

# THE PIPELINE



A New York State Maple Producers Association Publication

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## 2014 Weather and the Maple Crop: Optimism or Pessimism?

By Helen Thomas

Weather: maple producers can talk about the weather more than the staff at the weather channel! Especially this year, it seems that every one of you has had weather and temperature as the first thought on waking and the last thought before sleeping. The weather people tell us this has been an exceptionally long cold winter, not at all the “normal.” So what does that mean for our maple crop in 2014 in New York State?

I asked a few of you from all over NYS to tell me what has been actually happening. Most of you tapped your woods “about the same time” as you have in years past. Of course, there were variations—I heard from folks on the Tug Hill and at higher elevations in the Catskills and Adirondacks that you perhaps tapped a week later than usual. But there were some of you that tapped in January, which was earlier than usual. What is consistent is that there were fewer sap runs prior to early March, with a corresponding lower amount of syrup produced by that point, no matter where in the state. Most of you reported lower sugar concentration in those early runs.

As of March 26, everyone in the state was reporting that production was still not “taking off.” The differences in snow cover and temperature around the state were more pronounced by that time. After the first maple weekend, many of you had only gotten one or two sap runs, still had 1-3 feet of snow in your woods, and were feeling a bit worried that the season would be a low crop. But In Western and Central New York, and the lower Hudson Valley, by that time the reports said those producers had up to 1/3 of an average crop made. The rest of the state was reporting anywhere from 2% to 10% of a crop made. The news media was also getting interested: the state office was receiving daily calls asking what the financial loss was going to be! Helen



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## **2014 Weather and the Maple Crop: Optimism or Pessimism?** *continued from page 1*

got very practiced at explaining that the season was just getting started and it was too soon to tell. "Ask us on the first of May!!" got said a lot during the last few days of March.

It got more suspenseful when the forecast of warming for the second Maple Weekend (march 29-30) vanished in a surprise snowstorm Saturday night. Sunday there was a foot or more of snow when we had been expecting a decent sap run to be able to boil!

In spite of this, maple producers in general seem to be optimistic:

**FROM WESTERN NY:** "There is plenty of ice still on Chautauqua lake, generally we can make syrup until the ice breaks, if that holds true this year we still have plenty of time to get to a full crop!" and "We'll be boiling until 4/20 or later."

**FROM LEWIS COUNTY:** "We still hope the season will be good."

**FROM THE NORTH COUNTRY:** "Hopefully everything thaws out today and tomorrow and gets our season started. Then, hoping for more than a week and a half or two week season. Going to tap a few more trees to make up for lost production."

As I write this it is now April 4, and we have had a much more "sugaring weather" week. Reports from those of you have time to answer are encouraging. There is now a prediction from WNY: "Predicting a bumper crop—110%" It is also very encouraging that several folks I asked have NOT had time to reply!! While I still hear that almost no one is reporting one of those "gusher" days when you are chasing to keep the tanks emptied, for the most part you all report production has picked up. I am hearing everything from 60% of an average crop made (lower parts of the state) to 20% of a crop (you guys where it is really cold!).

By the time you read this, the season will be coming to a close. (Or maybe not: the April 20 prediction may be correct!). What this season does tell us is that "average" does not mean the same every year. We can go from a winter like 2012—with the season done in mid-March when it hit 80 degrees—to a winter like 2014 when it hasn't been above freezing yet by mid-March. I hate to have to admit I am old enough to remember when MOST winters were like this one, so it is really not that outside the average.

So let's hope as you read this that you can be looking at a sugarhouse that has an average number of full barrels—and maybe a weather forecast with a few more days of sugaring weather. Then we can all start asking Northern Vermont, Maine, and Quebec: "How's your maple season?"

I'll remind you all of the sentiment that drives us to do this: "I think it is always a good season (MY FAVORITE) sugaring season." (Thanks to Mike Kenny for that quote!)

Where trade names are used, no discrimination is intended and no endorsement is implied by the New York State Maple Producers Association.





# Use of New Grading System in NY Begins January 1, 2015

## Part 270. Maple Syrup

### Section 270.1 Maple Syrup: identities; label statements

(a) Definitions: For the purpose of this section, the following terms shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

1. Light transmittance means the fraction of incident light at a specified wavelength that passes through a representative sample of a particular sub-grade of Grade A maple syrup.

2. Soluble solids, expressed as a percentage, means the proportion of maple sap solids in the applicable solvent.

3. Tc means the percentage of light transmission through maple syrup, measurable by a spectrophotometer, using matched square optical cells having a 10-millimeter light path at a wavelength of 560 nanometers, the color values being expressed in percent of light transmission as compared to A.R. Glycerol fixed at 100% transmission.

(b) Standards of identity.

1. Maple syrup is the liquid made by the evaporation of pure sap or sweet water obtained by tapping a maple tree. Maple syrup contains minimum soluble solids of 66.0% and maximum soluble solids of 68.9%. Maple syrup includes, and is either, Grade A Maple Syrup or Processing Grade Maple Syrup, as defined in paragraphs (2) and (3) of this subdivision.

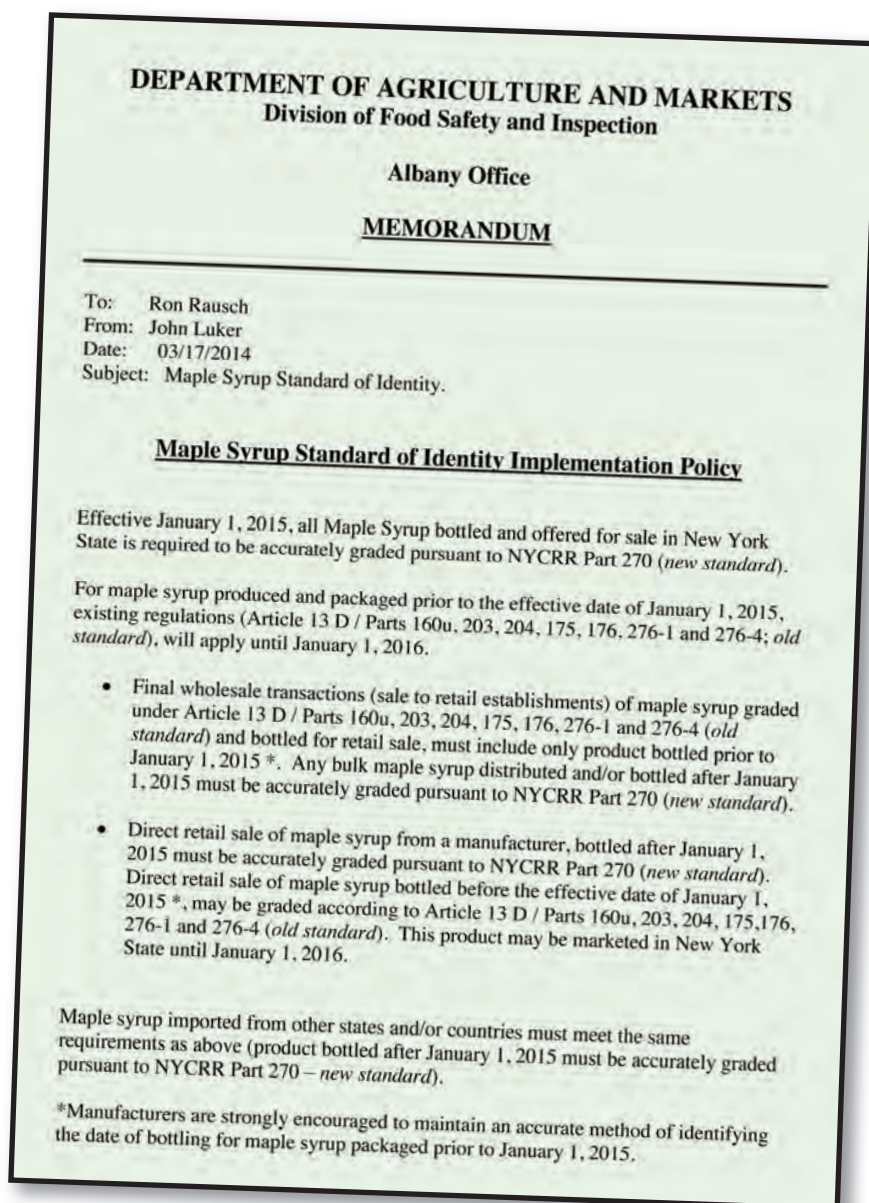
2. Grade A maple syrup means maple syrup that is not fermented, is not turbid, and contains or has no objectionable odors, off-flavors or sediment. Grade A maple syrup must fall within one of the color and taste sub-grades of Grade A maple syrup set forth in subparagraphs (a), (b), (c), or (d) of this paragraph.

a. Grade A golden color and delicate taste maple syrup has a uniform light golden color, a delicate to mild taste, and a light transmittance of 75% Tc or more.

b. Grade A amber color and rich taste maple syrup has a uniform amber color, a rich or full-bodied taste, and a light transmittance of 50% - 74.9% Tc.

c. Grade A dark color and robust taste maple syrup has a uniform dark color, a robust or strong taste, and a light transmittance of 25% - 49.9% Tc.

d. Grade A very dark and strong taste maple syrup has a uniform very dark color, a very strong taste, and a light transmittance of less than 25% Tc.



*continued on page 15*

# Vertical Water—Maple Sap as a Year-round Beverage

*By Paolo Cugnasca, Managing Director, Feronia Forests LLC*

The last week in March, we processed and packaged the 2014 commercial production of Vertical Water, 100% pure maple water – nothing added – from New York State maple trees. The Vertical Water name reflects the movement of the water inside the maple tree, when cold nights are followed by warmer days at the end of each winter. It also reflects our mission to keep trees vertical and growing every year rather than being cut down for timber.

As you know, maple sap is normally utilized for the production of syrup and other maple products. Until very recently, the production of maple sap as a beverage was limited to few flavored and carbonated products using maple sap as their base ingredient. Permeate and the condensate created during sap processing have also been bottled, though distribution has been fairly limited.

Commercial availability of maple water, i.e., outside of what one can taste fresh-tapped, is a relatively new development, spurred by the growing interest in natural beverages like coconut water, with global sales today exceeding \$1 billion, and important technological advances. Maple water possesses a number of really great qualities: it is delicious, 100% pure water, filtered through the trees' root system and enhanced by nature; it is naturally lightly sweet and has 1/3 the calories of most coconut water beverages making it an

appealing option for health-conscious consumers. Research on its functionality is ongoing however what has transpired so far is very promising.

Vertical Water originates from Feronia Forests, a company that owns and manages hardwood forests in the Northeast. My daughter Valentina, Director of Feronia Forests and Vertical Water's CEO, has worked with me on this forestry project for ten years and is the creator of Feronia Forests' sustainability vision: "Unlike most timberland management organizations, Feronia strategically postpones the harvesting of its trees and limits harvesting for the long-term health of its forests. To compensate, we creatively develop alternative sources of revenues from within the forest, ranging from recreational activities to renewable energy to various products of the forest: this is what we call our Sustainable Full Forestry™ strategy. Vertical Water is one of these ideas: it helps reconnect people with our forests, while conserving trees—keeping them vertical—at the same time."

For Feronia, the development of maple sap as a beverage goes back to the fall of 2011 when we first contacted Michael Farrell, Director of Cornell University's Uihlein Forest in Lake Placid, NY for advice on generating revenues from products of the forest. "One of the many topics we covered was why the commercialization of maple sap as a year-round beverage had not been tried before," adds Valentina. "We saw the opportunity to capitalize on the growing trend for healthy, natural beverages and at the same time innovatively extract sustainable revenues from the forests' ecosystem."

After much research on alternative processes, Feronia eventually contracted the use of Cornell's Food Venture Center's facilities in Geneva, NY, to test and perfect a process that resulted in achieving for maple sap a shelf life of over one year.



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“Our first commercial test was in March 2012 and we were very pleased with the results. People who tried our maple water were invariably surprised by its fresh, thirst-quenching characteristics” continues Valentina. “Most surprising to us was the general lack of awareness about the relationship between sap and syrup, and about the miracle of nature that each year’s sap harvest really is. Education is going to be important for this new beverage product to gain widespread consumer acceptance.” Vertical Water had its trade launch at the Natural Products Expo East in Baltimore last September, where it generated lots of interest and was ranked fifth among 170 new products by the Expo’s organizers.

We have made a conscious effort to keep the Vertical Water business within New York State. Pat Hooker, former Commissioner of the Ag & Markets Division and now working at the Governor’s office, provided Feronia much encouragement on this project from the very beginning. We are grateful for his guidance as well as the valuable insights we received from everyone else who worked with us on this exciting project.

Feronia Forests is one of the few timberland managers that is a Certified B Corporation. Today, there are one thousand B Corporations in 32 countries. In the U.S., probably the best-known examples are Patagonia, Seventh Generation and Method Products. B Corporations are measured for

their environmental and social impact so they must meet higher accountability standards. Among B Corporations, Feronia was one of the recipients for the 2013 “Best for the Environment” award.

Valentina concludes: “At Feronia forests, we like to say that ‘we see the forest for the trees.’ We have an enduring passion to conserve our forests and all they have to offer, for ourselves and for future generations. Vertical Water is sustainably sourced right here in New York State rather than being imported from thousands of miles away. If we are successful, we have an opportunity to create a new beverage category utilizing our state’s untapped [no pun intended] natural resources and, with future growth, hopefully create a number of job opportunities which is very much in line with Feronia’s social and environmental mission.”



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## Tapping Can Be a Real Bear!



*Skip Dippold found a fellow maple fan while he was out tapping one day!*



*And the little guy was still there at 11:30 that night!*

# Washing Maple Tubing Systems

by Stephen Childs, Cornell Sugar Maple Program Director & NYS Maple Specialist



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension

The Cornell Maple Program conducted some research in the 2012 and 2013 maple seasons on alternative methods of cleaning maple tubing systems. In 2014 this is the main thrust of your tubing investigations with the support of a SARE grant and assistance from the Upper Hudson Association. This article deals mostly with issues of various cleaners that have been used or questioned by maple producers. For additional up-to-date information on cleaning tubing systems, see the North American Maple Syrup Producers Manual beginning on page 109.

Washing all food contact surfaces is an important part of all food processing facilities including maple tubing systems. The sooner a maple tubing system can be cleaned following the last sap flow the less time bacteria and yeast will have to grow on sap remaining in the lines. Lines are washed to remove any remaining sap and the mass of bacteria and yeast that built up in the late-season sap. The standard procedure for most food contact surfaces would be to rinse with hot water to remove residue, wash with a cleaner, rinse out the cleaner, treat with a sanitizer, rinse again with hot water and dry. A cleaner is a product that is good at removing microbes and debris from the tubing but not necessarily good at actually killing the bacteria and yeast. A sanitizer is generally not good at removing microbes and debris from the tubing but is good at killing the bacteria and yeast. Due to the fact that sap is such a weak solution of sugar water, such an extensive protocol of cleaning has been seen as unnecessary. However, a maple producer needs to be careful which parts of the washing protocol are utilized and the implications of their choices of cleaners and or sanitizers. Residues of cleaners and sanitizers can be associated with off flavors in syrup or even with health concerns with tainted syrup. Maple producers must be familiar with the conditions that may lead to tainted syrup.

Besides flavor issues in syrup associated with cleaner and sanitizer residues, research has not been able to show clear improvements to syrup quality or quantity based on the tubing cleaning method used. Research in Canada conducted

between 1998 and 2000 could not clearly link the number of bacteria present in sap with mid-season tubing treatments with air and water, bleach, hydrogen peroxide and acid cleaners. Not one of these treatments was found to be consistently better than the others at reducing bacteria counts. This would raise the question of why maple producers would risk handling, storing and disposing of chemical treatments for tubing if they cannot provide a definable benefit.

The difficulty seeing the benefit of chemical cleaners and sanitizers is likely due to a combination of factors. First is the very large area of contact surface present in a maple tubing system. There is about one square foot of internal surface area for each 12' of 5/16" tubing. One inch mainline has about one square foot for each 4' of tubing. An acre of sugarbush with 60 taps per acre would average about 148' of dropline, 1480' of lateral line and about 270' of one inch mainline. That would represent a total of 203 square feet of surface area that needs to be cleaned. 6000 taps would have 20,300 square feet of surface area to wash. Second, many sanitizers need a certain contact time at a given concentration to actually kill the bacteria and yeast present. Often the contact time of fresh sanitizer solution flowing through the droplines of the system during washing is just a few seconds. Third, many times maple producers do not rinse the lines before the sanitizer is added. When the lines are not rinsed the sanitizer comes into direct contact with a volume of bacteria and yeast bodies, both dead and alive, in the line and the sanitizing effect is rapidly





exhausted. If the lines were well rinsed prior to the sanitizer being introduced the sanitizer would be much more effective. Fourth, often there are bacteria and yeast that form a bio-film on the inside surface of the tubing. In a bio-film the bacteria and yeast are glued to the tubing surface in a protective coating that is not easily penetrated with a sanitizer. The bio-film must be removed or disrupted with a cleaner before the microbes can be accessed by the sanitizer.

The most common method of washing maple tubing is with a combination of pressurized air and water fed into the bottom of the mainlines and the spouts removed from the trees one by one when the air and water are being pushed into the line so the cleaning water is forced out thorough the spouts for several seconds before being placed securely into the spout holder. Some producers then leave the system full of water, others let the system drain and some will follow up by vacuuming the line dry. In my experience, leaving the lines full of water results in very foul smelling water, often with algae to start the following season. This water must be disposed of along with a significant amount of new sap that it takes to purge the lines.

Chemical cleaners and sanitizers are strictly regulated in food processing operations. They are regulated by the Federal Food and Drug Administration's Code of Federal Regulations Title 21, Chapter I, Part 178 – Indirect Food Additives: Adjuvants, Production Aids, and Sanitizers. This document gives the suitable materials along with accepted concentrations. These regulations are available on line through the government printing office. The Environmental Protection Agency is also involved in providing the businesses that make the cleaners and sanitizers with regulations for what must be listed on the label for the legal use of the chemicals titled Label Requirements for Pesticides Used for Sanitation of Food Contact Surfaces. This is also available on line at [http://epa.gov/oppad001/dis\\_tss\\_docs/dis-17.htm](http://epa.gov/oppad001/dis_tss_docs/dis-17.htm). This instructs the company to specify many important details of how a material can legally be used.

Of particular importance to a maple producer who is planning to treat maple tubing is the term porous surface. Plastic is one of the food contact surfaces that is considered porous. Many labels specify that the chemicals are only for use on non-porous surfaces. This is true of most of the labels for several sanitizers that some maple producers have shown an interest in trying, including quaternary ammonium compounds and per-oxyacetic acid. These labels do not allow their use in cleaning a plastic food contact surface. Using a cleaning chemical in ways either not mentioned on the label or forbidden on the

label or at concentrations other than listed in the label is not acceptable. The label is the legal document, even if the use is permitted by the Food and Drug Administration, the label may limit the use. Experimenting with materials without a label or with uses not listed on the label is also not acceptable.

Only two sanitizers are recommended for sanitizing the tubing system, sodium hypochlorite (the active ingredient in bleach) or food-grade hydrogen peroxide. Where the bleach is used maple producers often complain of more rodent damage to tubing. The bleach should be drained, vacuumed or rinsed from the tubing. Leaving it in the lines can lead to off flavors or saltiness of the next season's maple syrup if not completely purged by sap the following season. The food grade hydrogen peroxide breaks down without leaving any residue and is not reported to attract rodents.

Hydrogen peroxide that is not food grade often has a second sanitizer present called peroxyacetic acid. This product should be avoided in the maple tubing system. Acid cleaners and peroxyacetic acid do not break down, do not boil away and can be toxic. They would only be used where the protocol is a true and complete rinse following the acid

and following the sanitizer, followed by drying the food contact surface. The actual product purchased would also need the label allowing them to be used to treat a porous food contact surface. These and other products not recommended can have residues that are actually concentrated by the sap boiling process and as a result a health concern.



To determine the correct concentration of a sanitizer to use in maple tubing read and follow label directions. These products are available in a variety of formulations and concentrations; therefore to list a potential dilution rate here may not match the products you purchase. Always read and follow the label.

*continues on page 8*

An alternative to washing the tubing system by pushing the water, air and associated cleaners or sanitizers into the system from the bottom end of mainlines is to wash the system from the top down. This method is more common in systems of small or medium size. This method is used for both gravity and vacuum systems. In a system with vacuum, it is left on during the cleaning. The operator carries a container or backpack filled with clean hot water or water plus sanitizer and injects the solution into each tap as they are removed from the tree. The solution is then pulled down through the system either by gravity or by the vacuum. This method may do a fair job of cleaning out drops and lateral lines but is not likely to provide the volume necessary to clean out the larger mainlines.

Some producers have overcome this shortfall by also washing mainlines from the top. After cleaning the lateral lines as just described the maple produce brings an adequate supply of water and pump to the top of the mainline with a tractor or four-wheeler and continues washing down the mainline from the top. Some woods do not provide adequate access to the tops of mainlines for this system to be used. One advantage of this cleaning method is that less pressure is required to push the solution through the lines. A disadvantage is that there is likely to be less turbulence to assist in a good cleaning of the mainline.

Another cleaning opportunity is available for cleaning mainlines where vacuum with dry lines and wet lines are part of the tubing system. With some additional plumbing near the releaser, a dry line and wet line can be washed with a minimum of effort. By shutting off the dry line from the vacuum of the releaser and injecting air and water under pressure into that dry line, the wash water will be forced out through the dry line and pulled back to the releaser through the wet line that is still under vacuum.

From the releaser the wash water can be discarded. This would likely only provide a good cleaning out to the first few

manifolds connecting the wet and dry lines. If the manifolds were constructed so that a shut off valve was in place between the wet and dry line the washing could be complete as far as the dry line extends into the system if the producers were to close all of those manifold valves along the line, except the one at the furthest point. This method allows the producer to wash mainlines from the sugarhouse or pump station. Producers with this system often will wash mainlines several times throughout the sap season or even following each sap run. The main effort is in closing and then reopening the manifold valves if there are more than just a few in the dry line system.

In the 2013 season in replicated trials in the gravity portion of our research we were able to show that properly cleaned and sanitized drops and spouts performed equal to new spouts and drops. To be properly cleaned and sanitized the spouts and drops had to be removed from the sugar bush, rinsed, washed with detergent, rinsed, sanitized with bleach, rinsed and dried. In the 2014 study we are duplicating trials with Proctor to get a good comparison.

Treatments include new spouts and drops, new spout on old drops, check valves on old drops, spout and drop sanitizing with Calcium based bleach, hydrogen peroxide, alcohol and water. Should be a good test with this very extended season.



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# Health Spouts and Pattern Tapping Beginning to Make a Difference

by Stephen Childs, Cornell Sugar Maple Program Director & NYS Maple Specialist

I first started assisting with tapping at the Arnot Forest in 2005. At that time the forest had been using health spouts or 5/16 spouts for three or four years. In 2009 we started pattern tapping by moving over one to one-and-a-half inches from the last years tap hole and up or down 5 to 10 inches from last year's tap hole. Often we had to move over more than the inch and a half due to the locations of visible old tap holes. In order to make it easy to identify where the pattern was and where it was going we painted a dot on the tree just under or over the current tap hole when the spouts were pulled with each year having a different color. Now based on the color dots it is very easy to see where the next tap should go based on the painted dots.

Each year as I tap I watch the drill shavings and count how many times I hit partitioned, discolored wood for each bag of spouts. In 2005 I was averaging between 15 and 20 poor taps for each 100 drilled. That means at least some portion of the shavings coming from those 15 to 20 holes were dark colored. In my years of tapping and harvesting sap in buckets I noticed I would usually get yellow sap from holes with significant brown shavings during the last third of the season. That was ten years with 1200 buckets per year so I had lots of time to observe. The number of spouts with off colored shavings has been gradually dropping over the years since 2005 at the Arnot Forest. 2014 tapping was the best so far with between one and three holes per hundred with poor shavings observed.

Each year the tree adds another ring of growth on the radius of the tree gradually burying old holes and associated partitioned zones. We try to keep tap holes about one and a half inches deep. The 5/16 spouts have helped by leaving a much narrower partitioned zone in the tree and the pattern tapping is allowing us to avoid hitting the damage from more recent taps. In a few more years it looks like drilling in clean white wood will be nearly perfect.



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# Kylie Hint, New York State Maple Queen



*Tara Austin and Kylie Hint helping the Hoffbienzies at Aripalooza*

Hello. I am Kylie Hint, your New York State Maple Queen for the remainder of the 2013-14 reign. The New York State Queen crowned in May has been unable to fulfill her duties. So as the 1st alternate, it is my duty to take her place to promote the maple industry and support producers throughout the state.

I am a senior at Fillmore Central School where I am a three-sport athlete, an honors student, and in FFA. I am also in a Natural Resources class at a vocational school. I have been involved in the maple royalty pro-

gram and have proudly represented WNY for four years. My family members are fourth-generation maple producers and we own Hint's Red Roof Maple in Friendship, NY. I help with everything from cutting wood and line maintenance to bottling and selling all of our products.

This year as the Western New York Queen and 1st Alt. NYS Queen, I have attended many events throughout the state, including WNY Maple Festival in Franklinville, the Allegany County, Chautauqua County, Wyoming County, Erie County, and NY State Fairs, Agripalooza, countless local festivals and parades, Taste of NY at the PGA Tour, and VVS Maple School and Pageant. Since my promotion to the NYS Maple Queen in early January, I have attended the Western New York Maple School and accompanied the New York State Maple Producers Association to the State Capitol for Maple Lobby Day. Along with my lobbying team, I was able to meet with many senators and assemblymen, where I shared some of Steve Child's research and expressed how his materials have helped producers and royalty promote the maple industry.

I am very excited to be the New York State Maple Queen, and I am looking forward to the maple season and Maple Weekends. I am planning to travel during maple weekend, and if you would like me to visit your sugar house or other event, I can be contacted at [khint30@yahoo.com](mailto:khint30@yahoo.com) or my coordinator Caitlyn Pilc at [catiej93@aim.com](mailto:catiej93@aim.com). I wish you all good luck for the 2014 maple season!



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# Queen Wins Farm Bureau Scholarship

by New York Farm Bureau | March 27, 2014

Three New York High School Seniors have received the distinct honor of being named statewide winners of the New York Farm Bureau Agricultural Youth Scholarship. Each student was previously named one of 11 district-wide winners, and then competed at the state level. The winners were selected based on their application and essay submission answering the question, "If you had the power to change something in your community or on your farm, what would you change and why?" The applicants also must have a family Farm Bureau membership or a Student Farm Bureau membership.

The second place scholarship prize goes to Kylie Hint from Cuba, NY. Hint, who represented Allegany County in District 1, received a \$1,200 scholarship. Her family owns Hint's Red Roof Maple, and she attends Fillmore Central School where she is active in FFA, 4-H, and numerous other activities. Next school year, Hint plans to attend college where she will study environmental science and agricultural business.



## St. Lawrence County Maple Producers Honor Maple Producer of the Year Art Hurlbut, Canton, NY, and Crown 2014 Maple Court



Left to right: New York State Maple Princess Kylea McAdam, SLC Maple Producers Association President Mike Kenny, 2014 SLC Maple Queen Megan Parkman, 2014 SLC Maple Producer of the Year Art Hurlbut, and 2014 SLC Maple Princess Sarah Rastley.



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## Behind The Scenes . . . Notes from the NYSMPA Office

Dear Members,

Thanks to all of you for renewing your membership or for joining our organization as a new member in 2014! Check out the membership statistics table – we have the largest membership in our association history and continue to grow. This reflects the robust Maple Activity in New York State!

I am happy to report that our NY legislators all recognize the important role Maple is starting to play in NY agriculture. Please be sure to thank your legislator for their support! Thanks to the leadership of Senator Ritchie and Assemblyman Bill Magee, the legislative Agriculture committees advocated for support money for the NYS Maple Producer's Association to use for our activities of advocating best practices and promoting the purchase of NY Maple products. In addition, they heard our requests to keep the Cornell Maple Program alive, and allocated 100% of the funds needed to keep Steve Childs on the job another year. This 1 year lifeline will give us all some time to figure out how we the users of the Cornell Maple Program can help ensure its long term future.

Speaking of promotion – one thing the association tries very hard to do is promote the individual retail business of each of our members. We need YOU to help us do that. When you change phone numbers or email addresses, notify the

office. Take the time to read your member listings on [nysmaple.com](http://nysmaple.com) and let the office know of any updates. If your map location is wrong, we can work together to get the pointer in exactly the right place – but I won't know it is wrong unless you call me!

We also are working on updated promotional literature for all of you. Look for an updated promotional items listing in your email and on [nysmaple.com](http://nysmaple.com) by the first of May.

The maple coffee and tea, made for us here in NYS with real NY maple, are continuing to increase in retail sales. I have found that it is hard to keep the tea in stock, it is so popular. After April 15, the coffee will be available in both regular and decaf, this is to meet customer demand. If you haven't yet tried these products, I urge you to try them in your retail sales. You can order as little as one pack of coffee or one box of teabags if you just want to try it on a small scale. Adding variety to your product offerings can get customers to stop and take a closer look, and perhaps buy something new.

I close with the same message I have each PIPELINE: the association exists to help you. If you have questions or suggestions, just give me a call on my cell phone 315-877-5795 or email me at [office@nysmaple.com](mailto:office@nysmaple.com).

*Helen Thomas, Executive Director*

## New York State Maple Producers Association, Inc.

Membership • April 4, 2014

Region	full members	associate members	retired members	student members	2013 total members	2014 total members	2014 new	unrenewed members 4/4/2014	will not renew	% renewed	% growth
Catskill 2013	92	4	2		98						
Catskill 2014	97	4	2	1		104	10	4	2	94%	6%
Central 2013	64	4	1		69						
Central 2014	61	3	1			65	8	9	3	83%	-6%
Lewis 2013	76	6	2	1	85						
Lewis 2014	76	5	1			82	4	9	0	89%	-4%
Northeastern NY 2013	56	6	0		62						
Northeastern NY 2014	74	1	1			76	25	4	2	90%	18%
St. Lawrence 2013	75	3	0		78						
St. Lawrence 2014	76	2				78	5	3	4	91%	0%
Upper Hudson 2013	50	2	0		52						
Upper Hudson 2014	55	3	0			58	7	1	1	96%	10%
Western NY 2013	148	22	2		172						
Western NY 2014	152	18	1			171	14	15	1	91%	-1%
Outside NY 2013	5	0	0		5						
Outside NY 2014	5					5	1	1	0	80%	0%
TOTALS:				2	621	639	74	46	13	90%	3%

total 2013 members 12/31/2013

621

total 2014 members 4/4/2014

639



# USDA GRANTS Available for Maple Producers

## 1. NRCS EQUIP Grants

Energy audits are offered (and required to be considered for future potential cost share of energy efficient equipment). Those producers that do have approved completed audits are eligible for certain energy efficient equipment but do need to sign up and have their applications ranked. At this point any new sign-ups would likely be batched for 2015 (starting in October). We take continuous sign-ups. So anyone thinking of applying for either the first step for an audit, or the second step for implementation, should sign up to get in line. Our cost share of equipment options include various sizes of ROs, enhanced pre-heaters (steam a ways, or piggy back units), energy efficient pans, and energy efficient arches. We cannot cost share a change in energy sources. We rank based on efficiency comparing apples to apples (which a good energy audit should provide). Efficiency improvement of fossil fuel units gets a better ranking. These grants pay a higher percentage of the cost than REAP so are well worth the extra paperwork involved.

## 2. USDA Rural Development REAP Grants

Many of you are already familiar with the USDA REAP grants. While the grant application schedule for 2014 HAS NOT YET BEEN ANNOUNCED, I am writing to let you know that the NY USDA coordinator has advised me the program will be available this year, and he expects the application process to start sometime in mid-April. The program will be open to applications for 60 days.

REAP grants are available to maple producers for the purpose of upgrading existing operational equipment to save energy. Some examples of equipment that will qualify: Reverse osmosis, steamaway, energy-efficient evaporators, and in some cases, vacuum pumps that replace older, outmoded vacuum pumps.

If this year's requirements are similar to previous years they will be:

- The minimum amount the equipment (plus installation) must cost is \$6,000. Maximum is \$80,000.
- You must have at least 1 year's records showing income from maple sales; 3 years are preferable.
- You must have at least 1 year's records of the energy used to produce the syrup you made; again more years history are preferable.

The grants are competitive: that means that all agricultural applications for NYS are ranked and the top scoring applications receive funding first. Scores are based primarily on how much energy is saved: the more energy saved per year, the higher the score. Grants are reimburseable: you have to pay the entire cost, and when the equipment is installed and the USDA has verified it is installed, you will receive funds that amount to **25%** of the cost. So you will pay **75%**.

If you think you are interested in applying for an NRCS EQUIP or REAP grant for equipment you can contact the state association office for further information. (315) 877-5795 or [office@nysmaple.com](mailto:office@nysmaple.com).

## Proper Care of Maple Syrup

Maple syrup in sealed containers keeps well in a cool, dry place. After the containers are open, the syrup may mold. If mold develops, the syrup should be discarded. If you want to purchase a larger amount, such as a gallon, to get the best price, you can bring syrup to 180°F and then pour into smaller clean, sterile canning jars with a sealable lid. Depending on how rapidly you use syrup you may want to choose quarts, pints or even half pints, the amount you are likely to use in 6 to 10 weeks or less. Once the jar is filled with the hot syrup and the lid and screw cap are securely in place, turn the jars on their side for a few minutes to insure that all of the inside surface is exposed to the hot syrup. An alternative would be to simply purchase your syrup in the smaller sized containers. To prevent mold and to protect the flavor of maple syrup store containers in the refrigerator for the short term or in the freezer if you don't plan to use it up in the next 6 to 10 weeks.

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# A Message from Our President

Fellow Maple Producers,

It is that time of year when most producers are gearing up for another production season. It is always a gamble as to when to tap your trees and get that first run of sap. This year has been an extremely cold winter and very little syrup was made in January and February. We all hope mother nature cooperates and gives us the weather in April to have a decent season.

When it is the time of year to get ready for sugaring season, it is also the time of year to start lobbying our legislators for funding for our State Association for the promotion of New York Maple. On February 10 twelve producers from around the state met in Albany and lobbied for the State Maple Association. We divided into three groups and each group had appointments throughout the day with different legislators. Each group saw eight or nine key legislators that have a say on how they divide up the money that is included in the NY State Budget.

The New York State Maple Producers Association is an Ag Alliance of New York Farm Bureau. A big benefit of being an Alliance member allows senior public policy director Jeff Williams from NY Farm Bureau to set the schedule and make the appointments for which Key legislators we see. This year had to have been one of the best days lobby days we have ever had. Our funding was increased to \$150,000. There was also an amount added to the budget to fund Maple research,

ie., Steve Child's Cornell Maple Specialist position. I would like to thank everybody who came to Albany that day and lobbied with us.

On March 11th Helen, fellow board member Tony VanGlad and myself had a very good meeting with the newly appointed Commissioner of Agriculture Richard Ball and some of his staff. We were there for well over an hour and had a great discussion on various topics. The Commissioner assured us that Agriculture is important to New York and its economy, with maple syrup being a important component to the Agriculture Sector of NYS.

The Commissioner also reminded us that the President recently signed the Food Modernization Act bill, which down the road may or may not affect the maple producers by having to get inspected. He assured us the Department is there to help us and also advise us on this matter. As we learn more about this we will keep our members informed.

Good luck to a good season!

**Dwayne Hill**  
President NYSMPA



## Going Up!



*Esther Lehman and Bruce Widrick try out the new elevator at the American Maple Museum in Croghan.*



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## Maple Sap Buckets and Lent

Mother Nature can teach us much about God! The barren maple tree this time of year speaks of the need to hibernate. It is good to be still, to pray, to find silence. Jesus goes off to quiet places to pray . . . we need to do the same! Warmer temperatures and sun begin to awaken the sap. When we allow the warmth of God's love to embrace and penetrate our hearts in prayer there is a stirring within us . . . signs of New Life!

"Giving up for Lent!" The maple tree gives us sweet sap for syrup and candy and cream! Our "giving up" is meant to bring sweetness into our world! We give up candy, alcohol, snacks between meals, etc., to benefit others—sharing the money not spent on what we have given up to those who go without all year long—we give to the food pantry, the Red Cross, Catholic Missions, the needy family member, the stranger! We give our time, talents and love to those in need . . . "and in giving we receive!"

### Use of New Grading System in NY Begins January 1, 2015

*continued from page 3*

3. Processing Grade Maple Syrup means maple syrup that does not meet the requirements for Grade A maple syrup set forth in paragraph (2) of this subdivision. Processing Grade Maple Syrup may not be sold, offered for sale or distributed in retail food stores or directly to consumers for household use.

(c) Nomenclature label statement.

1. The name of the food defined in paragraph 2 of subdivision (b) of this section is "Grade A Maple Syrup." The name "Grade A Maple Syrup" must conspicuously appear on the principal display panel of the food's label, and the words "golden color and delicate taste," "amber color and rich taste," "dark color and robust taste," or "very dark color and strong taste," as appropriate, must also conspicuously appear on the food's principal display panel in close proximity to the food's name and in a size reasonably related to the size of the name of the food.

2. The name of the food defined in paragraph (3) of subdivision (b) of this section is "Processing Grade Maple Syrup." The name "Processing Grade Maple Syrup" must conspicuously appear on the principal display panel of the food's label, and the words "For Food Processing Only" and "Not for Retail Sale" must also conspicuously appear on the food's principal display panel in close proximity to the food's name and in a size reasonably related to the size of the name of the food.



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## Calendar of Events

**MAY 6**

**St. Lawrence Assn. Meeting**  
Learning Farm, Canton

**MAY 7**

**Ham Dinner Fundraiser  
for Elevator**  
\$9.00 adults  
\$5.00 10 and under  
American Maple Museum  
Croghan

**MAY 8 ??**

**Central NY Meeting**  
TBA

**MAY 9**

**Lewis County Directors Mtg.**  
Larry Gorczyk's house

**MAY 14**

**Catskill Meeting**  
Brooks BBQ, Oneonta

**MAY 17**

**Opening Ceremony and  
Open House**  
American Maple Museum  
Croghan

**MAY 22**

**Western NY Meeting**  
Business meeting will start  
at 7pm at Sprague's Maple  
restaurant 1048 Rt. 305,  
Portville, NY 14770. Their  
full-service restaurant will be  
happy to serve you dinner  
prior to the meeting. Come  
early and enjoy their maple  
menu.

**JUNE 3**

**St. Lawrence Assn. Meeting**  
Learning Farm, Canton

**JUNE 20**

**State Association Board  
Meeting**  
301 Myron Rd., Syracuse

**JULY 1**

**St. Lawrence Assn. Meeting**  
Learning Farm Canton

**JULY 13-15**

**Annual Maple Tour**  
Chautauqua County

## 2014 Cornell Maple Camp Set for August 13-16

*by Stephen Childs,  
Cornell Sugar Maple Program Director  
& NYS Maple Specialist*

The Cornell Maple Program is excited to announce a unique opportunity for maple producers to acquire hands-on experience to increase their production, profitability, and efficiency. Maple Camp is a unique experience and an unparalleled venue for focused and hands-on learning in a research and production setting.

Participants will learn all aspects of production, processing and marketing. In the sugarbush, participants will learn how to measure and select trees, how to evaluate, plan and install a tubing system, and how to evaluate vacuum systems for efficiency. In the sugar house participants will learn about sap storage, reverse osmosis, evaporator operations, and syrup filtering, storage and grading. Further, participants learn to understand the principles of marketing syrup and value added products, making value-added products, and evaluating and managing their business enterprise.

This training will position maple producers, especially intermediate and beginners, to learn the details that would otherwise require years. The Cornell Maple Camp will begin late afternoon on Wednesday August 13 and conclude at noon on Saturday August 16. Cornell Maple Camp will occur at the Cornell University Arnot Forest near Ithaca, NY.

The Cornell Maple Camp is open to all maple producers and those wishing to become maple producers. The Cornell Maple Camp is designed for anyone who wants to become a producer or who has a few years of experience, but is seeking to expand production, products, markets or profitability. Registration information is available by going to [www.CornellMaple.com](http://www.CornellMaple.com) and selecting Cornell Maple Camp. This training is sponsored by the Cornell Maple Program.

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