

The official voice of Vermont sugar makers

VERMONT *Maple* SUGAR MAKERS' ASSOCIATION

Committed to the promotion and protection of the branding of Vermont maple products since 1893.

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YOU'RE INVITED: VMSMA ANNUAL MEETING

Save the date and join us for a celebration of membership at VMSMA's Annual Meeting happening Saturday, June 24 at Vermont Technical College's Randolph Campus.

WHAT'S ON TAP?

- » **A STATEWIDE MAPLE COMPETITION!** Bring your best samples of golden, amber and dark syrup along with maple cream. We'll have a panel of judges ready to sample and will present awards after lunch. Bragging rights, blue ribbons and a best of show prize will be awarded. The best of show winner will have a chance to sell that product at VMSMA's Big E booth this fall and will receive a one-of-a-kind Maple Open House sign to use forever after.
- » **A GUEST SPEAKER ON CLIMATE CHANGE** will share how it's expected to affect Vermont's sugarbushes in the future. Where are the seasons headed and how can we adapt to a changing climate? What do we know and what do we need to learn more about? Arrive curious and get your questions answered!
- » **WE'LL INTRODUCE YOU TO OUR NEW VERMONT MAPLE PASSPORT**, called the "Maple Meander". We'll be signing up participating sugarhouses at the annual meeting. You'll get to take home a packet of passports, and signage and holders for your front counter. The Maple Meander is one new way to encourage visitors to seek out sugarhouses all year round.
- » **LUNCH!** Join us for a delicious lunch and some time elbow to elbow with your peers to talk about the 2023 season and get some advice, sugar maker to sugar maker.

VMSMA's Annual Meeting offers members an opportunity to learn something new, taste winning syrup, and explore some new membership benefits.

RSVP today and we'll see you in Randolph on June 24th!
<https://bit.ly/mapleannualmeeting>



RSVP
HERE



COUNTY UPDATES

A SEASON OF HIGHS & LOWS

Our southern counties saw some excitement with snow load just as the season began, so our county updates this quarter focus on their seasonal highlights. But, stay tuned for a full accounting of the season across the state in our later summer newsletter!

BENNINGTON COUNTY:

Most sugarmakers were pleased with the 2023 maple season in Bennington County. Among the highlights: The season started early – many boiled on or before February 13th. Most made consistently light syrup and dealt with large quantities of coarse white sugar sand. There were none of the large three and four day runs without a freezing night that can be sustained by vacuum. Instead, freezing nights and not too warm days provided manageable flows and those without vacuum fared very well. Sugar content was a bit on the low side. The big snow in March (36-48" in areas) left higher elevation woods snow-covered to the end, which for most came abruptly – sap literally just stopped running. Very little very dark or off flavor syrup was made. Those who were not tapped by early February missed part of the first run and some finished tapping by headlamp (not recommended). Mud season was also pleasantly and noticeably absent in most parts of the County. The lack of any large runs was offset by a 5-7 week season and most producers, larger and small, wound up with a full crop or more.

-Dave Mance



WINDHAM COUNTY:

Sugaring season began early in Southern Vermont and we were all looking forward to what we hoped would be a banner year. The sugar content was good and although we didn't have any blockbuster runs, the sap run was steady. Our boils produced good quantities of syrup which included a lot of delicate syrup, even for orchards who didn't normally produce a lot of delicate syrup. I think most of us were looking forward to a record production year, then the snowstorm hit. Most sugarmakers lost power for several days, but that didn't phase us too much because the snow would prolong the season, or so we thought. Following the snowstorm there was really no real run, just a drizzle and a lot of damage in our sugarbush. Damage to trees, sap lines and equipment, a real mess we're still cleaning up. In speaking with a maple equipment dealer from Massachusetts, this happened to Massachusetts and New Hampshire producers as well. Most sugarmakers are or have been farmers so we're used to dealing with Mother Nature and her fickleness so we shouldn't be surprised we ended with an average year or less. Also, being good Boston Red Sox fans, maybe next year!

-Helen Robb

From the more northern part of Windham, county director Ed Smith concurred, sharing: It was a good year until the snowstorm hit then not much for runs even though the weather was right for some good runs! Lost power for six days so no vacuum and a fair amount of storm damage - mostly limbs down and a lot of repairs to sugar lines!

NOTES FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



LOOKING FORWARD

BY EMMA MARVIN, VMSMA CHAIR

At this point I don't think any maple sugar maker would argue with the statement that "every season is unique." It certainly feels particularly true for 2023. Yields across the State this year are highly variable, dictated by the nuances of each microclimate.

Despite the challenges the season posed for some and the successes it offered to others, one universal bright spot, for VMSMA members that chose to participate, was Maple Open House weekends. These events are an opportunity to showcase our hard work and dedication to producing maple syrup. They're also a chance to build community with friends and peers in the sugarhouse.

As we look forward, beyond the current season, we're excited about other opportunities to gather in person. This year we will gather in person for the Annual Meeting in Randolph. This will be a time to celebrate our successes and connect with our peers. We'll be able to welcome folks who are new to the Association – I'm pleased that year to date we've already welcomed 67 new members. And, we'll be able to discuss our advocacy efforts at the state and federal levels. As an Association, we are committed to giving our members a voice at the table and advocating for policies that support our industry. We believe that by coming together in person, we can strengthen our collective voice and ensure that our concerns and success stories are heard.

As I reflect on the season and look ahead to the future, a line from a Mary Beamish poem called "Vermont Maple" comes to mind, capturing the essence of this moment between when the season is still fresh and we're actively looking forward:

"The season comes, the season goes, But in our hearts Vermont maple glows; A golden sweetness, pure and clear, A memory of the year."

[f/vermont.maple](https://www.facebook.com/vermont.maple)

[@/maplesyrupvermont](https://www.instagram.com/maplesyrupvermont)

BOARD & STAFF

Executive Committee

Chair - Emma Marvin
Vice Chair - Arnie Piper
Secretary - Dave Mance
Treasurer - Jason Gagne
At Large - James Buck

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Allison Hope
Membership Manager,
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Chittenden | Andy Aldrich
Franklin | Jason Gagne
Lamoille | Arnie Piper
Orange | Cody Armstrong
Orleans | Ted Young
Rutland | Open
Washington | James Buck
Windham | Ed Smith
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Arnold Coombs | Coombs Family Farms, Brattleboro, VT

Sam Cutting IV | Dakin Farm, Ferrisburgh, VT

Emma Marvin | Butternut Mt. Farms, Morrisville, VT

Peter Purinton | Huntington, VT

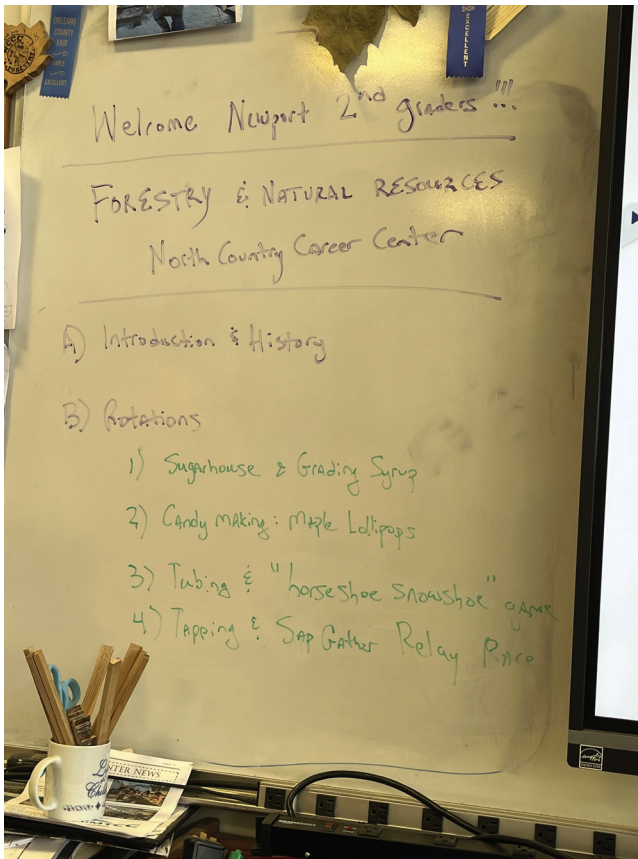
Kerry Sedutto | The Sugarman, Hardwick, VT

David Lane | Farm Credit East, Williston VT



MEET A SUGAR MAKER/INSTRUCTOR: SAM NIJENSOHN

As part of our series highlighting members across the state, Heather visited North Country Career Center's Natural Resources students as they hosted their annual spring educational programming for second graders.



I first met Sam Nijensohn and the students in his Natural Resources program at the Orleans County Maple Producers Annual Meeting in January. The guys welcomed me to their table and shared stories about their accomplishments in timber sports. Not only were they busy high school students, they were also putting in time for NCCC's sugaring activities, their family's sugar bushes, and occasionally stepping up to provide forestry services to the community. At one point the guys were huddled around a cell phone. When I asked what was so exciting, they sheepishly shared they were trying to identify "a really cool tree". I was so impressed with their commitment to our working lands, I asked to visit during the season and highlight their program!

On March 30th Sam Nijensohn, instructor at North County Career, along with his dedicated and good-humored students in the Natural Resources program, put on nearly two hours of educational programming for more than 40 second-grade students. The guys had practiced delivering their content for two weeks and created interactive stations for the students. From a kid-friendly presentation on why we tap our trees, to candy making, and some friendly competition with tossing tubing, the kids were rapt with curiosity. No small feat for 8 year olds. The NCCC students did this all while actively boiling their own sap in the sugar house! I followed up on the lively visit with some questions for Sam.

HEATHER: What is the history of sugaring on your campus?

SAM: We've been sugaring since 2016. I started here in January of 2015 so we didn't develop the sugaring program that year, but much of the initial set up was done with my seniors in 2016 that I had as juniors in the winter/spring of 2015. They were a good crew.



HEATHER: What's your favorite part of teaching about maple production and practices?

SAM: So many reasons I love teaching maple! Sugaring really drives home the importance of good stewardship of our resources. Producing a food crop is very satisfying for the students as well. As a teacher, sugaring also hits upon so many transferable skills. No matter what, the students come away proud of what they make and confident in their abilities. They also develop a real connection to Vermont's tradition of sugarmaking and to the resource itself. The community and business aspects are extremely valuable too.

HEATHER: What are you all up to this spring? I understand you've won some awards?

SAM: FFA State convention next month in Randolph is a busy time for us. We won the FFA VT State Forestry event last year and went to Indianapolis this year with the winning team to compete in Nationals. This year I will have students competing in Forestry, Maple, and Safe Tractor Operation at the FFA convention. We will also compete in TimberSports and Game of Logging. All of that is next month, it will be busy!

HEATHER: What do you want sugarmakers to understand about the next generation of producers?

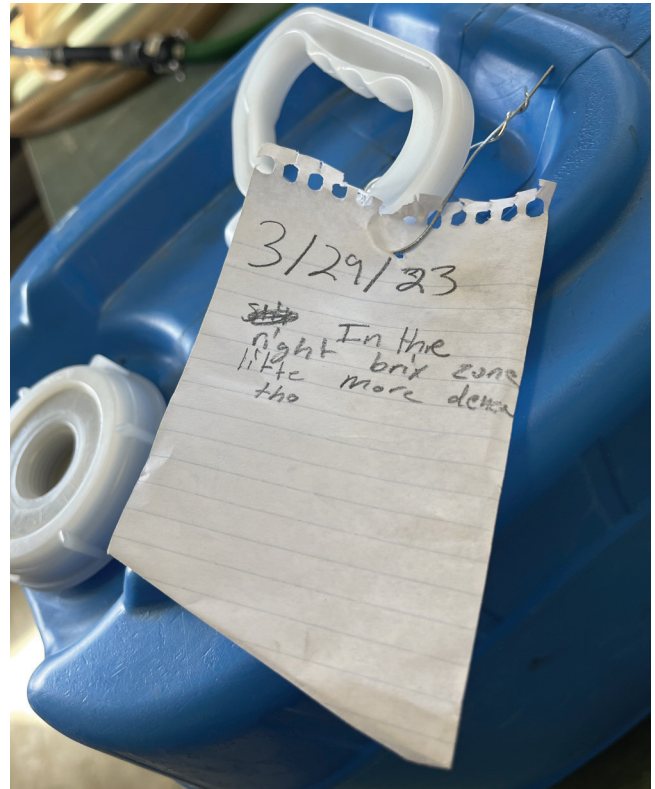
SAM: This upcoming generation is full of fine hardworking young folk that are ready to continue the Vermont tradition of making the world's best maple syrup.

If you're curious to learn more about North Country Career Center's programming for the students in your life, visit <https://nc3.ncsuvt.org/programs/natural-resources>

Special thanks to all the students I met in the Natural Resources program!

Liam Beatty
Kaden Dillon
Noah Fortin
Kyle Goulette
Noah Simpson
Evan Owen Ballinger

Cy Boomer
Dakoda Clark
Derek Louis Guillette
Kyle LaBounty
Nolan Myers



CELEBRATING MAPLE OPEN HOUSE 2023

THIS YEAR'S MAPLE OPEN HOUSE WAS A GREAT SUCCESS!

VERMONT'S FAVORITE STATEWIDE EVENT BY THE NUMBERS:

800
MILES



Intrepid travelers! VMSMA staff Allison Hope and Heather Winner **traveled more than 800 miles** and visited more than 25 locations across the state to learn more about what makes this event so special. From meeting excited first time consumers to welcoming locals back to the warmth and comfort of a sugar house, we loved our time on the road!

We are on our way back to pre-Covid participation numbers!

A hearty thanks to the **95 sugar makers and maple partners** that hosted events.



95
SUGAR MAKERS
& PARTNERS

1,000's
OF VISITORS



Many Open House locations reported seeing **more than 1,000 visitors** over opening weekend. Even some of our smaller producers reported seeing more than 100 visitors in one day. And visitors were hungry! As one location shared, next year they'll be "prepared with more donuts and hot dogs."

Between March 20 and April 2, the **VMSMA website saw more than 23,000 visitors**. More than 21,000 of those visitors were new - likely driven to our site to plan their Open House adventures after seeing our ads in local newspapers, listening to Vermont Public, reading Front Porch Forum, seeing VMSMA's posts on Instagram and Facebook (including your posts that we shared widely).



23,000
ONLINE VISITORS

310K+
REACHED



We started posting information on social media about Maple Open House on March 1 and kept on posting all the way through April 2. During this time, we **reached over 310,000 people** on our Facebook page and over 9,000 people on our Instagram page. Many of our participating sugarhouses and maple partners were highlighted in individual posts in March and April.

We had amazing partner support! Vermont Fresh Network shared our event locations with **9,000 of their subscribers**.



9,000
SHARED

Allison and Heather want to extend a warm and heartfelt thank you to everyone that welcomed them to their locations. They both admit to bringing home far more product than they could logically eat, and look forward to sharing their bounty with friends and family throughout the year. We surveyed Open House participants to get feedback for next year. Here's what one survey respondent shared:

"I think this is a great program. The general public is so far removed from agriculture and they yearn for getting in touch with where their food comes from. Many visitors are amazed at the technology inside our sugarhouses and just love the smell of sap boiling on the pans. Sugarmakers are great ambassadors for Vermont agriculture."



WOMEN IN MAPLE: MARY CROFT

ALLISON HOPE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we meet maple producers and partners around the state, we have the good fortune to meet a number of women making a difference in the Vermont maple industry. We'll continue to introduce you to a number of sugar makers we meet in the state through our "Meet a Sugar Maker" series. And in addition, we're adding introductions to influential women in maple. And we're starting with a woman who was the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association's first employee, Mary Croft.

At first, I only knew Mary as a name on the Association's mail, even 8+ years after she had retired. To this day, we still get mail with Mary's name on it and sometimes that mail even gets routed to her home address. It seems once you're on the Association's contact list, it might take decades to stop getting our mail!

I was happy to finally meet Mary in person at this year's Windsor County annual meeting, hosted by Meg Emmons at Cloudland Farm in Woodstock. Mary was in attendance with her sister and her parents, whom she continues to help sugar. From her father's stories, it feels like he's been sugaring for almost all of his 103 years. His description of the damage wrought by the 1938 hurricane made me feel like I'd seen it with my own eyes.

More than once during this county meeting, a member asked me for name labels. Something Mary used to order for members, but a service we no longer offer (*although members get a great deal from an online partner*). And so I'd offer up, "Mary used to get those for you, right?" with an apology and an explanation of many new resources we have on tap.

Mary was working in an attorney's office in Woodstock when she saw the VMSMA ad for a part-time secretary/treasurer in Agriview. She was part-time at the attorney's office, so adding a part-time position with VMSMA seemed like a good fit. And like recent employees, she had a group interview with Board members at the UVM Extension Office in Berlin.

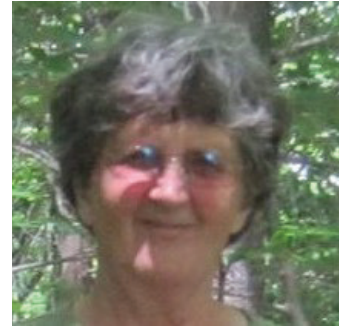
Little did she know that being on the Association side of things is much like being a maple producer.....eventually it has a way of taking over your time and attention! She left her attorney's office position about a year later and devoted 13 years of her time, care and attention to VMSMA and it's members, in addition to helping with her family sugaring operation. Like current VMSMA employees, Mary worked from home (before working remotely was even a thing) with

her dial-up internet connection and lots of snail mail and phone calls.

Mary enjoyed attending Board meetings, completing the Association's bookkeeping, working on the latest edition of the Vermont Maple Cookbook, coordinating conferences around the state, selling supplies and collecting member dues. Member supplies were kept at home, where she worked, with boxes of grade kits, grade labels, sample bottles and brochures in stock. Like many non-profit employees, Mary admits to working way too many hours to make sure members had what they needed. But she says it was also the perfect job with the flexibility in hours and short commute.

She says her favorite part of the job was getting to travel the state and meet all sorts of people. She attended meetings of the North American Maple Syrup Council (NAMSC) and the International Maple Syrup Institute (IMSI), attended maple conventions in places like Ohio and Bar Harbor and visited folks during Maple Open House. And no position, paid or volunteer, with VMSMA would be complete without some work in our Big E booth in Massachusetts, where Mary was the co-manager with Sheila Masterson, and then with Beanie when Sheila became a building manager. Google "Mary Croft" with the words "maple" and "Vermont" and you'll get a number of articles (or her home address as the place to send checks in trade for supplies and cookbooks). Mary wrangled donations for "Operation Vermont Maple Sweetness" which donated Vermont maple to troops overseas for many years. Mary also registered sugar makers for the earlier round of our voluntary certification program in 2013.

Mary was a great first addition to the VMSMA team and her work has touched so much of what the Association offers to members.. Hers was a heavy lift to be the first paid employee and she left big shoes to fill. She overlapped with Matt Gordon, the Association's first executive director, for a couple of years. And like Matt, she talks about her time with VMSMA fondly and with good memories. With good reason, Mary was awarded the "Maple Person of the Year" in 2011. As a current employee, I offer thanks to the folks on the Board 20+ years ago for making such a great choice to help get us where we are today. And, thank you, Mary, for setting the bar high for our employees and continuing to help create a great community for Vermont's maple producers.





WHAT'S NEW WITH SUGARHOUSE CERTIFICATION & GRANTS?

ALLISON HOPE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For the past few months, we've seen an increase in applications for our Sugarhouse Certification Program. Much of this interest stems from the accompanying Grant Program that offers up to \$15,000 in funding to fix any corrective actions noted during Certification. This season, we've had two sugarhouses finalize inspection without any corrective actions (a cause for celebration!) and those operations will receive a congratulatory free Certification in two years. We currently have several grant applications in process, at least one of which will include the replacement of a copper pre-heater.

When I talk to sugar makers about Certification, I often share our "how does the Program work" flowchart with them. The flowchart offers an easy outline of what to expect when you're ready to apply. If you're interested in Certification in theory, but have questions, reach out to Allison by email or phone! You can also spend some time reviewing the Program information on our website. Walk through the entire Checklist that your Certifier will use during their onsite visit. Review all of the templates we offer and double check them against what's in your operational manual. Don't have a manual because you keep that information in your head? Use the templates to create one! From start to finish, we do our best to help you have a successful Certification!

Once you've gone through the Program and completed the onsite visit, VMSMA will use the notes, pictures and Checklist from your Certifier to create a list of corrective actions. These are items that need to be updated before we can finalize your Certification. Some are as easy as adding a Material Data Safety Sheet for a chemical you're using in the sugarhouse and some are more complicated, like upgrading to potable water PVC or replacing copper with PVC or stainless. For those items that will cost you to update, we've got you covered with our Grant Program. Items on your corrective action list are your ticket to the Grant Program and funding of up to \$15,000 to make any necessary upgrades.

The Grant Program provides an added incentive to join us in Certification. Funding is first-come, first-served and is projected to last about three years. Now is a great time to achieve your two-year Certification and participate in our Grant Program.

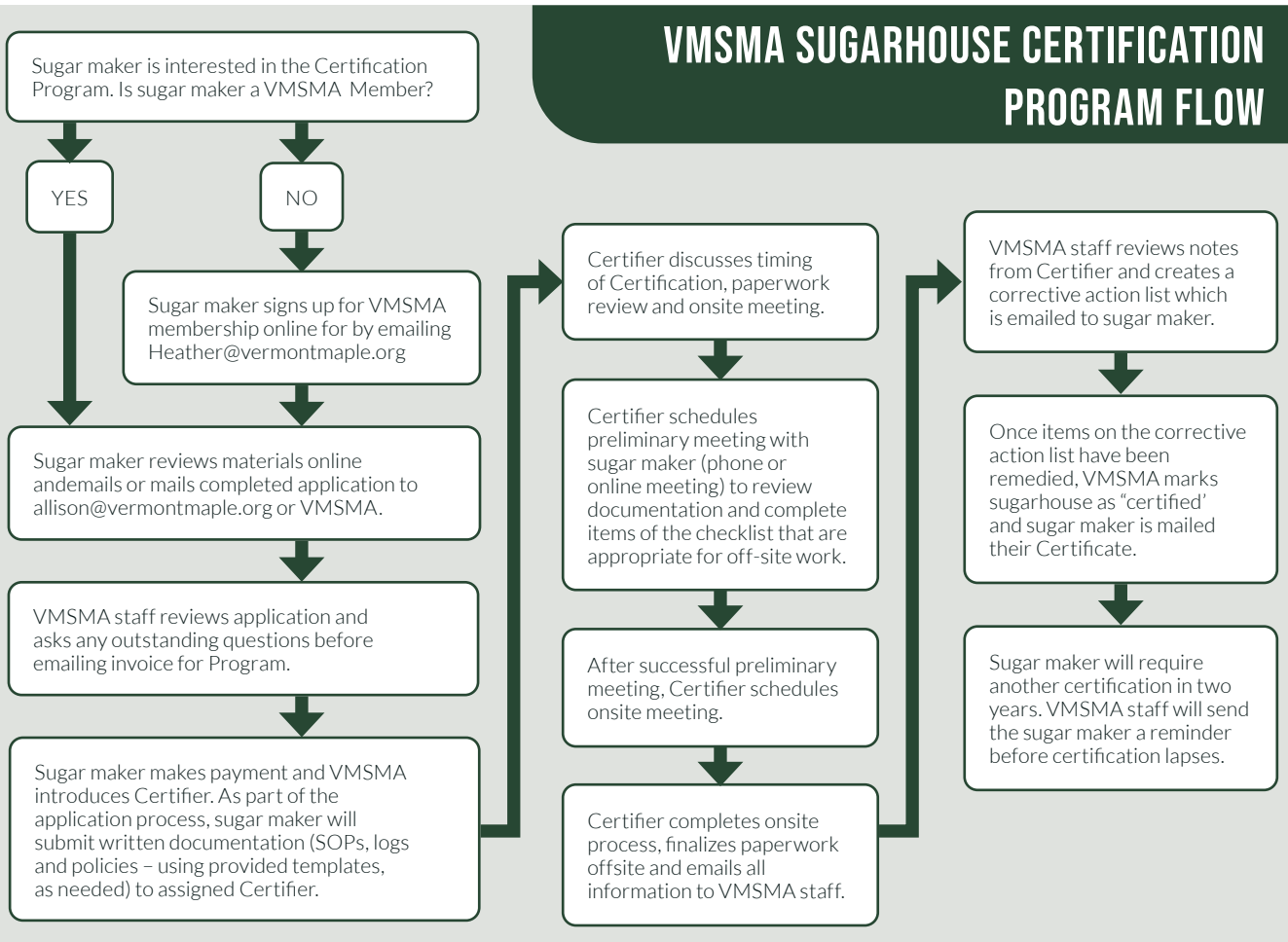
What are recent grant recipients saying?

Jim and Louise Greene, Berkshire

When we were initially approached to participate in the Sugarhouse Certification program, we hesitated. We were already enrolled in the organic certification program and felt we had enough on our plate. The staff at VMSMA simplified the process by providing resources on their website such as templates to complete the required employee handbook. The inspection process identified an area of non-compliance that we were able to remediate with full funding through VMSMA's new grant program. All in all it was a very positive experience!

Hannah and Ray Morvan, Northfield

When we heard about the Certification Program, we felt strongly that it would be a good way to improve our operation so we sent in our payment. When the "checklist" came out we felt overwhelmed by the scope of the plan, but decided that it was in our own best interests to go through it. Last fall, Allen came to our sugarhouse and he very ably checked off what we already were doing well, and outlined the steps we needed to take to be fully certified. Most of our improvements involved changing valves etc. to stainless, and updating our record keeping. We worked really hard to have everything set prior to the upcoming sugar season, and were thrilled when we received word from VMSMA that we were now Certified. Then we were surprised to learn that a grant would reimburse most of our expenses in the change-over! We highly recommend that other sugar makers go through this process!



CERTIFICATION MANAGER POSITION

VERMONT MAPLE SUGAR MAKERS' ASSOCIATION: CERTIFICATION MANAGER (PT)

The Certification Manager is the main point of contact for VMSMA's Sugarhouse Certification Program and will become a trusted resource for Vermont's sugar makers. They are responsible for coordination of all aspects of the Sugarhouse Certification Program. This includes keeping up to date on any changes in food safety regulations or best practices, ensuring the Checklist and Program resources are regularly reviewed and updated, supervising Certifiers, answering questions from sugar makers, writing educational information for VMSMA member newsletters, attending meetings and answering questions related to the Program and food safe practices. The Certification Manager may also perform onsite Certifications from time to time, as needed, or to train or assess Certifiers.

Compensation: \$28/hr, salaried at 16 hours per week, plus mileage

Read the full job description: www.vermontmaple.org/job-board

To apply: Email cover letter and resume to jobs@vermontmaple.org

THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE

HEATHER WINNER, VMSMA MEMBERSHIP MANAGER

I was looking forward to Maple Open House weekends like some people look forward to their birthday or the holidays. It was marked on my calendar with exclamation points and several 12-hour tours of the state. I had a plan. I packed snacks. Heck, I packed my dog. We were going to experience sugar making. All my questions would be answered. I'd reach a new level of clarity, and I'd be a better membership manager. I'd get to truly serve the needs of our members. THE TRUTH WAS OUT THERE.

Except it wasn't! Instead, much to my amusement, I found consistently opposing views. It was a great season. It was a hard season. There was a lot of sugar sand. This was a normal amount of sugar sand. There was a lot of golden delicate and that was great! There was a lot of golden delicate and that's horrible because everybody wants very dark. It was too cold. It was too warm. The weather was perfect for an open house. The weather was the worst for an open house.

People, this was a hard truth to swallow... even when served in a taster cup in a steamy room full of happy people and flowing sap.

I decided I needed additional perspective, so I reached out to Abby van den Berg and Mark Isselhardt. I excitedly grabbed my pen and notebook, thinking of myself as a highly motivated student. The first answer to my question about the increased amount of golden this year was, "it depends". I asked about the weather. I asked about sugar sand. I asked

about northern vs southern parts of the state. I started to count how many times I heard "it depends" (15). I understood why they were careful not to assume causality with one year of anecdotal information. I appreciated their pragmatism that it was too soon to call the game. "The season isn't over yet!" they told me. I hung up the Zoom call wondering what on earth I was going to write about for the spring newsletter.

Here's what feels true to me. Every year calls for a new calibration to balance what we **KNOW** about our season, and with what we **EXPERIENCE** in our season. Both feel important and we're nothing if not a group of folks that understand the need to calibrate our tools. I'm beginning to understand that maple is about trends and the long game. That we have to look back to see patterns - perennial crops don't share many unshakable truths every year. So, I guess the truth IS out there. It just depends. And, that's not a bad thing. Mixing individual perspective and hard data for just the right flavor perspective is a metaphor I can live with!

Many Thanks to Abby van den Berg, Research Associate Professor & Assistant Director, University of Vermont Proctor Maple Research Center and Mark Isselhardt, Maple Program Leader/Maple Specialist with the UVM Extension



KNOWING AND EXPERIENCING

What I discovered in my search for the truth in the spring of 2023

THE WEATHER WAS EXCITING

- » We know sugar makers across the state saw sugarbush and sugarhouse weather damage from December's wind storm and March's snow storm.
- » We heard that some folks experienced setbacks and deep frustration as they tried to repair their woods, get their trees tapped, and take advantage of early sap flow. Others sat at just the right lucky place in their region to avoid some of the worst of the weather.
- » We can speculate (one of my favorite mud season past-times) that the cold temps and higher sap sugar content (that some but not all experienced!) could have contributed to more light-colored syrup.

THE SEASON STARTED EARLY AND LATE

- » Speaking of sap flow, we know there was weather in early January and February that was conducive to production.
- » We heard from some members that the season felt like it started earlier than usual this year. It felt right on time for other sugarmakers - even when their first boil was the end of March.
- » We also can say with a high degree of certainty (knowing-ish) that Vermont's microclimates mattered a lot this year. Sometimes folks in the same town had radically different snow totals and temperature changes.

THE CROP DIDN'T MEET EXPECTATIONS... KIND OF

- » As of April 23, 2023, we know that many of our central and northern sugar makers' crops were below their goals or below average.
- » Our experience with the "why" of lower crop yield varied. Some sugar makers told us they experienced deep snow late into the season. Others experienced trees that never really flowed or let loose with large runs in the manner they have in the past. Still others met or exceeded their goals - in spite of their location in the state.



cal·i·brate

verb

adjust to take external factors into account or to allow comparison with other data.

"the 2023 maple seasonal observations would need to be calibrated to convert them to a more accurate measurement of "it depends".

Special thanks to the sugar makers, researchers, and seasonal publications that supported my learning journey. For more on where to go for updates on the 2023 season, please visit:

The Vermont Maple Bulletin

<https://vermontmaplebulletin.wordpress.com/>

The Proctor Maple Research Center

<https://www.uvm.edu/cals/proctor-maple-research-center>

Cornell University's Sweet Talk Podcast

<https://blogs.cornell.edu/cornellmaple/sweettalk/>



SUPPORTING MAPLE AT THE VERMONT AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS

TREVOR LOWELL, MARKETING AND EXPORT LEAD, VERMONT AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD, & MARKETS

It occurs to me that for most sugar makers in Vermont, their primary interaction with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFAM) is through the regulatory functions our Agency carries out. Whether it's calibrating hydrometers or conducting product inspections, our field staff – diligently crisscrossing the state to ensure the quality and safety of Vermont maple – are often the only Agency staff sugar makers interact with. So, it shouldn't have come as a surprise when Allison said to me the other day, "I don't think sugar makers know everything the Agency is doing to support maple."

In addition to the critical work conducted by the Agency's regulatory staff, VAAFAM's development division is engaged in numerous efforts to help support Vermont's maple industry; everything from business grants to agritourism promotion and international market development.

The annual funding opportunities offered through the Agriculture Agency are some of the most important resources we have for supporting maple businesses throughout the state. Whether it's help offsetting the costs of organic certification, support for business enhancement through the Working Lands Enterprise Initiatives, or funding to help attend trade shows, the Agriculture Agency offers a half-dozen or more annual grants that are open to maple businesses. If you're worried about staying on top of all the funding opportunities offered through VAAFAM, I'd encourage you to sign up for the Agricultural Development Division's Weekly Newsletter. It's a great way to ensure you don't miss important grant opportunities and all the other great resources found there, both from within the Agriculture Agency and from partners across the food system.

A key focus of the development division is helping to tell the story of Vermont's maple industry. With help from a grant from USDA, VAAFAM has been working with a media company to develop a portfolio of videos and images that promote Vermont maple in ways that go beyond pancakes and creemees (not to disparage pancakes or creemees). These media assets, which will be available to partners like VMSMA and the Department of Tourism, will help broaden interest and appreciation for maple by celebrating modern production techniques, its role in things like forest health and sustainability and its culinary versatility.



We're also helping tell the story of Vermont maple through promotion of maple agritourism. Whether it's helping promote VMSMA's events like the Spring and Fall Maple Open Houses, or working with statewide partners to build engagement with the Maple 100, a month-long, fall celebration of all things Vermont maple.

Last but not least, we are working to develop new market opportunities for Vermont maple across the U.S. and internationally. After some in-depth market research showing a strong connection between Vermont and the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area, VAAFAM initiated a project to engage chefs, brewers/distillers and social media influencers in and around Dallas to highlight Vermont maple on their menus and in their marketing efforts. We're also exploring opportunities to bring Vermont maple to international markets. On a recent trade mission to Spain, Secretary Tebbetts and I met with regional distributors and retailers and helped connect them with Vermont maple producers interested in international market opportunities.

As one of Vermont's most important and culturally significant agricultural commodities, VAAFAM is committed to supporting the state's maple industry. If you're a maple producer interested in how our agency can support your business, or the sector as a whole, don't hesitate to reach out.



Trevor Lowell
Marketing and Export Lead
Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, & Markets
116 State St., Montpelier Vermont 05602-2901
<http://agriculture.vermont.gov>
802 585-9186 (Call or Text)



RECIPES



HOOKED AFTER ONE TASTE!

ONE COOK'S JOURNEY TO ADDING MAPLE AS A STAPLE IN HER NYC KITCHEN

It all started with a trip to see a sugar maker. During a recent visit to Vermont, I had the opportunity to learn about the fascinating history and intricate process of making maple syrup, including the different grades and flavor profiles available. Prior to this experience, I had no idea that there were options beyond the standard amber syrup!

After sampling the dark robust variety, I was blown away by its distinct umami-filled flavor and realized that this unique flavor profile would be the perfect complement to the Korean dishes that I love to make. It pairs wonderfully with sauces commonly found in Asian cuisine, such as gochujang and soy sauce, and a great alternative to granulated sugar or corn syrup.



PIGS IN A KIMCHI BLANKET

(BRAISED PORK BELLY IN KIMCHI ROLLS)

Serves 4 (3-4 rolls per person).

This dish is best enjoyed with a side of white rice.

ROLLS

- » 12-16 thin slices of pork belly
(can substitute any thinly sliced meat)
- » 12-16 kimchi leaves
(or chopped kimchi See note in Step 3.)
- » 1 large yellow onion, sliced thin
- » 2 TBSP of chopped green onions
- » 1 tsp toasted sesame seeds

SAUCE

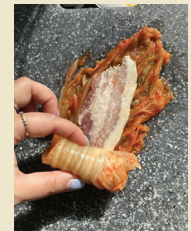
- » 1 cup water
- » ¼ cup gochujang
(Korean hot pepper paste, found at local grocery stores)
- » ¼ cup dark robust maple syrup
- » 1 TBSP soy sauce
- » 1 TBSP sesame oil
- » 1 TBSP rice vinegar or mirin
- » ½ TBSP gochugaru *(can substitute paprika)*
- » 1 tsp black pepper
- » 1 TBSP grated garlic

1. For the sauce, add and mix all the ingredients in a bowl and set aside.

Tip: use hot water to help the gochujang dissolve better!



2. Spread onion slices evenly in a large pot. This will be the "bed" for the rolls.



3. Take a slice of pork belly and place it on a leaf of kimchi. Roll up tightly, starting from the root side and rolling towards the leafy side. Tuck the leafy bits in so the rolls stay intact as they braise. Lay each roll down on the bed of onions until they are tightly packed in one layer. *(If unable to find kimchi leaves, layer kimchi pieces and pork belly pieces like scalloped potatoes around the onion layer).*



4. Pour the sauce evenly over the kimchi rolls. Cover the pot and cook on medium-high heat for 10 minutes, then lower the heat and cook for an additional 30-40 minutes, making sure to occasionally ladle the broth over the kimchi rolls.
5. Garnish with some chopped green onion and toasted sesame seeds before serving.

We're always looking for maple recipes! We love sharing maple recipes from members in these newsletters, on social media, and online. If you have a recipe you'd like to share, please send them along with photos to heather@vermontmaple.org.



DONUT KNOW HOW TO SUPPORT THE VMSMA?

VOLUNTEER AT THE BIG E!

The booth at the Big E in West Springfield, MA is VMSMA's biggest and most FUN annual fundraiser. To make it work, we need dedicated volunteers. There are lots of opportunities over the 17 days of the fair for you to join us! Share your love of Vermont Maple, tell your stories, and get great products in the hands of thousands of fair goers. Please select the date(s) and shifts that work for you.



HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

Our booth operations look really different than in years past. All our candy and cream will be made ahead of time, and we no longer sell cotton candy! This means less clean up and lots more time for our volunteers to talk to fair goers and offer tastings and lessons in maple. While we are busy all day, it's a sustainable and genuinely fun pace of work. We also will brew local coffee this year and have a new display for our donuts!

Also:

- » We provide a small daily stipend, a nightly hotel room near the fair, and carpooling from the hotel to the fairgrounds.
- » Ideally, you'd pick shifts over three consecutive days to ensure we can operate with a lean group and lessen the training time. If you need to do less, let's talk! We still need you!
- » Shifts are 12 hours with multiple breaks for food and adventures around the fair. We also have chairs and cushioned mats throughout the booth.
- » We admit our shifts are long (they are, but they're FUN!) and we understand they're not for everyone. Call us if you're on the fence and we can share more. We like to let folks go early (likely 5ish) on their final day of volunteering so they can get home at a decent hour.
- » Once you complete the form and sign-up, we'll be in touch within a week or two to ask any questions and start finalizing our volunteer schedule. THANK YOU!

Questions? Contact Allison (allison@vermontmaple.org).

VERMONT MAPLE SUGAR MAKERS' ASSOCIATION

PO BOX 854, RICHFORD, VT 05476

802-917-2032 • FOR QUESTIONS, CONTACT HEATHER WINNER • HEATHER@VERMONTMAPLE.ORG

2023 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

For your convenience, registration can be completed online at:
www.vermontmaple.org

TYPE OF APPLICATION: RENEWAL NEW MEMBER

NAME:

BUSINESS NAME:

MAILING ADDRESS:

TOWN/STATE/ZIP:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

TAP COUNT FOR 2023 SEASON:

SUGARHOUSE/
BUSINESS ADDRESS
(IF DIFFERENT):

MEMBERSHIP

Producer Membership:

VMSMA By-Laws define a voting member as one who sets at least 100 taps and/or produces 25 gallons of maple syrup in 2 of the last 5 years.

- | | |
|---|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 - 99 TAPS | \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 100 - 999 TAPS | \$30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1,000 - 1,999 TAPS | \$40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2,000 - 3,999 TAPS | \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4,000 - 8,999 TAPS | \$60 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9,000 - 14,999 TAPS | \$80 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15,000 - 29,999 TAPS | \$150 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 30,000 + TAPS | \$300 |



THE MAPLE NEWS: \$28

VMSMA Members receive a discounted rate. One year subscription includes 10 issues per year & the official maple syrup almanac.

PAYMENT

MEMBERSHIP DUES

MAPLE NEWS (\$28)

TOTAL

Friends of Vermont Maple Membership:

Anyone with an interest in supporting the Vermont Maple Industry. This membership level is non-voting.

- FRIENDS OF VT MAPLE MEMBERSHIP \$25

NOW INCLUDED WITH ALL MEMBERSHIP! ADVANCED WEB LISTING

Enhance your presence on the VMSMA website with pictures, logos, and links to your website and social media pages. Also includes free advertising in our Holiday Gift Guide! Share your photos and logo with us to include on your web listing.

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: VMSMA • MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 854, RICHFORD, VT 05476

VMSMA MEMBERSHIP UPDATE! YOUR 2023 MEMBERSHIP WILL BE VALID 12 MONTHS FROM YOUR DATE OF PAYMENT. SINCE THIS CHANGE STARTS WITH 2023 MEMBERSHIP, IF YOU PAY IN DECEMBER, YOUR MEMBERSHIP WILL BEGIN ON JANUARY 1, 2023.



Please consider renewing your registration at www.vermontmaple.org. Submitting your registration online helps to save limited staff time to be dedicated to projects that directly support and benefit our Members. Thank you!





Vermont Maple Sugar
Makers' Association
PO Box 854
Richford, VT 05476

SAVE THE DATES

ANNUAL MEETING & MAPLE CONTEST

JUNE 24, 2023 | VERMONT TECH, RANDOLPH, VT

<https://bit.ly/mapleannualmeeting>

THE BIG E

SEPT 15 - OCTOBER 1 | WEST SPRINGFIELD, MA

thebige.com

Sign up to volunteer in the VMSMA booth!

Email allison@vermontmaple.org.

2023 NORTH AMERICAN MAPLE CONFERENCE

OCT 25 - 28 | STRUBRIDGE, MA

massmaple.org/2023mapleconference

VMSMA WINTER CONFERENCE

DEC 9, 2023 | VERMONT TECH, RANDOLPH, VT

SAVE THE DATE



www.vermontmaple.org

 www.facebook.com/vermont.maple |  www.instagram.com/maplesyrupvermont