



The Tapline

Quarterly Newsletter of the Indiana Maple Syrup Association

Meeting Edition, December 2, 2006

Inspection Report at Annual Meeting

Indiana Department of Health Guidelines are now available

This year's annual meeting of the Indiana Maple Syrup Association will feature a report and discussion of the guidelines for maple inspection. This past June, the Indiana State Department of Health sent their recommendations for maple inspection to Indiana's county health inspectors.

Now that the guidelines are in place, local inspectors will visit the processing facilities of maple syrup producers who sell syrup retail from their farm, farmers market or roadside stand.

Art Harris, a member of the statewide task force that assisted the Food Protection Program in developing the guidelines, will review the official guidelines and answer questions. Copies of the official recommendations will be distributed at the meeting in Rockville set for Saturday, December 2.

According to A. Scott Gilliam, Manager of the Indiana State Department of Health's Food Protection Program Gilliam, the guidelines, issued June 28, 2006, have two important functions. They provide regulatory information for Indiana's maple syrup producers who sell their syrup in the retail market, and the guidelines will assist local health departments in the inspection of these operations.

"Our goal is to assist Indiana's maple industry to produce maple syrup intended for sale in a safe manner and suggest ways for producers to meet existing statutory requirements," Gilliam noted.

The guidelines are the result of a 3-year process that began when Gilliam and other officials from the Indiana State Department of Health's Food Protection Program attended the Indiana Maple Syrup Association's 2003 annual meeting in Terre Haute.

They familiarized themselves with the Hoosier maple industry, and they also consulted with departments of health in other maple producing states to learn how they approached food safety and maple syrup.

Inspection (continued on page 3)



Art Harris, a member of the board of directors of the Indiana Maple Syrup Association and a producer from Greencastle, IN, reported on the current status of health inspections for Hoosier sugar houses during our annual meeting last year in Columbia City. — photo L. Yoder

Hoosier Syrup Production Somewhat Lower for 2006

About 6400 gallons of maple syrup were produced in Indiana in 2006 according to Jeff Settle, Supervisor for the Indiana Division of Forestry's Utilization & Marketing (U&M) Program. This is down from the 8200 gallons reported in the Division of Forestry's survey in 2005.

Though Indiana has an active maple syrup industry, Hoosier production is too small to be included in the federal agricultural survey. Because of this, the Indiana Division of Forestry has kindly stepped in to distribute survey forms and compile results. Otherwise, we would have no information about maple syrup production in Indiana.

We are grateful to producers who take the time to complete the surveys and return them to Jeff.

Jeff Settle's Report begins on Page 4.

Welcome to IMSA's 2006 Annual Meeting

Garry Sink,
President, IMSA



I want to welcome all of you to the 2006 annual meeting of the Indiana Maple Syrup Association.

Your presence shows a growing interest in making this wholesome, natural food available to their friends and neighbors, and our program today is designed to help us do that.

We're also pleased to welcome as special guests Dick and Willie Schorr who are representing the Ohio Maple Producers. Dick is chair of the local arrangements committee for next year's international meeting and he will tell us more about plans for the meeting in Akron.

We are also pleased to welcome the dealers and exhibitors who are with us today.

Special words of appreciation go to Art Harris, Kieth Ruble, and Joe Polak who are our speakers today.

We also want to thank the members of our local arrangements committee, Florence Williams, Chair Rockville, IN; Art Harris, Greencastle, IN; and Keith Ruble, Terre Haute, IN.

The Indiana Maple Syrup Association has been representing the interests of Hoosier maple syrup producers since its formation in 1990.

Since that time, your organization has grown to nearly 100 members who faithfully attend our annual meetings to meet with the dealers and hear presentations about maple from some outstanding speakers.

Your organization also promotes Indiana maple syrup around the state. Most notable is the sugar shack demonstration and syrup sales each year at the Indiana State Fair.

The IMSA also represents the interests of Hoosier producers regarding legislative and regulatory issues. Most recently, association representatives were part of the Indiana Department of Health's task force that helped formulate guidelines for sugarhouse inspections.

I hope that you will find the day to be enjoyable and informative.

The Indiana Maple Syrup Association's Sugar Shack, located in Pioneer Village on the Indiana State Fairgrounds was a popular spot for those who attended the 2006 fair held August 9 - 20.

"This is a great way for Hoosiers to learn about maple syrup making in Indiana, and many visitors purchase their supply of maple syrup, sugar and maple cream at the sugar shack," commented Garry Sink, President of the state-wide association of maple syrup producers.



This year saw near record sales of maple products that were packed by Hoosier maple syrup makers. The sugar shack is the organization's major fundraiser, and funds are used to bring speakers and maple experts to the association's annual meeting held each year on the first Saturday of December.

Our thanks go to all the association members who helped out by greeting visitors, answering questions, and introducing Hoosiers to this fine natural product.

Board of Directors, Indiana Maple Syrup Association Directors are elected for 3 yr terms at the IMSA's annual meeting held the first Saturday of December. Directors elect the officers of the association.

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

In the spring of 2005 the State Department of Health assembled a task force of some 30 representatives from government, academia and producers of seasonal and value added products in Indiana. Members of the task force included producers or association representatives of products such as maple syrup, honey, wine, freezer beef, pork producers, and fresh vegetables.

Members of the task force were asked to become familiar with the existing statutes related to food safety and comment on the impact that current statutory requirements have on their respective enterprises. They were then asked to suggest ways to produce their value added food and meet legal requirements for food safety.

Art Harris and Larry Yoder represented the Indiana Maple Syrup Association with the assistance of association board member Lowell Williams.

The IMSA representatives identified the significant food safety issues in maple syrup production, they evaluated how strict application of the present statutes would impact the maple industry, and they suggested ways for maple producers to meet the statutes, assure food safety, and remain economically viable.

This information was forwarded to Gilliam and his associates and it was shared with IMSA members at our 2005 annual meeting last year in Columbia City.

The recommendations reflect the requirements of the law and the suggestions from your IMSA representatives.

Hopefully the document will enable maple producers to meet the law's requirements and make a safe, locally produced food available to Hoosiers. Further, it will guide inspectors who must interpret general regulations in the environment unique to maple syrup production.

There is still legitimate concern that wording in selected places may still lead some inspectors to question procedures or facilities common in maple syrup production. Harris will review those points of concern in his presentation and discussion.

"We'll have a better handle on how Indiana's inspections go after a sea-

son or two," Harris observed. "I hope that good communication continues so we can readily deal with any problems that may turn up."

According to Scott Gilliam, the state health department's intent is to provide guidelines that will enable the producer and inspector to work cooperatively.

"In Indiana, it was not a matter of maple syrup just now coming under regulation as a result of new legislation," Gilliam noted.

"Maple syrup production is a food processing activity as defined by the Indiana code, and that has been the case for some time. It falls into a group known as "value-added" products,"

"It's just that since maple syrup is a low risk food, it has not been a high priority for inspection," Gilliam continued.

Many maple producers are concerned that strict interpretation and enforcement of the current law will put them out of business if their seasonal, low risk operations are required to comply with the usual retail food regulations. Ironically, that would happen just as state government has begun to encourage entrepreneurial Hoosier agriculture.

"The guidelines can be a help to maple syrup production in Indiana," noted Larry Yoder, another member of the task force.

"At least we now know the recommended criteria. Before, interpretation of the statutes was all over the place as inspectors tried to interpret them in terms of maple syrup production. Such regulatory uncertainty probably limits the enthusiasm of a business person or entrepreneur more than anything else."

Development of Indiana's guidelines for inspection has been marked by good cooperation between maple producers and the state department of health. This has not always been

the case in other maple producing states where regulators and producers have sometimes found themselves in an adversarial relationship.

Shirley K. Vargas, Wholesale Supervisor for the state's food protection program, reminds Indiana maple syrup makers that the guidelines are for smaller producers engaged in retail sales only. Larger producers who sell maple syrup wholesale whether in state or out of state, must meet the



sanitation requirements for wholesale food establishments. Likewise, the guidelines are intended only for the processing of maple syrup and not other related products such as maple cream, maple sugar or candy.

Additional copies of the guidelines may be obtained as a PDF file at the Indiana Department of Health's web site at http://www.in.gov/isdh/regsvcs/foodprot/farmers_market/maple_syrup_guidance_final.pdf

The Indiana Maple Syrup Association will also maintain a supply and make them available by mail.



Maple Syrup Production in Indiana for 2006

**Jeff Settle, Supervisor
Utilization & Marketing (U&M)
Program**

Indiana Division of Forestry

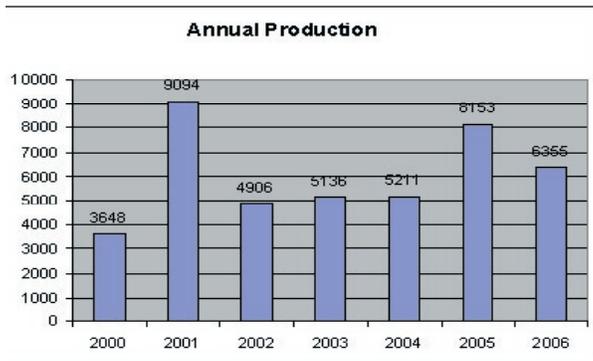
Shortly after the close of the 2006 Maple Syrup season, 168 questionnaires were sent to all known producers of maple syrup in Indiana. 75 individuals promptly responded to the questionnaire resulting in a 45% response rate compared to a 43% response rate in 2005.

For the sake of comparison of similar climatic regions, the results were broken down per two major regions. The dividing line chosen was U.S. Route 40 bisecting the State into a Northern region and a Southern region. 16 questionnaires were returned from the south region and 59 came from the northern region.

Of the producers that responded to the questionnaire, 70% of these folks produced syrup in 2006, a slight drop from the 74% reported in 2005. 8 producers from the southern region and 43 producers from the northern region reported production in 2006.

Almost 68% of the states' total syrup production of 6355.75 gallons was accounted for by twelve large producers. The total number of gallons produced was about 22% lower than the 8153 gallons produced in 2005. Northern producers accounted for 5663.5 gallons compared to 7206 gallons in 2005 while southern producers generated 292.25 gallons, significantly lower from 947 gallons reported in 2005.

The graph below reflects the total number of gallons produced each year from 2000.



There are 31 counties in the state that have at least one active maple syrup producer. Elkhart County was once again the county with the most reported sugar camps – 16. Elkhart County was also the home to the largest sugar camp, producing almost 900 gallons of syrup.

The overall state average for the opening date was 2/15/06 and the closing date was 3/14/06. Regionally, the average opening dates were 2/16/06 and 1/28/06 for the north and south respectively. The average closing dates were 3/10/06 for the north and 2/28/06 for the south.

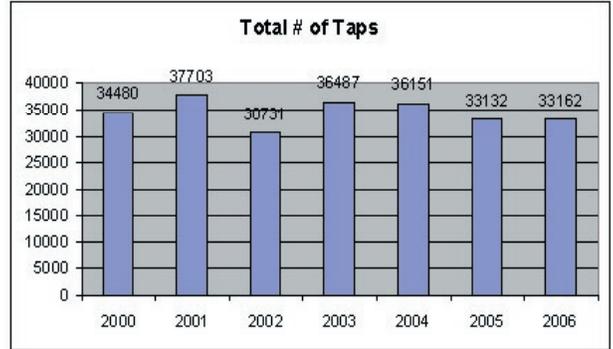
The average amount of sugar water (sap) needed to produce a gallon of syrup was 44.4 gallons in the north and 51.2 gallons in the south. The state average was 45.3 gallons of sap to produce a gallon of syrup. The average amount of sap needed in 2006 to produce a gallon of syrup may not be wholly accurate, as quite a few producers do not maintain accurate records of sap inflow. The average amount of syrup produced per camp was slightly over 122 gallons, up from 100 gallons per camp reported in 2005. Most sugar water was produced at the producer's own sugar bush(es), although in 2006 producers purchased a little over 27,500 gallons of sugar water from outside producers, which was 8,500 gallons less than in 2005.

Slightly over 33,000 taps were utilized in 2006, an average of 626 taps per producer compared to 457 taps per producer in 2005.

Of those 33,162 taps, almost 64% of the state's syrup production was accounted for via producers using buckets for sugar water collection. Almost 12,200 buckets were used in 2006 for collection purposes. The amount of sugar water collected by buckets accounted for total syrup produc-

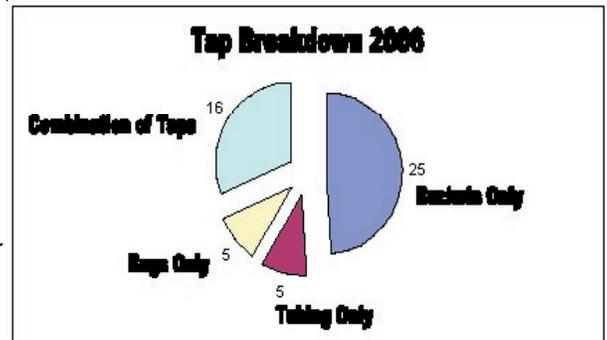
tion of 3922 gallons in the north and 175 gallons in the south region. 38 Indiana maple syrup producers used an average of 321 buckets in their collection operations.

The graph below represents the total number of taps used each year from 2000 to present.



Buckets remain more popular in the north region. The largest single producer utilizing buckets hung 1460 buckets in the northern region and 63 buckets in the southern half. Several producers reported using plastic bags and tubing in addition to buckets for the collection of sugar water.

The pie chart below shows the number of producers per type of tap used in 2006.



Although plastic sap collection bags have yet to really catch on, 14 producers used 1784 collection bags. Many of these producers also used buckets and or tubing as well. Producers using only bags to collect sap set on the average, approximately 197 taps. Exceptions are present though with two individuals using over 600 bags for collection. Those using only bags for sap collection accounted about for 167.5 gallons in 2006.

On a regional basis, those using only plastic sap collection bags were

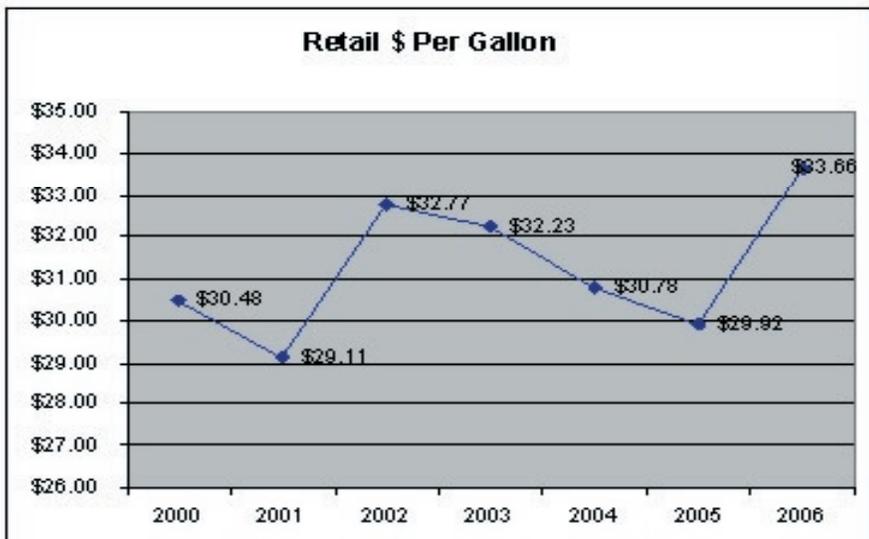
split pretty evenly between the two regions. Four northern producers using 900 bags collected produced 150.5 gallons of syrup. Only 1 producer in the southern region used only plastic bags (100 bags / 17 gallons) for syrup collection.

A number of producers are trying tubing for sugar water collection and are slowly changing over as terrain, dollars and results allow. Statewide, 17 persons (13 in the northern region and 4 in the south) used over 252,000 feet (almost 48 miles) of tubing for collection purposes in 2006. Those using only tubing produced 1657 gallons of syrup. This is below the 2005 figure of 2837 gallons. This amounts to 331 gallons per producer.

The statewide average price received for a retail gallon of syrup was \$33.66, over \$4 higher than in 2005. With only 2 producers from the south reporting, we did not feel comfortable to report an average price per gallon. Northern producers averaged \$33.48 per retail gallon.

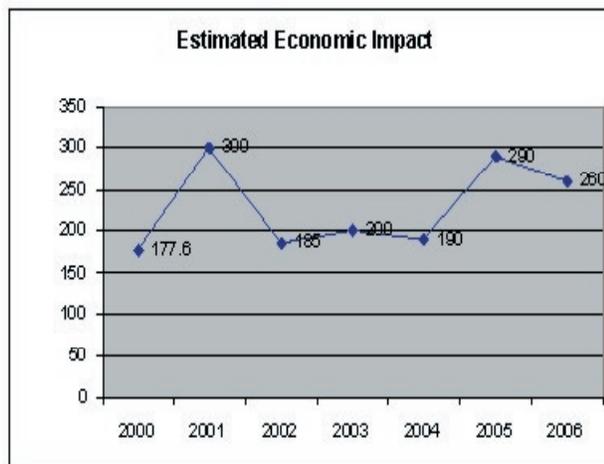
The average statewide price received for a quart of retail syrup was \$10.66. Considerably more surveys were returned this year with information about pricing per pint. The state average per retail pint was \$6.53. Statewide wholesale average gallon price was \$28.40; with little variation in wholesale gallon prices per region.

The graph below depicts the average price per retail gallon of syrup since the year 2000.



The statistics gathered via our 2006 maple syrup production questionnaire most likely will not reflect the true income generated from Indiana's producers. The statewide reported syrup income for 2006 (multiplying the average \$/per gallon X reported production) is almost \$214,000. However, if one appreciates that which was consumed via the producers' family, given away, or simply not reported, the calculated dollar figure may very well conservatively grow to about \$260,000. Assuming this figure to be realistic, the average dollar return per tap hole is \$7.84, slightly lower than the \$8.07 reported in the 2005 maple syrup producer's survey.

The graph below shows the estimated economic impact for maple syrup production during the past 7 years.



Sales do not appear to be a limiting factor for Indiana maple product producers; rather the inability to produce enough syrup due to the unfavorable weather and/or short tapping seasons were the greatest impediments to finding our maple fortunes. Prime tapping conditions center on below freezing temperatures of an evening with a fairly fast thaw in the mornings which normally allows for good syrup flow. Unlike last year when 14% reported below average conditions, 2006 survey data reported only 16% as above average, 51% average, and 32% below average.

Overall, greater than 85% of the produced syrup is sold at a retail level. Of those reporting sales, over 34% of those respondents reporting production, state that at least a portion of their production is given away or consumed domestically; of course these same producers tend to be smaller in scope and production. Packaging preferences show the majority favoring retail sales in gallon containers, fewer favoring quarts, with remainders sold in smaller units. A few producers offer maple sugar, creams, candies, cookies, etc., but apparently these maple products do not account

for substantial percentages of any one producer's sales.

We are all aware that each sugar bush has unique characteristics and that no two bushes produce alike. Although Indiana is a relatively small geographic area, the variation in weather is significant as evidenced by prior years. As reported earlier, conditions in 2006 were less favorable to a good tapping season compared to 2005 but the conditions reported for that year were about as close to perfect as could be.

36 respondents stated they would like to be listed in the Indiana Maple Syrup Producers Brochure. As time and funds permit, we are hoping to prepare an updated brochure.

Additionally, we believe it would be beneficial to have "Indiana generic" maple syrup articles on hand for the

barrage of requests from reporters for local newspapers and other media come next February, 2007.

I sincerely thank all the maple producers for their prompt questionnaire responses. I have updated our maple database and will continue to be a contact for Indiana maple products.

Please remember the data compiled in this report is only as good as the data received. To be able to more accurately report maple syrup production figures, we'll continue to need a high response rate.

Although our time is limited for personal visits to your operation, we do welcome your calls and inquiries on all facets of maple production. Special forest products such as maple syrup contribute substantially to many rural folk's income while offering wholesome therapy at the same time.

Louise Jewell, Nancy Sink, and Kim Owen fill containers during Canning Day 2006.

The event was held at the Harris Sugar Bush, Greencastle.



IMSA director Bill Owen explains the evaporation process to a visitor to the Sugar Shack during the 2006 Indiana State Fair.

Stock Up for Holiday Sales

Quart and half gallons of syrup are available to IMSA members who need additional syrup for holiday sales. This is extra syrup packed during canning day for the 2006 state fair.

The prices to IMSA members are \$8.00 per quart and \$14.00 for half gallons.

Cookbooks are available to members at \$2.50 each.

Equipment Wanted

Ned Stoller, (616) 897 0479 is looking for a drop flue evaporator and arch in the size range of 30" X 8 ft or 3 ft X 10 ft. If IMSA members have one for sale or know of one, Ned would appreciate a call.

Shane Gibson, environmental interpreter at Indiana University's Bradford Woods near Martinsville, plans to establish a modest maple sugaring program as a part of their educational offerings. Shane would like to purchase or receive as a donation about 20 used buckets and lids, a few blue bags and sap sac holders, tubing and plastic spiles for demonstration, 20 metal spiles, hydrometer, hobby sized evaporator pan and an arch. Contact Shane Gibson at Bradford Woods, 5040 State Road 67 North, Martinsville, IN 46151.

His phone number is 765 342-2915 Extension 5279, and his e mail is ggibson@indiana.edu



IMSA's Board of Directors meet during Canning Day to discuss preparations for the state fair and annual meeting.