

Requirements for certification of maple operations, written by a committee of the Vermont Maple Industry Council: Jacques Couture, Richard Green, Haven King, Elissa Valentine and Tim Wilmot, UVM Extension, chair. August, 2011.

Mission Statement: A guarantee of food safety is extremely important in order to protect the fine reputation of Vermont maple syrup. The rules proposed here, when followed, will offer syrup customers the assurance that the maple operation has made food safety the highest priority.

Sap Collecting:

Sugarmakers who use materials that contain lead, including but not limited to galvanized buckets, tanks and lead-soldered evaporators, will be subject to random testing of their syrup for lead from a sealed container. The testing will be paid for by the sugarmaker.

Sap collecting may not be done using materials not meant for food or potable water contact. This includes the use of buckets that originally held non-food materials.

Rusty and/or painted buckets and tanks are not allowable. Tin buckets are not allowable.

No container, tank, etc that once contained food allergen, such as milk, should be allowed to contact sap or syrup unless properly cleaned.

Anything used to clean tubing should be approved for that purpose. The dilution, the method of rinsing, and the method of testing whether the cleaner has been fully rinsed out will be specified.

Compressors used with air/water washing should have a settling bowl so as not to introduce oil or fumes into the tubing.

Sap transfer pumps, or any vacuum pump where the sap contacts the pump should be made from materials suitable for potable water. Bronze gear pumps may not be used for pumping sap.

Any vacuum system must include a check valve between the pump and the releaser.

Sap Filtering and Pre-concentrating:

Pool filters used for filtering sap must use clean sand and/or food grade diatomaceous earth. Other sap filters must consist of clean, odor free, food grade materials.

All sugarmakers must take a course in the proper use, storage and disposal of chemicals, and they must demonstrate proficiency by a written test after the course is completed. Periodic retesting may be required. The course will cover chemicals which may be used for cleaning tubing and evaporators, as well as for cleaning and storing RO membranes.

Sugarmakers must test whether the cleaning materials are safely removed from the RO, so that they will not contaminate sap.

Sugarmakers must keep in a readily accessible place the current MSDS sheets for all chemicals used in production, such as cleaners and filter aids. All chemicals must remain in their original containers with the label and lot code intact until they are used.

Boiling:

Galvanized boiling pans are forbidden. All evaporators, whether made by a maple equipment manufacturer or “home-made” must be constructed with materials suitable for food or potable water contact.

Only approved defoamers, containing no allergens, can be used in the evaporator.

Syrup Filtering, Storage and Packaging:

All syrup should be filtered using industry approved filters and filtering methods. These include the use of mold-free, odor-free cloth and paper filters, food grade diatomaceous earth, and food grade lubricants for filter press pumps.

Bulk storage containers must be used as they are intended, and must be made from materials suitable for food or potable water contact. All containers of all sizes must be inspected prior to filling to ensure that they are clean and free from debris.

Proper coding and record keeping are required for each container that is sold.

Sugarhouse Sanitation:

The sugarhouse interior must be clean and free from flaking paint or other loose debris that could enter the sap or syrup.

Sap and syrup may not contact mold or moldy surfaces anywhere in the sugarhouse during production.

Sugarhouse floors may be gravel, wood concrete or other materials that are cleanable and/or can be drained; dirt floors are not allowed.

Producers should take steps to ensure that debris, bird droppings, etc does not fall into a sap tank.

Pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers etc must not be kept in the same room as sap or syrup. Chemicals used for cleaning maple equipment must be stored in a safe manner.

Any petroleum product should be contained in a manner to prevent contamination by spills or fumes anywhere near sap or syrup.

The exhaust from a pump or motor must be isolated so that it does not contaminate the sap and syrup. Is there an air test?

Lights must be protected by slip-on tubes, shatterproof coatings, or shields wherever they are exposed to sap or syrup.

Any water which contacts equipment used for handling or storage of sap or syrup must be potable.

A hand washing station consisting of flowing potable water, soap, and single use towels must be located in the sugarhouse for use prior to handling equipment that contacts sap or syrup.