

Maple Mainline

Vermont Maple Conferences January 10, 17, 24



Over the last several years, the old traditional county maple schools have undergone numerous transformations. Efforts have always been aimed at bringing an improved, more comprehensive educational program to Vermont maple producers. Now sugarmakers themselves are assuming a much greater role in the development and production of these annual events.

The Maple Conferences are a series of educational meetings held around the state for the purpose of bringing the latest scientific and technological information to sugarmakers from Vermont and surrounding regions. The programs run all day and are open to the public. Topics include forest management, improved sap gathering techniques, syrup production, and marketing techniques. Classes are taught by scientists, maple specialists and sugarmakers from around the state. Meetings also feature a trade show with vendors displaying maple related equipment. These meetings are widely perceived to be among the best educational opportunities for sugarmakers in the US and Canada.

The 2009 schools are created and sponsored by UVM Extension and the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association (January 10th and 17th) and by the Addison County Maple Sugarmakers Association (January 24th). Look for many new topics, plus some old favorites, based on the needs expressed to us through your evaluations and inquiries.

Please Note:

As was true last year, the registration form in this newsletter has two parts. Please fill out the appropriate half, depending on whether you wish to attend the Jan. 24th meeting, or either the 10th or 17th meetings. Note that the meeting start times are different, that the checks are made out to different organizations, and the forms are sent to different addresses. Thank you!

Registration tables will be set up from 7:30 am through

noon, with coffee & donuts &/or pastries. The trade show will also be open at that time.

Sat., Jan. 10, Bellows Falls Union High School

Location: off US Rt. 5, just south of Bellows Falls.

Lunch will feature ham dinner with homemade casseroles, salad & desert by the Freshman class & parents.

Sat., Jan. 17, Lamoille Union High School, Hyde Park

Location: Side entrance to Lamoille Union High School, US Rt. 15 in Hyde Park. Lunch will be catered by the Culinary Arts program and will feature Maple Bourbon Roast Pork, with all the fixings.

Sat., Jan. 24, Middlebury Union H.S., Middlebury

Location: off US Rt. 7 just south of the village. Lunch will feature a roast turkey dinner with maple theme and all the fixings.

Pre-Registrations must be **postmarked** by: January 3 for all 3 schools. Thank You! Registrations received *by these dates* will be assured of a meal, if selected and paid for. Lunch for Walk-ins or registrations received *after these dates* will be served on a first come, first served basis. Please help us by registering early.

Special needs: If you require an accommodation to participate in this program, please notify our office at 802-888-4972 or 866-260-5603 (toll free, in-state only).

Please Note: All conference sites are on school property. A strict **NO SMOKING** policy must be followed.

You are welcome to attend all of the various meetings. We have developed a very inclusive agenda, with classes for all levels. We sincerely hope this program will be beneficial to you and your maple operation. **A drop box for conference evaluations will be provided as you exit.**

VMSMA President's Message: Education enhances profit

What a great time to be a sugarmaker! Prices are being paid for our maple syrup that a year ago we only dreamed about. Every year now we see a growing number of sugarmakers regularly produce over 1/3 gallon per tap, even on years with marginal sap producing weather. Couple these two things together and it spells "profit." Many of these sugarmakers say these winter maple conferences have played a large part in making this happen. When the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association joined forces with UVM Extension I don't think we ever realized just how good this program could get. The Addison County Maple Producers Association, after seeing how important these schools were to producers, now put on their own maple conference for their members and other producers, so that no one has to travel far to get to a meeting. If you have never attended one of these winter maple conferences then this would be a great year to start. There are interesting topics scheduled for everyone from the beginner to the seasoned sugarmakers. Join us and learn how to put more profit in your pocket. See you there,

Rick Marsh, President VMSMA



Sugarmaker Cecile Branon of Fairfield checking for vacuum leaks.

Bellows Falls and Lamoille Union High Schools: Jan 10 & 17 Schedule for the day:

7:30 ~ Registration opens; Coffee & Donuts
8:30 - 9:00 ~ Welcome (in Auditorium)
9:00 - 9:50 ~ Session I
10:00 - 10:50 ~ Session II
11:00 - 11:50 ~ Session III
12:00 - 12:50 ~ Lunch & Trade Show
1:00 - 1:50 ~ Session IV
2:00 - 2:50 ~ Session V
3:00 ~ Turn in Evaluations, Have a Safe Trip Home

The Asian Longhorned Beetle in Massachusetts: What it Means For Our Industry ~ Dr Robert Childs, U. Massachusetts. Of the four positive finds of ALB since 1996, the infestations have always been in urban and/or suburban settings; but in 2008, it was found in Worcester MA in a region just a few miles from heavily forested areas. This talk will explore the biology, importance, history of management and what it could mean to sugarmakers should ALB be found in forested areas. **Bellows Falls Only.**



A Female Asian Longhorned Beetle

Energy Efficiency in Maple Sugaring Operations ~ Tim Wilmot, UVM Extension, will discuss how energy efficiency is calculated in maple syrup production and how it varies using different fuels and evaporator configurations. Electricity use and cost will also be covered, as well as suggestions for modifications that could lead to improved efficiency in various parts of the sugaring operation.

Shipping Your Products Through the US Postal Service ~ Members of the business development team for the USPS will provide a presentation on packaging your products, new “online discounts,” and information regarding Click n Ship—the avenue for printing your shipping label and paying for your postage online.

Your Maple Syrup: the Best That it Can Be! ~ Henry Marckres, chief of Consumer Protection for the VT Agency of Agriculture will provide a review of production, packing and storage methods to keep your product all that it can be. He will share thoughts and observations from 25 years of inspecting maple syrup that may help you avoid some common problems that could affect the quality of your products.

Gravity Tubing Systems ~ Dave Mance, VMSMA vice president and Shaftsbury sugarmaker, will discuss the construction and maintenance of a modern tubing system for sap collection without vacuum. Learn the proven techniques and materials for gravity systems that will give you greater convenience and higher sap yields than conventional bucket collection.
Bellows Falls Only.

Getting the Most From Your Taps ~ Bob White, Underhill Sugarmaker. This discussion will be about simple methods to improve on the limitations of our tubing systems, how gravity and sap gas plays a roll in reduced production, down sizing vacuum pumps to increase production, the importance of controlling backflow in tap holes, and a new method to find hidden mainline leaks that can kill production.

The Seasonal ¼” Spout and Clean and Efficient Wood-fired Evaporators ~ Jeff Goulet, Lapierre/Waterloo/Small Hyde Park Only.

Methods for Finding Vacuum Leaks ~ Where are you losing vacuum—between the tree and the spout? Somewhere in the 5/16 tubing? Along the mainline? This will be a panel discussion in which producers will share their experience chasing down vacuum leaks in the woods.

Instrumentation for Syrup Making ~ Lynn Lang, superintendent of maple and honey at the Champlain Valley fair, will give a presentation on the proper use of production tools such as thermometers, hydrometers, barometers and refractometers for

making quality maple syrup. There will be an emphasis on the use of the new electronic thermometers offered by the state of VT as replacements for mercury thermometers, as well as tips on other electronic thermometers to buy if you break yours.

Cooking with Maple ~ Maple can be a lot more than pancake syrup. Learn how to make products that your family and friends will remember you for; plus add to your marketing appeal. Karen Sprague of Whitingham, VT (**B.F.**) and Steve and Amy Wheeler of Westfield, VT (**H.P.**) will share their talents. At both schools, Lynn Lang of Essex VT will also present both a technical and cooking session including a discussion of what causes defects and detractors from the ideal maple products, as well as tips for making value added products such as maple filled chocolates.



Karen Sprague demonstrates candy making. This year Karen will show you how to turn grade B syrup into granulated sugar and maple crunchies with little effort but big returns.

Servicing Your Sugarhouse Equipment ~ Nick Atherton, service manager for Maple Pro will give a presentation on RO and vacuum. Nick will cover the daily operation, maintenance and cleaning of the RO, and requirements for the RO room. He will also cover maintenance and operation of mechanical and electric extractors, and vacuum pumps ranging from basic farm pumps to high performance ring pumps.

A new style RO ~ Stephan Darveau will show off an RO that can be used in an unheated space, as well as other equipment from his company. **H.P. Only.**

Develop and Maintain your Website to Sell Your Maple Products ~ Mindy Wren Barth, owner of Tirna Designs; Marcia Maynard, co-owner of Cabot Hill Maple; Catherine Stevens, VT Maple Syrup Marketing Director. Learn how to develop and/or maintain your website effectively in order to increase sales of your maple syrup and maple products. We will share tips, pitfalls to avoid and lots of ideas.

Effects of Reverse Osmosis on Maple Syrup Chemistry and Flavor ~ Dr. Abby van den Berg, UVM Proctor Maple Research Center. An experiment was conducted at the Proctor Center in which syrup was produced simultaneously from 4 levels of concentrate (2, 8, 12 and 15%) in identical evaporators. Results of analyses of chemical composition and flavor of the syrup will be presented.



Four evaporators boiling different levels of concentrate simultaneously at the Proctor Center.

Exotic Pests at our Doorstep: the Increased Threat of Asian Longhorned Beetle and Others ~ Ron Kelley, VT Dept. Forests, Parks & Recreation. The Asian Longhorned Beetle, a killer of sugar maple, is now only 45 miles from Vermont and the Emerald Ash Borer is even closer. What is the status of these pests, how to identify them, what is being done and what can you do to help? **Hyde Park Only.**

High Concentration of Sap Using RO. A panel discussion on methods and potential pitfalls of using Reverse Osmosis machines to concentrate sap to levels well above 8%.

Things to Consider Before and After Purchasing an RO ~ Brian Stowe, Proctor Maple Research

Center. With the rising cost of fuel RO is becoming more popular. This discussion will include some of the needs and logistics of adding an RO to an existing operation. **Hyde Park Only.**

Sugarhouse Efficiency and Sanitation ~ Joe Russo, Belvidere sugarmaker. A clean, neat and properly set up sugarhouse can save a significant amount of time and labor in bringing in your maple crop. Joe Russo will explain what he has done over the years to improve efficiency in every aspect of his operation. He will also touch on the steam evaporation system that he designed and built. **Hyde Park Only.**

Proctor Maple Research Center Update ~ Dr. Tim Perkins. This presentation will focus on ongoing projects at the UVM Proctor Center, including research results on new ways to improve sap yields, research on developing new spouts, chemistry of sap and syrup, and the removal of off-flavors in syrup.

Beginning Sugarmakers ~ George Cook, UVM Extension, will cover who, what, when, where, why and how of getting started in sugaring. He will share some tricks of the trade to help people get started on the right foot regardless of the size of your operation.

Boiling School ~ Glen Goodrich, Cabot sugarmaker, addresses the best practices in boiling to make good tasting, high quality syrup. He will cover even firing, firebox construction, and evaporator efficiency. **Hyde Park Only.**



Nate Fice examines a sugarbush heavily infested with the invasive plant Japanese Barberry.

"I Should Never Cut a Sugar Maple...True or False?" ~ Nate Fice, Bennington County Forester will discuss how developing a new sugarbush or maintaining an existing sugar maple stand requires active management. Sugarbush management is best accomplished through site evaluation, selecting the appropriate sugar maple "crop tree," applying harvesting techniques to increase tree vigor and sap production, and thinking about your maple stand long-term. **Bellows Falls Only.**

Forest Management for Sugarmakers ~ Nancy Patch, Franklin Cty. Forester, will discuss the use of even-aged and all-aged management practices in Northern Hardwoods to maximize sap production, timber production, and forest health within Current Use Forest Management standards. **Hyde Park Only.**

Middlebury H.S. Classes: January 24

Schedule for the day:

- 8:00 - 8:45 ~ Registration; Coffee & Donuts
- 8:50 - 9:50 ~ Welcome and updates (in Auditorium)
- 10:00 - 10:50 ~ Session I
- 11:00 - 11:50 ~ Session II
- 11:50 - 1:10 ~ Lunch & Trade Show (collect your door prizes)
- 1:10 - 2:00 ~ Session III
- 2:10 - 3:00 ~ Session IV

Renovating Your Old Tubing System for High Production ~ Steve Pierson. How to get the best out of your tubing and vacuum set-up. From mainlines to drops, learn the best practices of how to set up an efficient tubing/vacuum system.

Thinking About Going Organic? ~ Nicole Dehne of NOFA will tell you about the benefits and drawbacks to being an organic maple syrup producer. Learn about the new rules that effect the organic designation as well as how the issues of the tin can and galvanized barrel effect the organic producer.

On the Tip of Your Tongue ~ Sumner Dole, retired maple specialist from New Hampshire will help you gain a better understanding of the off flavors that can make or break your syrup. Discover techniques to evaluate your syrup for competition and the marketplace. Learn what not to do and use to avoid creating syrup with an off-flavor.



Sumner Dole shows sugarmakers what can happen to improperly packed syrup.

Beginning Sugarmakers ~ Bill Scott, FAA instructor Emeritus, will cover the who, what, when, where and how of getting started in sugaring. Whether for large or small operations, Bill will share some tricks of the trade to help people get started on the right foot.

Effects of Reverse Osmosis on Maple Syrup Chemistry and Flavor ~ Dr. Abby van den Berg, UVM Proctor Maple Research Center. An experiment was conducted at the Proctor Center in which syrup was produced simultaneously from 4 levels of concentrate (2, 8, 12 and 15%) in identical evaporators. Results of analyses of chemical composition and flavor of the syrup will be presented.

Basic Woods Management ~ Chris Olson, Addison County Forester. No sugarbush is perfect! Learn about proper timber and crop tree management. Chris will also discuss the new Use Value Allotments for standing timber, sugarbushes and managed forests.

Sap Ladders ~ Moe Rheaume, Andy Hutchinson and Steve Willsley, Addison County Sugarmakers. Defy gravity and move the sap uphill to your sugarhouse. Learn about the different systems available from LaPierre, Dominion/Grimm and Leader

Pests in the Woods ~ UVM entomologists will talk about the major pests that threaten our forests and sugarbushes, along with strategies and defenses that

you an employ to help reduce the spread of these pests for the better health of Vermont Forests.

Tubing Setup ~ Glen Goodrich of Cabot will show you how, even though tubing looks easy, there is a right way and a wrong way. Learn the techniques in setting up a solid, workable mainline, creating drops and plotting out the line through the woods.

Energy Efficiency in Maple Sugaring Operations ~ Tim Wilmot, UVM Extension, will discuss how energy efficiency is calculated in maple syrup production and how it varies using different fuels and evaporator configurations. Electricity use and cost will also be covered, as well as suggestions for modifications that could lead to improved efficiency in various parts of the sugaring.

Consistency is the Key to Making High Quality Maple Syrup ~ Brad Gillilan, Leader Evaporator. Brad will discuss the best practices in boiling to make good tasting, high quality syrup. He will cover even firing, firebox construction, and evaporator efficiency.

Maple Confections ~ Ruth Goodrich, Cabot sugarmaker. Make the most out of your syrup with value added products. Learn how to make small batches of the best maple products in a way that anyone can handle.

Renting Taps/Buying and Selling sap ~ Roundtable with Addison County Sugarmakers. How much is too much to pay when renting taps or buying sap? What is the fair market value for your product? This session will help you plan your sugaring budget and learn the best practices in the industry.

Reverse Osmosis ~ Brian Stowe, UVM Proctor Maple Research Center. A two session presentation that will cover getting the best performance from your RO. Part 1 will cover sizing, selection, and installation of an RO. Part 2 will cover the basics of running an RO.

Timothy Wilmot, George L. Cook

UVM Extension Maple Specialists



THERMOMETER EXCHANGE

Many Vermont producers signed up to exchange mercury thermometers with the state last year. If you have previously signed up, you will be able to exchange your thermometers at any maple conference during January. Bring your thermometer with you and see Henry Marckres or Anne Macmillan of the Agency of Agriculture.

There may be a possibility of a future exchange for those who have not yet signed up. To sign up, contact: Anne Macmillan at 828-3479 or by e-mail at: anne.macmillan@state.vt.us

Please note: the exchange is available for Vermont producers only.

**UVM Extension
29 Sunset Dr., STE 2
Morrisville, VT 05661**

2009 ~ 3 Maple Conferences

Registration Inside

Vermont Maple Foundation News

Greetings to everybody in this sweet Vermont Maple Industry! What a wild ride this year has been! A good crop and record prices. On the promotional front, I believe it's important to continue doing the best job we can to make sure that consumers continue purchasing our maple products even though the prices are at record highs. Maple Open House Weekend is all organized and ready to go. Our new maple map/directory is being distributed at all the Vermont Welcome Centers, by the Vermont Ski Area Association at many shows all over the USA and abroad, the Vermont Chamber of Commerce, and the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing. Our shared website with VMSMA continues to get a record amount of activity. When you do a search for Vermont Maple Syrup, www.vtmaple.org usually comes up on the first page! The other very exciting thing that we are currently working on is a new mobile sugarhouse which has just been ordered! We are replacing our 25 year old model that has served us very well for many years. We hope to have the new one ready to go by early spring 2009. Thanks for your support. We operate only on volunteer contributions from industry folks like yourselves! Thank you to all of the volunteers who have helped us during the past year on various projects.

Jacques Couture, President, VM

Maple School at Middlebury Union High School
Saturday, January 24, 2009
Sponsored by the Addison County Sugarmakers Association

Name _____
 Operation Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City, State, Zip: _____
 Phone: _____ - _____ - _____
 Email: _____
 Name(s) Attending: _____

Pre-Registration is \$25 per person if **postmarked** by Jan 3, 2009; \$35 per person at the door. **Please Note:** Registration fee **DOES** include lunch.

Number of attendees _____ x \$25.00 = _____
 (meeting and lunch)
 Number of attendees _____ x \$15.00 = _____
 (meeting **ONLY**)
 Total Enclosed = _____

Make checks payable to: ACMSA
 Mail to: Barbara Rainville, Sec/Treas. ACMSA
 598 Browns Rd
 Lincoln, VT 05443

Date Received: ____/____/____	Amount Paid: _____	Check No: _____
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Maple Schools at Bellows Falls H.S. Saturday January 10, 2009
Lamoille Union H.S., Hyde Park, Saturday, January 17, 2009

~ Sponsored by UVM Extension and the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association ~

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City, State, Zip: _____
 Phone: _____ - _____ - _____
 Email: _____

Please Circle the site(s) you wish to attend:

Bellows Falls ~ 1/10 Name(s) Attending: _____
 Hyde Park ~ 1/17 Name(s) Attending: _____

Pre-Registration is \$20 per person if **postmarked** by Jan 3, 2009; \$30 per person at the door. \$5 discount for current FFA/4H member/youth (under 18). Lunch is \$15. **Please Note:** Registration fee **DOES NOT** include lunch.

Make checks payable to: VMSMA Mail to: VMSMA, c/o Mary Croft, 491 East Barnard Road,
 So. Royalton, VT 05068

Number of adults _____ x \$20.00 = _____
 Number of youth _____ x \$15.00 = _____
 Number of meals _____ x \$15.00 = _____
 Total Enclosed = _____

Credit Cards accepted. Provide information below:
 CC # _____
 CIV # _____ (last 3 numbers on back of card)
 Circle Type: VISA / MC only
 Exp. Date: ____/____
 Signature: _____

Date Received: ____/____/____	Amount Paid: _____	Check No: _____
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