



The Gathering Tank

Volume 20 Issue 1 June 2015



Robyn Pearl, Editor

A Newsletter of the New Hampshire Maple Producers Association, Inc.

Summer Meeting Planned



The 2015 Summer Meeting will be held at Ben's Sugar Shack in Temple, NH on Saturday, July 18th. A coffee hour will be held from 9:00-10:00 am with refreshments available.

The meeting will begin at 10:00 am with a greeting from our host, Ben Fisk. The business meeting of the NHMPA will follow. Qualifying entries for the Carlisle Award will be announced and the Felker Award presented.

A picnic lunch will be held at noon. Please refer to the schedule posted on the Summer Meeting agenda on page 7 of this newsletter to know what to bring.

After lunch, we will hear a presentation from the keynote speaker for the meeting, Dr. Michael Farrell. Dr. Farrell is the Director of Cornell University's Sugar Maple Research & Education Center in Lake Placid, NY, and the author of [The Sugarmaker's Companion](#). A leading authority on maple research, Mike focuses his efforts on the economics of maple sugaring and sustainable development of the maple industry. His presentation is titled "How to Make Money at Sugaring". He offers the following description: "Everyone has room to improve upon and grow our sugaring operations in a more profitable and productive manner. This session highlights a wide variety of steps you can take to increase your bottom line from sugarbush management, sap collection and processing, and marketing of the final products." This presentation will certainly provide great information that will be helpful to sugar makers of all size.

After the presentation, Ben has invited all to take a tour of his facility. The meeting will adjourn at 3:00 pm.

See you in July!!



2015 Season Produces Near Average Crop



A survey of members of the New Hampshire Maple Producers Association indicated a 90% crop produced for the 2015 season.

For the second year in a row, cold weather conditions extended deep into what has become the prime sugaring time for New Hampshire causing many producers to remain frozen out much later than in the recent past. First boiling dates have gradually moved into the end of February for the southern half of the state. This year, sugar makers noted that the starting and ending dates were more aligned with those recorded in the past by their fathers and grandfathers. In the southern part of the state, temperatures followed the historical starting time for boiling, around March 12, with February 20 as the earliest reported date. The northern half of the state began boiling around March 27, with the latest starting date of April 11 reported. The season ended for most producers around April 14, with some sugar makers experiencing their last boil as early as March 31, and others as late as April 27.

All grades of syrup were made this year with Grade A Amber Rich Taste creating over 50% of the crop, followed closely by Grade A Dark Robust Taste. Grade A Golden Delicate Taste and Grade A Very Dark Strong were made in much smaller quantities.

The persistence of cold late winter weather created frustration but once the season was underway, strong sap flow made up for the delay and most sugar makers had great results. High sugar content was reported. Survey responses showed that 41% of producers use vacuum systems and 37% use RO. This seems to indicate that regardless of whatever technology is used, it was a successful season for the vast majority of sugar makers in New Hampshire.



A note from the Editor: This space generally houses the President's Corner and Secretary's Notes. No letter from the President had been submitted by the date of publication. In addition, the Secretary resigned from the position prior to the publication date as well, so there is no report from that office.

Below is a letter that was submitted from members of the Board of Directors. I am hopeful that by the next issue the newsletter will be back to its regular format. - Robyn

Important Message from the Board of Directors:

It is the duty of the Board of Directors to maintain the integrity of the organization. As a director, the fiduciary responsibility to the Association supersedes personal interests. This requires a transparency of actions.

Our Board became fractured by differing opinions of the future direction of the Association. A relationship developed between some of the Board members and a non-profit organization, Northern Community Investment Corporation. While the original purpose was supposedly to aid the NHMPA in hiring an Executive Director, it morphed into an investment in a large property in Groveton, NH to house a "maple center" and a joint marketing effort with Vermont. The Northern Community Investment Corporation is forbidden by NH Secretary of State filings from operating in the rest of our state, where the majority of our members live, thus any potential benefit from the relationship is limited to a fraction of our membership.

New directors and officers have brought their strengths in business, marketing and knowledge of compliance with State statutes and Federal rules. Steps are currently being taken to insure compliance with non-profit rules as the operating status of the Association otherwise will be in jeopardy. An independent physical audit of the Association's containers is being performed at our container dealers to verify inventory for our Federal tax return. This idea has been discussed multiple times in the past but never previously been supported by the Board. This audit is not a reflection on the integrity of the dealers, but as a responsible standard business practice. A situation came to light with a container dealer's inventory numbers. Corrective actions will be taken and preventative controls will be put in place to prevent potential future risk to Association assets. A further review of the container business has brought other suggestions for efficiency and financial benefit to the Association.

The Board of Directors voted 7 to 1 no confidence in the President. The President has not attended five out of the last six Board meetings and has indicated that he has no interest in working with the members of the Board. Four of the ten Directors, in a simultaneous action, resigned their positions without notice, including the Vice President, Secretary, and the Manager of the Big E. Our Association by-laws allow only the Board of Directors to fill vacant seats for the remainder of their term until the next annual meeting. The by-laws also provide the Vice President the authority of the President in his absence. The remaining Board members have elected Dale Smith as Vice President to insure the Association will continue normal and necessary business operations. Directors are reaching out to our members who have indicated an interest in being a Director. Any member who is interested should contact any Director to participate in the vetting process.

Minutes of all of the Board meeting are posted on the website under the Sugarmakers tab. All interested members are encouraged to attend the Board meetings. The meeting dates and locations can be found on the website under Upcoming Events. If there are any questions or you wish to discuss anything with a Directory, please contact any one of us.

- Vice President Dale Smith, Treasurer Bruce Treat, Directors Skip Cilley, Ben Fisk and Howard Pearl

Contact information can be found for the Directors on page 3 of this newsletter and on the website.

Treasurer's Ledger

After becoming Treasurer in January, I began to perform a businessman's review of the Association's financial components and now is a good time to share an overview.

Foremost, the Association is in good financial condition. This is a credit to Howard Pearl, the former Treasurer, Bill Cheney, the Container Chair, and Dee Linn, who managed our Big E enterprise. All three discharge their responsibilities with diligence and integrity. However the Association has significant structural and regulatory issues. I believe these matters can be resolved over the course of this calendar year. Any members interested in further information or a discussion of these issues in greater detail may contact me directly at bruce.treat@hotmail.com.

Regards,

Bruce



NHMPA CONTACTS

President: Bodan Peters, Sugar Hill, 823-7708
(imapesugar@myfairpoint.net)

Vice Pres: Dale Smith, New Boston, 325-5900
(dale.smith@ampherol-tcs.com)

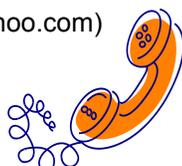
Secretary: vacant seat

Treasurer: Bruce Treat, Bow, 774-2160
(bruce.treat@hotmail.com)

Directors: Skip Cilley, Frankestown, 547-6612
Ben Fisk, Temple, 562-6595
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Howard Pearl, Loudon, 231-1482
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Container Chairman: Bill Cheney, 726-3829
(vlss708@yahoo.com)

Publicist: Robyn Pearl, 225-3757
(nhmpa@aol.com)



IMSI REPORT



Our IMSI representative, Bill Eva, was not able to attend the most recent meeting. The following are excerpts from the meeting's minutes:

The most recent IMSI Board of Directors and Committee meetings were held in Croghan, NY on May 14-15, 2015.

The IMSI has a committee working on a market study to develop a more global approach to marketing maple syrup, especially in the U.S. The goal is to grow maple syrup consumption by 10% per year for the next 7 years, effectively doubling the maple market size from about 1% to 2% share of the total sweetener market, currently dominated by corn syrup (55%) and cane/beet sugar (44%).

The North American Good Management Practices (GMP) for eliminating lead in maple syrup production and packing equipment developed by the IMSI have been well received by producers and packers of maple syrup in Canada and the United States. A serious movement to totally eliminating lead in equipment (and ultimately in maple syrup) is necessary. We all need to be vigilant to ensure that we meet a lead free goal over the next 5 years or sooner, if possible. High quality is a foundational element of pure maple products and is essential to growing the maple industry.

Most maple jurisdictions, with the support of the North American Maple Syrup Council (NAMSC) and IMSI are requesting government agencies declare March "Maple Month". This is a good opportunity to showcase maple and to get politicians involved and supporting the maple industry.

-Dave Chapeskie R.P.F. Executive Director, IMSI



IMSI/NAMSC

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the International Maple Syrup Institute (IMSI) and North American Maple Syrup Council (NAMSC) will be held in **Seven Springs, Pennsylvania** from **October 19-22, 2015**. This annual gathering is held in one of the member states or provinces of the IMSI/NAMSC. The multi-day event includes meetings, discussions of maple industry news, developments and concerns, and award ceremonies. Local tours are also offered. A detailed description of what is planned for the 3 day event can be found on the last page of this newsletter.

New Hampshire will be hosting the event in 2018. If you are interesting in helping to coordinate the meeting or have ideas for associated events, please contact the event **Chairman Mike Moore at 783-0321**.

Grading Changes To Be Fully Implemented in 2016

After many months of public forums and discussion, the Division of Regulatory Services of the NH Dept. of Agriculture received approval from JLCAR (Joint Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules) for the grade rule changes of RSA 429:13-28, Chapter Agr 904.04.

The Maple Grades are now the following:

- Grade A Golden with Delicate Taste
- Grade A Amber with Rich Taste
- Grade A Dark with Robust Taste
- Grade A Very Dark with Strong Taste



The new grade rule was adopted on December 16, 2014 granting a one year grace period for adjustment. The new grade rule will be fully implemented on January 1, 2016 meaning all NH sugar makers must comply from that point forth. A discussion with an NH Division of Regulatory Services inspector indicated that the Department continues to be very willing to work with sugar makers. The NHMPA has no authority in changing or enforcing the NH Administrative Rules. All questions should be directed to the **Division of Regulatory Services (603) 271-3685**.

Free Grade Change Promotional Materials Available

To aid with the grade change transition, the NHMPA has created a poster and rack cards. The waterproof poster shows a comparison between the old NH grades and the wider range of light transmission of the new Maple Industry grades. The rack cards are a combination of the poster information and nutrition information. Their intent is to help producers to engage in conversation with consumers regarding their taste preference, which the new grades promote.

Every 2015 paid membership is entitled to one free poster and 25 free rack cards. If you have not gotten your free set, they are available to pick up at **Sunnyside Maples in Loudon, Bascom's in Alstead and Turkey Street Maples in Chocorua**. If you are unable to pick them up, send Robyn an email at nhmpa@aol.com or call **(603)225-3757** and have them mailed to you. You will be responsible for the mailing cost. (approximately \$6.00). Additional posters can be purchased for \$10 (\$15 for non members) and rack cards at \$3/25 cards.

Membership Dues Will Increase in 2016



A favorable vote by the membership at the NHMPA Annual Meeting on January 24, 2015 resulted in an increase in dues from \$20.00 to \$35.00 annually. The increase will be effective when signing up for the 2016 membership.

Then NHMPA Vice President Tim Robinson provided the following breakdown of the use of the current dues to explain the need for the increase:

- \$4 for Maple Digest subscription
- \$8 for NAMSC membership (doubled from \$4 in 2015)
- \$4.50 for Publicist duties for member services (newsletter, postage, printing costs)

The remaining \$3.50 is used for promotion funding.

Rising costs for subscriptions and services have greatly impacted the ability of the membership fee to support them as well as the increasing demand by membership to expand promotions and marketing of the NH maple syrup brand. Records indicate that the \$20.00 dues have been in effect for approximately 30 years. Donations made towards the Promotions Fund provide an additional \$1800.00 annually. 60% of the members contribute to this voluntary fund. The \$15.00 dues increase will be used for promotions only.

Pure Maple Syrup Grades Are Changing

Old New Hampshire Grade System	New Maple Industry Grade System
Grade A Light Amber	Grade A Golden Delicate Taste
Grade A Medium Amber	Grade A Amber Rich Taste
Grade A Dark Amber	Grade A Dark Robust Taste
Grade B	Grade A Very Dark Strong Taste

It's All Grade A!

www.nhmapleproducers.com

4th Annual Maple School Planned

The 4th Annual Maple School is currently being organized for this coming fall. The School coordinator Steve Roberge from the UNH Extension Service is currently working on setting the date and location, with anticipation that the event will again be held in October at the Winnesquam High School in Tilton, NH.

The format will be the same as in previous years, with a variety of classes covering various subject matter and skill levels held in 5 sessions over the course of the day. A lunch will be provided for an additional cost if desired, or attendees can bring their own or leave the campus to obtain other means. Vendors will be in attendance to aid with equipment needs and demonstrate some of the latest technology.

Are you a beginner sugar maker and would find it helpful to learn the basics? Have you been sugaring for a while but would like to learn a few tips and tricks to make your equipment run more smoothly? What would you find most helpful to learn about to further your sugaring operation? The program of classes is being organized. If you have suggestions for topics that you would like to learn more about, please contact Steve at steven.roberge@unh.edu

The NHMPA Goes to Washington

For the fourth year in a row, the NHMPA was asked to participate in the Experience New Hampshire Reception hosted by the New Hampshire State Society with guests of honor Senator Jeanne Shaheen and the other members of the NH Congressional Delegation. The event takes place on June 17th. The NHMPA donated 400 3.4 oz. jugs of pure New Hampshire maple syrup to the event as part of the take home gifts from the event. The event is to highlight the excellence of what New Hampshire offers through its handmade beers, wines and ciders, as well as tasting menus from the state's finest dining establishments, discovering New Hampshire's travel and tourism opportunities, unique businesses, fine arts and crafts.

The syrup sent was remaining syrup from the Big E that had not sold. Thank you to Bruce Treat, Dale Smith and Howard Pearl for donating their time to pack it.

FAIR SEASON IS COMING UP!



The busy fair season will be here before you know it! Within a one month timeframe, the NHMPA will be represented with booths at three fairs. Plan on visiting them all!



Hopkinton Fair will be held from September 4th-7th and Deerfield Fair will be held from October 1st-4th. This year is the 100th anniversary of our state fair in Hopkinton. One of the highlights is the maple milk served at our Hopkinton Fair booth. Help is very needed at the booths for both fairs.

Shifts at the Hopkinton Fair last 4 hours, Deerfield Fair for 5 hours. Volunteers will receive a small stipend (\$25), an admission ticket and a parking pass valid for the length of the fair. Contact [Don Lassonde at 456-6052](tel:456-6052) or donlass@aol.com for details about the fairs and if you are able to help.

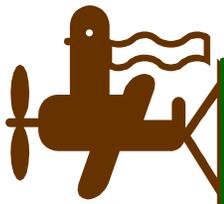
The Big E runs from Sept 18 - Oct 4th this year. Any time you can give to help is much appreciated. A daily stipend (\$50) is paid and local lodging is provided. It's always a fun time and a great experience. For more information about the Big E and to put your name on the volunteer list, email nhmpa@aol.com or call 225-3757.

The NHMPA has a long history of involvement with the fairs. They are important outlets for education to the public. Interaction between sugar makers and the public directly is the most effective way to relay accurate information about how the process works.

Be sure to check our website when you are looking for information on upcoming events, meetings, registration forms and contact information.

www.nhmaproducers.com

www.whoneedsacalendar.com



NHMPA PROMOTIONS

Maple Sugaring Month Review



The second Maple Sugaring Month and 20th Annual NH Maple Weekend provided a good turnout of visitors despite the slow start to the season. We were fortunate that Maple Weekend was planned for the third weekend of Maple Month as by the end of March, many sugar makers were able to get syrup made for Maple Weekend visitors.

This year more television advertising was implemented per request of members and we were able to tap into the Boston advertising market with our TV ad being aired on FOX 25. The choice of TV advertising was made over radio this year and it seemed to provide positive results with new visitors pleased to learn that a maple season event was available with multiple dates to choose from. The TV ad also appeared on WMUR during the prime viewing times.



The NHMPA website continues to grow in popularity. During Maple Month, we had a total of 30,652 visitors to the page, an increase of 25% over the same period in 2014. We used the same format of an interactive map for the Maple Month, which is designed to help visitors to find their way to each sugar house that has signed up for each weekend with a description of what they are offering for goods and services. Set up of the map is time consuming. Thank you to Kate Stanley, our webmaster, for her continued hard work in maintaining our website.

The NHMPA Facebook page has taken hold and the public is using it as a valuable resource for information as well as the website. Weekly reminders with the entire Maple Month/Weekend list of participants was posted on the page. The page hit the 1000 "likes" mark during this past maple season. A cookbook was sent to the person who gave us our 1000th like. Our page is currently at 1200 likes.



Sugar House Tour Guide



It's time to sign up for the publication of the 2016 Sugar House Tour Guide, an annual brochure that allows members to advertise their business and what they offer on a year round basis. There is a \$30.00 participation fee.

The 2015 Guide had a greatly decreased participation, approximately half of the level in recent years. The Tour Guide requires a strong participation level in order for this to continue as a cost effective and successful program.

The guide is distributed to the rest areas across the state by volunteer aide from members of the NHMPA. It also is available to the public at the fairs, educational forums and by request.

This is a very popular brochure and an inexpensive way to get your business seen by thousands of visitors to our state. If you interested in participating, you can **find the participation form on our website** or contact Robyn by phone or email to **request a form to be sent to you**. The deadline for inclusion in the guide is **November 15, 2015**.

How to Sign Up for Promotions



• All forms for NHMPA events and promotions can be found on the specified sections of our website, www.nhmapleproducers.com



• You can also send an email request to nhmpa@aol.com and the necessary form will be sent to you



• If you do not have web access, please call **(603)225-3735** and request the form you are needing to be mailed to you

Summer Meeting Agenda

WHEN: Saturday, July 18, 2015

WHERE: Ben's Sugar Shack, Temple, NH

TIME: 9:00-10 a.m. - Coffee & Pastries

10:00 – Welcome by Ben Fisk

10:15 – 12:00 - Business Meeting



Officers' and Chairmen's Reports

Old and New Business

Presentation of the Qualifying Carlisle Award Entries

Presentation of the Felker Award

12 noon – Pot Luck Alphabet Picnic (see note below)

1:00 – Key note speaker - Dr. Michael Farrell, Cornell University, "How to Make Money at Sugaring"

3:00 - Adjournment



Lunch Note: Whichever letter your last name begins with, please bring that item:

AB - Dessert: cake, cookies, brownies, etc.

CDEFG - Sandwich fillings, luncheon meat, sliced cheese, etc.

HIJK - Bread, rolls

LMN - Vegetable salad, potato chips, etc.

OPQRST – Potato salad, cold salad, baked beans, etc.

UVWXYZ – Fruit salad, fruit



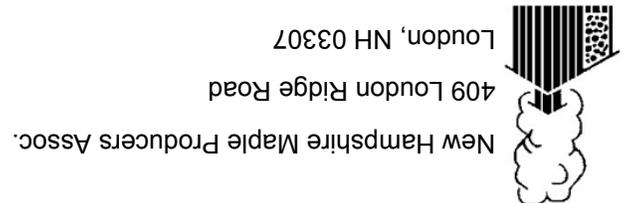
Directions to Ben's Sugar Shack: (83 Webster Highway, Temple, NH 03084 for GPS)

From Milford, follow 101W through Wilton (approx. 11 miles from the intersection of 101 and Route 13) until you get to Powers Road on the right (If you get to Rte 45, you are too far.) Turn onto Powers Rd, follow it to the left and turn right onto Webster Highway. #83 is 0.6 miles on the right.

From Peterborough (intersection of Route 101 and 202) follow 101E past Miller State Park on the left . Follow 101 through the intersection with Rte 45 and continue until you reach Powers Road on the left. Follow Powers Rd to the left and turn right onto Webster Highway. #83 is 0.6 miles on the right.



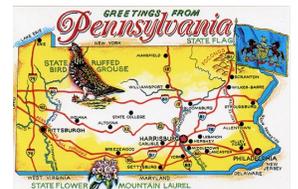
IMPORTANT: SUMMER MEETING NOTICE ENCLOSED



The 2015 International Maple Syrup Conference (Annual General Meetings of the North American Maple Syrup Council and the International Maple Syrup Institute) will be held on Monday October 19th through Thursday October 22nd at the Seven Springs Mountain Resort in Seven Springs, Pennsylvania.

We have an exciting conference planned this year. It all starts on Monday, October 19th with registration for the conference and the photo and maple syrup competitions. The commercial exhibits open in the afternoon. The day concludes in the evening with the welcome reception.

After starting your day with a full breakfast buffet, Tuesday (Day 2) includes the Annual General meetings of the NAMSC and the IMSI for many. Those that are able to go on the companion tour will be treated to a local shopping experience traveling through Amish country. The Taste of Pennsylvania Reception and Silent Auction will be held that evening as well. On the menu for this year's event is a salad bar, Pepper pot soup, Mushroom Strudel, Chicken pot pie, Pierogis, and Cheesesteak. A snack station will be featuring items from Hershey's, Mars and Snyder's of Berlin. For dessert there will be Dutch apple pie, Shoofly pie and Burnt Sugar Cake. Anyone wishing to donate items for the auction; please note on your registration form. Entertainment for the evening will be the Roof Garden Barbershop Chorus.



Wednesday (Day 3) kicks off a very busy day. The NAMSC will have their closing session in the morning. Technical presentations and workshops will follow the closing session. We have tried to include presentations and workshops that will appeal and are useful to all Maple producers.

A one day registration will be available for Wednesday. Don't forget the commercial exhibits will be open as well until 2pm. The evening will conclude with the annual banquet where the awards for the maple and photo contests will be presented.

On Thursday we will offer two tours. Both will visit the Flight 93 National Memorial, where Flight 93 crashed on September 11, 2001. Then one tour will go to Oak Lodge. The other tour will visit four local sugarhouses. For more information on the Conference, the tours, and for registration forms, please visit the Somerset County Maple Producers Website: www.somersetcountymaple.org or contact Matthew or Stephanie Emerick at 814-324-4345