

New Hampshire Maple Facts--2007

Annual production of maple syrup in New Hampshire has averaged 69,000 gallons over the last five years. The five year production trend (from USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service): 2006-64,000; 2005-57,000; 2004-83,000; 2003-60,000; 2002-83,000. The weather can significantly impact the length of the maple season and the quantity of the syrup produced. For example, the 2005 season, and similarly 2006, started late (temperatures warming to above freezing during the day) and because the spring temperatures warmed up very quickly, the season ended early.

The value of the maple crop in 2006 was approximately \$3 million. Sullivan, Cheshire and Grafton Counties account for more than 50 percent of all syrup produced in the state.

There are over 300 maple operations in the state that produce for the commercial market. Add to this the number of backyard producers and the total nears 1000. Commercial operations range from as few as 50 to as many as 30,000 taps.

Total demand for syrup in the state is estimated to be in excess of 150,000 gallons, while New Hampshire currently produces an average of about 69,000 gallons. This means a substantial portion of syrup sold within the state originates in other states and Canada. Only New Hampshire-made syrup can say "New Hampshire Maple Syrup" on the label.

Many New Hampshire producers encourage visitors to their operations. The industry has produced a brochure listing sugar houses which welcome observers and it may be obtained by calling 271-3788 (NH Dept. of Agriculture, Markets & Food) or 225-3757 (NH Maple Phone), or visit www.nhmapleproducers.com. New Hampshire Maple Weekend is March 24th and 25th. Many sugar houses will be open with special activities throughout the weekend.



Each maple operation has its own character. Some specialize in tasty products made with the maple syrup: candy, cream, sugar, pies, and pancakes. Many are located in some of the most scenic spots in the state. A fast-growing area of maple products marketing in New Hampshire is the mail order/Internet trade, with many producers shipping packaged syrup, sugar and other specialty items across the country and around the world. These businesses operate on a year-round basis.

More than 90 percent of the sap used to produce maple syrup in New Hampshire is gathered through the use of plastic tubing, which significantly lowers labor costs, improves syrup quality and helps producers maintain their cost position against competition from other states and Canada. Vacuum systems help some producers to boost sap flow on low flow days.

Use of reverse osmosis equipment permits producers to remove as much as 70 percent of the water from maple sap before it goes to the evaporator, greatly lowering per-gallon fuel costs in maple syrup production. Reverse osmosis equipment may cost as much as \$20,000 per installation, but the costs are rapidly recovered in energy reduction.

New technology in the development of smaller spouts used to actually tap into the trees, allows the trees to heal more quickly at the end of the season. These mini-spouts or micro-spouts also contribute to higher quality syrup because there is less opportunity for contamination of the sap with the smaller spout openings.

Fuel for boiling the sap is a major input to the process of making syrup. Many sugar houses still use wood harvested from the sugarbush and the rest use oil or gas to heat the evaporator.

Grading and quality standards for New Hampshire maple syrup and maple products are established by laws enacted by the Legislature and through rules promulgated by the state Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food. Inspectors from the department carry out the State's grading and quality monitoring program.

Although maple production is tallied in gallons, the most popular package for maple syrup with the retail customer is the quart, followed by the pint and the half gallon.

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