

**New York State Maple Producers Association**

**Minutes of September 30, 2016 Meeting**

**301 Myron Road, Syracuse, NY**

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m. by President Tony VanGlad. The Secretary called the roll. Present were Tony VanGlad\*, Vice President Greg Zimpfer\*, Treasurer Karl Wiles\*, Secretary Dottie Merle, Executive Director Helen Thomas, Mike Bennett\*, Dwayne Hill\*, Hugh Newton\*, Michael Parker\*, Gordon Putnam, Eric Randall\*, Dave Schiek, Doug Thompson\*, Dan Truso\*, Haskel Yancey\*, and Greg Zimpfer\*. \* indicates voting members of the Board. Also in attendance were NY Ag & Markets representative Joseph Ganley, Cornell Maple Specialist Steve Childs, Kim Enders, Dean & Ruth Esther Delavan and Ben Taylor.

The group recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States.

Tony introduced Joe Ganley representing NY Dept. of Agriculture & Markets to the group.

Dwayne Hill moved that the minutes of the June 10, 2016 meeting be approved as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Doug Thompson – carried. The minutes of the meetings and schedule of upcoming meetings are available to the membership on the NYSMAPLE website.

**Officer Reports**

- **President** VanGlad presented a couple motions that came out of the Executive Committee meetings:
  - The Executive Committee discussed the Maple Weekend Consultant Angela Swan's contract – Karl Wiles moved that Tony sign the contract, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Eric Randall – carried.
  - Karl Wiles moved that Helen be given authority to sign checks for regular vendors at the Maple Center during the State Fair, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Hugh Newton. Per Karl, both he and Tony receive a report of all checks written and the auditor has no problem with this procedure. Dave Schiek said he signs off on the expenses also. Carried.Tony also discussed his trip to NY Farm Day in Washington, DC. He said that honey, dairy, beer & wine, Cobleskill College, Cornell University cheese, Hudson Valley Farm Assoc., Dean Norton, Eric Koons and Jeff Williams of Farm Bureau, and Senators Gillibrand and Schumer were among those attending. NY Dairy is #3 in production nationwide and NY Maple is #2.
- **Treasurer** Wiles said our finances overall are good. State Fair proceeds had a record year at about \$36,000 over last year. We need \$200M in the bank to fund our NYS grant expenses until we get reimbursement. As of this board meeting the 2016-17 grant paperwork has not been approved so we can't draw reim Karl said we are losing money on each membership. The membership cost has been \$50/year since 2009. We have 690 members – about 650 who are full members. There was some discussion on whether we should consider raising dues. Eric moved to table this until New Business, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Doug Thompson – carried.
- **Executive Director** Thomas said she has been really busy doing lots of accounting work from State Fair. Maple Weekend planning has already begun. Helen attended a 4-day meeting in

Puerto Rico representing maple at a Ag & Markets and NYS Economic Development Council's Agriculture Trade Meeting. She said she learned a lot and took some samples of maple products with her. She has forwarded the names and contact information for supermarket chains in Puerto Rico to any of our members who responded to her email with interest in these sales. She will send a sample of granulated maple sugar to a chocolate farm and a coffee farm she toured while there.

Advertising/Promo grant money was discussed at the last Board meeting. Zoey Advertising provided much of the assistance in promotion at the State Fair. We have discussed the best way to advertise for maple in New York. We have tried billboards and have asked Zoey to analyze the content and placement. There are electronic billboards at city interchanges that are more expensive than Thruway and interstate routes. Zoey will get back to us with a blend of the most eye catching billboards we can use and where we would get the most for our money. The budget is approximately \$50M. There will be a full board conference call to make a decision on this.

### **Committee Reports**

**Maple Center** – Dave Schiek reported a record year for State Fair this year. We finished out the last four days at over \$20M per day in sales. We had great help and Dave thanked Kim Enders for getting everyone scheduled. We used fewer volunteers than last year even though we needed more people at the Maple Experience educational area and people testing products coming in for sale. The maple cheesecake was a big surprise – we sold 4,300 units in 9 ½ days! Ice cream continues to get bigger each year. Nate Williams provided syrup in bulk and worked evening shifts which allowed him to take home empty drums and bring in full ones as needed – a huge help with the very limited space available. Lyle Merle and Bill Kern entered the sugar made in the booth for judging and came in 1<sup>st</sup> place, which was subsequently disqualified since it was not made by the sugarmaker himself. Dave said producers should pay attention to the vacuum cooling and thanked Steve Childs for all his work on that. Syrup from every consignor was checked, a total of 57 samples – 6 were rejected on color, 2 on density, and 1 was mislabeled. 27 samples of cream were checked – 3 were too runny and 1 was off flavor. We will probably continue to check in this way – not to kick people's product out, but to help them make a better product. Many maple cream labels say "keep refrigerated" on them. The Health Department questioned why we were selling it without refrigeration at the Fair. We will get in contact with Cornell's Geneva Food Venture Center to address this issue before next year. Most of the problems at the Fair were technical in nature. We have added a tremendous amount of power consuming equipment. The Fair brought in a temporary panel to help us out, but we definitely need to address the power issue before next year. We also need to address the floor drains in the cooler and ice cream areas. We need to upgrade several computer tablets for point of sale and need to increase the number of receipt printers. Cheesecake production was new this year and worked well to sell granulated maple sugar overall. We brought in 10% more granulated than last year to start the Fair and had to bring in more throughout the Fair. Most of the cheesecake was sold at the Education Experience because we couldn't keep up selling in two places. The great quality of the maple sugar pieces was also mentioned. Zoey was a big factor in increased media coverage this year. Ag & Markets said the numbers were way up despite the slow start. We discussed the feasibility of running a separate location on the Fairgrounds – Joe Ganley said that we would need to talk with Troy.

**North American Council** – Eric Randall submitted a report that was passed out to the group which talked about our summer tour, the success of maple weekend and State Fair sales. The North American and IMSI will convene their annual meetings in about three weeks in Vermont. The new ***Maple Manual*** is getting close to completion. Eric said there is an abundance of maple syrup this year and we need to work on how to market it. Ontario has dropped out of the NAMSC – Eric feels their membership has no idea what the NAMSC is doing for the maple industry. He said our delegates need to take back to their local organizations what our group is doing. He suggests reading the Florent Gagne Report which discussed issues with the Federation quota system in Quebec.

**Legislative Affairs** – Dwayne Hill said that Jeff Williams from Farm Bureau contacted him regarding the Governor's budget and wanted to know what our "ask" will be this year. We are looking to continue the association support at \$215,000 again, and the support of Steve Childs' position as Maple Specialist supported at the same level.

**Sage Committee** – Eric said they are looking forward to getting applications for funding. Unfortunately to date there have been no applications. The fund has \$7,000 available.

The group recessed for a lunch break.

**Maple Weekend** – Angela Swan's written report was distributed. They have a coordinator for almost all regions – Tammy Bechard, Northeast; Mary Jean Packer, Upper Hudson; Marcia Rudd, Lewis ; Karl Wiles, Central; Bridget Smith, WNY; Deidre Hill, Catskill. St Lawrence does not have an assigned coordinator yet. Proposed MW policies were presented for discussion. (1) The deadline for signing up for Maple Weekend is October 31<sup>st</sup> to be included in all promotional materials, after that date the cost is \$90 and the business is only listed on mapleweekend.com; and, (2) only pancake breakfasts onsite at participating producers will be listed on mapleweekend.com. Non-profit pancake breakfasts who are purchasing their syrup from a participating farm will be listed on a downloadable pdf. Dwayne Hill moved to approve the October 31<sup>st</sup> deadline, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Haskell Yancey – carried. Eric Randall moved that we only directly promote onsite breakfasts and list the offsite non-profit breakfasts on a separate list, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dwayne Hill – carried.

**Cornell Maple Program** – Steve Childs passed out a list of the upcoming workshops and schools. He is working on upgrading the Arnot Forest to be able to do research during syrup production. They have added 1,500 taps towards a total goal of 4,500 in the future. They are advertising for a full time person to replace Cathy Coats. Steve has applied for a grant to turn late season sap into vinegar and alcohol. Tony thanked Steve for all he is doing on procedures and value added maple schools.

**NY Dept. of Ag & Markets** – Joe Ganley reported that A&M is expanding the "Taste NY" program. They are opening the largest Welcome Center on the Long Island Expressway – and there are about 9 more in the pipeline. They have talked with several distillers about working with maple producers. Joe suggested that we donate maple syrup to the Culinary Institute of America for them to explore new ways of using maple. In 2017, Ag & Markets would like to include maple in the new "NY Certified Program". This will require measurable standards be developed and approved.

**Maple Ambassador** – Greg Zimpfer reported that nothing has changed since our last meeting. Our Ambassador has been out and about representing maple. We need to stimulate interest in this

program. Eric Randall moved that we take a hiatus on this program and see if a regions want to bring it back, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Greg – carried.

**Dottie, Is this the start of Old Business? And where does new business start?**

**Grant Allocations** – Helen reported that we have spent \$30M on the Maple Center and the Maple Experience Educational area, as well as allocated funds for VVS FFA, a percentage of the executive Director position, Maple Weekend, and the Omni Hotel maple program. We are proposing using the unallocated funding for billboards for the balance of the year. Zoey will get back to us with a proposal on billboards.

**Cornell Endowment Fund** – This is a slow work in progress. \$5,600 from cotton sales at the State Fair will go to the fund. The ice cream money from the WNY Steam Show is about \$300 and will also be going into the fund. We need to get information out to the regional associations on how to make donations to this fund Helen spoke with Julie Suarez to help us get reconnected with the person who handles this fund so we know what’s going on. We need to find someone who knows how to run a donation campaign.

The Secretary and Treasurer job descriptions were reintroduced from the last meeting. Eric Randall moved we approve the job descriptions, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Doug Thompson – carried.

**By-Laws** – The By-Laws were reintroduced from the last meeting. Dwayne Hill moved to adopt these By-Laws, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Karl Wiles – the roll call vote was unanimous, 11 voted to adopt.

**Maple Tour** – Next year the Tour will be held by the Lewis County Association. They are already working on an itinerary – Jefferson and Oswego counties will be the main area. Larry Rudd and Jake Moser are also working on a visit by Governor Cuomo on October 6<sup>th</sup> to Lewis County.

**Pennsylvania Farm Show** – Eric Randall will be a maple judge there.

**Maple Logo** - There was a discussion on the new maple logo developed – Doug Thompson moved that the logo be available for use only to Association members with no charge for its use, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mike Bennett – carried.

**FFA** – The Grahamsville FFA has been chosen to represent New York State at the National FFA Conference. Grahamsville has asked us for any hand-outs available advertising maple. Helen has a box of 1,000 “Insist on New York Real” pens left from the State Fair we will send. It was suggested that we also send maple t-shirts for their FFA members.

Eric read a draft of using maple as a flavor ... “Be it resolved, the New York State Maple Producers Association endorses the concept that pure maple syrup and its derivatives should enter the code as a nutritional flavor as well as a well-known universal sweetener.” Eric moved that we, as an Association send this resolution on maple flavor to ?, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Hugh Newton – carried.

Greg Zimpfer moved that the Maple Museum be included in Maple Weekend at no cost, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Doug Thompson – carried.

**Commented [HT1]:** Helen has no idea what the action item is.

Dave Schiek said we need to discuss labeling of maple cream and refrigeration. The Health Department objected to cream sitting on the counter at the State fair when the labels stated "keep refrigerated" so this must be resolved by next year. Steve Childs said they have had maple cream sitting at room temperature for 6 months and there was no mold unless inoculated with it. We will contact Geneva Food Venture Center on this topic. The subject was tabled until the January meeting.

Steve Childs said they are experimenting with a new way to make maple cream where the first crystallization happens in the jar – stay tuned!

Steve asked if there were any topics the group would like to see presented at VVS – suggestions were:

- A presentation of what is involved in writing an energy grant application
- The ins and outs involved in exporting product
- Quality control of syrup – how to judge it

There was considerable conversation on Ben Taylor's question on whether the ideal tapping dates can be predicted from temperature recording.

**Bourbon Barrel Aged Syrup** – Helen has had initial discussions with Ag& Markets for developing regs for process and labeling of this type of flavor enhanced syrup, but no resolution. Tony & Helen will reach out to commissioner and the food safety folks to try to move this along.

Phil Giltner has indicated he is trying to revive talks on sap water regulations.

At 3:30p.m. Dwayne moved the meeting be adjourned, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Karl – carried.