when we produced 115,000 gallons. Abnormally warm weather patterns have played a dominant role in keeping production below normal over the last three years. This has led many to believe that Ohio is no longer a player when it comes to maple syrup production.

This has not only caught the attention of the media but also the bean counters down in Washington, at USDA/NASS. Midway through the 2019 season, NASS made the decision to eliminate Ohio and five other maple-

producing states from their annual Maple Syrup Production Survey. This list also includes Massachusetts, Connecticut, Indiana, and West Virginia, along with Minnesota, which was dropped several years ago. It appears that these states are no longer being surveyed because their total contribution to the total US maple syrup production is only 5 percent.

This is unfortunate because Ohio, like several of the other states, has had a long tradition of producing some very fine maple syrup. The timing of the removal is equally unfortunate. The 2019 maple season in Ohio could very well be a turnaround year. A year similar to 2013 or at least as good as 2015? The hard cold reality is that we will never know!

Ontario

Not sure if the season really started a little later, or if we just had a more traditional start this year. Production started in February in the southern regions and continued until the end of April in the northern regions. Overall, the sap sugar content was higher throughout the Province. For a second year producers in our southern regions reported above-average to record production, with some reporting 6-7 pounds per tap. Producers in the north are reporting average production despite record snow levels, which meant many had to dig their lines out before any tapping could begin. All grades of syrup were made, but predominately Golden Delicate and Amber Rich, and to a much lesser extent Dark Robust.

Ontario's Maple Weekend takes place the first weekend in April. This year 77 sugarbushes opened their

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farms to the public. Visitors had the opportunity to observe the collection of the first agricultural crop of the year and experience the process of turning it into sweet Ontario syrup. This event is turning into an excellent educational and marketing tool as some producers reported that they were able to sell over half their crop during this event, at retail prices. The 55th Elmira Maple Syrup Festival is reporting 80,000 people attended a one-day event, a record crowd.

Ontario's summer tour is being held July 17-19 in Kincardine, if you are in the area we would love to see you.

Pennsylvania

Happy New Year from Pennsylvania. It is off to Harrisburg for the annual Pennsylvania Farm Show where hundreds of commodities are showcased.

This year some of the booth space

locations were changed, which resulted in better flow of visitors right to the new Maple Food Court booth! The booth showcased the maple competition area as well as the maple sales area. This all culminated in maple sales going past six figures, which is up from the last three years!

Right after the Farm Show, our early tappers got to work getting trees tapped in the second week of January. Some of these producers made syrup the last week of January and the first week of February. The weather then turned cold and stayed that way right into the second week of March when it started to warm up slowly. Producers were getting scared, wondering if Mother Nature had forgotten them and then it happened, the weather warmed and sap ran for days straight.

We had flood runs that were hard to keep up with and suddenly there was lots of syrup being made, barrels were filling fast and little sleep was had. During this period the weather stayed cold

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and lots of Golden and Amber syrup was made. The season lasted into the second week of April with mostly above average production being reported.

Quebec

On behalf of our 2,000 Citadelle cooperative members, it is with great pleasure that we present you with the 2019 season results of maple syrup production in Québec.

Due to severe weather conditions, heavy snow accumulations, and cold winds, the season began later than last year. These unforeseen temperatures explain why the season started late, around mid-March, and some eastern regions had to wait until April to get started.

Despite the cold weather, the results were much better than we anticipated, with a harvest that will be probably superior to the 118 million pounds that we gathered in 2018. After a deep analysis, we are very pleased with the quantity of maple syrup obtained this year, and the quality of the maple syrup was even more impressive. The sap was particularly sweet, producing syrup with a Golden color that was remarkable.

Westerns regions were the first to end their crop around the third week of April. The center followed the next week or so, and then the eastern regions finished roughly around the first week of May. In summary, it was a season with good results and great quality.

Citadelle members transform and commercialize their maple syrup products over 47 countries, including a large part of the US market. Next year we will be celebrating our 95th year as a maple syrup cooperative, renowned for producing pure syrup manufactured

with high quality and innovation that makes a difference.

Rhode Island

Our young association is made up of a mix of small commercial producers as well as hobbyists. Some of our commercial members sell strictly to stores, while some begin their seasons producing syrup and also produce other cash crops, opening their sugarhouses and farms to the public throughout the year. Some do both. Then again, some of our members just love to make syrup for fun, often giving it away to family and friends.

All told, our nice mix of producers made 1,171 gallons of syrup with 8,644 taps, producing mostly Dark robust syrup. This is down from last year, where our member sugarhouses produced 1,341 gallons of syrup with 7,608 taps.

With a couple early birds tapping around the 2nd weekend of January, most of our members began tapping during the last weekend of January and the 1st weekend of February. The last weekend of March was when most pulled their taps.

Now, every year our members are asked to provide the numbers. However, this year's assignment was to also include "something special" that happened or a "funny notable." Well, our hobbyists didn't disappoint.

One of our founding member sugarhouses celebrated their 30th Annual Syrup Party for the last time. They had people from as far away as Florida and California sharing in all manner of tasty treats during, yet again, another

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snowy day. Though their annual party has come to an end, happily, they have not given up on sugaring just yet.

Another memorable moment for one of our members occurred while boiling outside at dusk in their backyard. They soon discovered they were being stalked by... turkeys. The birds just wanted to settle in for the night. Or perhaps, they were waiting to sneak a taste. We may never know.


Of course, with all the sentiment, there are the stories that will make you laugh. Here was a sticky situation for one of our members: don't answer your cell phone when you are about to reach that magic syrup temperature. Why? Your cell phone could end up in a boiling syrup bath. What's amazing is that the phone still works. He just needed to turn his ringer louder.

We couldn't include all the stories, but we hope that those we did share made you laugh or just reminisce. For many of our members, that is simply what it is all about.

Our annual trek in March to the state house for a proclamation sponsored by State Senator Elaine Morgan proclaiming March maple syrup month was made again, in the hope of educating Rhode Islanders about the syrup we've all come to love.

Wisconsin

The 2019 Wisconsin maple syrup season for most producers started in mid-March. Snow cover in Wisconsin was abundant this year, with certain parts of the state setting records for the snowiest season ever recorded. Early winter gave us some below average



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temperatures setting a tremendous amount of frost in the ground. With the cold weather the snowfall did not come until late winter, laying a blanket of insulating snow on top of the frozen ground, which led to production issues for a few Wisconsin producers.

The southern 1/3 of the state had a good crop with average yields. Very warm weather conditions thawed the ground very quickly and started the season off very quickly. Production in this area of the state was very fast paced in mid-March, with the majority of the crop being made in only a few weeks. Syrup quality was excellent with most of the syrup being in the Golden category. Production in the southern 1/3 of the state concluded for most producers by the first week of April.

The central part of the state had an

average crop with production starting in the 2nd week of March. The season started with very good sap sugar content. The first half of the season sap from tubing systems ranged between 2.5 and 3 brix. Syrup quality was excellent, with most of the syrup being made in the Golden category. The tremendous amount of snow cover and cool temperatures held the season until mid-April.

The northern 1/3 of the state had a slower start to the season with deep snow cover and cool temperatures for most areas. A blanket of snow covered the ground that received a tremendous amount of frost before the first of the year. This area of the state had a later start with some producers' first boil in the 3rd week of March. This region also had an average crop with the majority of syrup in the Golden category.



Wisconsin's First Tree Tapping took place March 17 at Hartje Outdoor Learning Center in Reedsburg, WI. From left to right is (back) Theresa Baroun, WMSPA Executive Director, Justin Baroun WI Maple Marketing Intern, Clint Beyer, Principal Pineview Elementary School, Matt Peetz Associate Principal Pineview Elementary, Jerry Griffin, volunteer, (front) three fourth graders from Pineview Elementary who tapped the maple tree.

Overall the production in the state of Wisconsin had an average production year. The saving grace for most producers was the high sugar content the state had for the majority of the season, and the cold weather which enabled producers to make a very good quality crop.

The Wisconsin Maple Syrup Producers Association had a very busy year with activities throughout the calendar year. The winter institute and trade show was held January 11 and 12 in Marshfield. Leader Midwest had their open house February 1 and 2, and CDL Wisconsin/Roth Sugarbush had an open house February 6-9. The Association had a booth at both events to promote the benefits

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of the Association to nonmembers.

The Association had its annual first tree tapping March 16 at the Reedsburg School District. Maple Fest in Phelps was held on April 6.

The Medford Maple Fest was held April 27. The event includes a pancake breakfast, maple syrup judging, maple flavored food products, cooking with maple syrup, and tapping techniques.

The Association will have its annual booth at the Wisconsin State Fair, August 1-11. This event is the primary fundraiser for the Association. Along with the sales of maple products the Association has a daily presentation in the Wisconsin Ag Products Pavilion about how maple syrup is made.

The Wisconsin Maple Syrup Producers Association is pleased to announce the 2020 Wisconsin Maple Institute and trade show that will be held at Hotel Marshfield in Marshfield, Wisconsin. The trade show will kick off Friday, January 10 at 4 p.m. and the program will start at 8 a.m. on January 11.

West Virginia

The 2019 maple season was a welcome change for most producers in West Virginia and neighboring Highland County, VA. Some producers started tapping around the middle of January and were rewarded with a few good sap runs the last ten days of the month, and they produced around 25% of their total crop during these ten days.

2018 was the wettest year on record for most of the state, and this continued into the first part of March. There were many cool and overcast days throughout most of the season. There was good

sap flow and the cool temperatures and cloud cover helped to keep bacterial contamination to a minimum. The extremely saturated ground helped produce big sap runs in all three months of the season. This, along with lack of sunshine and lots of rain during the 2018 spring and summer growing season, contributed to low sap sugar content.

The first week of February brought a huge concern for many producers with nearly a week of way above normal temperatures. Some areas of the state reported temperatures that reached nearly 80 degrees. After this warmup, temperatures quickly returned to normal, and strong sap flows returned without a lot of yeast and contamination. The temperatures remained normal for the most part through the rest of the month into the first three full weeks in March. Most producers usually see their season end by the 21st of March, and those in the lower elevations struggle to produce syrup in March even in years of normal temperatures.

The statewide average was around three pounds of syrup per tap despite the huge volume of sap most producers saw. This was a result of an average sugar content around 1.0 to 1.2 for most producers. All four grades were produced by most of the state, with Dark Robust seeming to be the highest produced grade. Several producers in the state reported their biggest crop ever and everyone seemed very pleased with the 2019 season. Once again, vacuum proved to be a huge benefit in 2019 with good sap flows, even on days where the temperatures barely climbed above freezing and the wind chills were below freezing. Vacuum also helped tremendously to keep the tap holes fresh, even during the warm week of February and the other warm days.

U.S. Crop Production Report

Released June 11, 2019, by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS),
Agricultural Statistics Board, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Maple Syrup Taps, Yield, and Production – States and United States: 2017-2019

State	Number of taps			Yield per tap			Production		
	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
	(1,000 taps)	(1,000 taps)	(1,000 taps)	(gallons)	(gallons)	(gallons)	(1,000 gallons)	(1,000 gallons)	(1,000 gallons)
Connecticut ¹	78	73	(NA)	0.231	0.247	(NA)	18	18	(NA)
Indiana ¹	70	70	(NA)	0.200	0.257	(NA)	14	18	(NA)
Maine	1,900	1,870	1,900	0.376	0.288	0.305	715	539	580
Massachusetts ¹	320	320	(NA)	0.263	0.225	(NA)	84	72	(NA)
Michigan	600	600	620	0.250	0.275	0.315	150	165	195
Minnesota ¹	83	65	(NA)	0.205	0.200	(NA)	17	13	(NA)
New Hampshire	570	560	540	0.281	0.291	0.274	160	163	148
New York	2,650	2,730	2,800	0.287	0.295	0.293	760	806	820
Ohio ¹	420	400	(NA)	0.200	0.225	(NA)	84	90	(NA)
Pennsylvania	780	670	680	0.212	0.212	0.231	165	142	157
Vermont	5,900	5,670	6,000	0.339	0.342	0.345	2,000	1,940	2,070
West Virginia ¹	70	66	(NA)	0.157	0.121	(NA)	11	8	(NA)
Wisconsin	760	750	800	0.272	0.300	0.338	207	225	270
United States	14,201	13,844	13,340	0.309	0.303	0.318	4,385	4,199	4,240

(NA) Not available.

¹ Estimates discontinued in 2019.

Maple Syrup Price by Type of Sale and Size of Container – States: 2017 and 2018

Type and State	Gallon		1/2 Gallon		Quart		Pint		1/2 Pint	
	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018
Retail	(dollars)	(dollars)	(dollars)	(dollars)	(dollars)	(dollars)	(dollars)	(dollars)	(dollars)	(dollars)
Connecticut	51.60	62.90	32.40	38.00	20.10	21.40	11.90	13.40	7.30	8.60
Indiana	40.70	41.00	23.20	25.50	14.10	14.60	9.10	8.40	5.70	6.20
Maine	54.10	53.40	31.10	31.40	17.40	17.50	10.40	10.60	6.10	6.60
Massachusetts	48.90	53.80	31.00	32.60	19.30	19.50	11.40	12.60	7.20	9.00
Michigan	47.00	46.70	26.70	26.50	15.20	15.80	9.30	10.50	6.90	7.10
Minnesota	58.60	50.30	30.50	31.50	16.30	16.90	9.00	8.30	7.40	7.00
New Hampshire	53.30	57.00	30.30	32.80	18.40	19.50	10.60	10.70	6.00	6.75
New York	46.90	42.60	27.50	25.90	17.20	15.90	10.70	9.50	7.80	5.80
Ohio	40.60	45.60	24.00	25.20	13.80	15.50	9.00	9.50	6.10	7.10
Pennsylvania	41.40	47.20	24.70	26.80	14.20	16.00	8.20	9.40	5.10	5.60
Vermont	44.80	45.30	26.60	26.40	16.10	16.70	9.90	9.70	5.90	7.50
West Virginia	44.40	53.90	27.40	29.10	16.40	16.30	8.80	10.70	5.60	6.30
Wisconsin	44.80	43.20	23.90	24.90	13.60	14.70	7.80	8.50	5.80	4.80
Wholesale										
Connecticut	(D)	53.60	(D)	(D)	15.10	16.60	8.50	8.00	5.00	5.40
Indiana	42.70	32.80	(D)	21.80	11.00	11.30	(D)	5.30	(S)	(S)
Maine	48.40	43.60	24.10	19.70	13.20	13.00	7.90	7.90	5.20	4.75
Massachusetts	44.20	45.20	24.90	25.50	15.10	14.80	8.40	8.10	5.45	5.30
Michigan	43.00	43.60	23.40	23.10	12.90	12.60	7.80	7.50	5.10	5.00
Minnesota	46.90	45.00	(D)	(S)	(D)	18.80	(D)	10.40	(D)	(D)
New Hampshire	44.90	47.30	21.80	26.40	12.80	15.20	7.70	8.25	4.80	6.15
New York	46.00	37.40	25.00	23.60	14.10	12.80	9.20	7.90	6.60	4.70
Ohio	39.50	40.20	22.50	21.40	14.30	13.10	7.70	7.40	6.10	4.40
Pennsylvania	29.70	29.80	21.90	19.10	13.70	13.00	7.60	7.70	4.70	4.00
Vermont	40.10	38.80	22.20	22.80	12.90	13.50	7.40	7.60	4.40	4.40
West Virginia	50.00	(D)	26.20	24.60	16.70	14.80	8.50	9.00	5.40	5.00
Wisconsin	39.40	43.80	23.00	23.70	11.10	12.90	6.50	6.80	4.10	5.60

(D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual operations.

(S) Insufficient number of reports to establish an estimate.

Spotted Lanternfly: A New Sugarbush Threat

by Dr. Eric Randall

A new foreign invader could have a substantially negative impact on the eastern North American hardwoods in general, and sugarbushes in particular. The Spotted Lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*, SLF) was first detected near Philadelphia, PA in 2014 and since has spread throughout much of the Commonwealth and has been sighted in about a half dozen New York counties and in several sites in southern New England.

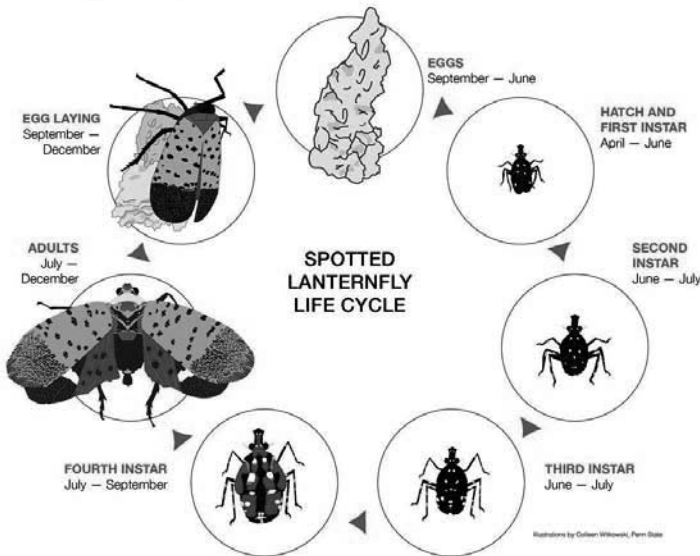
All pest alerts should be taken seriously and it seems like we are routinely reminded of the newest or most threatening among them. Sadly, the influx of non-native invasive species is directly related to modern transportation and our global exchange of goods, and this daunting pest seems to follow the all too familiar "invasion curve."

SLF has a voracious appetite for grapes, fruit trees, hardwoods like maple, cherry and oak, and seems to relish other horticultural crops as well. Penn State and Cornell researchers, as well as USDA scientists, have worked earnestly in search of both biological as well as chemical controls for this alien invader before it mirrors the damage done recently by the Emerald Ash borer or the Asian Longhorned Beetle.

The Spotted Lanternfly seems to seek out *Ailanthus altissima* (Tree of Heaven), another invasive species, as a preferred host in completing its life cycle. While the thought of one invasive species exacting some form of control over another invasive seems appropriate, the SLF also prefers to mature and feed heavily on native species and economic crops like grape vineyards and sugar maple groves.

SLF damages its victims by wounding and removing copious amounts of sap via its mouth. This process injures the host and provides a large supply of insect generated waste (honeydew) which, in

Insect sizes have been enlarged to show detail.



turn, creates a substrate for sooty mold, furthering damage to the grape vine, fruit, or hardwood tree.

SLF is not a vigorous or strong winged insect capable of long distance flight. It seems to move from plant to plant and place to place with a gliding rather than a winged flight pattern. But, what it lacks in long distance powered flight, it makes up for with mass transport as evidenced by the thousands upon thousands of insects preying on their host.

Promisingly, in early May researchers identified a couple of native pathogenic fungi which appear to provide some measure of biological control against the SLF. It is too early to think that these biocontrols will be the "silver bullet," but it does provide the fruit, wine and hardwood industries with a

bit of hope that this nasty pernicious invader might be controlled.

What every citizen, resident, land owner and sugarmaker needs to know:

- 1) Don't transport firewood, lumber, bricks or nursery materials from quarantine areas.
- 2) Know the Spotted Lanternfly life cycles and the several different stages of this insect, from egg masses through the adult insects, (see preceding page).
- 3) If you see it, report it to your State DEC, Cooperative Extension or the Land Grant University Department of Entomology in your region.
- 4) Tell your neighbors to be on the lookout for this highly destructive insect.



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Pennsylvania Maple Tour

The Endless Mountains Maple Syrup Producers Association will host the 2019 Pennsylvania Maple Tour September 13-14. It will be headquartered in Athens, PA.

We will have educational seminars on Friday on packaging, tubing, and confections, along with maple industry suppliers' equipment and products information, news and advertising. The motor coach bus tour to see the sugarhouses will be Saturday.

For more information, contact Andrew Dewing, Secretary/Treasurer, at 570-395-3458, syrup@cableracer.com.

Wanted

Experienced boiler for maple syrup production, seasonal full time, or part time employment to boil sap, operating r/o machines, occasionally packing syrup, and some mechanical/maintenance for a large scale maple operation in Fonda, NY.

Year round, full time employment may be available performing associated aspects of maple production.

Starting wages/benefits based on experience and references.

For information contact Adirondack Maple Farms 1965 LLC at 518-853-4022 or email information to bruceroblee@yahoo.com

Cornell Maple Camp

Cornell Maple Camp provides intensive, hands-on training for beginner and less experienced maple producers. The 4-day curriculum, to be held July 23-26, begins with sugarbush assessment, then builds sequentially through all phases of maple syrup production from sap collection to boiling, bottling and sales. Participants will gain the skills necessary for the safe, efficient and profitable production of maple products. Classroom sessions will be held in the Schuyler County Cornell Cooperative Extension office in Montour Falls, NY. Field sessions will take place in the Arnot Teaching and Research Forest in Van Etten, NY. The cost is \$250 per person. A group discount is available at the rate of \$250 for the first registrant and \$200 for each additional registrant. Additional information and online registration are available at cornellmaple.com. Contact Aaron Wightman at arw6@cornell.edu with questions or comments.

New York State Maple Tour

The 2019 New York State Maple Tour will be Friday, July 12 through Sunday, July 14, hosted by the Western NY Maple Producers Association and centered at the Grange Building on the Erie County Fairground in Hamburg NY. Maple operations in Erie and Wyoming County will be visited. Descriptions of the sites to be visited and registration information are listed at nysmaple.com and cornellmaple.com.

Food Safety Resources for Maple Producers

While maple is considered to be one of the safest foods, maple producers may still fall under all or part of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) regulations.

The University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension recently sponsored two 2-part workshops designed to help NH Maple producers understand where they fall regarding the FSMA and state regulations, FDA registration, Current Good Manufacturing Practices and Farm Mixed-Type Facilities.

Here are a few of the Preventive Controls resources from the UNH Cooperative Extension FSMA site (<http://bit.ly/prevcontrols>) that were covered in the workshop:

- Does FSMA's Preventive Controls Rule Apply to your Maple Operation? Use this quick online tool to see where you fall under FSMA: (Note: link is case sensitive) <http://bit.ly/MapleOnlineTool>

- FSMA Maple Producers Flowchart <http://bit.ly/mapleflowchart>
- Facilities Registration: <http://bit.ly/FDAregistration> (Note: In Section 9a. General Product Categories, Maple Syrup is part of the Food Sweeteners (Nutritive) category.)
- Low Risk Activity-Food Combinations <http://bit.ly/lowriskactivities>

For more information please contact the UNH Cooperative Extension FSMA Team:

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Contribute to the Digest

We're always looking for news updates from provincial and state associations, producers, and businesses, as well as calendar items, photos, and ideas for articles. Send to editor@maplesyrupdigest.org.

International Maple Syrup Institute News

The International Maple Syrup Institute (IMSI) Board of Directors held its quarterly meeting in Colchester, Vermont on May 15, 2019.

A Good Year for the North American Maple Syrup Industry

It is a good time to be in the maple business. Despite a late start for maple syrup production in 2019, favorable weather conditions prevailed, resulting in large maple sap runs in some areas. IMSI members reported good-to-excellent production across all regions with some producers proclaiming it to be their best crop ever. The representative from the Quebec Maple Syrup Producers Association suggested that the Quebec crop may be at least 120 million pounds. Official numbers will not be available until later in the spring. With few exceptions, estimates range from 6 to 20 percent better than last year. Most reported better than average flow, some regions reported record tap yields in the range of 3.5 to 4 lbs. Quality was reported to be good and most regions reported a high sap sugar content. Demand for syrup appears to be strong, with established packers and vendors, as well as a number of new entrants, buying from existing supply and into this year's production.

On the sales side, Ontario's Maple Weekend (April 6 -7) was deemed a very good marketing strategy which saw very good weather conditions conducive to a family outing. Quebec reported good export levels and stable sales in Canada. Packers and vendor members reported that margins are un-

der continued pressure as the industry grows and competes more aggressively at wholesale and retail and some new players enter the marketplace. Preliminary indications are that production costs are going down which could potentially offset the smaller margins. This is corroborated by equipment manufacturers reporting a rising trend in capital investment and new and expanding maple production facilities.

Some members are marketing creative new syrup products that are very well positioned in the marketplace. For example, sales of organic products are in high demand and commanding substantial price premiums. However, certified organic maple syrup continues to be in short supply. On the innovation side, IMSI members reported investing in new product development and working on creative maple sap derivative products and value-added products that will broaden the retail offering and expand consumption occasions resulting in increased per capita consumption. The use of maple products as an ingredient in other food products continues to grow.

In summary, continued capital investment and innovation, improved productivity, growing output, consistent high quality products, strong consumer demand, practical research projects and forest stewardship were mentioned to explain this successful harvest year.



Jean Lamontagne, new Executive Director

Jean was present at the May 15th IMSI board meeting in Colchester, Vermont, where he got to meet many members and was initiated to the IMSI work and projects. Jean has 26 years of experience in the food industry in general management and senior leadership roles in operations, sales, business development, brand management and new product development in large Canadian and U.S. companies. He has experience helping businesses grow through strategic planning and execution. His experience allows him to understand the commercial environment, identify market development opportunities and align enterprise capabilities to achieve goals. He greatly values collaboration, trust and respect for people's individuality and personal and professional goals.



Jean is married to a wonderful grade one teacher and has two children currently pursuing their studies in Montreal. He loves to cook and occasionally eats out in restaurants in Montreal and New York. To balance his interest in food with a little exercise, Jean is a nature enthusiast who cycles and hikes.

He can sometimes be found hiking Acadia National Park, cycling the coast of Maine or trekking the White Mountains of New Hampshire.

Jean obtained an MBA at McGill University and an accreditation in agribusiness at Harvard University.

Nutrition Facts Panels for Maple Syrup & Maple Sugar

The FDA is preparing to issue new guidance regarding the Nutrition Facts Panel. Recently, IMSI President Ray Bonenberg communicated with the FDA to ask for a compliance date of January 1st, 2021 instead of Jan 1st, 2020. The FDA responded that it is considering the request and considers the issuance of revised labelling guidelines a priority. Following the IMSI's lead, the National Honey Board (NHB) also requested an extension to the FDA's NFP compliance date requirement. The industry is currently awaiting the new NFP guidelines from the FDA.

IMSI Proposal to FDA to Amend the Definition for Maple Syrup

The amendment will hopefully be addressed in 5 or 6 months. The IMSI filed a specific petition with FDA recommending that their definition for maple syrup be amended to remove the option for preservative additives to maple syrup. The Quebec Maple Producers Association, the lead in pursuing Codex certification for maple syrup, has done good work on preparing the Codex application and the IMSI has arranged for IMSI member input on the draft document. All definitions should be the same for all markets and regulatory bodies and jurisdictions such as Codex, USDA and CFIA. In order to harmonize U.S. and Canadian defini-

IMSI: continued on page 42

IMSI: continued from page 41

tions for maple syrup, it is necessary to remove the possibility of preservative use, as this precludes the use of the word 'pure' as a descriptor. Further updates will be provided in the future.

Maple Research Activity

Abby van den Berg reported UVM Proctor Research Center had a good season and is pursuing a number of research projects relating to optimized sap yields. UVM Proctor has completed testing of a new organic defoamer and is now testing how this process affects taste. Abby will need trained panellists from producer organizations to join the tasting roster. Also planned are more videos and resources on the website.

Mark Isselhardt (UVM) obtained a grant to study business productivity and mentioned that there is currently a lot of focus on revisiting current practices in forest management, with em-

phasis on forest sustainability. There was a general discussion on maple quality issues, especially density. Mark mentioned that at a recent maple festival competition, 80% of submissions were rejected for low density. Implied is the possibility that producers are not using certified hydrometers/refractometers.

Adam Wild from Cornell University mentioned that current sap sugar content was high at the study sites and that he continues to work on ways to enhance maple production.

Yves Bois from Centre Acer is working on an off-flavour detection method and exploring ways to treat off tasting syrup. Centre Acer is also planning to upgrade its lab to offer third party analysis world-wide.

Consensus among researchers was that funding is becoming harder to obtain.

Thank you to our Research Alliance Partners

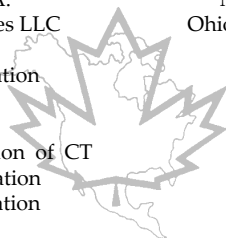
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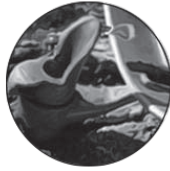
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The North American Maple Syrup Council has received a number of generous bequests from sugarmakers who wanted to ensure that the important work of our organization can carry on. Those funds help us promote the maple industry and support our members. Planned giving like this is a way for you to show your support for the maple syrup industry for many years to come. It's a simple process.

Contact your attorney for information on how to revise your will, or your financial institution, plan administrator, or life insurance agent for the procedures required to revise your beneficiary designations.

The information needed for your legal documents is: North American Maple Syrup Council, PO Box 581, Simsbury, CT 06070.



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