



Tap into Maple Syrup Resources

by Billy Thomas

The process of producing maple syrup is fairly simple—extract maple sap from maple trees then remove excess water until you have syrup. Sounds simple, right? While the process is straightforward, the challenge is in the details. The best choice on how to go about it depends on the producer's situation. Many producers "graduate" from buckets to tubing systems for the efficiency and labor savings. Another piece of modern technology can be used to concentrate the sap prior to boiling it down—reverse osmosis machines can drastically reduce the time it takes to produce maple syrup. There are also modern evaporators, pre-warmers, filter presses, and so much more to consider. Fortunately, there are numerous resources available to help Kentucky maple syrup producers decide what equipment is best for their situation as well as the financial considerations of each decision and the operation overall. This article highlights the many useful resources and organizations available to support Kentucky maple syrup producers in production and management of their woodland resources.

National Maple Syrup Producers Manual

Often considered the "bible" of maple syrup production, the North American Maple Syrup Producers Manual is a crucial resource for maple syrup producers. It provides up-to-date, science-based information and recommendations

relating to all aspects of the maple syrup industry. The guidelines presented in the manual are beneficial for users ranging from hobby and beginning producer level to those well-established in the industry. The manual covers all aspects of maple syrup production, including the history of maple syrup and sugar production, planning an operation, managing maple trees, sap production, syrup production, syrup filtration, and marketing. The manual is available in print (<http://www.mapleresearch.org/ordermanual>) and can be downloaded as a PDF (<http://157.245.92.171/wp-content/uploads/NAMSPM3sm.pdf>). It includes numerous photographs, tables, a glossary, and hyperlinks to selected source materials. The National Maple Syrup Producers Manual is

a must-have resource for any maple syrup producer in Kentucky, offering a wealth of knowledge and practical guidelines for every stage of the production process. Whether you are a beginner or an experienced producer, this manual can help you improve your operations and enhance the quality of your maple products.

Maple Digest

Another national maple syrup resource from the North American Maple Syrup Council is the Maple Syrup Digest, which is their official publication. It is published quarterly and contains information of interest for all who are involved with the maple syrup industry. It features research reports from U.S. and Canadian universities and institutions on all aspects of maple syrup production, packaging, and marketing. Visit <http://northamericanmaple.org/index.php/maple-syrup-digest/> to request a subscription.

The Maple News and Maple Trader

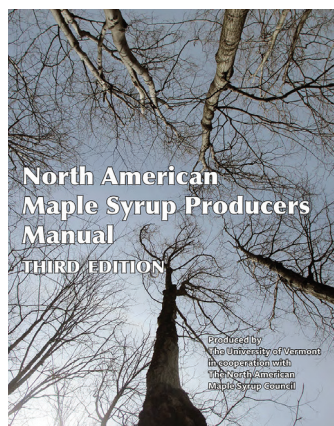
The Maple News (<https://www.themaplenews.com/>) is a maple syrup trade publication and source of information and updates related to the North American maple syrup industry. It covers topics such as production, trends, and events. In addition, it hosts www.MapleTrader.com, which is a forum where maple producers can discuss various aspects of their work. It is a place to share experiences, ask questions, and stay informed about industry developments. Both resources can serve as valuable tools for maple syrup producers.

UK Maple Syrup Website

UK Forestry and Natural Resources Extension maintains a Kentucky Maple Syrup website (<https://ky-maplesyrup.ca.uky.edu/>) that provides numerous maple syrup-related resources including recorded presentations, announcements, as well as links and other resources to support maple syrup producers statewide. It is also a convenient resource that promotes Kentucky Maple Days which are typically held each February.

Maple Syrup Budgets and Financial Considerations

The Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development (KCARD; <https://www.kcard.info/>) offers resources that provide helpful information to those interested in



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maple syrup production or other aspects of agriculture. They provide one-on-one assistance for farm businesses navigating distribution methods, including financial, technological, and marketing considerations. As part of a grant to the UK Department of Forestry and Natural Resources from the USDA Acer Access and Development Program, KCARD has produced interactive maple syrup production budgets and financial considerations that identify financial assistance opportunities. These resources are available at: <https://ky-maplesyrup.ca.uky.edu/resources>

NRCS Funding for Maple Syrup Producers

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) On-Farm Energy Initiative by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

helps producers make voluntary improvements that can boost energy efficiency on the farm.

Maple syrup producers are encouraged to contact the NRCS office at their local USDA Service Center for free, one-on-one technical support where they can provide more detailed information and help you navigate the application process. You can learn more by visiting: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/on-farm-energy-initiative>.

Partnering with NRCS
The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) assists Maple Syrup producers by providing technical assistance to help them improve their energy efficiency. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) NRCS collaborates with landowners and managers to help them improve energy efficiency on the farm. For many of these farms, conservation work is needed for the equipment or facilities where the syrup is produced.

EQIP Ag Energy Assistance
Through the EQIP energy assistance program, NRCS provides financial assistance to help producers improve their energy efficiency. The assistance is available to producers who are interested in improving their energy efficiency. The assistance is available to producers who are interested in improving their energy efficiency. The assistance is available to producers who are interested in improving their energy efficiency.

ducer. Home-based processors may sell their products throughout the state at farmers markets, certified roadside stands, community events, and from the home-based processor's home within Kentucky. They cannot mail or ship products to customers, and they cannot sell products to restaurants, grocery stores, wholesale distributors, or any other retail outlet for further sale as these require a commercial license. To register, home-based processors should submit an Application for Home-Based Processors along with a \$50 registration fee to the Food Safety Branch (<https://www.chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dphps/fsb/Pages/homebasedprocessing.aspx>). If a maple syrup producer wants to sell products at grocery stores, across state lines or over the internet, a commercial food manufacturing permit is required. In order to qualify for the permit, the producer needs a commercial kitchen, agree to regular inspections, and adhere to specific processing guidelines. To learn more about obtaining this permit, call 502.564.7181.



Kentucky Maple Syrup Association

If you are a producer or interested in seeing viable maple syrup industry in Kentucky, then you are strongly encouraged to join the Kentucky Maple Syrup Association (KMSA). The producer association provides a forum for all maple syrup producers in Kentucky and membership is open to all persons interested in maple syrup or firms engaged in any phase of producing, processing, and/or marketing of maple syrup. To join KMSA, complete the form at <https://kymaplesyrup.com/>



In conclusion, these resources and organizations provide a wealth of information and support for Kentucky maple syrup producers. Whether you are a beginner or an experienced producer, these resources can help you improve your operations, increase your knowledge, save you time and money, and enhance the sustainability of your woodland.

Kentucky Division of Forestry Forest Stewardship Program

The Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF) offers a Forest Stewardship Program that provides a customized forest stewardship plan based on your goals and objectives for the property. The program helps producers by providing a road map on how to improve your woodland property. When working with KDF foresters, let them know you are interested in maple syrup production so they can tailor their recommendations and connect you with additional programs to make your sugarbush healthier and more productive. Visit <https://eec.ky.gov/Natural-Resources/Forestry/forest-stewardship-program-and-landowner-services/Pages/default.aspx> to learn more about the services KDF provides to Kentucky woodland owners.

Forest Stewardship Program

Selling Maple Syrup in Kentucky

It is important to remember that maple syrup is food — time, temperature, and sanitation must be considered throughout the process. There are also regulations when it comes to selling maple syrup in Kentucky. Producers interested in selling maple syrup in Kentucky need to decide if they want to be a home-based processor or a commercial pro-

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