

NASS Survey Training
Maple Syrup Inquiry – May 2021
(MAPLE PROD)



United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service

NOD – Training Group
April 2021



Survey Overview

- The Maple Syrup Inquiry is conducted:
 - As a result of the North American Maple Syrup Council requesting in 1988 that NASS reinstate the maple syrup program.
 - Due to increased demand for data regarding the maple syrup industry.



General Survey Information

- Project Code: **192 – Maple Syrup Survey**
- States:
 - ME, MI, NH, NY, PA, VT, WI, WV
- Questionnaires:
 - Mailed April 23
 - Web reporting option also available
- Release:
 - *Crop Production Report*
 - June 10, 12:00 P.M. (EST)



Published Data

- From the 2020 Maple Syrup Inquiry:
 - 13,510,000 taps
 - 4,372,000 gallons
 - Yield average: 0.32 gallons of syrup/tap
 - 2019 average price: \$31.00/gallon
 - 2019 total production valued at \$129,479,000
 - 2020 prices will be published in the June 2021 crop production report



Additional Information

- Maple sap flows in the spring of the year.
 - Production and quality can vary from year to year based on weather conditions.
 - Optimal conditions are warm days (above freezing) and cold nights (below freezing).
- It takes around 40 gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup.
 - Can range between 20-60 depending on the year, weather, amount of sugar in the sap, etc.
 - A single tree can have multiple taps based on its age and diameter.
- The lighter the syrup color, the higher the quality
 - Darker colored syrup is considered a lower quality product.



Survey Questions: Screening

- Any taps set on the operation in 2020 OR 2021?
- No?
 - Intend to set any taps in the future?
 - Yes/No/DK
 - All will route you to Conclusion
 - » Leave a note describing the situation
- Leave good notes if the operation is completely out of business (no agricultural activity)
 - What happened? New operator? Any other info?



Survey Questions: Production Data

- First questions in survey ask for both 2020 AND 2021:
 - How many taps set on trees owned, leased from others, or tapped rent-free?
 - Gallons of syrup produced?
 - Include syrup from sap purchased
- In 2021, how much sap required to produce 1 gallon of syrup OR what was the Sugar Content Percentage of the sap (ex: 1.5 – 4.0)



Survey Questions: 2021 Production Data

- First date of sap collection in 2021?
 - MM/DD/YY
 - Focus on when *sap was collected* **NOT** when trees were tapped.
- Last date sap collected for 2021 season?
 - MM/DD/YY
- Any comments about weather, quality, etc. during 2021 season



2020 Sales Data

- 3 sales categories: Retail, Wholesale, or Bulk Wholesale
- Only include syrup produced by the operation
- Exclude purchased syrup resold
- Exclude syrup from previous years. (Only looking for 2020 crop)



2020 Retail Sales Data

- Retail Sales:
 - Total gallons (of 2020 crop) sold retail?
 - Of the total gallons, how were they sold?
 - Several sizes to choose from, and ‘other’ is available for sizes not listed.
 - Report number of each size container sold.
 - Average \$ per container (nearest cent)
 - Of the 2020 crop production, how many gallons were used to make value-added products for retail sale?
 - Include: granulated sugar, maple cotton, maple sugar pieces, ice cream, etc.
 - Exclude bottled sap and any syrup not produced by the operation



2020 Wholesale Sales Data

- Wholesale Sales:
 - Essentially the exact same as Retail sales, but looking at wholesale sales instead.
 - Exclude bulk wholesale, which will be asked next.
 - (Containers 5 gallons or bigger)
 - Record gallons used for value-added products



2020 Bulk Wholesale Sales Data

- Bulk Wholesale
 - Syrup sold in large quantities to food processors for blending. (Such as General Foods for Log Cabin)
 - Reported by the pound, rather than by container sizes.
 - Grade A Golden Delicate
 - Grade A Amber Rich
 - Grade A Dark Robust
 - Grade A Very Dark Strong
 - Processing Grade
 - How many pounds of each grade
 - Average price per pound (nearest cent)
 - Of the 2020 crop, how many pounds sold to other packers?
 - Of the 2020 crop, how many gallons of sap sold bulk wholesale, for bottling as sap?



Things to Watch Out For

- Syrup produced seems high or low compared to number of taps
- Sap run started early/ended late
- Length of sap run seems long
- Sap to syrup ratio – high/low
- High/low prices
- Large change in amount of syrup produced from year to year
- Previous year's syrup production seems high
 - Did you purchase additional sap?
- No taps set in 2020, but taps set this year
 - Why didn't you collect sap last year? What happened?
- Syrup produced this year, but not last year



How Do You Handle This? (1)

- An operation sets taps, collects sap, has someone else process the sap into syrup, receives half the syrup back as payment for the sap, then sells the syrup.
 - **What should be reported for this operation?**
- Answer: Report the number of taps set in item 2, skip items 3 & 4, complete items 5 & 6, items 7, 9, & 11 should be answered “NO” because they didn’t produce the syrup, items 12 & 13 should be answered “0” because this operation didn’t produce the syrup.



How Do You Handle This? (2)

- This operation sets no taps (and doesn't plan to in the future) but gets sap from another operation, processes the sap into syrup, gives half the syrup back as payment to the tapper, sells his share of the syrup directly to the public at his sugar house.
 - **What should be reported for this operation?**
- Answer: Item 1 is answered "NO", Item 1a is answered "NO, then skip to item 14 to see if they would like survey results emailed to them. (this operation did not collect the sap it was cooking)



Reluctant Responses

- “You’ll tell the I.R.S.” or “My syrup business operates as a cash business”
 - I understand your concern about who might see this information. Our pledge of confidentiality makes it illegal for us to pass any information onto anyone else including other government agencies.



Reluctant Responses (2)

- “We only tap a few trees” or “My operation is too small to make a difference”
 - I can understand why you might feel that way, and that’s exactly why your response is so important. We want to make sure every operation, big or small is represented in our numbers. We know that smaller operations work differently than the larger ones, so small operators should have a chance to share their information.



Conclusion

- Leave good notes
 - Any time you need to explain a situation
 - Or want to provide info to the office
 - You are our eyes and ears in the field
- Work through some practices
 - Before interviewing!
- Contact your supervisor/regional office with any questions specific to your area
- **Thank you, and have a good survey!**

