

# *Maple Syrup Digest*



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Vol. 59, No. 2

June 2020



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***Recycling Tubing  
Crop Reports***

***2020 International Meetings: Cancelled***



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NAMSC Executive Director: Michael A. Girard, CT

860-658-5790 • [mgirard@simscroft.com](mailto:mgirard@simscroft.com)

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### North American Maple Syrup Council Delegates

Debbi Thomas, **President**, MI  
989-685-2807, [debbi1612@hotmail.com](mailto:debbi1612@hotmail.com)

Howard Boyden, **Vice-President**, MA  
413-209-1752, [hboyden@oescoinc.com](mailto:hboyden@oescoinc.com)

Joe Polak, **Secretary-Treasurer**, WI  
715-536-7251  
[joepolak@frontier.com](mailto:joepolak@frontier.com)

#### DIRECTORS

J. Mark Harran, CT  
860-567-3805, [jmharran@aol.com](mailto:jmharran@aol.com)

David Hamilton, IN  
765-836-4432, [dave@rutherfordsugarcamp.com](mailto:dave@rutherfordsugarcamp.com)

Lyle Merrifield, ME  
207-892-5061, [merfarm@aol.com](mailto:merfarm@aol.com)

Howard Boyden, MA  
413-209-1752, [hboyden@gmail.com](mailto:hboyden@gmail.com)

Stu Peterson, MN  
218-758-2796, [campaquila@aol.com](mailto:campaquila@aol.com)

David Briggs, NB  
506-382-3380, [dsbriggs@nbnet.nb.ca](mailto:dsbriggs@nbnet.nb.ca)

David Kemp, NH  
603-532-8496, [david.kemp7@myfairpoint.net](mailto:david.kemp7@myfairpoint.net)

Eric Randall, NY  
585-547-3596, [randall-maple@msn.com](mailto:randall-maple@msn.com)

Avard Bentley, NS  
902-548-2973, [jbentley@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:jbentley@ns.sympatico.ca)

Jen Freeman, OH  
440-487-1660, [jen@richardsmapleproducts.com](mailto:jen@richardsmapleproducts.com)

Brian Bainborough, ON  
705-229-9345,  
[brian.bainborough@sympatico.ca](mailto:brian.bainborough@sympatico.ca)

Daryl Sheets, PA  
814-337-0103, [sheetstool@zoominternet.net](mailto:sheetstool@zoominternet.net)

Cécile Brassard Pichette, QC  
450-439-2329, [cecile.bp@hotmail.com](mailto:cecile.bp@hotmail.com)

Thomas Buck, RI  
401-377-2418, [UncleBck@aol.com](mailto:UncleBck@aol.com)

Mike Rechlin, WV  
[mike@future.edu](mailto:mike@future.edu), 304-946-3811

James Adamski, WI  
715-623-6853, [cldadamski@gmail.com](mailto:cldadamski@gmail.com)

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# Greetings from your President



As I write this, Spring is struggling to make an appearance here in Michigan. We've had some beautiful mid- to high-50-degree days and then we're back to below freezing (and in some cases more of the white stuff).

Most producers here are done boiling and have finished the majority of clean up. Some are reporting an average of 2-2.25% sugar content while others were lucky to have 1.5%. We never know what Mother Nature has in store for us until the season is over. I would hope most would be able to report an average season, if not above average.

By the time you read this, I hope everyone can report to having a successful season and are now busy marketing your product. With the delay in opening of some farm markets, as well as some fairs and other summer activities being cancelled, 2020 will provide a unique challenge in getting our products out there to the public. However, maple producers as a whole are an optimistic bunch and I can see new ways of marketing our product popping up.

It was disappointing to not welcome visitors into our sugarbush this season. It's something we all look forward to each year especially during our maple weekends. Sharing the syrup making process with the public is a great way to educate many about the variety of our maple products along with the nutritional value of maple.

It was not an easy decision for the Executive Committee to make to cancel the 2020 NAMSC/IMSI Convention in Wisconsin this October. Much thought and discussion went into making this decision. I appreciate all the hard work the Wisconsin Association put into the 2020 Convention and then rearranging all their plans to 2022. The 2021 Convention will still take place in New York.

Another cancellation was the May 9, 2020 induction into the Maple Hall of Fame of Joe Polak and Ray Bonenberg. Congratulations to both Joe and Ray who will have their induction ceremony in May 2021.

Your delegates had their mid-year meeting via Zoom on May 8. This is just another way we are adjusting to our new normal. One of the topics of discussion was the availability of grants from the Council to state and provincial associations for educational projects. We also discussed progress being made on the revisions to the *North American Maple Syrup Producers Manual*, which is still aiming for production in late 2021.

Have a great and safe summer!

Debbi Thomas  
NAMSC President





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# In this issue...

Darkening of Maple Syrup in Uncoated and XL-Coated Plastic Containers . . .	8
2020 International Meetings in WI Cancelled . . . . .	13
The Maple Season Moves to the Fall! . . . . .	15
When Tubing is Tapped Out: Recycling Maple Plastics . . . . .	16
2020 Crop Reports . . . . .	22
Changes in Consumer Spending and Opportunities for Maple Producers . . .	34
U.S. Crop Production Report (NASS) . . . . .	38

## Seeking Photos

We're always looking for good maple photos for the *Digest*. Send to [mapledigest@gmail.com](mailto:mapledigest@gmail.com).

**Cover photo:** Rutherford Sugar Camp, New Castle, IN. Dave Hamilton, sugar-maker.



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# Darkening of Maple Syrup in Uncoated and XL-Coated Plastic Containers

*T.D. Perkins, W. Bosley, G. Bosley, and M. Moore*

*Proctor Maple Research Center, University of Vermont, Underhill, VT*

Maple syrup is classified, in part, by the amount of light transmitted through a sample, ranging from 0 100% transmittance compared to a glycerol control. This is commonly referred to by maple producers and consumers as “color” or “grade.” The U.S. and Canada use a common classification scheme for maple syrup.

Sap directly from maple trees is predominantly sucrose. Sap that has been stored for a period of time, particularly when it is warm, typically has a higher microbial load, which results in microbial inversion of some portion of sucrose into invert sugars (glucose and fructose). Formation of color in maple syrup is due to a series of reactions in sap involving these invert sugars and other sap constituents and during caramelization reactions during boiling.

When syrup is reheated for packing into retail containers, light transmittance (LT) typically drops, mostly as a result of oxidation reactions. This is very noticeable in widely-used HDPE plastic maple containers that have sat on the shelf for some time. Certain plastic containers employ an externally applied polyvinylidene chloride copolymer (Hillside© “XL” coating) to reduce oxygen permeation through the container in order to reduce the rate of syrup darkening.

For regulatory purposes, it is important that syrup packed under a certain grade designation remain within the

range of the grade until purchased by the consumer. Syrup that falls below the LT for the grade range can be removed from sale, resulting in a significant loss of revenue for the producer. Slowing the rate of darkening helps sellers of maple syrup ensure that syrup packed at a specified grade will remain in that grade for a longer period of time.

Although several previous studies have examined syrup darkening in different retail containers, packers and producers sometimes question the effectiveness of an oxygen-barrier in reducing the rate of color change. Two studies were performed by the University of Vermont (UVM) Proctor Maple Research Center (PMRC) in 2018 and 2019 to compare the rate of color (LT) change in maple syrup in uncoated and XL-coated retail plastic containers.

## Methods

In the first study (2018), several quart or liter samples of maple syrup packed in both uncoated and XL-coated were supplied by three different packers: Citadelle (Québec, Canada), LB Maple Treat (Québec, Canada), and Bascom Maple Farm (New Hampshire, U.S.A.). For two of the packers, samples were packed back-to-back on the same day. For the third, syrup was packed on two sequential days (separated by the weekend). Samples were shipped and took up to two weeks to reach UVM PMRC, so there was no way to independently assess darkening for the immediate time period after packing. The



LT at the time of packing was supplied by each packer.

For the second study (2019), four companies supplied syrup samples, the three noted above and Butternut Mountain Farm (Vermont, U.S.A.). In addition, syrup from UVM PMRC was packed into uncoated or XL-coated containers. This resulted in a total of five sites supplying sample syrup. In this case, we observed the maple syrup as it was packed at each site in uncoated and XL-coated containers on the day of packing and obtained a syrup sample. The LT of the sample of syrup being packed was tested within 1 hour of packing. The remaining samples were then shipped (from Canada) or transported immediately to UVM PMRC by automobile (from New Hampshire and Vermont) immediately after packing.

All samples for both studies were stored in the dark at room temperature (70°F) until measurements were made. At approximately monthly intervals, the LT of three duplicate samples from previously unopened containers of syrup from each site for both uncoated and XL-coated containers was measured using a calibrated Hannah HI759 Digital Maple Syrup Grader (Hannah Industries, Smithfield, RI, U.S.A., + 4% accuracy). Three duplicate readings were taken from each syrup sample and the average recorded. For both study 1 and 2, the packing companies provided the measurement of the LT of the syrup when packed. In addition, for study 2, the single sample measured within 1 hour of packing was used to provide a baseline LT. Measurements continued at approximately monthly intervals for the next 6-7 months for both studies.

## Results

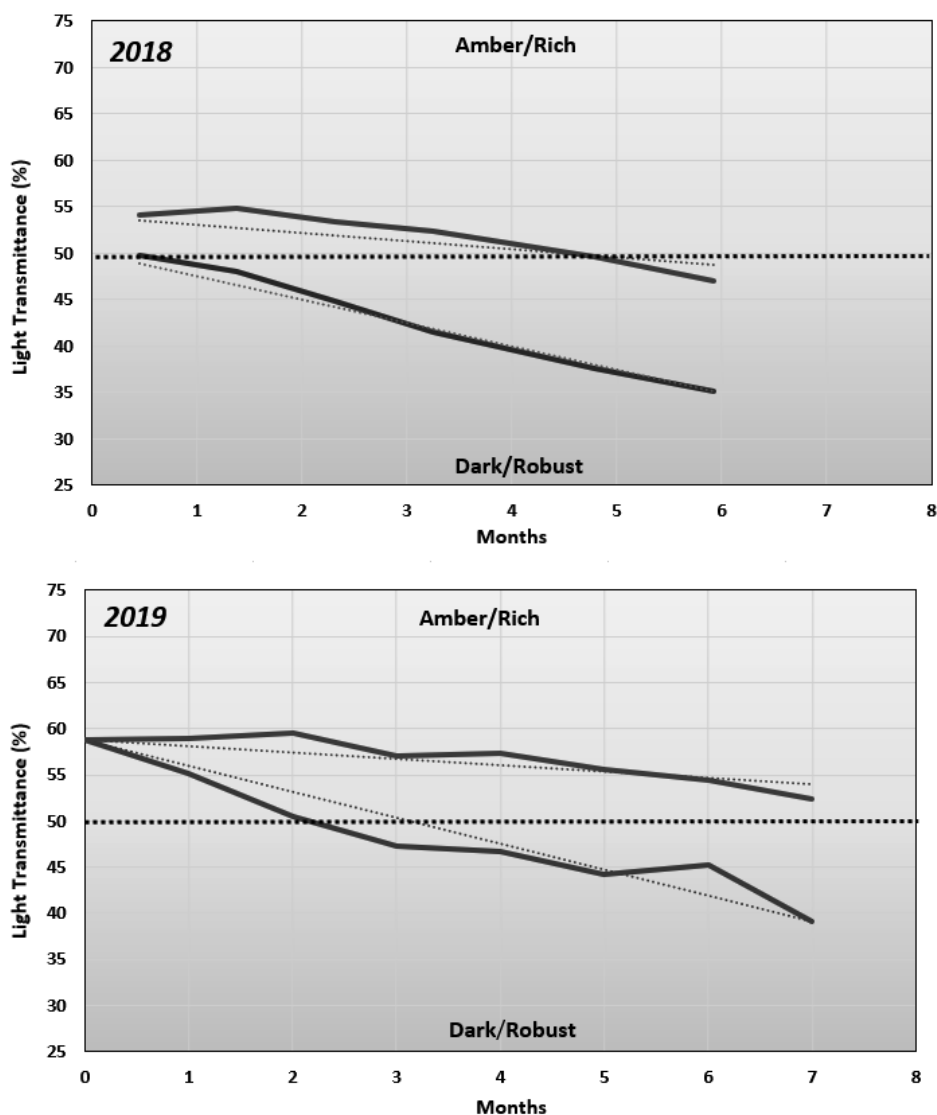
The maple syrup packed in the

course of the two studies showed very similar trends in LT (Figure 1). Darkening of maple syrup occurred in a near-linear fashion ( $r^2$  values were within the range of 0.75-0.95 and significant to  $p < 0.05$ ) in both container types for each year, however the syrup LT in XL-coated containers lost LT at a significantly slower rate (average 0.8% loss in LT per month) than in uncoated containers (average 2.6% loss in LT per month). Thus the darkening rate in uncoated containers averaged 3.3 times the rate of darkening in XL-containers. Although there were slight variations from month-to-month and site-to-site, these tended to even out over the course of each study, and the overall trends observed in the rate of darkening were similar within the main comparison of uncoated versus XL-coated containers.

Over the six-month course of these two studies, syrup packed in XL-coated containers dropped an average of less than 5% in LT, demonstrating that the XL coating substantially retarded oxygen permeation and loss of LT. Syrup packed in uncoated plastic containers, on the other hand, dropped an average of 15.5% over the same time period. Clearly the XL-coating is very effective in retarding the rate of darkening in maple syrup packed in plastic containers.

Functionally what this means is that maple syrup packed in uncoated containers will suffer a far more rapid loss in LT after packing (during shipping and on the retail shelf) and is considerably more likely to fall out of color-grade unless sold and consumed relatively quickly. In the 2018 study, much of the syrup packed in uncoated containers had already lost a grade prior to the first sample period. In 2019 the

*Containers: continued on page 10*



**Figure 1.** Average light transmittance (%) of maple syrup in uncoated (lower solid lines) and XL-coated (upper solid lines) plastic containers in 2018 (top) and 2019 (bottom). Three duplicate readings (+ 4% accuracy) of each of three samples for each day of measurement for three sites in 2018 and five sites in 2019. The line for 2018 starts when samples were received by UVM PMRC (approximately 2-3 weeks after packing). Dotted lines show the respective linear trend lines in each case. The dashed black line represents the break-point between syrup classified into Amber/Rich or Dark/Robust categories.

### Containers: continued from page 9

syrup in uncoated containers was at the dividing line between Amber/Rich and Dark/Robust within two months. In contrast, syrup in XL-coated containers retained the same grade for nearly five months and for over seven months in 2018 and 2019 respectively. Although a short residence time between when syrup is packed and sold would likely be satisfactory for uncoated containers, XL-coated containers are a better choice when more than a few months elapses between packing and sale, if producers/packers wish to ensure better stability of the syrup grade, or if producers/packers wish to pack relatively close to the dividing line of two grades.

### Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Citadelle Maple Products, LB Maple Treat, Bascom

Maple Farms, and Butternut Mountain Farms for their cooperation in this project and for supplying the syrup used in this study. We also thank Plastic Industries (Sugarhill) for financial support, supplying the plastic containers, and helping to schedule and coordinate the site visits to packers and shipping of the syrup in both years. Dr. Abby van den Berg (UVM) provided useful advice and comments throughout this work.

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# 2020 International Meetings in WI Cancelled

During this difficult time of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Wisconsin Maple Syrup Producer's Association (WMSPA), NAMSC and IMSI have made a very difficult decision. They have decided for the health, safety of convention attendees, and uncertainties lying ahead for everyone, it is in everyone's best interest to cancel the NAMSC/IMSI Convention October 21-24, 2020 in La Crosse, WI.

Massachusetts has graciously offered to allow the WMSPA to take their spot in 2022; and the hosts slated for 2023 and beyond have offered to advance one year. WMSPA is thankful for this opportunity and felt this would be the best approach, not knowing what each day brings.

The future NAMSC/IMSI convention schedule through 2026 with state and years is:

2021 New York  
2022 Wisconsin  
2023 Massachusetts  
2024 Maine  
2025 Michigan  
2026 Ontario

WMSPA is still making plans to have the NAMSC/IMSI Convention in La Crosse in October 2022. The Convention will be held during the week of October 23-31, 2022. The exact dates will be determined in the near future. WMSPA has many details to work out, but will provide more information as it is available. Please watch [www.wismaple.org](http://www.wismaple.org) for more information.



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# The Maple Season Moves to the Fall!

*Helen Thomas, New York State Maple Producers Association*

**T**he COVID-19 pandemic forced most state maple associations to modify or cancel their spring maple season agri-tourism events. This cancellation means both a loss in revenue, and also a missed opportunity in building a customer base for maple producers. Many of the maple associations had spent time and advertising dollars on these cancelled events.

Farmers are inherently optimists – we approach each growing season with the hope that it will be the best ever. So rather than lament the missed opportunity this spring, we want to focus on finding a substitute event that will appeal to the consumer. Scott Dunn of Maine was the first to put forth a proposal that many of the state associations had been contemplating – “let’s have a fall maple event!”

This was quickly recognized by many of the state maple associations as a good idea. The idea has been formalized to an official “first annual” event. Thirteen state maple associations have participated in discussions about planning a fall event. The purpose of the event is to host the public at our maple

farms, to give them an opportunity to learn about how maple is made, to meet the families that make maple, and to sample and buy the products.

We have agreed that the event is to use a common shared logo and name, as well as dates. Each maple association will be responsible for determining how to implement in their state, and how to publicize. The first official fall maple event will be October 8-19, 2020. We have tentatively named it “Fall in Love with Maple.” More details will be released in the coming months.

States that have already agreed to participate include: Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. These states are interested and will participate if approved by their boards: Connecticut, Indiana, Minnesota, Vermont.

It is an uplifting story that out of these adverse times comes a way to work together to promote a native North American food we all love: pure maple!

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## When Tubing is Tapped Out: Recycling Maple Plastics

*Andrea Caluori*

**A**s the maple industry has grown, so too has the use of plastic sap tubing. Solutions are needed to help producers dispose of tubing when it is past its useful life, in ways that ensure it is not merely ending up in landfills.

### Plastic Removal to Increase

Plastic tubing was first introduced to the maple industry in the 1950's, meaning we have spent nearly 70 years generating scraps and discarded used systems. Lateral lines have a lifespan of 10-15 years, and the recommended use for drops is only a few years at most. That's a lot of waste generated in a short time, and the amount of discarded tubing is growing each year.

Sending this plastic to the landfill or leaving it in the woods have typically been the only answers for disposal. But although plastics are inexpensive to produce and require less energy than glass or metal, the concern regarding the environmental impact of plastic in general is on the rise, and consumers are demanding solutions. In some cities single-use plastic bags are banned and companies are becoming more intentional about use of biodegradable and compostable materials for product packaging. With the growing concern surrounding consumption and the effects of waste disposal on the planet, plastics have become a significant part of this public conversation. The maple industry needs to be part of a positive solution when considering the role of plastics in the environment.

### Recycling Maple Tubing

The maple industry primarily uses polyethylene sap lines. When these plastics are discarded into a landfill, they slowly break down into micro-plastics. As they degrade, releasing greenhouse gases contributing to climate change, the small particulates can leach into the environment, contaminating soil and water and even our food supply. The challenge of providing alternative ways to dispose of tubing after removal has been identified by maple researchers as a critical need in light of climate change and the effects of plastic pollution.

Recycling is one option, but only for some. Due to the amount of tubing expected to enter the waste stream in coming years, sugarmakers in some areas can now recycle sap tubing at some waste management facilities. At the heart of this conversation is Dr. Mark Isselhardt at the University of Vermont's Proctor Maple Research Center. In 2018 maple producers in the state of Vermont alone used 10,400 miles of tubing, the equivalent of driving across the United States 3.5 times. Isselhardt is part of a working group currently researching plastic recycling in the maple industry, and helped to launch one of Vermont's pilot programs at the Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Management District. At two of their locations, sugarmakers can schedule drop-offs of maple tubing to be recycled for a small fee. Recycling clean tubing, with all fittings removed, costs \$10 per cubic yard to dispose of.

At the Northwest Solid Waste Man-



agement District in Fairfax, VT, producers can schedule drop-off of clean maple tubing at \$5/cubic yard, or tubing with taps, tees, and other fittings for \$20 per cubic yard. It's important to note that the only acceptable plastic is Polyethylene (PE) sap line. PVC sap line or any other pipe material is not accepted for recycling. If sugarmakers are unsure whether their tubing is PE or PVC, they can simply test a small piece of tubing in water. If it floats, then it is made of Polyethylene and is acceptable for recycling.

One of the issues specifically related to maple tubing is the material's flexibility, which makes it somewhat difficult for automated recycling systems to consolidate – or even to be received initially at most waste management centers. It is a clumsy product to transport and, while lightweight, takes up a lot of space. It is challenging to store and process and requires higher gauge metal to recycle it into new plastic items. To prepare maple tubing for drop-off at facilities, producers are required to cut main line into 3-foot lengths, remove tees, taps and fittings (or pay a higher fee, as indicated above, at the Northwest Vermont Solid Waste Management District) and coil or bundle tubing for easy transport. Each district's waste management unit may have different requirements for drop-off preparations and a varied fee structure depending on whether loads have fittings removed or not.

While in Vermont is home to a handful of established tubing recycling programs, there aren't many others in the Northeast U.S. that appear to be in operation. New York State previously had a program, as did western Massachusetts, although both of these appear to be defunct. If your local waste manage-

ment district does not offer this service, sugarmakers might consider contacting local districts to urge them to launch a pilot program. More demand will help spur more of these facilities to accept tubing for recycling.

Once received by a Vermont recycling facility, tubing is sent to processing plants in Vermont and Arkansas where the material is transformed into smaller particulates to sell to manufacturers making new products such as fleece vests, shopping bags, bottles and other items.

In Québec, the company Environek operates a facility in Saint-Malachie with all of the equipment required to transform maple syrup tubing into granular particulates that can be made into various objects such as agricultural drains, plastic containers, and park accessories. According to the company's website (<https://environek.com/tubulures/>), in Québec approximately 2,900 tons of plastic sap tubing is removed every year – enough to almost fill 9 Olympic swimming pools. Environek offers three options for maple producers to recycle their tubing:

- (1) If all fittings are removed from 5/16 tubing, producers receive \$250/ton.
- (2) If fittings are still present, then Environek will take the tubing at no cost to the producer.
- (3) If metal components (clamps, etc.) are on the tubing at the time of delivery the producer is charged \$150/ton.

In some instances, the company can refuse material for recycling, particularly if tubing is coated with contaminants or plastic film that may reduce

*Recycling: continued on page 18*

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## **Recycling: continued from page 17**

the quality of the recycled material. Additionally, any tubing received needs to be clean, with as little debris as possible, and not mixed with any other materials. Producers are charged a fee if Environek receives contaminated tubing. Sugarmakers located in Québec interested in recycling their tubing may bring recyclable material directly to the Saint-Malachie factory by scheduling an appointment.

## **Opportunities for Community Engagement**

Recycling or repurposing maple tubing is a great way to engage local community groups and give back to the environment while teaching the public about maple. In 2018 at the Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Management District, UVM Extension partnered with the Stowe Mountain Lodge Employee Epic Volunteer Program where volunteers spent the day removing fittings and taps, cut tubes into smaller lengths and helped recycle over 100 cubic yards of tubing. This helped reduce labor costs plus saved time and money for maple farmers. Sugarmakers might consider contacting nearby scout troops, schools, and volunteer groups interested in supporting local agriculture and looking for service learning opportunities. It's a great way to get cost-free labor while educating visitors about maple. Such volunteer days can also help connect community with grassroots farming and build solid connections between new consumers and their local maple producers.

For those without nearby recycling facilities willing to take maple tubing, other creative solutions may be to partner with neighborhood school art classes interested in turning old sap tubing

into recycled sculptures, or perhaps afterschool craft programs looking for donated materials for creative projects. Summer camps often provide campers with arts and crafts programs, too. Producers could offer to showcase some of them in the sugarhouse as a way to promote the role of their operation within the community. Even farm education programs can use old sap tubing for both art projects and as a part of their toolkit for teaching kids about maple production. Program initiatives such as these inspire community participation in local agriculture through a shared interest in protecting the environment.

## **The Challenges of Recycling Plastic**

Recycling plastics comes with challenges. It's important to consider the related costs, energy use, and labor involved in processing the material. The value of recycled plastic is also determined by the price of crude oil at a given time. If the value of oil is low, then recycling tubing may be seen as a not very cost-effective process, particularly given the energy and labor involved. But no matter the financial costs, the cost to the environment remains significant. As taphole sanitation practices now recommend more frequent spout and dropline replacement, plastic waste from the maple industry will only increase. Additionally, as some producers are finding 3/16" tubing to not live up to its promise, even more plastic is likely to come out of the woods sooner than had been anticipated.

Given the risks climate change poses to the planet and to the maple industry, and the adverse effect plastic waste has on the environment, the industry needs to consider meaningful alternatives to offset maple production's carbon footprint related to the manufacturing and disposal of plastics, in the same way

that energy consumption has been dramatically reduced in recent years by the adoption of high-efficiency evaporators and reverse osmosis machines.

The fabrication of plastics necessitates the extraction of oil and natural gases, carbon-intensive activities in themselves. In the United States alone 12.5 million to 13.5 million metric tons of carbon dioxide per year are emitted in order to extract and transport fossil fuels for plastics manufacturing. (Brook, <https://www.yaleclimateconnections.org/2019/08/how-plastics-contribute-to-climate-change/>) An increase in greenhouse gas emissions, plus deforestation from continued fracking, all release significant amounts of carbon dioxide into the environment. Just five years ago, the annual emissions for creating ethylene, one of the foundational components of plastic production (including sap lines), were 184.3 to 213 million metric tons of carbon dioxide. While the maple industry represents just a fraction of overall plastics usage, it is significant enough to consider alternatives.

## **Bioplastics**

One new technology developed to create more renewable, less carbon-producing, manufacturing options for plastics, is bioplastics. Compostable plastic plates and compostable plastic shopping bags have become more common. This material can either be biobased (derived from a renewable resource) or biodegradable (can break down naturally) or both. (<https://www.plasticsindustry.org/article/bioplastics-101>)

Biodegradeable bioplastics can be as durable as other plastic materials but break down in a different way and over

*Recycling: continued on page 21*

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### ***Recycling: continued from page 19***

a shorter amount of time. The production of bioplastics may help reduce the use of fossil fuels in manufacturing and can be made of renewable resources such as used cooking oil, sugarcane, wood, corn, castor beans and algae. Not only can bioplastics be recycled, but durable bioplastics that are not single-use can also be designed for industrial composting – another alternative to landfill disposal and a healthier end of the plastic's life cycle. Bioplastic tubing would need to be a material that can hold up to year-round, all-weather conditions in the woods for a similar lifespan as current tubing and compatible with the pressures of a vacuum system, and would also have to be able to be produced at the same price point as plastics to allow sugarmakers to remain economically sustainable.

### **Looking Forward**

Although recycling plastic tubing is challenging and is still a relatively new concept, it is better than discarding the waste in landfills and certainly a positive step for the maple industry to mitigate waste and contribute to emissions reduction. Plastic pollution has a critical environmental impact and its long-term use is being reevaluated across all industries. For the maple industry, it may mean coming up with alternative solutions. The established recycling programs in Vermont and Quebec can serve as models for other states and districts to follow in launching similar programs that allow producers to recycle old tubing from the sugarbush. Recycling is one way maple producers can play a role in reducing plastic pollution and participate in an ongoing conversation about conservation, maple, and the environment.



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# 2020 Crop Reports

## Connecticut

The 2020 season was sub-par in Connecticut. Syrup production was below average due to a very mild winter, which resulted in a very short season. Sugar content was average at about 2% across the state. But overall, the season was disappointing to most.

The annual membership meeting, held on November 2, 2019, had two featured speakers: Ray Bonenberg, then president of IMSI and past president of the Ontario Maple Syrup Association and Byran Hurlburt, Connecticut Agriculture Commissioner. Ray discussed the details of Ontario's program to increase the sale of Ontario produced syrup within the province, which is relevant to what MSPAC is trying to do in Connecticut. Bryan addressed the recent transfer of regulatory responsibility for Connecticut produced maple syrup from the Department of Consumer Protection (akin to the FDA) to the Department of Agriculture. Both talks were very well received. The annual Pre-season Meeting was held on January 18, 2020 and, after a brief business meeting, consisted of workshops, including a well attended session on tasting and identifying off flavor syrup presented by Mike Girard.

## Indiana

Maple syrup producers around the Hoosier state tapped near the end of January or the first week of February. Most reported a short season, ending the first or second week of March. Even though the season was short, almost all producers had an above average season. Fortunately, Indiana was blessed with plenty of moisture, mostly rain, during our maple season. Sugar con-

tent varied from 2.0% sugar content to 3.0%, with most people reporting about 2.4%. One sugarmaker reported that the last run registered only 1.34% sugar content. All sugarmakers reported making excellent-flavored syrup, most of it in the medium amber grade.

Maple Weekend was held on March 13 and 14, just as we were learning of the seriousness of the pandemic. It was too late to cancel, so it went on as planned. As the weekend began, horrible weather blew into the state, bringing wind, cold rain, sleet, snow, and waist-deep mud (it seemed waist-deep, anyway). Some camps had decided to cancel due to the virus but some remained open. The camps that remained open still saw lower attendance than previous years. Still, we were fortunate to have our maple weekend activities concluded before the shelter in place orders were instituted. Throughout the year marketing for the event is conducted through social media and the IMSA website, and through handouts at the Indiana State Fair Sugar Shack and farmers markets throughout the state. Participating camps work with local tourism bureaus and media to promote the event. Members also invite local artisans and cottage vendors to demonstrate and sell their wares for the weekend.

COVID-19 does not appear to have affected the sale of pure maple syrup here in Indiana, but the Indiana Maple Syrup Association has rescheduled its annual Canning Day from mid-May to late June. Canning day is when sugarmakers from all over the state convene at the Harris Sugar House near Greencastle to process maple syrup to sell at the Indiana State Fair. It appears that

the State Fair will go on as scheduled for early August, but I am certain that there will be some restrictions in place.

Even though we are all now facing some difficult times it is my belief this situation will improve. There are several bears on my property made of wood, metal, or concrete, and one of the bears near the road holds a sign that reads "THIS TOO SHALL PASS, GRIN & BEAR IT." Hang in there and be vigilant.

## Maine

Maine producers reported an average length season, with odd tempera-

ture swings involving a three-week freeze followed by close to two weeks with temperatures that were barely freezing at night. Sugar content was reported incredibly low with some producers saying that they had never boiled so much 1% sap in Southern Maine. Northern Maine producers reported average to above average sugar contents with their seasons running later in the year. Despite the low sugar content, most producers reported an average crop with great flavor. Maine Maple Sunday events were mostly canceled, with some producers offering

*Crop report: continued on page 24*



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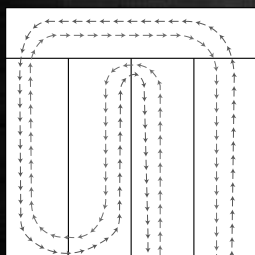
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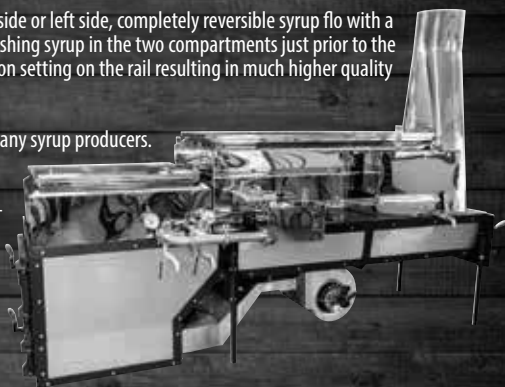
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### **Crop Reports: continued from page 23**

farmstand sales. Most reported steady but low numbers. Most producers report stated that sales have been up as consumers are looking to support local, with many looking forward to a maple event at some point this year.

As we look forward, this is a great year for producers to innovate with how they can sell, using new platforms and with increased advertising. Any new ideas will be there for future years, resulting in increased maple consumption and revenue for our producers. I am extremely optimistic about a fall event that is supported by all the maple producing states that could be as big as March maple events in future years.

Maple Mainia has been canceled for 2020, and has been rescheduled for June 10-12, 2021 in the Augusta area. We are planning for a fall tubing technical session on November 7 at the Bacon Maple Farm in Sidney.

### **Massachusetts**

In Massachusetts, it felt like March lasted from late December through early May. There were warm spells in January when temperatures didn't drop below freezing at night, and some rapid warm ups in March when some thought the season was over. But in between the weather anomalies were some perfect stretches where the sap ran for days, much of it with decent sugar content and all of it yielding excellent-flavored syrup, mostly in the lighter grades. The earliest boil we heard of was in mid-January, and several ran well into the first couple of weeks of April.

Our season kickoff was held at Sunrise Farms in Colrain, where the Lively family boils on a solar-powered high efficiency electric EcoVap evaporator.



Our ag commissioner tapped the ceremonial first tree of the season and other elected officials were on hand as well to talk about the importance of the maple industry and of agriculture in general.

As with the rest of the maple-producing region, the COVID-19 pandemic and the steps taken to mitigate its spread had a significant impact on our season. Hardest hit were the sugarhouses with restaurants, which lost well over half of their business for the season when they were shut down in mid-March along with other restaurants. Producers who rely on sales to schools, restaurants, and other institutions have also seen a significant drop in sales. Agricultural fairs are being cancelled, further cutting into sales as well as contests. But sales at farms have remained strong, and the state declared farmstands and farmers markets to be 'essential businesses,' allowing those outlets to continue to operate.

Fortunately maple syrup doesn't spoil, unlike many other agricultural products, so we have had a little more time to adapt to the new market landscape. As retailers and food services begin to reopen there is plenty of inventory on hand and the outlook for sales remains strong.

## **Michigan**

Syrup season in Michigan is over and as usual there was a vast range throughout the state both in length of season and sap sugar content. All the producers who gave me information agreed upon one thing: they made mostly Golden or Amber syrup that had great flavor.

Number of days between first boil and last boil ranged from 9 to 34 days, with the majority of producers having a season that lasted 25 to 34 days. Most

reported favorable weather, except for in the northwestern Lower Peninsula where the weather was too cold. A few reported the weather was warmer than normal throughout most of the season, while others had several days where it didn't get warm enough for the sap to even run.

The western Upper Peninsula reported the highest sugar content all season starting with 3.25% and ending with 2.25%. Several of our producers never saw sugar content at 2%, registering a high of just 1.7% and then dropping rapidly. There were producers in the same geographical area whose sugar contents were vastly different. Apparently, this was not just a Michigan thing - low sugar content was common throughout the maple-producing states.

The majority reported the season's crop was average, several stated it was below average with only one saying their crop was better than normal.

## **Minnesota**

Minnesota from its southern border with Iowa to the northern border with Canada (Ontario and Manitoba) is all of 400 miles (640 km). Maple syrup is produced on a commercial scale generally within the eastern two-thirds of the state.

For producers in the southern third of the state the season began in late February and stretched out for about three or four weeks. Our central Minnesota producers (north of the Twin Cities of Minneapolis/St. Paul) experienced their first sap runs about ten to fifteen days after our southern producers. As the season moved from south to north, our northern producers saw their season

*Crop Reports: continued on page 26*

### **Crop Reports: continued from page 25**

begin just as those in the south were finishing and had begun to clean up. As this was written in early May, the northernmost Minnesota producers were just winding down.

While not as strong as the 2019 season, Minnesota producers reported average to above average syrup production in 2020. Many producers reported slightly lower average sugar content, great syrup flavor and predominantly Amber Rich production.

Minnesota has postponed its spring Annual Membership Meeting and rescheduled it as a fall event, conditions permitting, in October. Our board of directors has met successfully via Zoom conference calls. With postponement of our annual membership meeting, a major challenge will be effective communications with members. Our focus will be on direct mail and our website. We discussed, but do not have the nerve to try, a 100-member Zoom conference call!

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Thanks again to all who attended the 2019 NAMSC / IMSI annual convention in Duluth, Minnesota. We extend our regrets, understanding and total support for our friends in Wisconsin who were to host the 2020 NAMSC/IMSI annual convention. We will be there in 2022.

### **New Brunswick**

This year the province saw moderate to less than average snow cover in the south. Many areas only had around a couple of feet of snow cover, which is less than normal for our region, however in the north, it was a different story. The north saw a lot more snow, reaching four to five feet in some areas. Winter weather seemed to start later this year, dragging on into late March. We never really saw extreme cold like we normally do in late December into early February. Our larger producers started tapping early as usual but most didn't see any sap until very late in March or early April. For the southern regions of the province the sap started around mid to late March and kept running late into April. The sap didn't seem to be as sweet this year, just lots more of it. For many in the south a huge crop was made for most of the region's producers. Sap in the south is usually around 1% to 2%, not as sweet as it gets in the north. Most producers in the south made Golden to Amber syrup with very little Dark to Very Dark produced.

The further north you progressed into New Brunswick the deeper the snow cover became. The snow accumulated to well over four and five feet in many areas of the north. The season started around the end of March into early April and finished around late April or into the early days of May. Some early tappers saw some syrup made before March but most 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. The pounds per tap were close to the same as last year, giving around 3-4lbs with a few exceptions of 5lbs. Not too bad for an area that usually sees 5lbs and up per tap.

This year's maple season, although starting a bit late, turned out to be one of the best in the south and fair to moderate crop in the north. So not too bad all over.

## **New Hampshire**

I firmly believe that Mother Nature is a fickle business partner.

We solicit reports from NH sugar-makers from as wide a geographic area as possible, some folks that tap just a little south of the Canadian border to others that tap just a bit north of the Massachusetts border. There are only a couple of similarities in their respective seasons. No two seasons are ever the same and just when you think you have the key to increased production, Mother Nature changes the rules.

New Hampshire Governor Chris Sununu only had to make a short drive across town to attend the annual tree tapping ceremony held this year on March 5 at sugarmaker Dean Wilber's Mapletree Farm in Concord. Students from the Shaker Road School were among those who attended the event and cheered on the Governor, who was successful in drilling a wet hole on the first attempt.

Reporting sugar makers tapped as early as January 17 to as late as February 19 with little difference in pounds per tap produced. Production varied from a low of 2.53 pound per tap on gravity to 5.5 (second best year ever).

The average was 3.96. Sap volume was reported as very high but overall sugar content as low, with an average of 1.8%

Boiling began as early as January 28 in the center of the state to February 24 in the Southwest and March 4 in the far North. Warm temperatures and no night freezes brought the season to an early end on March 11 in the South central area, with only the far North making any syrup in April, their season ending on April 10.

Less than normal amounts of Golden syrup reported, but with lots of Amber on the very high end of the grade, and not as much Dark or Very Dark reported either. Flavor, however, was judged as excellent.

The pandemic caused the cancellation of Maple Weekend and most planned season events. Whether or not this carries over into fair season and judging contests remains to be seen. For most sugarmakers this has created a decrease in farmgate sales. Along with other maple associations, New Hampshire is planning fall foliage sales events to help make up for lost spring sale. This may be an ideal time to rethink, update and increase your internet presence.

## **New York**

It is always a challenge to summarize the annual maple syrup crop for States or Provinces with diverse geography, size, and weather. New York clearly is no exception, where the season started along the southern tier in late December to early January, with heavy runs in February. The north country, Adirondacks and Catskills had their usual later start and ran much longer toward late April than the earlier bushes. All,

*Crop Reports: continued on page 28*

### **Crop Reports: continued from page 27**

however, were disappointed with sap sugar content, with some producers averaging 1.5 degrees Brix or less. Historically, low sap sugar content improves with the season, but that did not materialize and low sugar was reported throughout the entire season.

Overall, New York will record a near average statewide season with some (western and upper Hudson) slightly under and higher elevations reporting slightly better than average. Several larger producers have reported crops in excess of 0.6 pounds/tap.

Of note is the loss of what was to be the 25th anniversary of NY Maple Weekend. Out of an abundance of caution and prior to the announcement of the pandemic shutdown, the New York Maple Producers Association directors proactively cancelled this statewide event. Nearly 200 participants were prepared to open their educational and sales venues to their massive audiences, but instead worked to shut everything

down. The impact of lost advertising funds, value-added product inventories, and lost fluid syrup sales will continue to be addressed and evaluated. On a positive note, farm market, online sales, and home sales of syrup seem to have increased.

Bottom line is that there is a substantial supply of excellent maple syrup available in New York for all grades apart from Dark Robust, where demand exceeds production. Direct and local marketing of maple syrup and products will continue to be challenging with the announcement that many of the State's County Fairs have been shuttered for the 2020 summer fair season. At this writing (early June), we do not know whether the New York State Fair will be held in late August. The NYSMPA has a wonderful permanent outreach/demonstration and sales venue on the State Fairgrounds and they derive substantial revenue for New York programming through this Center. 2020 will be a challenging maple year for New York, and for once the

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challenge is not particularly weather-related.

## **Nova Scotia**

The 2020 season in Nova Scotia started approximately February 25 and ended around April 20 in the larger production areas. Some of the southern parts were in production in later January and early February. The province has very wide range of weather conditions that see up to four weeks' differences in production timing in some years

Overall the reports are from a very good crop, 3 to 4 pounds per tap, to poor at just over 1 pound. Those with modern high vacuum tubing systems did well, while gravity and bucket operations were down considerably from last year

COVID-19 guidelines forced camps to close to visitors and has left many doing creative marketing to sell their crop. Demand seems strong, but it is challenging getting product into consumers' hands at a reasonable price.

## **Ohio**

For Ohio producers this was almost a normal season, with the exception that it came a month early. This year's long-range winter weather forecast was predicted to be long, cold, and snowy. In the Northeast that pattern prevailed due to a shift in the jet stream. This left Ohio, WV, Indiana, and parts of Pennsylvania with a rather mild winter. It also opened the door for some very good maple syrup production in February. March saw an early warming trend that quickly brought the maple syrup season to an early end across the region. Production across the state was all but shut down by St. Patrick's Day. Looking at my records over the last several decades St Patty's day is circled in

red because of the excellent runs occurring on or near that date. This is usually accompanied by snow and cold just prior to that day. After several years where late tapping resulted in poor seasons, producers across the Southern Tier of maple producing states have learned to adjust their tapping to the weather and not the calendar. This resulted in very good to excellent production across the region.

Examples of the excellent production can be found across the state of Ohio. James Miller at Sugar Valley Farm tapped 3,200 taps in January and over the 4th and 5th of February he collected more than 14,000 gallons of sap. He set a personal best of 332 gallons of syrup. This pattern continued until the first week of March when the flow of sap stopped, and the trees dried up within a week due to an abnormally dry and warm period that lasted until the end of March. With the early start, and despite the early shutdown, James ended the season with over ½ gallon of syrup per tap. This was also the case for his neighbors The Gingerich Family. OMPA President Karl Evens reported 100% of a normal crop despite low sap sugar content. This was pretty much the story across NE Ohio. Down State producers reported excellent maple producing weather in the month of February. In Central Ohio, Knox County, the Brown Family at Bonhomie Acres reported a near record crop. Further to the south, in Mt. Vernon, the Butcher Family set new production records, after several years with below average production. Reports coming out of the southern parts of the state report excellent production color and flavor. A large percentage of the syrup made from the south and the north graded Golden and Amber. The flavor of first

*Crop Reports: continued on page 30*

## ***Crop Reports: continued from page 29***

boils was superb. Low sugar between 1.3 and 1.6 was common this season in the north and in the south.

What can we learn from the 2020 season? First and foremost, weather forecasting is an exact science with a lot of room for error. The winter of 2019/2020 forecast for Ohio was about as far off as you can get. However, for parts of the NE it was spot on. Probably the single most valuable tool a producer has to work with is experience. After years of experience making syrup you just develop a feeling, almost a sixth sense when it is time to tap. The worst thing you can do is to second guess yourself. Wait too long and you can miss crucial runs, tap too early and you may be headed for an early shutdown with a lot of season left. For sure, once you are in there is no turning back and you must make the best of it. From that point to the end of the season how you are utilizing modern maple technology will determine your level of success. Technology has become the equalizer when it comes to maple syrup production.

Just as the maple syrup season was ending COVID-19 cast an ominous shadow across the Buckeye state and the rest of the nation, disrupting agricultural sales. Maple was not immune. Many of the traditional points of sale such as retail establishments, festivals, and farmers markets were closed until further notice. Even though maple syrup was disappearing from the shelves of large grocery stores, giving the appearance of a maple syrup shortage, nothing could be further from the truth. For small to medium size local producers it is difficult, if not impossible to tap

into that mega supply chain. Many are worried that there will not be a market for their crop. Hopefully as summer approaches health regulations will be relaxed and maple producers will once again be able to market their products in traditional venues. Until then, stay safe.

## **Ontario**

2020 will be one to remember. Although reports are quite good about the production around the province, more serious issues have been thrust upon us with this world-wide virus affecting all of us in many different ways. Getting the government to confirm that the production of maple syrup was an essential service isn't something I was thinking when I was tapping. The term social distancing wasn't a common practise, but is an accepted protocol now.

With the closure of festivals, including Maple Weekend, there will be economic fallout or delay for many producers, more so for our producers that have facilities open for the public to come and enjoy in the form of tours and pancake houses. On the positive side, across the province reports of an average crop are being reported, with above-average sugar content during the early part of the season. With a few freeze/thaw cycles in January this helped keep any metabolic off-flavour from occurring this season.

With all grades of syrup being produced and demand for a quality product still strong, producers have been forced to adapt to continue to supply our product to consumers. The use of farmgate sales has been effective, as has been organized pick-ups and deliveries to meet consumer demand.



Please stay positive, we make a great product and work in a wonderful environment. We are lucky that we produce (when packaged correctly) a non-perishable product that we can sell, even if it is a little later than usual, and can sell it for a fair price.

## **West Virginia**

The 2020 West Virginia maple season production was similar to the 2019 season as far as overall crop. Tapping started around the middle of January for some producers and most producers were tapped by the first week of February. The biggest difference in 2020 is that February will likely go down as the best ever, as many produced 75% to 100% of their crop in February. This was very fortunate, as the season ended for most by March 7 to 10, 10 to 15 days earlier than normal, especially for producers above 2,400' in elevation.

While the weather was not optimal for sap runs during February and the first week of March, there was a deep freeze all five weeks for nearly all of the state and this helped produce runs each week. In the highest elevations above 3,000', producers were able to get into the third week in March but the warm temperatures quickly shut them down. Nearly everyone in the state reported an average or slightly above-average crop, with a few producers reporting record crops. The first two weeks of February produced massive sap flows, with some producers producing a 75% crop during the first 14 days of February.

The sugar content seemed a little higher this year for nearly everyone in the state compared to the last 4 seasons and this contributed to a slightly higher than average crop as the sap flows seemed to be a little lower than

the 2019 season. Statewide, around 3 pounds per tap seemed to be the overall average among producers on vacuum. There was more Golden Delicate and Amber Rich produced this season than producers normally see, with most producers producing some of all four grades. The flavor was excellent again during the 2020 season and some of the extra light produced at the beginning of the season had a buttery flavor similar to that produced during the 2018 season.

Even though the season ended early due to high temperatures, the common theme among producers was they were very thankful that we did not experience any weeks of high temperatures during the season which also contributed to the lighter than normal syrup. During the prior three seasons, there had been at least one week or more of 5 to 7 days in a row of high temperatures that we did not experience during the 2020 season. In neighboring Highland County, VA, producers experienced optimal sap flow for nearly six weeks and most in the county reported an above average crop and some had record production.

## **Wisconsin**

The 2020 Wisconsin maple syrup season for most producers started in early March. Early winter gave us some below-average temperatures with snow coming to northern Wisconsin by the third week of November, and for most producers in the north the snow was still on the ground when the syrup went off-flavor.

The southwest corner of the state had an exceptional crop that came in with above average yields. Very warm weather conditions thawed the ground

*Crop Reports continued on page 32*

### ***Crop Reports: continued from page 31***

very quickly and started the season off very quickly. Production in this area of the state was very fast paced in mid-March, with most of the crop made in only a few weeks. Syrup quality was excellent, with most of the syrup being in the Golden category. Production in the southwest corner of the state concluded for most producers by the first week of April.

The central part of the state had about 85 percent of a crop with production starting in the first week of March. Sugar content for the majority of the season was slightly above 2% and as the season came to an end the sugar was well below 2%. Syrup quality was excellent with most of the syrup being made in the Golden category. The snow cover and cool temperatures slowed the season for most producers in central Wisconsin with temperatures above freezing for only a few hours per day. The season concluded for most producers the first week of 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 with no frost jump-started the northern 1/3 of the state's production year, with the season starting just a few days after central Wisconsin started. This area of the state had very cool temperatures and the majority of their syrup was made the last week of March to the first week of April. It was an unusual season with the producers in the area concluding just a few days after central Wisconsin. The cold temperatures and not much sunshine led to the majority of the syrup being made in this area in the Golden category. The northern 1/3 of the region produced between 85 and 90 percent of a full crop.

Overall, the production in the state of Wisconsin was slightly below average. With the season starting early and not much warm weather the majority of the syrup in the state was one color grade better than the previous season.

The Wisconsin Maple Syrup Producers Association had a very busy year with activities throughout the calendar year. The Wisconsin Maple Syrup Producers winter institute and trade show was held January 10-11 in Marshfield. Leader Midwest had their open house January 31 and February 1, and CDL Wisconsin/Roth Sugarbush had an open house February 5-8. The Association had a booth at both events to promote the benefits of the Association to nonmembers.

The Association had its annual first tree tapping March 7 at In the Woods Sugarbush in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. State of Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers tapped the first tree and proclaimed March 15 to April 15 Maple Month in Wisconsin. On March 25 Governor Evers signed into effect the safe at home order which cancelled the events of the spring.

The Wisconsin Maple Syrup Producers Association is pleased to announce the Wisconsin Maple Institute and Trade Show that will be held at Hotel Marshfield in Marshfield, Wisconsin. The trade show will kick off Friday, January 8, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. and the program will start at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 9. This event will be pending based upon the COVID-19 pandemic.



# WI Governor Kicks Off Season

The Wisconsin Maple Syrup Producer's Association (WMSPA) held their annual First Tree Tapping on March 7,. The tapping ceremony was held nestled in the woods of Inthewoods Sugar Bush in Manitowoc, WI. The day was a beautiful sunny day perfect for sap production. Inthewoods Sugarbush is a family operation on 17 acres of land, where the Wagners tap approximately 1300 trees. They also buy sap from many producers throughout the state. They run their operation on a tubing and vacuum system, and process with an R.O and a fuel-oil fired evaporator.



Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers sets the first tap.

Governor Tony Evers, Representatives Paul Tittl and Shae Sortwell, and Senator Andre Jacque presented WMSPA a commemorative plaque thanking them for their involvement in the industry. This was the first year in many years that the Governor of Wisconsin was able to make the event. Governor Evers, then read an official Proclamation declaring Maple Month in WI from March 15-April 15.

Governor Evers was the first to tap the ceremonial first tree, telling attendees he prepared by watching an hour-long YouTube video the night before. Abigail Martin, Alice in Dairyland, followed behind Governor Evers. This was the first time she ever tapped a maple tree. Rachel Van Deurzen, a pro at

hand with tapping since a child, tapped the last tree.

This year's tapping ceremony was a little different then past years. The trees tapped were on tubing and a vacuum system. This was a great way to show attendees the changes in technology. After the ceremony, event attendees toured Inthewoods Sugarbush, sampled tasty maple treats donated by

Inthewoods Sugarbush and Polly Pumpkins. Attendees also received tickets to tour the Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center after the event. The Farm Discovery Center has hands-on exhibits of WI commodities, including a

maple syrup exhibit.

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## Quebec Sets Production Record

The Québec Maple Syrup Producers reports that the 2020 maple harvest set a record for production, at more than 175 million pounds, an average yield of 3.59 pounds per tap for the nearly 49 million taps set. "Although the pandemic had an impact on processes and methods, the syrup kept on flowing. An additional 2.3 million taps in the last two years and a chilly April could explain why this season was so successful," according to a release from the Québec Maple Syrup Producers.

## Changes in Consumer Spending and Opportunities for Maple Producers

*Jean Lamontagne, Executive Director, International Maple Syrup Institute*

The Coronavirus has changed the way people work and shop, and many trends we see now will persist and become the new normal even after a vaccine is widely available. It is clear that the proportion of people working from home will increase substantially. Education via on-line channels will become much more common, and meetings will be held online resulting in less business commuting, less airport traffic, less use of public transport. This will shift consumer spending from city centers to suburbs where people will now both live and work and study.

With fewer commutes and more time, people will prepare home cooked

meals more often. We already see trends towards more elaborate breakfasts such as pancakes with maple syrup. More elaborate recipes with sophisticated ingredients and flavors like maple syrup are likely to be part of the weekly home menu. The growth of on-line shopping, up by well above 20% lately, will persist and accelerate, and local foods and local producers will be in favor as well as more organic, less processed foods.

These are favorable trends that maple syrup producers can leverage to increase sales. It will be important to develop a solid on-line business to capture consumers that migrate from in-store

# MAPLE RESEARCH.ORG

NORTH AMERICAN MAPLE SYRUP COUNCIL

NAMSC has launched [mapleresearch.org](http://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

videos, 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. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service.



purchases to online. Maple businesses can optimize their websites to capture search engine results and make it easy to navigate and view products clearly. New packaging labels can be designed to be clear and compelling, viewed as small images online. Advertising online to pull people to the maple website (inbound marketing) is a good strategy too. Using social media channels to talk about your business and products can have a big impact on sales and make your brand known and loved within your region. One strategy is to hire a well-known and -admired local blogger to promote your products. Many bloggers are paid in-kind through the barter system – sugarmakers have an excellent currency with maple syrup.

In the coming year, a lot of vacation travel will be road trips to scenic towns, countrysides and nearby attractions, as opposed to airline flights to resorts. I received an e-mail from booking.com this week with the following caption, “Jean, travel locally — take a weekend trip.” This trend will be favorable to local businesses. If you have a roadside farm stand, advertise it online and in town and allow for online payments and pre-paid pick-ups. Leverage the strong trend to buy local and natural foods. Get on the online map of local tourist attractions. Try Google ads during high season to reach folks searching on their smartphones as they drive in your area. Maple syrup is the perfect product for this important change in consumer behaviors.

Maple businesses now have the opportunity to reach folks who have more time to shop locally. Increasing your local distribution to food and non-food stores, local country stores, specialty, and small chains can generate sales and brand recognition. Brand your products well.

Consider taking your business to the local or regional mall. As malls reinvent themselves, they are making more space for retail pop-ups. These are short-term stores either in an actual store locale or an aisle booth. Showcasing your brand in a high traffic area at intervals can increase your sales and build brand awareness and help folks navigate to your website for further purchases.

Many new online local markets are opening, combining online shopping with local products, two attributes that people want. These markets typically sell local food products and local crafts and services. Investigate if this type of market exists in your area and join then. If not, consider working with your local merchants and local government to create such a market. Buying local is a big trend, you can leverage it.

To develop a profitable strategy, it's important to know and manage your costs of production. A semi-annual cost analysis will allow you to know which products are more profitable and help you notice changes in input costs so you can manage your lines and evaluate your mix of products. For ex-

*Changes: continued on page 37*

## **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 [mapledigest@gmail.com](mailto:mapledigest@gmail.com).

# Profession Sugarmaker Passionate

A black and white photograph of a man and a woman, Mr. Jean-Marie Chabot and his wife Marthe Frachette, standing in a sugarmaking workshop. They are both wearing plaid shirts and glasses. The man has his arm around the woman's shoulder. The background shows various sugarmaking equipment and a large circular structure.

**MR JEAN-MARIE CHABOT, FOUNDER OF CDL  
AND HIS WIFE MARTHE FRADETTE**

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**Changes: continued from page 35**

ample, planning the right mix of bulk, wholesale and retail production.

From an human resource perspective, be aware that technology will be more prevalent in all your commercial activities including communication, sales, and manufacturing. Businesses need to secure and grow the skill sets required to use technology whether in-house or outsourced. This has very important implications for your training and recruitment and retention strategy.

Take some time to evaluate whether you have the right mix of customers and distribution channels. Concentrate your efforts on customers with businesses that are resilient and have growth potential, and consider diversifying your sales and distribution channels to include businesses that can offset each other in difficult times.

It's important to thoughtfully consider and discuss your business goals and strategy. Consider reaching out to your industry colleagues, local agricultural support organizations, and the IMSI to consult and get information about the resources available to help you increase your sales and build your brand.

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**Thank you to all who  
attended the 2019  
international maple  
meetings in Duluth  
and who contributed  
generously to the  
NAMSC Research  
Fund!**

**Please Consider Including NAMSC in Your Estate Plan**

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 helps 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.

# U.S. Crop Production Report

Released June 11, 2020, 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: 2018-2020									
State	Number of taps			Yield per tap			Production		
	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020
	(1,000 taps)	(1,000 taps)	(1,000 taps)	(gallons)	(gallons)	(gallons)	(1,000 gallons)	(1,000 gallons)	(1,000 gallons)
Connecticut <sup>1</sup>	73	(NA)	(NA)	0.247	(NA)	(NA)	18	(NA)	(NA)
Indiana <sup>1</sup>	70	(NA)	(NA)	0.257	(NA)	(NA)	18	(NA)	(NA)
Maine	1,870	1,950	1,970	0.288	0.267	0.299	539	520	590
Massachusetts <sup>1</sup>	320	(NA)	(NA)	0.225	(NA)	(NA)	72	(NA)	(NA)
Michigan	600	620	570	0.275	0.315	0.298	165	195	170
Minnesota <sup>1</sup>	65	(NA)	(NA)	0.200	(NA)	(NA)	13	(NA)	(NA)
New Hampshire	560	540	530	0.274	0.274	0.291	163	148	154
New York	2,730	2,800	2,800	0.295	0.293	0.287	806	820	804
Ohio <sup>1</sup>	400	(NA)	(NA)	0.225	(NA)	(NA)	90	(NA)	(NA)
Pennsylvania	670	680	710	0.212	0.231	0.238	142	157	169
Vermont	5,670	6,000	6,150	0.342	0.345	0.361	1,940	2,070	2,220
West Virginia <sup>1</sup>	66	(NA)	(NA)	0.121	(NA)	(NA)	8	(NA)	(NA)
Wisconsin	750	800	780	0.300	0.338	0.340	225	270	265
United States	13,844	13,390	13,510	0.303	0.312	0.324	4,199	4,180	4,372

(NA) Not available.

<sup>1</sup> Estimates discontinued in 2019.

For more data see <https://usda.library.cornell.edu/concern/publications/tm70mv177>.

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**For Sale:** 30"x9' oil fired Waterloo Small evaporator w/hoods & preheater, Wes Fab 7" filter press w/air pump, Leader Micro2 R.O., CDL auto drawoff, 2 extra finish pans, SS Bulk Tanks, Canner, many extras. Ken Baechle: 989-205-7076, Michigan

**For Sale:** Evaporator, stainless steel soldered. 5'x4' front pan, 5'x10' rear raised flu. Also 6' preheater with 11 1 1/4" copper tubes and drip pan. 585-356-1290.

**Full time employment opportunity** for a large scale maple syrup operation located in Fonda, NY. An agricultural background or education, a driver's license, and the willingness to work outdoors are all requirements of employment. Pay rates are negotiable bases on experience and abilities. Housing could be available in Otsego County. References and a resume are required and can be sent to [bruceroblee@yahoo.com](mailto:bruceroblee@yahoo.com) Questions regarding employment or the job can be addressed via telephone: 518-853-4022 (business office) or 518-853-3987 (John Buccos, office manager).

**WANTED:** Maple Syrup Memorabilia. Old maple syrup tin cans, bottles, taps, spouts, spiles, packing labels, brochures, signs, maple candy molds and other related maple syrup industry items. Also Back issues of the Maple Syrup Digest (1962 - #4, 1963 - #4, 1964 - #1, 1968 - #1, 1970 - #1, 1975 - #3, 2010 - #4, 2019 - #4, Contact, Don Bell at 203-268-7380 or [thedbells@msn.com](mailto:thedbells@msn.com).



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