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Aubrey R. Davis, Director

Maple Syrup

June 12, 1997

A special "THANK YOU" goes to New England producers and buyers who have helped us by completing the annual Maple Syrup survey during April and May.

SYRUP PRODUCTION DOWN 17 PERCENT NATIONWIDE

UNITED STATES: The 1997 U.S. maple syrup production totaled 1.29 million gallons, down 17 percent from last year. The forecasted value of production is $30.5 million, a decrease of 28 percent from 1996. The U.S. estimate consists of the ten major producing States.

Maple syrup production decreased in all States except Maine and Ohio. In general, producers experienced variable weather and cold temperatures that hampered good flow. All States but Ohio averaged a lower yield per tap. The tapping season was the same length as last season, but it started a few days earlier. Most of the New England area and New York tapped one week longer than Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Excessive snow cover hampered production in northern Wisconsin and Michigan, but conditions were more favorable in the southern areas of Michigan. Syrup color was medium to light amber in all States but Wisconsin. The sap's sugar content was slightly lower than last year for the nation, but a little higher in New England. Maine had the highest sugar content. Preliminary prices for 1997's syrup are down from last year, possibly due to remaining inventories of last season's syrup. Vermont led the U.S. in production with 395,000 gallons of syrup, but decreased 28 percent from last season. New York's production declined 22 percent to 269,000 gallons. Maine was the third leading state with production of 180,000 gallons, 8 percent more than 1996 and the highest reported production since 1988.

NEW ENGLAND (excluding Rhode Island)**:** Maple syrup production in New England for 1997 totaled 704,000 gallons, down 19 percent from last year; however production showed a 12 percent increase from 1995. Vermont remained the largest producing state in New England and the nation, with 56 percent of the region's production and 31 percent of the total U.S. syrup.

Poor weather conditions in 1997 led to decreased production in all New England states, except for Maine. The percentage decrease from 1996's production varied from 28 percent in Vermont to 10 percent in both Connecticut and Massachusetts; Maine showed an 8 percent increase in production. Maine's production increase was due to an increase in taps, offset by a much smaller decrease in yield per tap. New England's 1997 sugaring season lasted approximately 34 days, 1 day longer than 1996. The average opening dates were February 20 in Connecticut, February 27 in Massachusetts, March 3 in New Hampshire, March 12 in Vermont, and March 13 in Maine. Temperatures were reported to be 71 percent too cold, 19 percent favorable, and 10 percent too warm. The sugar content of this year's sap ran a little higher than usual, requiring only 38

gallons of sap to produce 1 gallon of syrup. Syrup color this year was lighter than normal, with only 15 percent of production reported to be dark amber in color. The average closing dates were March 30 in Connecticut, April 6 in Massachusetts, April 9 in New Hampshire, April 14 in Maine, and April 15 in Vermont. In Northern Maine and Vermont several producers continued boiling into early May.

The preliminary value of New England's 1997 maple syrup crop, based on grower expectations, is $16.2 million. This is a 32 percent decrease from the 1996 total value of $23.9 million for the five New England states surveyed. The preliminary average gallon equivalent price for New England syrup across the retail, wholesale, and bulk markets is $23.00 which is down $4.60 from 1996's price of $27.60.

1996 PRICES AND SALES: Average gallon equivalent prices for 1996 maple syrup across retail, wholesale, and bulk sales varied widely across the region. Connecticut's all sales equivalent increased $2.50 to $42.70 in 1996. Maine's all sales equivalent increased $3.60 to $21.90. Massachusett's all sales equivalent increased $0.80 to $38.90. New Hampshire's all sales equivalent decreased $0.80 to $37.20. Vermont's all sales equivalent decreased $1.30 to $26.50. As expected, Maine continues to have a low gallon equivalent price due to their large percentage of bulk sales. The 1996 gallon equivalent price of $27.60 across all New England states reflects a 2 percent increase from the 1995 price of $27.00.

This report is taken from the June issue of the national ***Crop Production*** *report published by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service at 8:30 am on June 12, 1997.*

This annual report includes prices received for the previous year's crop and production & expected prices for this year's crop.

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MAPLE SYRUP: Production, Price and Value, 1995 - 1997

STATE	Production			Average Gallon Equivalent Price of All Sales [1/]			Value of Production		
	1995	1996	1997	1995	1996	1997 [2/]	1995	1996	1997 [2/]
	1,000 Gallons			Dollars			1,000 Dollars		
Connecticut	7	10	9	40.20	42.70	33.40	281	427	301
Maine	162	167	180	18.30	21.90	19.40	2,965	3,657	3,492
Massachusetts	29	49	44	38.10	38.90	31.00	1,105	1,906	1,364
New Hampshire	64	89	76	38.00	37.20	29.50	2,432	3,311	2,242
Vermont	365	550	395	27.80	26.50	22.30	10,147	14,575	8,809
NEW ENGLAND [3/]	**627**	**865**	**704**	**27.00**	**27.60**	**23.00**	**16,930**	**23,876**	**16,208**
Michigan	55	88	75	26.90	31.10	25.50	1,480	2,737	1,913
New York	208	343	269	23.50	25.50	23.70	4,888	8,747	6,375

Ohio	65	90	95	28.80	28.50	26.00	1,872	2,565	2,470
Pennsylvania	43	71	63	25.10	24.60	25.60	1,079	1,747	1,613
Wisconsin	98	110	87	25.40	22.70	21.90	2,489	2,497	1,905
UNITED STATES	**1,096**	**1,567**	**1,293**	**26.20**	**26.90**	**23.60**	**28,738**	**42,169**	**30,484**

1/ Average gallon equivalent price is a weighted average across retail, wholesale, and bulk sales. This price is lower for states, such as Maine, with more wholesale and bulk sales. The average gallon equivalent price is not the average retail price paid for a gallon of syrup -- see page 3 for retail gallon average prices.

2/ 1997 price and value are preliminary and based on grower expectations during April and May 1997.

3/ New England includes CT, ME, MA, NH, VT

SOURCE: ***Crop Production***, 8:30 am, June 12, 1997, National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA.

MAPLE SYRUP: Sales Percentages, New England, 1995 - 1996

	Connecticut		Maine		Massachusetts		New Hampshire		Vermont	
TYPE OF SALE	**1995**	**1996**	**1995**	**1996**	**1995**	**1996**	**1995**	**1996**	**1995**	**1996**
	Percent									
Retail	70	70	5	5	70	80	60	70	40	35
Wholesale	20	20	3	5	15	10	25	20	20	15
Bulk	10	10	92	90	15	10	15	10	40	50

SOURCE: ***Crop Production***, 8:30 am, June 12, 1997, National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA.

MAPLE SYRUP: Sales Percentages, Other States, 1995 - 1996

	Michigan		New York		Ohio		Pennsylvania		Wisconsin	
TYPE OF SALE	**1995**	**1996**	**1995**	**1996**	**1995**	**1996**	**1995**	**1996**	**1995**	**1996**
	Percent									

Retail	50	64	48	50	75	65	51	48	53	37
Wholesale & Bulk	50	36	52	50	25	35	49	52	47	63

SOURCE: *Crop Production*, 8:30 am, June 12, 1997, National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA.

MAPLE SYRUP: Prices by Type of Sales and Size of Container, 1995 - 1996

STATE & YEAR	Retail					Wholesale					Bulk					All Sales gallon equivalent price 1/
											Grade A					
	Gal	½ Gal	Quart	Pint	½ Pint	Gal	½ Gal	Quart	Pint	½ Pint	light amber	med amber	dark amber	Grade B & C	All Grades	
	Dollars Per Container										Dollars Per Pound 2/					Dollars
Connecticut																
1995	35.00	19.60	11.10	6.00	4.20	3/	14.80	8.10	4.85	3.60	--	--	3/	3/	3/	40.20
1996	35.40	20.50	11.00	6.95	4.25	3/	17.40	8.85	6.50	3.20	--	--	3/	3/	3/	42.70
Maine																
1995	30.20	16.90	9.45	5.45	3.60	25.80	13.60	7.05	4.30	2.70	1.55	1.50	1.40	1.25	1.50	18.30
1996	32.30	17.50	9.35	5.55	3.70	25.40	13.60	7.50	4.50	2.80	1.79	1.94	1.81	1.82	1.83	21.90
Massachusetts																
1995	30.10	17.80	10.50	6.40	4.15	23.50	14.70	8.15	4.75	2.75	1.85	1.60	1.30	1.20	1.22	38.10
1996	32.40	18.30	10.60	6.65	4.05	25.70	16.00	8.60	5.05	3.25	1.67	1.63	1.32	1.34	1.38	38.90
New Hampshire																
1995	31.20	17.80	10.40	6.25	3.70	25.50	14.70	7.75	4.55	2.75	2.00	1.40	1.50	1.05	1.29	38.00
1996	32.10	17.80	10.50	6.20	3.80	24.90	14.80	8.40	4.90	3.10	1.84	1.62	1.34	1.18	1.36	37.20
Vermont																
1995	28.80	16.90	10.40	6.45	4.20	24.00	13.60	7.95	4.65	3.10	1.80	1.50	1.40	1.30	1.46	27.80
1996	28.30	16.50	10.10	6.15	4.20	24.30	13.90	8.10	4.80	3.05	1.79	1.56	1.39	1.25	1.48	26.50
Michigan																
1995	27.60	15.60	8.28	5.24	3.14	24.80	13.00	7.40	4.30	2.46	--	--	--	--	1.63	26.90
1996	27.70	17.00	9.17	5.81	3.47	25.80	13.80	7.60	4.17	2.24	--	--	--	--	1.77	31.10
New York																
1995	29.10	15.70	9.00	5.60	3.70	23.30	13.80	7.80	4.70	2.60	--	--	--	--	1.15	23.50
1996	28.20	16.50	10.00	6.05	3.65	25.70	14.70	8.00	4.80	3.40	--	--	--	--	1.35	25.50
Ohio																
1995	26.30	14.50	8.50	5.20	3.80	20.60	11.50	6.50	3.60	2.70	--	--	--	--	1.30	28.80
1996	26.50	15.00	9.20	5.70	4.30	22.50	13.00	7.50	4.50	3.40	--	--	--	--	1.60	28.50
Pennsylvania																
1995	27.90	15.20	8.50	5.10	3.40	23.50	14.00	7.40	4.70	2.90	--	--	--	--	1.10	25.10
1996	28.70	16.10	9.00	5.40	3.70	26.80	14.60	7.90	4.80	3.00	--	--	--	--	1.30	24.60
Wisconsin																
1995	23.40	12.40	7.30	4.00	2.90	26.60	13.90	7.50	4.00	2.40	--	--	--	--	1.29	25.40
1996	24.80	13.10	7.09	4.45	2.67	23.90	13.10	6.65	3.81	2.51	--	--	--	--	1.42	22.70

1/ Average gallon equivalent price is a weighted average across retail, wholesale, and bulk sales.

2/ For dollars per gallon: multiply dollars per pound by 11.03 pounds per gallon

3/ Data withheld to prevent disclosure of individual operations

SOURCE: **Crop Production**, 8:30 am, June 12, 1997, National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA.

FREQUENT 1997 COMMENTS FROM MAPLE PRODUCERS, BY COUNTY

CONNECTICUT: Fairfield: Temps too warm. **Hartford:** Weather was fickle - as usual. Too short of a season. For us overall it was a less than perfect year; February was too warm, March too cold and windy. This season was much too warm for good runs. Perfect - highest yield per taps here in 30 years. Not the best, but slow and steady. **Litchfield:** A difficult year. A whole week with no sap, a lot of bad runs. Crazy season - too warm and then too cold. Never had more than one day of run. **Middlesex:** Fluky! I should have tapped in the middle of January - but who would have known! **New Haven:** Started too warm, better weather later on. Sap only ran well for about 10 days, was too warm overall. **New London:** Two very warm **MAINE: Androscoggin:** Sap flow was good the first (and during the last) few days of the season, poor in the middle. Split season - two runs divided by a cold spell. The season started early in February, but most producers weren't ready for the first runs - then it went a couple of weeks with nothing. The worst season I've seen in 15 years. **Aroostook**: Not enough water in the ground. Cloudy, windy, cold - too much snow. Not much sun. **Cumberland:** Long, slow season. Good quality syrup. Too cold when it was cold - too warm when it was warm. Disappointing. **Franklin:** Terrible season! Too cold, too much snow and wind - spotty sap flow. Poor sap weather most of March; quality was good to excellent. **Kennebec:** Long season. Not a good year. **Knox:** Exceptional sugar content, high grade quality; very difficult production year - poor sap flow. Not enough sunshine. **Lincoln:** Flavor real consistent. Season was both too cold and too warm. **Oxford:** Mostly too cold. We experienced one of the coldest sap seasons ever in this area. Only had one very good run - in the middle of April. **Penobscot:** Nights were cold enough, but days were too warm. Sap did not run good. Awesome weather - awesome quality - we love sugaring season! **Piscataquis:** Season started late and warmed up night and day by mid-April. Too cold for sap to flow regularly. Late! **Somerset:** Best runs in April, sap tested very sweet. Very cold, lots of snow; still had snow when we closed up. Season too short. Erratic, drawn out season. **Waldo:** Good early and mid-season. Weather was not conducive to a good season. Poorest season in this locality for 40 years. **York:** We had a good run in the last days of February; March conditions included more than half the days too cold for good runs. Early April has some good sap days. Very erratic temperatures. Sap was exceptionally sweet. Mostly too cold and windy. Excellent quality. Quality was the best in several years.

periods early turned very nice light syrup to dark syrup, then stopped for about 10 days, which caused tap holes to close up. Started earlier than expected. **Tolland:** Crazy season. Too cold at night - too windy during day. The weather never seemed to be just right. Quality was pretty good. Warm weather in February yielded some B syrup; otherwise all fancy, medium and dark amber. Season started before we were ready for it. **Windham:** Weather conditions were poor - there wasn't the proper range between freezing and thawing. Dark syrup - good flavor.

MASSACHUSETTS: Berkshire: It was either too warm or too cold. When the sap ran, it ran good; but most of the season was cold. **Essex:** Temperatures in March were too cold, quality of syrup was good. **Franklin:** Sap came slow, but sugar content was two to two and a half percent. Sap quality was excellent and very sweet. Temps did not get high enough for many heavy sap flows. Strong early start, then too cold until late March. Did not get a big sap run anytime but sap was cold and clear and made light syrup all year. End of February started to warm up and we had real deep mud, sap ran some every day; In March sap ran with a west wind and ice on the spouts, the sap was cold and we had ice in the tanks that lasted most of the month of March; This ice and cold nights made excellent flavor, with color being medium to light amber. Quality of syrup we made was exceptional. **Hampden:** Too cold at first then when warm weather came the wind was wrong most of the time. Very strange season. **Hampshire:** Little snow cover made gathering sap easy. Very cool season kept sap quality excellent, best ever; entire crop was light amber. Probably the best grade in 10 years. **Middlesex:** Ideal conditions, some of the best sugaring in recent memory. Heat caused some spoiling of sap. Unfavorable. **Worcester:** February too warm - March too cold. Very poor weather conditions; no snow, so little moisture from January through March. Temps were ideal, but the wind blew too hard to be good for the trees. Unusual cool conditions yielded beautiful light syrup. Temperature fluctuations were decent, but wind kept sap from flowing.

NEW HAMPSHIRE: Belknap: February too warm, March too cold. Cold but okay. This year has been the most frustrating year weatherwise that I have come across in the 40 years I've been making syrup. Crazy! **Carroll:** Long season due to a cold March start. Sap and syrup quality were excellent overall. **Cheshire:** High sugar content in the sap. Quality was better than average. Crazy. First year we've made light syrup. **Coos:**

Seemed to take forever. Frustrating because very cold; highest quality in years for taste. Good season; no problems. Cold wind through most of the season hampered flow. Quantity down, but quality up. **Grafton:** Weather was too cold in March and too warm in April. Anytime you have to deal with Mother Nature, she wins - you lose. Very windy season here. Best run was the last week of February. **Hillsborough:** Excellent long season. Missed early run in February; rest of the season was cool and windy. Sugar content higher than last two years. **Merrimack:** Perfect for first week; froze for two weeks, then normal weather for rest of the season. Quality great. Sweeter than last year. Cold weather made fort lighter syrup - when it ran. Too cold, lots of snow, couldn't get to taps; windy, never warmed up. Season started out and ended fine, middle part was lousy; however, best syrup in a long time. **Rockingham:** Good weather except for midMarch when it was too cold. Season started early. Sporatic weather. Sap runs were short. Very long season - 49 days. **Sullivan:** Exceptional quality and flavor. Fickle.

VERMONT: Addison: No big runs even by Lake Champlain. Crazy weather, best Fancy in years. Great color and flavor. Mother Nature! **Bennington:** Weather difficult, good quality. **Caledonia:** Worst year in history - it was just weird. Wish it was better! Coldest March and April in memory; trees tapped early in season dried up early. **Chittenden:** Good quality. Season started favorably but by end of season produced little sap. **Essex:** Late season, March was too cold; only one good run in April. **Franklin:** Sap just would not flow. **Lamoille:** Affected more by wind than temps. Superb quality, weather was marginal. Late start but good normal crop; good quality and color. Warm and cold came in long spells this year; all too often warm nights followed warm days. **Orange** Never had a good run, wind was bad. March too cold, then way too warm. **Orleans:** Windy weather seemed to dry out the trees quickly. Good quality, a little low in quantity. **Rutland:** Second best season our farm ever had. Quality was excellent - good flavor, good color, no dark, too quick. 75 percent of our syrup was fancy, in spite of fickle weather - too cold, then too warm. By the time good sap flow began it was late in the season and the weather was too warm and trees had been tapped for too long. Too cold, large amount of snow buried lines. **Washington:** Too much of season was lost to returning winter weather. Strange season, weather did not cooperate. 90 percent was Fancy, best flavor in years. **Windham:** The only good sap runs were in February and early March. Excellent quality. **Windsor:** Too many days without correct temperature variations. Excellent flavor even through the end. Extended cold weather held back early season. Sap was very sweet. Excellent season - until it got too cold in March.

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