

2020 VERMONT MAPLE CONFERENCE WEEK

Welcome to Vermont's Maple Conference Week

Sunday, December 6th - Friday, December 11th

University of Vermont Extension and Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association are pleased to host the 2020 Vermont Maple Conference Week. We continue to design conference sessions for anyone who wants to learn about maple production, whether you are an existing sugar maker, looking to become one, a forester you works with maple producers or a forest landowner looking to lease to a producer. Frequent attendees will certainly notice some changes this year (as you've probably experienced in most areas of your life since March).

Traditionally, January is the month for maple conferences. For many years UVM Extension and VMSMA have partnered to host two events while the Addison County Sugar Makers Association has hosted a third. Of course this year, the pandemic has turned everything upside down and gave us the opportunity to think creatively about how to offer meaningful interaction and education, even in one of the safest states in the country here in Vermont.

Like so many things right now we have had to make the tough decision to move the event online. Because the start of the season for some coincides with our usual January dates, we also chose to offer the conference in December this year (after the majority of the hunting season ends, naturally). We've set aside a whole week in December for Vermont's Maple Conference Week – kicking off with our popular Industry Panel and then offering three separate, interactive online sessions each day (morning, noon and evening). Our usual in-person welcome messages and updates will be recorded and throughout the week we'll offer “anytime” sessions on different topics for registrants to watch on their own time. Sessions will be focused around our usual tracks: Maple Business Management, Regulations and Maple, Sugarbush Health, Marketing and Media, and Maple Production and Innovation.

We acknowledge this format will be challenging for some in Vermont, where access to internet service can be inconsistent at best and where technology offers its challenges to each of us. However, this type of conference structure also has some advantages. It allows us to provide free registration this year, space out the conference over multiple days, easily record presentations for future viewing, and reach out to an audience and presenters well beyond our state's borders. We're excited for the upcoming sessions and the discussions they generate. We are also looking forward to feedback from participants about what worked and what could use improvement.

Registration is available online through the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association website www.vermontmaple.org/maple-conferences. If you need assistance along the way, please reach out to VMSMA staff for assistance. Remember to register for each session that you want to attend. After you register for a session, we will send you reminder emails and specific instructions on how to log in so you can join us and actively participate in the discussions!

“See you” at the conferences!

Mark Isselhardt
Maple Specialist
University of Vermont Extension

Allison Hope
Executive Director
Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association



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HOW TO REGISTER

Registration is easy and free this year! Please visit the conference registration link on the VMSMA website to register for each session you would like to attend. You will receive a confirmation email with specific information on how to log on or dial into each session (so if you register for 6 sessions, for example, you will receive 6 confirmation emails). Registration for each session closes 24 hours before its scheduled date and time. Questions? Get in touch with Cory or Allison using their contact information below.

WHEN Sunday, December 6th - Friday, December 11th

REGISTER HERE www.vermontmaple.org/maple-conferences

REGISTRATION DEADLINE 24 Hours Before Individual Session

COST FREE!

NEED HELP? Contact Cory Ayotte: cory@vermontmaple.org; 802-786-9437 or Allison Hope: allison@vermontmaple.org; 802-777-2667



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6TH

5:00 - 6:00 pm

Welcome

Industry Panel moderated by Mark Isselhardt,
UVM Extension Maple Specialist

MONDAY, DECEMBER 7TH

9:00 - 10:00 am

[Research on] Early Tapping & Tapping Longevity Strategies

Abby van den Berg

Results of a multi-year experiment conducted by the University of Vermont Proctor Maple Research Center to determine the net yields and impacts of fall and early-winter tapping, with and without subsequent "freshening" of the tapholes by re-drilling them wider and/or deeper will be presented

12:00 - 1:00 pm

Review of Vermont Maple Regulations & Common Issues found During Product Inspections

Tucker Diego

Agriculture, Food & Markets will review the basics of the Vermont Maple Product Regulations and discuss the Agency's approach to maple product inspections. In recent years the Agency has resumed inspection of maple products at retail stores to ensure products comply with labeling, grade, and sanitary standards. He will share recent findings from early 2020 (pre-Covid) and discuss common issues found during product inspections.

MONDAY CONTINUED...

5:00 - 6:00 pm

Thinning your Sugarbush for Sap & Tree Health

Peter Smallidge

Thinning is a specific woodlot management practice to concentrate growth on the most desirable trees. This presentation reviews the benefits of thinning, how to know if you should thin your sugarbush, potential problems from thinning, and reviews research about how thinning in NY sugarbushes affects health, tapping options, and production.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8TH

9:00 - 10:00 am

Designing & Installing a Maple Tubing System

Adam Wild

Looking to upgrade from buckets to tubing or add vacuum? This session will cover basic tubing design and installation for both gravity and vacuum systems.

12:00 - 1:00 pm

Forestry & Sugarbush Management

Mark Isselhardt

Results from a recent survey of professional foresters will include approaches and challenges to successful sugarbush management.

5:00 - 6:00 pm

Online Advertising Tools & Takeaways

Zac Smith & Mike Lannen

Advertising your business online can often seem overwhelming if you don't know where to start and what you're trying to accomplish. Learn how to set tangible goals, start small and expand your online advertising with a variety of tools.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9TH

9:00 - 10:00 am

Sugarhouse Certification Program

David Tremblay & Arnie Piper

VMSMA is about to launch the updated Sugarhouse Certification Program. Hear from Quality Director, David Tremblay, and VMSMA Board Vice Chair, Arnie Piper, about what certification involves and how the updated process will work to benefit sugar makers. David and Arnie will talk about what they've noticed during their sugarhouse visits and how certification is tied to state and federal food safety rules.

12:00 - 1:00 pm

Resilient Businesses: Adapting to Change

Mark Cannella

Maple producers and sellers are adjusting many aspects of their businesses to adapt to the shifting environment of the national pandemic. During this session you will hear from maple producers and business advisers that will discuss successes and considerations from shifting operations, marketing and financial approaches to remain viable. (Mark is interested in getting 1-2 producers who would be willing to contribute to this talk).

5:00 - 6:00 pm

Proctor Maple Research Center Update

Tim Perkins

A review of the past year at PMRC and collection of recent findings will be presented on topics related to sap and syrup production.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10TH

9:00 - 10:00 am

Keys to High Yield

Abby van den Berg

Actual yields in many maple operations are often lower than those achievable under optimum conditions. Practices to help narrow this gap, from tree to sugarhouse, will be presented.

12:00 - 1:00 pm

Sugarbush water quality & AMPs

Dave Wilcox

Understanding how roads and water interact in the sugarbush is important for many reasons. This presentation will provide clear understanding of how acceptable management practices used in timber harvesting can help improve water quality, reduce erosion and keep access to the sugarbush open.

THURSDAY CONTINUED...

5:00 - 6:00 pm

Renting Taps to Enhance Viability

Mark Cannella

Can access to more taps improve your business? Do you own forest land that you'd like to lease to sugarmakers? This session will provide information on leasing taps and different approaches to setting rental rates. The new UVM Sugarbush Lease Guide and Sugarhouse Lease Guide will be presented and shared with participants.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11TH

9:00 - 10:00 am

Maple Storytelling With Photography & Social Media

Chadwick Estey, Jenna Baird (Baird Farm),
Abby Rouleau (The Gateway Farm)

Use photography and social media to connect with consumers and market your business. Learn some basics of photography with your smart phone and how to use your photos to engage with an online audience including: best practices for posting compelling pictures and stories on social media, what to avoid, and how to use what you have to take good quality pictures and effectively engage potential customers.

12:00 - 1:00 pm

Maple Tele-medicine: What is Making my Syrup Taste Sick?

Mark Isselhardt & Henry Marckres

Most people recognize good tasting syrup and many can pick out when syrup tastes off but occasionally there is a flavor that is not easily identified. Send your samples of unidentifiable off-flavors for diagnosis (see note about how/where to send samples).

5:00 - 6:00 pm

Good Flavor Factors

Joël Boutin

Descriptions of the working techniques now found in maple syrup production which have an influence on the flavor. This is the opportunity to talk specifically about flavor. It is possible to choose working techniques according to the types of flavors desired.



Vermont Maple Sugar
Makers' Association
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UVM Extension helps individuals and communities put research-based knowledge to work. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. University of Vermont Extension, Burlington, Vermont

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Individuals requesting a disability-related accommodation to participate in this program should contact Cory Ayotte at 802-786-9437 by November 15th, 2020.