



# MINUTES - International Maple Syrup Institute (IMSI) Board of Directors Meeting Video Conference, Monday September 20, 2021

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## IMSI BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING SEPTEMBER 20, 2021

PRESENT **Fred Ahrens**, *Ohio Maple Producers*, **Jim Adamski** - *CDL Wisconsin*, **Steve Andersen** – *Andersen’s Maple Syrup*, **Nadine Beloin**, *Maple Industry Officer, Agriculture Agri-Food Canada*, **Brian Bainborough**, *Maple Ridge Farms*, **Ray Bonenberg** - *IMSI Past President and Ontario Maple Syrup Producers Association*, **Philippe Breton** – *Lapierre Equipment - Les Équipements Lapierre*, **David Campbell** - *IMSI Treasurer*, **Peter Christopher** – *Maple Grove/B&G Foods – Vermont*, **Geneviève Clermont** – *Centre Acer – Quebec*, **Daniel Dufour** - *Conseil de l’industrie de l’érable*, **Mike Farrell** – *The Forest Farmers*, , , , , **Mark Harran** - *IMSI Past President & Connecticut Maple Syrup Producers*, *Allison Hope* – *Vermont Maple Sugar Maker’s Association*, , **Jean Lamontagne** - *IMSI Executive Director*, **Jason Lilley** - *University of Maine Extension*, **Betty Anne Lockhart** – *Maple Producer and Writer*, **Emma Marvin**, *Butternut Mountain Farm – Vermont*, , **Lyle Merle** - *New York State MSPA* **Richard Norman** - *Norman’s Sugar House*, **Stu Peterson** – *Minnesota Maple Syrup Producers Association*, **Mike Rechlin** - *Future Generations University*, **Peter Roth** *CDL Wisconsin & Roth Sugarbush*, , **Helen Thomas** – *New York State Maple Producers*, **David Marvin** – *Butternut Mountain Farm – Vermont*, **Tyge Rugenstein** – *COO Crown Maple*, **Simon Trépanier** - *Producteurs et productrices acéricoles du Québec (PPAQ) – Quebec*, **François Sylvestre** – *Citadelle coopérative de producteurs de sirop d’érable*, , **Tom Zaffis** – *Turkey Hill Sugarbush*, **Abby van den Berg**, *University of Vermont*, **Adam Wild** - *Cornell University*.

REGRETS - **Nicolas Bell** – *LB Maple Treat*, **Mark Cannella** – *University of Vermont Extension*, **Jacques Couture** - *Couture’s Maple Shop*, **Martin Désilets** - *Dominion & Grimm*, **John Goldberg** – *The Normandy Group*, **Pamela Green** – *President, IMSI*, **Mark Iselhardt** - *University of Vermont*, **David Kemp** – *New Hampshire Maple Syrup Association*, **Lyle Merrifield** - *Maine MSPA*, **Les Ober** - *Ohio State University Extension*, **Louise Poitras** - *Association acéricole du Nouveau-Brunswick - New Brunswick Maple Syrup Association*, **Steve Selby** - *AEC Specialty Products*, **Andy Schmidt** – *Winsor Hill Sugar House*, **Daryl Sheets** - *Pennsylvania Maple Producers Council*, **Jeff Smith** – *Leader Evaporator Mathew Wilkinson - Maple Syrup Producers Association of Connecticut (MSPAC)*.

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CALL TO ORDER: IMSI Past President Ray Bonenberg opened the fifth 2021 IMSI Board of Directors Meeting of the year on September 20<sup>th</sup> at 1600hrs.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: A motion to approve agenda was carried. Simon Trepanier seconded by Mark Harran.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion to approve minutes of the previous IMSI Board Meeting held June 29<sup>th</sup> 2021 was carried. Stu Petersen seconded by Geneviève Clermont



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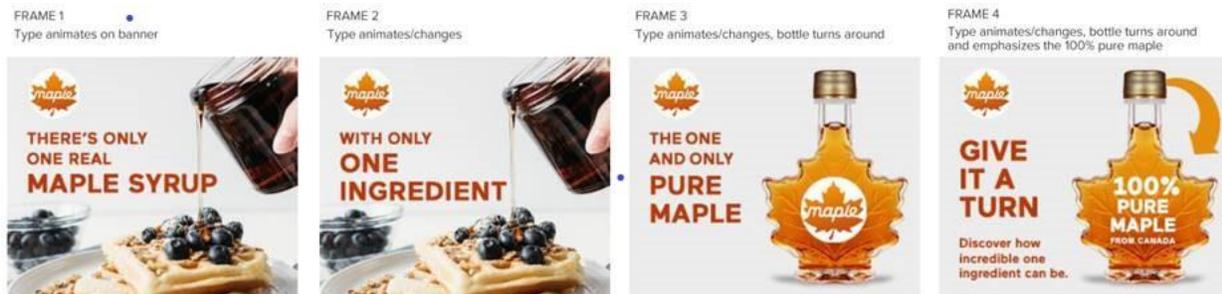
**TREASURER’S REPORT:** IMSI Treasurer David Campbell stated that current USD funds are sufficient to close the year on budget. A detailed Profit & Loss and Balance Sheet (current as of Sept. 2-20, 2021) was sent to the IMSI directors prior to the meeting for their information.

**INTRODUCTIONS:** The CIE has hired Jean-Marc Lavoie as executive director. He will take over from Daniel Dufour who is retiring and will hold the CIE’s seat on the board. Daniel will continue at CIE as an internal advisor until the end of the year. We are grateful for Daniel’s excellent contributions to the IMSI and the industry. The IMSI participants and director introduced themselves to Mr. Lavoie and welcomed him to the IMSI.

## THE DIRECTORS ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION.

Members commented on the growth in sales in the US this past 12 months estimates at about +20% in dollar sales and 17% in unit sales over last year and clearly outpacing sales of corn syrup and other ‘table’ syrups. The equipment manufacturers confirmed the sale of tubing is barely keeping up with production of tubing with increasing sales over last year indicating growing operations, lines and taps in the US. Producers have reported supply issues with glass syrup bottles. Many local and regional producers selling directly reported successful online sales operations and are experiencing growth well beyond the summer tourist season. The sales season seem to be extended this year. The increased demand is attributed to a variety of factors such as the persistent work-from-home confines and huge increase of in-home breakfast incidence, the US government stimulus and relief program in response to the pandemic which increased household disposable income, savings and wealth, and the persistent trend towards healthier foods. To this end the PPAQ ran a campaign with the message of *single-ingredient maple syrup* to change the wrong perception that some corn syrups are maple syrup. The IMSI also re-ignited its Facebook and Instagram sites to reinforce this important distinction that still causes confusion at the point-of-purchase.

FIG 1 – PPAQ CAMPAIGN – “GIVE IT A TURN”





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Quebec PPAQ announced recently that it will increase its tap quota by an additional 7 million (up from a planned 3 million) for a projected 54 million taps to keep up with increased demand and offset last year's low yielding maple harvest. The PPAQ advised that at least 50% of the reserve will be sold this year and that the commercial grade syrup was also more than halved due to packers success in selling maple syrup as an ingredient. International sales are growing, and it seems like maple recipes are everywhere.

**FOLLOW-UP CFIA & HEALTH CANADA** – There were no comments or questions from the group. Jean Lamontagne mentioned that Health Canada appears to be planning to implement front facing nutrition warnings. The group members think this had been abandoned by HC. JL to investigate the details of this and update the group.

**SUSTAINABLE FUNDING COMMITTEE** – The committee held 3 meetings so far and developed an initial workplan become familiar with programs in use by other US ag sectors. Six programs have been reviewed with a few more to be reported back on next meeting on Sept 29. Many of the programs are USDA Market Orders or USDA Research and Promotion Programs.

Next steps will be to try to find voluntary programs or private (non-government) examples that collectively generate funds to support a specialty/crop or commodity sector. After this initial investigation of options, the committee will proceed to specifically address necessary features and consider the feasibility for US maple community to implement a funding program.

**NASS STATISTICS - IMSI COMMITTEE** – The group, composed of Mark Canella, Dave Folino, John Goldberg, Pam Green, Mark Isselhardt, Jean Lamontagne and Les Ober held its first meeting September 14<sup>th</sup>. The discussion focused on the inaccuracy of the data. Members with solid data for certain counties compared with NASS estimates showed a discrepancy of negative 64%. The group acknowledged that the survey is complex and also that methods have not been updated. The group concluded that a concerted collaboration with NASS could help improve the accuracy of the survey. For example, some mentioned better questions could be asked, a better time to survey could help too. The elimination of 7 states in the survey is cause for concern too. The group also discussed how the IMSI could communicate with the industry to explain why the survey matters and encourage them to comply. Dave Folino mentioned that many producers may not appreciate the economic and political benefits that participation in the survey might allow. The group agreed that underreported and inaccurate data and misinformation is prejudicial to our industry's growth and prosperity.

*The meeting concluded with our intent to meet with NASS to discuss how we can work together. In a subsequent communication, John Goldberg met with NASS executives who confirmed their willingness to meet the IMSI. A meeting will be scheduled in the coming weeks (late September)*



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NEXT MEETINGS – New Schedule (replacing Niagara Convention)

The following dates were agreed upon:

## **Tuesday October 19th (replaces Niagara)**

IMSI Annual Meeting (AGM)\_\_\_\_\_ 3 – 4 pm

Maple Syrup Consumer Data/Insights – Atlantic Group Market Research\_\_\_\_\_ 4 – 5 pm

## **Monday December 6th (new date)**

IMSI Board of Directors Meeting\_\_\_\_\_ 3:30 – 5 pm

## **Thursday June 9th**

On-site – in person – US or Canada TBD

IMSI Board of Directors Meeting\_\_\_\_\_ 10 am - 1pm

IMSI Annual Meeting (AGM)\_\_\_\_\_ 2 – 2:45 pm

IMSI Speaker (TBD)\_\_\_\_\_ 3 – 4:15 pm

IMSI Gala Dinner & Awards Ceremony\_\_\_\_\_ 5:30 – 10 pm

ADJOURNMENT – The meeting was adjourned at 17:15 hrs