



# The *Tapline*

April 2002

Quarterly publication of the Indiana Maple Syrup Association

## So,..... Exactly What is a Normal Season?!!

*"It feels like sugar weather and it acts like sugar weather."*

*"But it's the middle of January. We can't tap yet!!"*

That was the quandary that most Hoosier maple syrup makers encountered when the last days of January saw bright sunshine and the right temperatures for some great runs. The problem was nobody could determine whether it was a January thaw or the start of an extraordinarily early season.

As I surveyed sugarmakers after the season was over for this issue of the *Tapline*, one member remarked, "Tap? No, we haven't tapped. We're still waiting for winter so we can tap after it thaws!"

Jeff Settle, forester with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, will compile the numbers for us after he conducts the official survey for 2002, but the consensus is that the 2002 season came early and yielded only about half to three fourths of the normal crop.

Several producers around the state chose not to open at all because the winter had been so warm and weather so unreliable.

A few in the northern part of the state tapped in late January, an unusual three to four weeks earlier than normal. Most in the northern tier of counties tapped in the first ten days of February, still earlier than normal. Those in the central and southern districts had little choice but to begin then, and the January taps ran normally for a while, but with no frost in the ground and weather patterns that would not behave normally, the runs soon gave out.

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*After an unseasonably warm winter, March gave Hoosier sugarmakers the most challenging weather of the winter. - photo L. Yoder*

## Canning Day is June 8

Make plans to join other sugarmakers for canning day on June 8. That's when we get together at the Williams and Teague Sugarhouse to can the syrup to be sold at the state fair.

Set-up begins at 7am, and canning continues throughout the day. Come for the entire day if you can, but even a few hours are helpful as many hands make for light and enjoyable work.

This is a great time to visit with fellow association members as you help. A noon meal will be served compliments of IMSA. Complete the registration form enclosed with this letter and return it to Steve Deatline.

Motel accommodations in the Rockville area are very limited for the weekend because of another major event in Rockville, so plan your travel and lodging accordingly.

Florence Williams has 8 guestrooms (most double occupancy) available at \$25 per room. You may contact Florence at RR #3 Box 263, Rockville, IN 47872 (765) 569-3704.

## 'Notes from your President .....

*Another season has come and gone.*



Phil Hanner, *President, Indiana Maple Syrup Association*

It's hard to believe another sap season has come and gone. I've received reports ranging from, "...a very poor year," to, "...a fairly decent season." Peculiarly, some sugar bushes had a tough time making any light syrup at all this spring - even on first run sap. In fact, some folks made their lightest syrup at the end of the season. Whatever your 2002 crop yielded, it is certainly over here in Indiana.

As we look back and anticipate the coming months, members of the IMSA have done a great job in turning out to support the annual meetings and participating in the Pioneer Village event at the State Fair. **Speaking of the fair, contact Steve Deatline at (765) 874-2170** to make sure you get an opportunity to experience one of the highlights of being an Indiana producer!

To prepare syrup for our "Hoosier Sugar Shack", we need the dedicated help of everyone on canning day. (Thanks, Steve, for agreeing to facilitate our schedule for the 2002 Fair. Steve did an outstanding job serving as our president for the past 2 years, besides being a long term, active member of the IMSA.)

No matter where you find maple syrup producers, it's easy to see that they are special people who take pride in this special product. We have a heritage that has been passed down to us. Although equipment and methods may change as we learn from each other through our association about how to improve efficiency and make consistently better syrup, let's also do our part to pass down this quality heritage to those coming after us.

Let's all continue to work together to educate people about Maple, and market what is one of nature's greatest products!

## Highlights of the April Board Meeting

The board of directors met Saturday, April 6 in Fishers, IN to make plans for the state fair and schedule the annual meeting for 2002.

Treasurer Ken Shipley reported that we have the funds to proceed with plans for the fair and annual meeting. There a balance of approximately \$6,600 in our operating fund along with a certificate of deposit for \$18,000. Income for 2001 (syrup sales, memberships, meeting registrations, interest and miscellaneous deposits and redemption of our certificate of deposit totalled \$40,600. Expenses for 2001 (including purchase of an \$18,000 CD) totalled \$38,000.

An estimated 400 gal of syrup will be needed for the fair. This year about half of our needs (top quality light or medium amber syrup hot packed in drums) will be purchased from members. The remainder will have to come from elsewhere.

The board voted to switch to our own private label (IMSA) for containers of syrup sold at the sugarshack at the state fair. This will help to further promote your association and Indiana maple syrup.

The board selected the Elkhart County Fairgrounds in Goshen as the site for our 2002 annual meeting scheduled for Saturday, December 7.

The board is reviewing our association's insurance coverage to be certain that it is up to date and covers the appropriate risks associated with our activities at the state fair and annual meetings.

The board heard a proposal from an association member to establish a scholarship sponsored by the Indiana Maple Syrup Association. Discussion will continue at our June meeting.

The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be Saturday, June 8 at the Williams and Teague Sugarhouse in Rockville.

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*Season (continued from p1)*

An ice storm on January 30 added an unexpected challenge for sugarmakers in the northern counties. Severe damage occurred in a few areas. For the most part, downed limbs were only a nuisance for most producers as they got ready to tap.

Lowell Williams who taps about 400 trees near Bedford reported below average production. "It seemed like we'd get two or three warm days in a row and then it would turn off cold for a while. We never got the cycle of warm days and freezing nights like we should."

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**Board of Directors, Indiana Maple Syrup Association** Directors are elected for 3 yr terms at the annual meeting of the IMSA held the first week of December. Directors elect the officers of the board.

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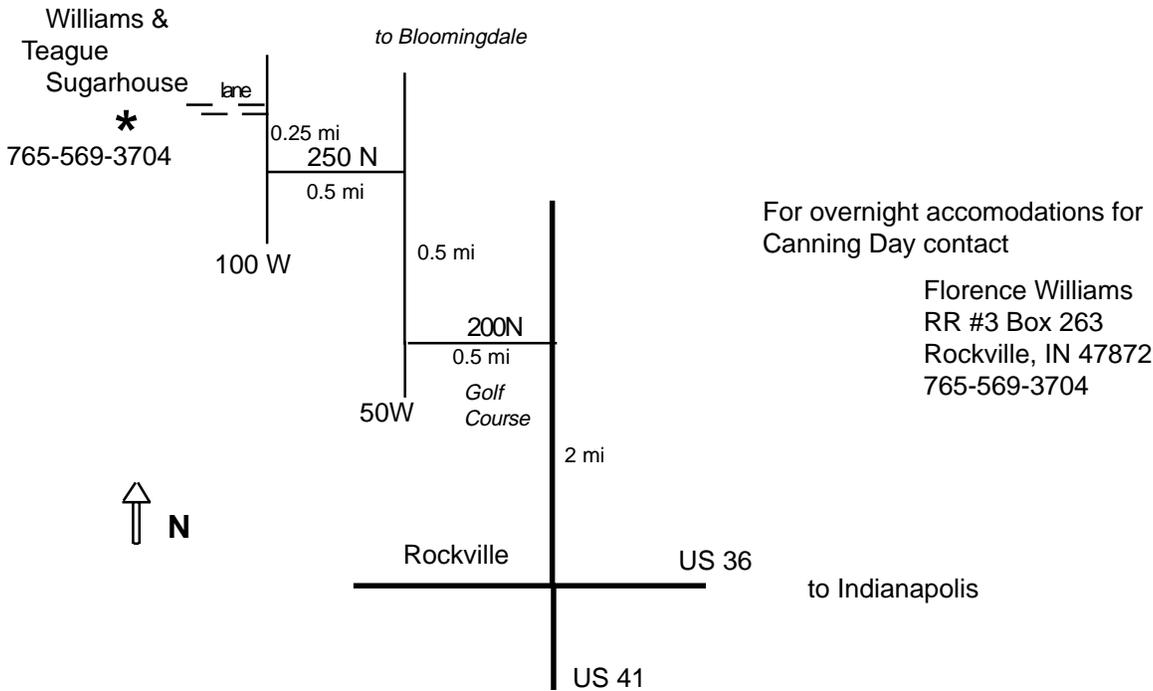
*The Tapline* , newsletter of the Indiana Maple Syrup Association, is published in December, April, July and October. Larry Yoder, Editor

Lend a Hand at the ....

# IMSA Syrup Canning Day

7 am -5pm Saturday, June 8  
Williams & Teague Sugarhouse  
Rockville, IN

Meet your directors and “talk shop” with fellow association members as you help can the syrup to be sold at the Indina Maple Syrup Association’s sugarhouse at the 2002 Indiana State Fair. This is a great time to share experiences and observations about the past season. A noon meal will be served compliments of IMSA. Complete the registration form below and return it to Steve Deatline.



clip and mail-

Yes, sign me up for:  canning day June 8  the Indiana State Fair on August \_\_\_\_\_  
(See calendar on next page)

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ e mail \_\_\_\_\_

Send your completed registration to

Steve Deatline, President IMSA  
7773 S 100 East  
Lynn, IN 47355 765-874-2170 deatline@globalsite.net

# Join Us at the Fair

Make plans now to take part in the Indiana Maple Syrup Association's Pioneer Village Demonstration at the Indiana State Fair August 7 - 18, 2002

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5 <b>Set Up Day</b> All Directors	6	7	8 <b>2002</b>	9	10
11	12	13 <b>Indiana State Fair</b>	14	15	16	17
18 Close-up	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
<p><b>Remember, income from syrup sales at the fair finances most of the cost of speakers and our annual meeting. Be sure to do your part.</b></p>						

Already a number of members have indicated when they'd like to help run the sugarhouse at the 2002 Indiana State Fair. 'But you know it's quite a task to sugar if you're short handed even as a demonstration. Talk it over with family and friends, pick your day to visit the fair, and volunteer your time at the IMSA sugarhouse in Pioneer Village.

Complete the registration blank on the previous page (p3), and we'll send you a confirmation of your date, your assignment for the day, and all the information about entering at the fair.

Look for more information in the July issue of the *Tapline*. Members can expect a call from their regional directors if people are still needed as we get closer to fair time.

**See other side**

## Survey About Syrup Production to be Mailed

Thanks to the efforts of Jeff Settle, Supervisor for the Indiana Division of Forestry's Utilization & Marketing (U&M) Program, the Division of Forestry will again compile information about Hoosier maple syrup production. For a time, it appeared that the survey would not be conducted because of the state budget cuts. Settle sends the questionnaire to everyone who is on the Division's list of producers that he and his predecessors have developed over the years. He then compiles the results.

The Utilization & Marketing Program in the Division of Forestry has been responsible for gathering information on maple syrup since syrup is basically a forest product. The numbers and data obtained from the questionnaires are summarized and shared with producers.

*Jeff Settle assures Hoosier syrup makers that all data collected from the questionnaire is for informational purposes and it is kept strictly confidential. "Nothing is sent to the IRS!!!"*

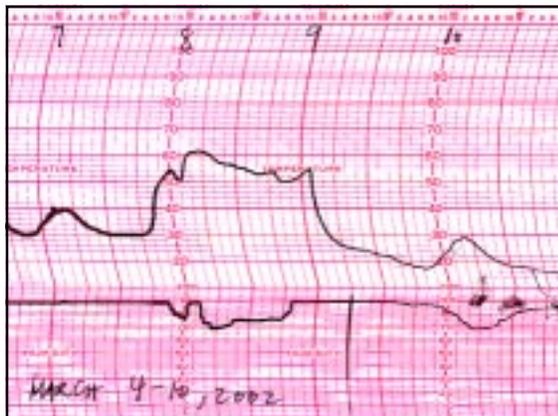
The report is also forwarded to the North American Maple Syrup Council as the "official" report of production of syrup for Indiana. This is why accurate and complete reporting by Hoosier producers is helpful to develop an accurate picture of maple production in Indiana.

The questionnaires also provide an opportunity for producers to indicate whether or not they wish to be listed in the Division of Forestry's directory of maple producers that is updated every two years. Copies of this directory are available to the public to help people find local sources of Hoosier maple syrup.

Hoosier sugarmakers can contact the Indiana Division of Forestry at

Division of Forestry  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
402 West Washington Street Room W296  
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2739  
(317) 232-4105

<http://www.state.in.us/dnr/forestry>



*Changeable weather? This chart from a recording thermometer at the Yoder Sugarbush shows a 30-degree drop in two hours on Saturday, March 9. The front was accompanied by some wind gusts that reached an estimated 50 mph.*

*Season (continued from p1)*

About the time southern producers were ready to pull their spiles, the north was hit with the coldest temperatures of the entire winter. The Yoder Sugarbush just north of Fort Wayne recorded an overnight temperature of 0 degrees the first week of March. Bill and Kim Owen of Maple Acres near Avilla (Noble County) reported a stretch of nearly 15 days with no sap collection because of the cold weather. That long period meant that tapholes had started to dry by the time the proper temperatures returned. David Hamilton, New Castle, tapped about two weeks earlier than normal and then re-bored his tap holes at mid season. He estimates his production at about 30% of normal, and he attributed it to the mild winter, dry weather and the lack of sugar weather when it was needed.

There was virtually no frost in the ground in the woods all winter. While that detracted from the quality of the runs, Hoosier sugarmakers did find that ruts weren't as deep on the gathering roads and it was easier to get around in the woods this year. There was less precipitation earlier in the winter, and what moisture did fall went on into the ground with no frost to stop it.

Indiana sugarmakers still hang a lot of buckets, and this was the first year that the smaller 5/16 in spiles were readily available for those producers. Some have yet to try them out, but I heard from a number who had purchased a few to compare with the traditional ones.

Children in school groups that visit the Yoder Sugarbush get an opportu-

nity to help gather the sap, and there was some concern that the smaller aluminum spiles would get pulled out or broken by the inexperienced gathering crews. However, they did well.

David Legg, Waynetown, comments, "We've been using some 5/16 for several years. I'd use all 5/16 if I had them—just haven't invested yet."

In spite of Indiana's small size in terms of production, (At the international meetings we're affectionately likened to the Jamaican Bobsled Team in the Olympics.) Hoosier sugaring is alive and well. Some families are resuming production after some years of inactivity, and new or upgraded operations are coming on line. Arthur and Rebecca Harris of Greencastle currently tap 850 trees on buckets. They plan to eventually increase their taps to 2000 and convert to tubing. They've already built a new sugarhouse and bottling facility.

Dave Hamilton extolled the virtues of the automatic draw-off he added to his evaporator. He finds it to be an effective tool to assure that finished syrup does not remain in the pan a moment longer than necessary.

Attendance at our annual meetings continues to increase as producers gather the first Saturday in December to improve their skills in sugarmaking and examine the latest in equipment.

The association's sugarhouse at the state fair effectively promotes Indiana maple syrup. It gives thousands an opportunity to taste pure maple syrup and locate producers near their homes.

The result is an increasing demand for high quality syrup that presently exceeds what Hoosier sugarmakers can produce

## Helpful Information for You

### For Sale

Approximately 400 aluminum buckets (14 quart & 12 quart) with lids  
Stainless steel spouts  
Wood-fired evaporator . 2x6 raised flue in good shape

Arthur & Rebecca Harris  
999E Co Rd 325N Greencastle,  
IN 46135-8025  
(765) 653 - 5108.  
aharris@link2000.net

Website for the Indiana Maple Syrup Association is

<http://www.indianamaplesyrup.org>

e mail at [imsapr@hotmail.com](mailto:imsapr@hotmail.com)

## Join Us for Canning Day

### Saturday, June 8, 2002

### Details Inside



The Tapline  
Indiana Maple Syrup Ass'n  
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Goshen, IN 46526

