



VERMONT MAPLE SUGAR MAKERS' ASSOCIATION

189 VERMONT ROUTE 15, JERICHO, VT 05465

PHONE: 802-858-9444

WWW.VERMONTMAPLE.ORG

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

UVM Extension Office, Berlin, VT

June 15, 2018

PRESENT: Mark Isslehardt, Arnie Piper, Mark Bigelow, Dave Folino, Donna Young, Rick Kobik, James Buck, Paul Palmer, Arnold Coombs, Jason Gagne, Pam Green, Roger Brown, Jason McFarland, Ted Young, Emma Marvin, Andy Aldrich, Peter Purinton

Staff present: Matt Gordon and Amanda Voyer

The meeting was called to order at 9:10am by Board Chair Pam Green.

Minutes: Mark Bigelow moved that the minutes for the December 5, 2017 meeting be approved. Arnie Piper seconded. Motion passed.

Financial Report: Mark Bigelow presented a snapshot of the health of VMSMA over 3 years. The 2016 and 2017 financials were handled by Pace & Holly. Mary Croft handled the financials in 2015. Total Revenue was up in 2016 due to the IMSI meeting in Burlington. Expenses from 2016 carried into 2017 because of bills paid in 2017 for 2016 IMSI conference. Total assets are on a slight incline in 2017. Jan-April statements will be available for Annual meeting. The 3-year trend looks good, but we need to keep an eye on budget. Emma Marvin made a motion to approve the financial report. Arnold Coombs seconded. Motion passed.

Season Report: Mark Isselhardt reported it was generally a long and cold season. Producers with historically cold sugarbushes may not have fared as well as others. Elevation had an impact, where in some cases the valleys did better. There were also some scattered reports of it being the best year ever. Some reported hard won gallons with low sugar content. Crop production was just slightly down according to NASS. The NASS report helps with trends while not necessarily fully accurate. Parts of Orleans didn't fare as well. Quebec had a terrible production year. Addison county sugarmakers experienced huge variability within the county due to elevation and exposure. Not a lot of buddy syrup reported statewide and overall good quality. Franklin county reported making almost the same crop as previous year, down about 5%, and sugar content was almost the same regardless of forest tent caterpillar that came through last summer.

Mobile Sugarhouse Update: Pam Green reported that four people have looked at it. Spruce Peak is very interested and gave a bid of \$20K, however they will not be able to purchase it until the fall. It is currently stored in Hinesburg with Mike Guillemette.

UVM Extension Update:

- This season conditions were prime for pair thrips due to the damage caused by forest tent.
- Mark Isselhardt worked on a project of intentionally hitting brown wood and reported 60-75% less sap when hitting brown wood. A more detailed report will follow later this year.



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- Vermont Agriculture and Natural Resources instructors have developed curriculums around maple, with some information not rooted in current knowledge. There is interest in education enrichment and work force building. It may develop as a basic framework as opposed to a full curriculum with both historical and modern approaches. It could potentially be used for producers to use with new employees too.
- For 28 years FFA students have taken a maple/forestry test at the Farm Show. The Agency of Agriculture historically has run it, but Mark took it over this past year.
- The dates for this year's Maple Conference are January 19th in Brattleboro at SIT and January 26th in Lamoille.
- IMSI grading school will be held October 24th and 25th in Keene, NH.
- Annual sugar-on-snow event at UVM served 1,500 students
- UVM Extension submitted a proposal for a Maple Forest Business Development Program ACER grant with Mark Canella focusing on best practices for growing trees for maple production vs forestry production.
- Tim and Abbie are working on the 3rd Edition Manual, with the idea not to print it, but have it freely available as a PDF. Food safety, sustainability and tapping guidelines would be new chapters in addition to necessary revisions.
- Mark and Amanda will be working together on VMSMA's Working Land's grant focused on Food safety, developing course materials and online quizzes giving individual sugarmakers the ability to walk away with a basic food safety plan. Grant funds will be used on hosting workshops and creating video content with Extension and Across the Fence. They will be using the framework of the voluntary sugar house program for creating content for the videos. The grant funding total is \$9,900 and VMSMA will need to contribute \$1,000.

FDA Added Sugar Update: With vocal support from our Congressional delegation, Attorney General, and the Agency of Ag, we've seen tremendous momentum, and big press coverage. Vermont demonstrating leadership, is taking the lead on how other states can follow. Next steps will be that the FDA will review all comments. It will likely be 120 days until we hear anything. IMSI paid for survey on consumers and found consumers were confused by "added sugar" line seemingly implicating sugar is added to maple syrup. IMSI will be sending another letter with consumer survey results to the FDA to review. Honey has three lobbying groups, is well-funded, well organized and engaged legislatively. The coordinated advocacy VMSMA has led, one sugar maker could not do alone, and we should use that to tell members what we're doing.

Marketing Committee Report: Arnie Piper reported that a new 4th edition cookbook update may be ready in time for 2019 Maple Open House Weekend.

Membership Committee Report: Donna Young reported they are working on collecting data on percentage of sugar makers in the state and starting to look at dues structure. There was discussion on offering a gift membership for current members to help attract new members. A retention plan would need to be set up ahead of time.

Industry Committee Report: Roger Brown reported he will set up a meeting in late June/early July.



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Education & Research Committee Report: Jason McFarland reported that the committee was mostly focused on Maple Schools.

Dealer Committee Report: Emma Marvin asked that anyone who is actively engaged and interested in joining the committee to get together at the Annual Meeting.

Emerald Ash Borer Update: Guest Presenter, Keith Thompson, Forest Parks & Rec. reported that the first detection in the US was in 2002 and likely came from Asia, specifically, the Koreas. The quarantine is not being proven effective. In Vermont it was first detected in Plainfield, Orange, Barre... and now in Montpelier. We are surrounded by other states and Canada which have known infestations.

Around May 1st, it emerges from beneath the bark, flies, mates, lays eggs on bark or just under, then larvae travel, pupate over winter, and emerge in spring again. Single Females lays 60-90 eggs and are very difficult to see. Galleries girdle the tree and water and sugars can't move through and ultimately that is what kills the tree. Top die back, but roots still healthy, and woodpecker flecking are indicators of possible infestation. From a distance, woodpecker damage is the most obvious sign because galleries could be at the tops of the trees and not as easily seen. Damage is caused by larvae not the adults. The adults are metallic green with a purple belly. 99.7% of trees infested will die, those that don't will be the future of Ash. Ash plays a major role in recycling nutrients and important for wildlife. Holding on to some Ash is critical to continued long-term forest health.

Getting rid of all Ash is not recommended. There is a balance to strike and every forest is going to have a different set of balances. Maintain Ash as a component, promote a diversity of native species. It's worth paying attention, having a game plan, but it's not on your doorstep today.

What we can do today is control invasive plants, promote a diversity of native species. Take the long view. Satellite infestations will show up, it doesn't just expand from known infestations.

There is a law on the books with the Agency of Ag stating that if a tree is visibly infested you can't move it. In flight season, you need to leave it on site. Map and resources available on vtinvasives.org/eab. If you see it, go to vtinvasives.org and report it. Take a picture and send it in.

Maple in Every School Program: Abby Nelson from NOFA reported that there are three small grants put together to work on the program. Orleans, Lamoille, Washington and Bennington counties will work on the school side of the program, surveying school nutrition staff. Mailed and electronic surveys will go out to all county and VMSMA sugarmakers. NOFA, Shelburne Farms, and VMSMA will work together to come up with an outline this summer for how we approach this going forward based on information received in the survey. Then materials will be created to support educating the community about maple and maple production and workshops will take place at the Maple Conferences in 2019 on how to successfully host a field trip/go into the classroom.

Bylaws Revision Update: Donna Young suggested a strike through added to show the proposed edited language with new language in a single document to better understand the changes being proposed.



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Further discussion occurred on suggested edits and items that should remain the same. The final edited draft will be sent to the voting membership within 10 days prior to the Annual meeting to be voted on at

the meeting. The goal of the edits is to provide guidance with some level of flexibility. The Policy Book still needs to get completed too. Rick Kobik made a motion to have the Governance committee put forth another version with all deletions and subtractions and a follow-up Board of Directors conference call will vote on presenting final draft at Annual meeting. Arnold Coombs seconded. Motion passed.

Officer Nominations: The Nominating committee, recommended the slate of officers to be presented at the Board of Directors meeting directly following the Annual Meeting to be:

- Chair Emma Marvin
- Vice Chair Arnie Piper
- Treasurer Jason McFarland
- Secretary Jason Gagne
- At-Large Pam Green

Discussion was held on some opposition to the recommended slate and questions on the proper procedures for nominating and electing officers and the option for nominations from the floor.

Arnold Coombs made a motion to accept the report. Rick Kobik seconded. Motion passed. Next meeting nominations are open for all positions.

SCBGP Grant Update: Matt Gordon secured grant funding for VMSMA to address food safety. There will be funding for dedicated staff around a new certification program. Need from Food Safety Modernization Act and Food safety concern. Absence of Henry as well. And developing a training procedure for inspectors. Third objective to advise certification program and that it's as useful and inclusive as we can make it. 4th part to developing marketing materials around certification program dedicated to branding and marketing. Providing value to producers to certify through program. Spread out over 2.5 year. Would start as late as August and September ending in 2021. Recommendation that the Research and Education Committee work on moving this forward.

Old Business: NAMSC membership was suspended.

New Business:

D&G contacted Amanda to offer printing VMSMA tins, with no cost to VMSMA and VMSMA would receive royalties. Paul Palmer mad a motion to approve D&G selling VMSMA tins with paying royalties up front. James Buck seconded. Motion passed.

VMSMA received \$2,000 grant to develop additional recipe cards to distribute at Big E.

Chittenden county is evaluating hosting Maplerama in 2019.



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Roger Palmer announced that there will be a meeting regarding tapping on State land. There are currently 6 leases.

Scheduling next meeting: Next meeting will be held at Middlebury Union High School on July 28th, directly after Annual Meeting.

Executive Session: A motion was made to go into executive session to discuss the executive director search. The meeting reconvened and Amanda Voyer was named the new Executive Director of VMSMA.

Arnold Coombs made a motion to adjourn. Rick Kobik seconded. Meeting adjourned at 3:49pm.