

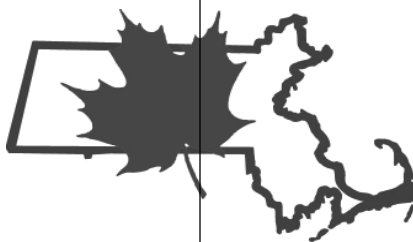
M A S S A C H U S E T T S SUGAR BUSH NEWS

The Newsletter of the Massachusetts Maple Producers Association

Maple Weekend a success!

More than 40 sugarmakers and 30 restaurants participated in Mass Maple's first ever Maple Weekend, March 22-23. Sugarhouses around the state were open to the public for tours, demonstrations and tastings, and restaurants featured menu items made with 100% pure Massachusetts maple syrup. Everything from cocktails to deserts to marinades to salad dressings highlighted the versatility of maple syrup as an ingredient.

Thanks to a Specialty Crops grant from MDAR and USDA, MMPA was able to do extensive outreach and publicity for this event including new handout materials and some radio spots. We had excellent media coverage of the entire season – see <http://www.massmaple.org/march.php> for links to many of the articles. As a result, many sugarhouses reported record numbers of visitors – some even sold out of product over the weekend! We'll be repeating the event in future years and hope that even more members will participate.



Summer picnic and workshop August 3 in Hadley

This year's Mass Maple Summer Picnic will be held on Sunday, August 3 at North Hadley Sugar Shack. Along with a great meal, we'll be offering a chainsaw maintenance and safety workshop – bring your chainsaws!

See the enclosed flier for details and a registration form.

Help promote MA maple syrup!

The Big E – September 12-28 – is our best opportunity of the year to educate people about Massachusetts maple products and turn them into customers!

More than 1.5 million people visit the Big E, and many of them stop by our booth for a maple cream cone, a maple soda, a jug of syrup, or any of our other products, or just to learn about what's so great about real maple syrup. Nobody is better than YOU, a maple producer, at helping to make those connections. The value of those conversations and sales extends well beyond the Big E, because anyone who tries Massachusetts maple products will no doubt seek out their nearest sugarhouse to get local syrup year-round.

Volunteer slots are currently open for all days of the week and all times of day – sign up early to make sure you get the times you want. Volunteers get a free day pass, parking, and \$10 for a meal. If you volunteer for two or more shifts you get a free pass for the entire two weeks of the fair, plus one free ticket to the 2015 Mass Maple summer picnic. You also get to spend the day with other sugarmakers, making candy and cream, and hearing people who just had their first taste of real maple syrup tell you that they've never tasted anything better.

Contact booth manager Andy Schmidt at 413-446-4128 or windsorhill5@yahoo.com to sign up today!

Jug price increase

After several years of stable prices, prices of MMPA jugs have increased slightly. Please see the new pricelist in this mailing, or online at: <http://goo.gl/cJwhBL>

From the President

In February the Mass Maple board of directors elected Melissa Leab as president.

For those who do not know me well here's a little intro, and for those who do here's what I am up to. I now work full time at Ioka Valley Farm with my husband, Rob, and his parents, Don & Judy. Rob and I have two children, Josh and Martha who are very much a part of all we do at the farm. We are a diversified, family-owned and -operated working farm, home to natural, hormone-free beef, fall activities with pick-your-own pumpkins, U-cut and fresh-cut Christmas trees, summertime animal petting and farm play area, and maple syrup with sugarhouse tours and pancake meals during the sugar season. We began sugaring in 1992 with 13 taps and Mom's kitchen stove. We have gradually grown to just over 10,000 taps and continue to serve our homemade pancake meals during the sugar season.

I am very grateful for all the support and educational opportunities I have had through the Association and with fellow sugarmakers over the years to help us get to where we are and look forward to helping and contributing to the Association. I have seen many changes in the short time I have been sugaring and strive to continue to better the industry and promote Massachusetts maple.

I look forward to meeting you.

– Melissa Leab



Massachusetts Maple Producers Association Board of Directors

The Massachusetts Maple Producers Association is a non-profit organization representing more than 250 producers in our state. The Association is governed by a board of directors, and daily operations are conducted by a coordinator who serves at the discretion of the board. If you have any questions, problems or suggestions, please let one of the following people hear from you. The board relies on your input to keep them informed on issues of importance to you.

Name	Term Expires	E-mail Address	Town
Keith Bardwell	2015*	kbardwell@massmaple.org	Whately
Cynthia Cranston	2016*	ccranston@verizon.net	Ashfield
Pat Delaney	2016*	pdelaney@massmaple.org	Belchertown
Missy Leab – President	2015	missy@iokavalleyfarm.com	Hancock
Andy Schmidt – Vice President	2016*	windsorhill5@yahoo.com	Windsor
Gary Shaw	2017	shawssugarhouse@comcast.net	Buckland
Chip Williams	2016*	cwilliams@massmaple.org	Deerfield
Stan Zawalick	2017*	szawalick@massmaple.org	Florence
Paul Zononi	2017*	pzononi@massmaple.org	Haydenville

*Those Directors with a * next to their term expiration date will have served two consecutive terms as directors, and cannot be re-elected without at least a one year break.*

Containers

Mass Maple Warehouse	212 Reynolds Rd., Shelburne, MA	413-625-2900
Devon Lane Farm Supply	357 Daniel Shays Hwy., Belchertown, MA	413-323-6336
North Hadley Sugar Shack	181 River Drive, Rte. 47, Hadley, MA	413-585-8820
Red Bucket Sugar Shack	Kinne Brook Rd., Worthington, MA	413-238-7710

Main Office

Winton Pitcoff - Coordinator/Treasurer	winton@massmaple.org	Plainfield
Mass Maple Association office	PO Box 6, Plainfield, MA 01070	413-628-3912
E-mail: info@massmaple.org	Mass Maple Website: www.massmaple.org	

Sign up for Commonwealth Quality

Commonwealth Quality, a brand designed by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, serves to identify locally sourced products that are grown, harvested and processed right here in Massachusetts using practices that are safe, sustainable and don't harm the environment. Massachusetts sugarmakers developed a set of guidelines, based upon MMPA's Quality Control manual and the Handbook of Best Management Practices for Massachusetts Maple Syrup Farms, to be used for Massachusetts sugarmakers who wish to participate in the Program.

Participation in the program is voluntary and largely self-regulated, with participants self-auditing their operations using a checklist. Participation will allow sugarmakers to display the Commonwealth Quality seal on their products. To date, four sugarmakers have signed up to participate in the program.

Guidelines for participation and more information about the program are available at <http://www.thecqp.com/images/maple/maple.html>, or contact MMPA coordinator Winton Pitcoff at winton@massmaple.org.

DO YOUR GIFT SHOPPING WITH MASS MAPLE

Get all of your gift shopping done AND support MMPA!

Does your favorite sugarmaker have the **The North American Maple Syrup Producers Manual**? We've got it for only \$35!

Then there's our great DVD -- **Making Maple Candy & Cream**. \$25

And don't forget Mass Maple **tshirts** (\$10), **sweatshirts** (\$15), **hooded sweatshirts** (\$23) and **caps** (\$12). Limited quantities of some sizes, so order soon!

Everything's available online, at:

<http://www.massmaple.org/buy.php>

Welcome New Members

The following people joined MMPA in the last six months. If they're neighbors of yours, stop by and welcome them!

Scott Breveleri, Feeding Hills
Brendan Gerry, Charlemont
Jason Hoellerich, Cheshire
Mark Lattanzi, Montague
Michel Levesque, Lapocatiere, Quebec
Penny Marston, Spencer
James Molitoris, Easthampton
Patrick F. O'Bryan, Deerfield
Thomas C. Powers, Jr., Williamsburg
Mike Rhenow, Brockton
Steve Rogalski, Hadley
Craig and Hunter Sessions, Shelburne Falls
Eileen & Bob Silva, Byfield
Peter Stodden, Washington
Christine Turnbull, Sharon
David Wallace, Monson
Ashley and Shirley Webb, Greenfield

Mass Maple Warehouse

212 Reynolds Road • Shelburne, MA 01370
413-625-2900

SUPPLIES: The warehouse is well stocked with all sizes of maple syrup jugs, maple cream jars. Other syrup containers stocked include three sizes of glass maple leaf bottles and five-gallon plastic containers for bulk packing. The warehouse also has cardboard cartons for all size of jugs, gift boxes and maple candy boxes. Many other materials are available: Posters, recipe booklets, coloring books, labels, hang tags, producer manuals, instructional and educational videos, etc.

HOURS: The warehouse is open seven days a week, on a "call ahead" basis only. During the maple season if no one can answer the phone, a message on the answering machine will indicate the hours for that day when someone will be home. Otherwise, please leave a message and someone will return your call. Please be sure to call ahead for everyone's convenience - don't be disappointed by arriving unannounced and finding no one there to assist you. Terms are cash or check only upon pick-up - no charges.

UPS: We can ship only full cases of jugs. You will be billed for the cost of the jugs plus UPS charges. Call in your order to the warehouse (413-625-2900) and we will send it out with a bill. Partial cases of jugs and glass of any quantity cannot be shipped safely.

Maple Syrup Taps, Yield, and Production – States and United States: 2012-2014

State	Number of taps			Yield per tap			Production		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
	(1,000 taps)	(1,000 taps)	(1,000 taps)	(gallons)	(gallons)	(gallons)	(1,000 gallons)	(1,000 gallons)	(1,000 gallons)
Connecticut	70	78	83	0.157	0.256	0.193	11	20	16
Maine	1,500	1,880	1,850	0.240	0.298	0.295	360	560	545
Massachusetts	250	280	290	0.160	0.225	0.210	40	63	61
Michigan	430	490	430	0.151	0.302	0.212	65	148	91
New Hampshire	440	470	490	0.173	0.264	0.229	76	124	112
New York	2,070	2,200	2,200	0.174	0.261	0.248	360	574	546
Ohio	410	440	450	0.244	0.352	0.289	100	155	130
Pennsylvania	501	583	588	0.192	0.230	0.248	96	134	146
Vermont	3,500	4,200	4,270	0.214	0.352	0.309	750	1,480	1,320
Wisconsin	600	740	700	0.083	0.358	0.286	50	265	200
United States	9,771	11,361	11,351	0.195	0.310	0.279	1,908	3,523	3,167

Source: Crop production report, Released June 11, 2014, by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Agricultural Statistics Board, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), <http://goo.gl/ShGGV4>

Massachusetts maple syrup production in 2014 decreased only slightly from the previous year, dropping 2,000 gallons to 61,000, according to the annual survey conducted by the National Agricultural Statistics Service. The season length was reported to be five days shorter than 2012, and national production was 10% less than during the record-setting 2013 season.

Massachusetts average retail price per gallon (all

grades, all container sizes) increased from \$51.50 in 2012 to \$59.10 in 2013, second only to CT, while MA bulk price declined from \$29.70 to \$28.40 per gallon (\$2.69 to \$2.60 per pound). Average retail price per gallon across the U.S. declined from \$39.10 to \$37.40 from 2012-2013.

192 producers in Massachusetts responded to this year's survey. MMPA encourages all of our members to participate.

Our Heriage Is Maple Sugaring...



Call and ask for our maple equipment catalog and current used equipment list. Bulk maple syrup bought and sold. Syrup and equipment may be accepted in trade toward equipment.

Photo: Ken Bascom with Jack and Jerry collecting sap, 1953.



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2014 VT grading kits a little light

Sugarmakers who purchased temporary grading kits for 2014 for the new grading standards are advised that the sample in the kit for the lightest grade was accidentally made too light. As a result, you may have graded some syrup as 'Amber Color' that, in fact, should have been on the darker end of 'Golden Color.' More details are available at: <http://goo.gl/EBJ87a>.

Research on spouts and droplines

The Northern New York Agricultural Development Program has been exploring the impact on production and on profitability of replacing spouts and droplines and has released some of their findings. Their conclusions included:

- New drop lines and spouts produce excellent yields, but perhaps not the highest profit
- Producers are losing income if they just use very old drop lines and spouts.
- It is important to use a new spout every year though the type of new spout on new drop lines does not seem to matter.
- Check-valve spouts may improve yields on old (more than several years) drops, but evidence is not clear; more research needed.
- The cost of drop replacement may not be offset by increased yields if the drop lines are relatively new (less than 3 years old). The breakeven period for replacing droplines is likely a few years, though more research is necessary.
- It is very difficult to get reliable information from the type of comparisons producers are able to do by comparing a small number of stands. To compare treatments for whole stands, we first need to "calibrate" stands for several years to ensure that the differences in yields can be attributed to a certain type of spout or dropline replacement and not other factors.

The full report can be found online at: <http://goo.gl/VfcWuq>

Comments due on new grading system

The USDA has posted for public comment their proposed new set of voluntary grading standards for maple syrup. As with the current system, these regulations will be voluntary for producers, except in states where there are laws mandating their use (Massachusetts currently does not have such laws).

The proposal is based on the work done by the International Maple Syrup Institute and other industry organizations over the last 10 years. The full text of the proposed regulations, along with information about how to submit comments (the deadline is July 7), is available at: <http://goo.gl/KXdUc3>.

Forestry BMPs revised

Massachusetts' Best Management Practices for forestry have been revised. These guidelines play a critical role in implementing sound forest management and are often referenced in conservation restrictions to help guide appropriate forest management on conserved land.

The last edition of the forestry BMPs was published in 1999, and since then many things have changed. Foresters are now licensed, the use of conservation restrictions has increased, we are more aware of the spread of exotic-invasive plants and insects, biomass for energy production has grown, new sediment control structures are available, and the Internet has become an important source of information.

The revised manual is available online at: <http://goo.gl/4sruzy> or contact Paul Catanzaro at cat@umext.umass.edu or 413-545-4839.

MA Forestry Alliance

After representatives from the Massachusetts Forestry Alliance spoke at the Mass Maple annual meeting in January, it was agreed that the two organizations have many shared interests. The Alliance is a membership organization, and you can find more information about what they do on their website at <http://massforestalliance.org/>.

One issue of note is the potential 'National Forest' designation for 20 towns in Western MA. Such a move would have many implications for landown-

ers, foresters and sugarmakers – some positive, and some that warrant concern. “The one sure thing that would come from involvement of the National Forest branch is a large – and largely unforeseeable – collection of strings attached. The Forest Service manual detailing the laws applicable to National Forests is more than 800 pages long. Does anyone really believe that any type of National Forest “designation” for the region will come without a set of entangling complications?” Further details about MFAs concerns were published in their quarterly newsletter, at: <http://goo.gl/2V63p2>

Invasives updates

The small outbreak of Asian Longhorned Beetles in Boston has been eradicated, according to state officials, while the efforts to contain the outbreak in Central Massachusetts continue. A 110 square mile quarantine zone remains in place in Worcester, West Boylston, Boylston, Shrewsbury and portions of Holden and Auburn.

Meanwhile, last summer’s discovery of Emerald Ash Borer in Dalton led to a quarantine of Berkshire County, and a subsequent discovery of EAB in North Andover resulted in a quarantine of Essex County.

Details of these and other efforts to stop the spread of invasive pests in Massachusetts can be found at: <http://massnrc.org/pests/>.

2014 NAMSC/IMSI annual meetings and technical presentations

The annual meetings of the North American Maple Syrup Council and the International Maple Syrup Institute will be held October 21-23, 2014 at Old Orchard Inn & Spa, Annapolis Valley, Nova Scotia. Details and registration information are available at <http://goo.gl/KU9C4R>.

Even if you’re not planning to attend, please consider entering some of your syrup, candy, cream or photos. Entry forms are at the above link. It would be great to see Massachusetts producers win some awards! If you want to save on shipping costs, check with coordinator Winton Pitcoff (winton@massmaple.org) and he can bring your entries to Nova Scotia with him.



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2014 NYS Maple Tour

The 2014 New York State Maple Tour is scheduled for July 13-15, 2014. The tour will be hosted by the Chautauqua County Maple Producers Association and centered at the Chautauqua Suites Hotel and Expo Center, in Mayville. The tour will be visiting a variety of maple sugar houses and sugarbush locations. Come prepared to experience some maple demonstrations, some outstanding maple operations and another great New York State Maple Tour. Details and registration at: <http://goo.gl/svWpNQ>

2014 Vermont Maplerama

The 2014 Vermont Maplerama will be held July 24-26 at the Franklin County Field days. 14 sugarhouse tours have been scheduled. Some of the smallest and largest maple producers are located in Franklin County, using a variety of evaporation techniques, including wood, wood pellets, wood chips, steam and oil, plus the newest technology in tapping, evaporation and remote vacuum sensing. More details are available at: <http://goo.gl/c97DKi>

Glass bottles available at MMPA warehouse

Members have noticed these etched glass jugs and some have begun bottling syrup in them. MMPA carried a limited amount at the Big E booth and they sold out quickly. The Association has purchased two pallets of these jugs to sell to our members, and they are available at the warehouse.

The jugs are sold in cases of 12. A case of the 500 ml size is \$25.80 and a case of the 250 ml size is \$24.

The etching is done by Artisan Printing of Vermont (www.apofvt.com), a company run by Vermont Sugarmaker Bill LaPorte.





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Support for maple in U.S. Farm Bill, sort of

The U.S. Farm Bill (aka the “Agricultural Act of 2014”) finally passed Congress and was signed by the President in January. Included in the bill was the Acer Access and Development Program, the first time that the maple industry has been singled out for attention in this massive piece of federal legislation.

The program’s stated purpose is “To support State and tribal government efforts to promote research and education related to maple syrup production, natural resource sustainability in the maple syrup industry, market promotion of maple products, and greater access to lands containing maple trees for maple-sugaring activities, and for other purposes.” The text goes on to say that, specifically, the program will offer grants to support:

- “(1) Promotion of research and education related to maple syrup production.
- (2) Promotion of natural resource sustainability in the maple syrup industry.
- (3) Market promotion for maple syrup and maple-sap products.
- (4) Encouragement of owners and operators of pri-

vately-held land containing species of trees in the genus Acer--

(A) to initiate or expand maple-sugaring activities on the land; or

(B) to voluntarily make the land available, including by lease or other means, for access by the public for maple-sugaring activities.”

The law sets aside \$20 million per year for five years for grants that support this mix of promotion and production. But don’t go spending that money just yet. Don’t even go applying for it. The legislation authorizes those funds, but does not specifically appropriate them – that’s up to a whole ‘nother couple of committees.

Unfortunately, those committees met just last month and decided that this program didn’t warrant funding this year -- the ongoing budget crisis in Washington has made it difficult to get new funding for any programs at all, in fact. We’ll take it up with our members of Congress next year, though, in the hopes of getting some much needed support for our industry in future years.



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What does my \$45 MMPA membership get me?

The Mass Maple board and staff know that there are many good organizations out there asking you to become members. We appreciate your commitment to MMPA, and we work hard to make sure that your membership is worthwhile for you.

A voice for producers. The Massachusetts Maple Producers Association is actively involved with the two international trade organizations – the North American Maple Syrup Council and the International Maple Syrup Institute – and helps to make sure that the work they do and the positions they take are in the best interests of our members. We are also engaged here in Massachusetts, supporting laws and regulations that meet the needs of our members, and challenging those that don't.

A link to consumers. We are always promoting Massachusetts maple products, and steering consumers to their local sugarhouses to buy direct from our members. Our online directory of sugarhouses gets thousands of hits every month, we send brochures

and other literature to visitor centers and chambers of commerce for distribution, we maintain a very active Facebook page, and we run a booth at the Big E where we educate thousands of people about how maple products are made and why they should buy direct from Massachusetts maple producers.

Educational opportunities. Members are invited to workshops at our annual meeting and summer picnic, and can get free transportation each January to the New York State maple conference, which offers a full day of technical workshops and a great trade show.

Product discounts. Members can purchase the widely-recognized Massachusetts maple jugs from our warehouse and other convenient locations. Other items, such as signs and educational materials, are also available at cost or at discounted prices.

Detailed member benefits are listed online, at: <http://www.massmaple.org/membership.php>



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For Sale: 4'x8'x2' galvanized sap tank, no leaks, a little rust: \$100. Side mounted stainless steel roof jack for 6/12 pitch and 8" pipe: \$75. Contact Ed Parker at 413-427-2475.

Reduce diabetes risk with maple syrup

Research findings presented at the American Chemical Society (ACS) annual meeting in March reported that maple syrup does not cause the same insulin spike as some other sugars and further suggested that maple syrup's unique cocktail of constituents may be beneficial to one's health. "While more research is needed," said the researchers, "our findings may help people at risk for metabolic syndrome to make better choices when selecting a sweetener for their daily intake. We know today that not all sweeteners are created equal when it comes to glucose control and insulin resistance. Our preliminary findings also suggest that maple syrup may have a positive effect on metabolic syndrome and could play a role in the prevention of it." More details are at <http://goo.gl/y5iUwI>.

The inner workings of the maple industry

An excellent article in *Northern Woodlands* magazine ("A Maple Bubble? How the Syrup Market Works, and What It All Might Mean") looks at the history of the maple industry and explains the outsized influence of the Quebec Federation on prices and supply. This should be required reading for anyone who sells maple syrup. <http://goo.gl/sJkxUy>

Monthly columns on maple production and the industry

Mass Maple Coordinator Winton Pitcoff has been writing a monthly column for *Farming* magazine on maple sugaring. Recent topics include tap and tubing replacement and cleaning, tapping guide-

lines, energy efficiency in the sugarhouse, and the 2012 agricultural census numbers for the maple industry. All of the columns are available at: <http://www.farmingmagazine.com/>.

2012 Ag Census data released

Recently released data from the 2012 USDA Census of Agriculture offers a detailed picture of sugaring in Massachusetts. Some interesting numbers:

County distribution: Fully 50% of the taps in Massachusetts are set in Franklin County, followed by 26% in Hampshire and 12% in Berkshire.

Operation size: Between 2007 and 2012 there was a 25% increase in the number of taps set on farms with more than 2,000 taps, and a 15% decrease in the number of taps set on farms with fewer than 2,000 taps.

Farmers: 109 sugarmakers listed farming as their primary occupation, while 158 said their primary occupation was something other than farming. 51% of MA sugarmakers are 55 years old and older, 81% are 45 years old and older.

Lots of additional data is available online, at <http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/>.

Just like with NASS, the Census of Agriculture is only as accurate as the number of people who respond to the surveys. All responses are kept confidential – please return these surveys when you get them, as the information gathered helps the Association support the industry!

2014 Quebec production second-highest ever

Just as we're finishing this issue of the newsletter, the Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers has released their 2014 production numbers. The Province made 113.7 million pounds of maple syrup on 42.7 million taps, second only to last year's production of 120.3 million pounds. In early April, prior to their season, the Federation's strategic reserve had 52 million pounds on hand.

2014 Maple season kickoff in Belchertown

On Friday, March 7, MMPA held the annual kick-off event to draw attention to the maple sugaring season. The event was held on the town common in Belchertown. State Representative John Scibak (D-South Hadley) was on hand to read the proclamation from Governor Patrick, declaring March to be Maple Month in the Commonwealth.

"If you want the best maple syrup, you have to get it in Massachusetts," said Scibak.

The event was hosted by the Shattuck family and drew about 50 guests. Representative Scibak set the ceremonial first tap and there were even a few drops of sap, despite the cold. Media coverage was good, and local bakers provided some excellent maple treats.

Each year the Association holds this event to help promote Massachusetts maple products. If you'd like to host it at your sugarhouse, contact Winton at winton@massmaple.org.



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