

NASS Survey Training
Maple Syrup Inquiry – May 2023
(MAPLE PROD)



United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service

Workforce Performance and Staff Development Section
April 2023



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 28
 - Web reporting option also available
- Release:
 - *Crop Production Report*
 - June 9, 12:00 P.M. (EST)

Published Data

- From the 2022 Maple Syrup Inquiry:
 - 14,300,000 taps
 - 5,028,000 gallons
 - Yield average: 0.352 gallons of syrup/tap
 - 2021 average price: \$35.90/gallon
 - 2021 total production valued at \$133,648,000
 - 2022 prices will be published in the June 2023 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.

Questionnaire Changes

- Removed from the questionnaire:
 - Open and closed dates
 - All retail sales data
 - All wholesale data
 - All bulk wholesale data
- Added to the questionnaire:
 - Acres
 - Sales data - everything is being collected on a per gallon basis for retail and wholesale, bulk wholesale on a total pound basis
 - Unprocessed sap

Survey Questions: Screening

- Any taps set on the operation in 2022 OR 2023?
- 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 2022 AND 2023:
 - How many taps set on trees owned, leased from others, or tapped rent-free?
 - On how many acres were taps set?
 - Gallons of syrup produced?
 - Include syrup from sap purchased
 - How many gallons used to make value-added products?
 - (sugar, maple candy, etc.)
 - How many gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup?

Survey Questions: 2022 Unprocessed Sap

- In 2022, how many gallons of unprocessed sap purchased from other producers?
 - Record gallons and price per gallon
- In 2022, how many gallons of unprocessed sap sold to other producers?
 - Record gallons and price per gallon

2022 Sales Data

- From the 2022 production, record gallons sold and average price per gallon
- 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 2021 crop)

2022 Sales, Cont'd.

- How much sold as Grade A?
- How much sold as processing grade?
 - INCLUDE all syrup sold at retail, wholesale, and bulk wholesale
- In 2023, were operation's maple products certified organic according to USDA standards?



Things to Watch Out For

- Syrup produced seems high or low compared to number of taps
- 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 2022, but taps set this year
 - Why didn't they collect sap last year? What happened?
- Syrup produced this year, but not last year

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!
 - Survey questions have changed.
- Contact your supervisor/regional office with any questions specific to your area
- **Thank you, and have a good survey!**