



## Producers Association Newsletter

August 2015

Issue 1, Volume 1

### Inside This Issue:

Straight From The Tree...1

WV Counts ..... 2

Maple Syrup 101 & Why You Should Be Making It..... 3

Tim Wilmot: The Prophet of 3/16 ..... 4-5

Women In Ag .....5

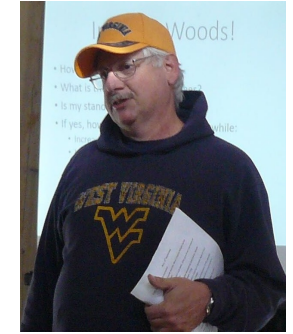
2015 International Maple Syrup Conference ..... 6-7

WVU's Sugarbush Management and Maple Production course ..... 7

See You At The Fair .... 8

**“Straight from the Tree”** - A message from our president.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome each and every reader of this inaugural newsletter from the West Virginia Maple Syrup Producer Association.



In July of 2013 a group of maple producers attended an informal meeting to discuss forming an association. During this meeting we elected officers to start the process of establishing an association. I have been elected President the past two years, I consider this a great honor and a historic event for the State of West Virginia, It is my hope many future Presidents follow me.

### Special Interest:

WV Maple Syrup Producers Association Logo Contest .....9

WV Maple Syrup Producers Association Membership Application10

WV Counts Survey .11-15

I feel our accomplishments have been many with educational seminars and workshops, participation at the State Fair of West Virginia, Small Farms Conference, and many other ways we have promoted ourselves and our products.

The past two years have been exiting, we have accomplished a lot, I feel we are just scratching the surface, at this time our committees are working on future events.

Recently we received our certification as a non-profit association. Following our completed registration we are now ready to except membership dues. I encourage all producers to do so promptly. You will find membership info on page 10 of this newsletter. We have several initiatives in progress and we want and need your help to make them happen. Some are highlighted in this issue. Others will be announced in future issues or via email to all association members.

Thanks, *Mark Bowers*, President WVMSPA

**WV Maple Syrup Producers Association**  
 C/o Cathy Hervey, Secretary  
 100 Fernwood Drive  
 Wellsburg, WV 26070

## West Virginia Counts

Each year the National Agricultural Statistical Service (NASS) surveys crop production by state. To date the NASS survey has only counted maple syrup in the 10 highest production states. In 2016 we anticipate West Virginia being added to that list. This is in recognition of the growth in our industry. To many people, maple Syrup is synonymous with Vermont, and is something that is done in the forests of the Northeast. In order for us to continue to grow and to expand our markets we need to change that perception.



In anticipation of the 2016 NASS survey, the West Virginia Maple Syrup Producers Association is, this year, conducting its own producer. By completing and returning the enclosed survey on page 10, also available online at <http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07eazl344ki9hrtkum/> start, you are helping us to better understand the present state and growth trajectory of West Virginia's sugaring industry. With this information we will better positioned to work with the Department of Agriculture to advocate for policies and incentives that will help our industry grow. We need to let people know, from policy makers in Charleston to those in the wider maple products market, that when it comes to maple production, West Virginia counts. We can only do that when we have the data to back up our claims.

So, fill out the survey, turn in your "counts," so we can make sure that West Virginia counts, when it comes to making maple syrup.

### Daniels Maple Products *Serving All of WV & Virginia*



We carry a large selection of WV Jugs, 3/16" & 5/16" tubing, mainline, fittings and many other in-stock supplies. We ship anywhere and can order any size reverse osmosis, evaporator, tank or other manufactured items. Please give us the opportunity to serve you.

1747 Morris Branch Road, Dawson, WV 25976

(304) 575-7266 [wvmapler@suddenlink.net](mailto:wvmapler@suddenlink.net)

(Survey Continued)

E. The next questions explore the **marketing methods** you are currently using to promote your maple products.

29. Based on how we currently sell our syrup products, rate following marketing methods

	Some but have not tracked sales	Few sales but would like to have a better response	Have sales, shows potential, would like to explore & do more of	Generates most of our syrup sales
Word of Mouth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Direct sales (i.e. on-farm, farmers market)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wholesale sales (i.e. Tamarack)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fairs & Festivals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mail Order	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Printed brochure/publications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recipes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

F. The final set of questions relate to the **West Virginia Maple Syrup Producers Association** and how they can better serve the needs of the industry.

30. How can the West Virginia Maple Syrup Producers Association (WVMSPA) best assist you? Check as many apply and feel free to provide feedback.

- Technical Seminars. List topics \_\_\_\_\_
- Marketing & sales. List topics \_\_\_\_\_
- Networking. Describe \_\_\_\_\_
- Public relations & maple awareness. List Ideas \_\_\_\_\_
- Development of a state wide maple "weekend" and/or "day"
- Partnership development. How and who?
- Finical opportunities. Examples would include how to use REAP funds, grants, partnerships, etc.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Comments \_\_\_\_\_

(Survey Continued)

24. In what year did you begin sugaring? \_\_\_\_\_

D. The following question refer to your **syrup sugaring** operations.

25. How do you collect your sap? For each method, indication percentage of total sap collection done.

A. Buckets \_\_\_\_\_%    B. Bags \_\_\_\_\_%

C. Tubing \_\_\_\_\_%    C. Other \_\_\_\_\_%

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

26. If you utilize tubing, what percentage is:

A. On artificial vacuum (using a vacuum pump) \_\_\_\_\_%

B. 5/16 inch natural vacuum \_\_\_\_\_%

C. 3/6 inch natural vacuum \_\_\_\_\_%

D. Other \_\_\_\_\_%

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

27. In processing your sap, is your evaporator ....

A. Wood Fired? If so do you used forced draft?

B. Oil Fired?

C. Natural Gas Fired?

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

28. Indicate the pieces of equipment you use in processing sap (check all that apply):

A. Reverse Osmosis                      B. Filter Press

C. Steam A Way                          D. Preheater

E. Automatic draw-off                  F. Canner

G. Candy/Value-added custom equipment

H. Other \_\_\_\_\_

Comments \_\_\_\_\_ 14

## Maple Syrup 101 and Why You Should be Making it!

This was one of the sessions held at the 11th Annual Small Farm Conference this Past February, in Charleston, West Virginia. Rachel Taylor, of Green Bank, West Virginia led the discussion. She and her husband Adam own and operate Frostmore Farm in Dunmore, West Virginia. This year they decided to turn the corner of their maple operation from a hobby to a business and implemented many of the new technologies used with modern maple syrup making.

The session attracted many conference goers from all over the state of west Virginia and surrounding states! Before the session began, a survey was conducted. It was found that class attendees had a varying level or prior experience with maple syrup production—from never making it but wanting to learn more, to currently producing on a small scale.

**Maple Syrup 101** reviewed the steps necessary to successfully take sap from a maple tree and turn it into maple syrup (That's right, the syrup doesn't just come straight from the tree!). The second part of the presentation, **Why YOU Should be Making It!**, discussed the many different "perks" of syrup production that could apply to anyone.

A few examples of these "perks" include maple syrup's ability to build community. Local schools and clubs love to come visit an operating sugarhouse during maple season. Local maple festivals draw thousands of people out to taste maple products and learn more about their production and uses.

Graphs were shown to highlight the point that maple syrup production is an expanding industry and West Virginia, although not typically thought of as in the "maple belt," has a very high potential for production. We are 6th in most tapable trees of any state in the US!

By the end of the 50 minute talk, attendees had gained useful maple knowledge but more importantly had gained an appreciation for many personal, financial, and community benefits that maple syrup production offers!

To contact Rachel Taylor with questions please email at—  
frostmorefarm@gmail.com

## Tim Wilmot: The Prophet of 3/16

On June 4th, at Mark Bower's maple camp, and then again on June 6th, at Brandon Daniel's camp, the **West Virginia Maple Syrup Producers Association** hosted Tim Wilmot from the University of Vermont's Proctor Maple Research Center (PMRC). Forty-nine West Virginia and Virginia producers came out to hear Tim talk on re-research conducted by PMRC. Tim focused his presentation on tapping guidelines and on natural vacuum tubing systems using 3/16-inch diameter tubes.



This was a "science in the woods" presentation, where virtually all Tim's comments were backed up data derived from research done at PMRC. It showed the value of sap and syrup production research. This continued research at PMRC, Cornell's Sugar Maple Research and Extension Program, and through the budding research program at West Virginia University is essential to drive advances in our industry.

If prophets foretell the future, then Tim truly is the prophet of 3/16 in West Virginia. With over five years of research into these systems, he was ready to present the facts. The most essential requirement for natural vacuum system is slope, and the one thing we've got in West Virginia is slope. Based on the weight of continuous column of sap, 1 foot of vertical difference will give you 0.88 inches of mercury vacuum at the tap hole. Got 30 feet of drop between your lowest tap and the collection tank and you've got 26.4 inches of vacuum. That's a high vacuum system, without the expense of a pump, releaser, or fuel. *(continued to next page)*

*(Survey Continued)*

18. Based on **BULK WHOLESALE SALES** of **YOUR** maple production, what **GRADE & COLOR** did you sell in 2015? For each size checked, state the **total pounds sold of each grade category AND the average price per pound**.

- A. Grade A Golden \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Grade A Amber \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Grade A Dark \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Grade A Very Dark \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Processing Grade \_\_\_\_\_
- F. I am not using the new international grading standards; bulk whole sales explained below.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

19. Based on **value-added maple products**, please estimate the contribution these items made to the percentage of your overall sales and average price. For this question, please include all sales including from products where you purchased syrup in order to make. Explain, if needed. *Include % contribution to total sales, pounds made and/or sold*

- A. Maple Cream \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Maple Sugar \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Maple Candy \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Other (i.e. maple cotton candy) \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

20. Approximately how many acres of land that is tap is your own? \_\_\_\_\_

21. Approximately how many acres of land that you tap is leased, where you buy sap from other owners? \_\_\_\_\_

22. In what counties do you conduct sugaring operations? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

23. What is the approximate elevation range of your operation? (from "X" feet to "Y" feet) \_\_\_\_\_

(Survey Continued)

14. Did you produce other types of tree syrup in 2015? If so, what types (i.e. walnut blend, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

15. Please enter any comments about weather, quality, etc., during the 2015 season. \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Sales Data**

These question refer to only syrup produced by this operation. EXCLUDE syrup purchased for resale.

16. Based on **RETAIL SALES** of **YOUR** maple production, what container sizes did you sell in 2015? For each size checked, state the **number of units sold AND averaged price per container.**

- A. Gallon \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Half Gallon \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Quart \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Pint \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Half Pint \_\_\_\_\_
- F. 3.4 oz (100ml) \_\_\_\_\_
- G. 8.5 oz (250ml) \_\_\_\_\_
- H. 12 oz (355ml) \_\_\_\_\_
- I. Other Sizes \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

17. Based on **WHOLESALE SALES** of **YOUR** maple production, what container sizes did you sell in 2015? For each size checked, state the **number of units sold AND averaged price per container.**

- A. Gallon \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Half Gallon \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Quart \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Pint \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Half Pint \_\_\_\_\_
- F. 3.4 oz (100ml) \_\_\_\_\_
- G. 8.5 oz (250ml) \_\_\_\_\_
- H. 12 oz (355ml) \_\_\_\_\_
- I. Other Sizes \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

*Tim Wilmot: The Prophet of 3/16 Continued*

The workshops started indoors, with science, and ended outdoors in the woods. Participants got to handle the new 3/16 tubing and fittings as the designed and laid out a lateral run. They also got to visit either Marks camp, on the 4th, or Brandon’s on the 6th. These are great times of sharing and learning. They are also great times of swapping stories and having fun. Like at Mark’s, where before the crew had laid out the lower section of a line the supper section had mysteriously moved over a bit so the trees being tapped were oaks. Over a good laugh we explained to Tim, from Vermont, that that’s the way we do things down here, in West Virginia.



**Women In Agriculture**

The 1st Annual Women In Agriculture conference was held this past November at Stonewall Jackson Resort. The 2-day event, brought nearly 150 women together and provided workshops in a variety of tracks.

Our West Virginia Agriculture Department provided the West Virginia Maple Syrup Producers Association an exhibit area to promote our maple industry. Britney Hervey Farris and Cathy Hervey from Family Roots Farm, along with Cindy Martel from the WVDA enjoyed passing out maple cotton candy to those in attendance. The sweet, maple aroma filled the hallways throughout the congerence center. Even Commissioner Helmick and WVU President Gee both stopped by for some maple cotton candy sampling.



Women from all around the State found the maple sugaring process very interesting as well as a map illustrating all the sugar maple trees throughout the State. West Virginia has an opportunity to become One of the top ten maple producing State in the USA.

## 2015 International Maple Syrup Conference

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 Seven Springs Mountain Resort in Seven Springs, Pennsylvania.

We have an exciting conference planned this year. It all starts 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 complain tour will be treated to 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 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 over two tours. Both will visit the Flight 93 National Memorial, where flight 93 crashed on September 11, 2001.

*(continued to next page)*

## WV Maple Syrup Producers Association 2014 & 2015 Survey

### A. Production Data:

The first 15 questions of the survey relate to production.

1. How many taps were set for collecting maple sap on trees owned by you in 2014? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many taps were set for collecting maple sap on trees owned by you in 2015? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many taps were set for collecting maple sap on trees leased from others in 2014? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many taps were set for collecting maple sap on trees leased from others in 2015? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many taps were set for collecting maple sap on trees tapped rent-free in 2014? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How many taps were set for collecting maple sap on trees tapped rent-free in 2015? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many gallons of syrup were produced at your sugarhouse in 2014 (include syrup produced by this operation from sap purchased from others)? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How many gallons of syrup were produced at your sugar house in 2015 (include syrup produced by this operation from sap purchased from others)? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How much sap was required to produced one gallon of syrup in 2015?  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What was the first date sap was collected for the 2015 season on your operation? \_\_\_\_\_
11. What was the last date sap was collected for 2015 season on your operation? \_\_\_\_\_
12. Which of the following best describes 2015 sap flow conditions
  - A. Too warm for sap flow
  - B. Favorable for sap flow
  - C. Too cold for sap flow
13. Which of the following terms best describes the 2015 season's syrup color?
  - A. Golden
  - B. Amber
  - C. Dark

# West Virginia Maple Syrup Producers Association

## Membership Application

### Purpose:

“The purpose of the West Virginia Maple Syrup Producers Association is to promote, educate, and research the maple and other tree syrup as well as value-added syrup products throughout West Virginia.”

### Membership:

“Membership is open to persons interested in maple or firms engaged in any phase of producing, processing and/or marketing maple syrup, and/or tree syrups and value-added products of maple syrup and other tree syrups.”

**We invite you to join with us as we learn and promote our industry.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm/sugarhouse name: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership category (check one):

\_\_\_\_\_ West Virginia members. (With full voting rights).

\_\_\_\_\_ Associate and Honorary members. This category is for friends from other states who want to join our organization. (Without voting rights)

### Contact information:

Address:

Phone number:

Cell phone number:

Email address:

**Annual dues: \$25** – includes a subscription to the Maple Syrup Digest, a quarterly publication of the North American Maple Syrup Council.

Complete the enclosed application and submit with your \$25 annual dues to: Cathy Hervey 100 Fernwood Drive, Wellsburg, WV 26070

### *2015 International Maple Syrup Conference Continued*

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](http://www.somersetcountymaple.org) or contact Matthew or Stephanie Emerick at 814-324-4345

## **WVU’s Sugarbush Management and Maple Production Course**

For the past two years, Dr. Jamie Schuler with WVU’s Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design has offered a course in Sugarbush Management and Maple Syrup Production (FMAN493).

Students receive 3 hours of college credit in return for their efforts—which are many! The course is designed to provide hands on training and field experiences. Students essentially setup a sugaring operation from scratch on a 5 ac portion of the University’s Farm woodlot. Students install tubing, main line, tap trees, coil sap in evaporator, and finally grade and bottle syrup. We also discuss forest management and visit several sugarmakers in WV. As part of their grade, each class is also required to assess the costs and profitability of the entire operation, and provide feedback on the enterprise using SWOT analysis. As with all new maple syrup operations, we are still working out all the bugs, especially scheduling boiling time for students with full course load, but each year things seem to get better. The WV Department of Agriculture, through a USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant, provided about \$20,000 in funding to purchase most of the equipment and supplies we needed to start the course. Each year the proceeds for our syrup sales are re-invested in supplies and upgrades. The course is available in the spring semester to any ambitious WVU student that has an interest in syrup making.



*The 2015 class-(left to right) Jamie Schuler, Joe Jarrell, Anthony Pappas, Dylan Johnson, Katy Jenkins, Matt Pefferman, Lucas McCabe, Evan Harman, and Robert Reed. Photo taken by Jim Ferguson.*

## See You at the Fair!



(Robert Reed, 2014 State Fair)

The WV Maple Syrup Producers Association made its debut at the 2014 West Virginia 90<sup>th</sup> State Fair in Lewisburg, WV. The Department of Agriculture assisted the newly formed Association in developing a Maple Sugar Camp display complete with a Blue Ribbon Sugar House, Evaporator (compliments of Brenneman's Maple Syrup & Equipment), and dripping sap bucket.

It was a team effort with members of WV Maple Syrup Association headed up by Robert Reed of Towering Oak Farms and the support of Jean Smith, Director and Cindy Martel, Marketing Specialist from the Department of Agriculture.

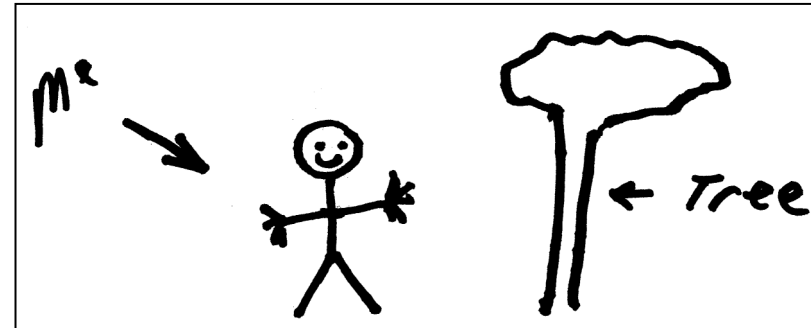
Visitors stopped by throughout the week to learn about the process of making maple syrup. Many stories were told by folks who remembered their grandparents tapping trees and boiling the syrup for hours and noted maple sugaring is very labor intensive. Many visitors were surprised to learn that maple syrup is a pure product, without sugar added, and that it takes 40 gallons of sap to make a gallon of syrup.

The WV Maple Syrup Producers Association is proud to announce they will have a display at this year's WV State Fair Aug. 14-23 located in the AG Annex Building. Please stop by and visit us!

**August 14-23rd 2015**  
**Lewisburg, WV**



## HELP



If you can draw better than this, the West Virginia Maple Producers Association needs your help. We need an association logo. Something we can use to promote the Association and to promote West Virginia Maple Syrup. SOOOO, we're holding a contest. Use your creative talents to design our logo and submit your entry to Cathy Hervey, same address as you send your dues to. From the hundreds of masterpiece level works of art we expect to get, the Association Board will choose one winner. Stay tuned, because that could be YOU.

