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September Producer Spotlight Gray Farm Maple LLC



Member of



President's Letter

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTORS: It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our longtime President, Lyle Merrifield. Lyle was a driving force in our association for many years, serving on many boards and committees. His knowledge of maple and enthusiasm to educate the public about maple syrup, and all things agriculture, will leave a lasting legacy. This is his final note to the membership.

Greetings Maple Producers,

Well, summer is certainly getting by us, and it seems this happens just a little quicker every year. We are also well into Maine's fair season with good representation of Maine Pure Maple across the entire State. It's important for us to remember at the fairs, that whether it's a private sugarhouse selling syrup or an MMPA organized booth we are all looking for the same result... Promotion of Maine Pure Maple Products to our fair goers, which overall will strengthen the industry for all.

MMPA had a new fair location this year at the Topsham Fairgrounds, a big thank you to Vice President Alan Greene for organizing this building and event. Alan noted that Topsham was not without its challenges, but overall was a great success, thanks again Alan and all who helped and participated.

The NAMSC 65th annual meeting is nearly upon us. Much planning has gone into the program, with still many finishing touches to go. Thank you very much to all that have stepped forward to volunteer and help in pulling this together. This event is a huge honor for MMPA to be able to host and showcase what Maine has to offer.

In closing I hope that many MMPA members are able to attend all or some part at the NAMSC 65th annual meeting. I believe you will find it interesting and very informative, not to mention the comradery among producers.

Best Regards,
Lyle Merrifield
President MMPA

September Producer Spotlight ~ Barry Kallander, Gray Farm Maple LLC, Denmark, Maine, Oxford County

We purchased our land of 300 acres in Denmark in 2012 for a homestead, forest management, and hunting. We started with a couple dozen buckets and grew the bucket count to 120 before going to gravity pipeline – 120 buckets in deep snow is a lot of gathering!

The operation...collecting, boiling and finishing

In 2021 we added vacuum and Reverse Osmosis (RO). Once on pipeline, we slowly grew the tap count to 300. While maples occur across dozens of acres, we tap a very small section. Most of our taps consolidate into lateral and main lines and go to a vacuum pump house with a Atlas Copco vacuum pump and a LaPierre Releaser. A small number of taps are on pipeline to a gusher pump.

We haul our sap from the pump house to the sugar house in a utility vehicle. The sap tank gravity drains into an Reverse Osmosis feed tank in a “clean room” attached to the evaporator room in the sugar house. Because we have a smaller 200 gph RO, we cycle the sap through the RO to 6 – 8% brix. For us, this maintains a good flavor and results in darker grades syrup from our wood fired 2 x 6 Leader Patriot evaporator, which our customers prefer. The RO transfers the concentrate to a head tank that gravity feeds the feed box on the Patriot flue pan. We use automatic draw off but frequently check density with a hydrometer and adjust draw off temperature to obtain perfect density. We burn a combination of hardwood and softwood in the arch. The softwood provides quick ignition of the new wood, and the hardwood delivers the BTUs. Because we bottle plastic and glass, all of our syrup is checked again for proper density and batch run same day through a high-pressure filter press and into 20-liter bottles. Throughout the year we will reheat syrup and hot pack into retail sizes.



Owner, Barry Kallander.

Marketing

As a small producer we only do word of mouth and a few events. We have a large wholesale (vegan) restaurant account in North Carolina - we purchase bulk syrup from a partner to blend with our syrup and deliver in 20-liter bottles. The restaurant only uses maple syrup as a sweetener (no can sugar). They also sell our dark syrup in private label glass jars.

Syrup made here at Gray Farm is available at our sugar house. In addition to retail at the sugar house, we do a few events, including the Fryeburg Fair, Maine Maple Sunday, and a community pancake breakfast in Denmark that we sponsor. We sell out of our syrup each year just as we are approaching the new maple season.

We have an open house that includes free pancakes with our maple syrup, our own recipe maple baked beans cooked slow in a bean pot, and of course our maple syrup and maple candy. We make sure that we have plenty of sap so we can boil most of the day for customer demonstration. We also provide sugarbush tours and have kids drill and tap trees near the sugar house.



Grandson, Anders – future sugar maker.

Continued on page 4...



EXTENSION PIPELINE

What Can the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service do for Your Sugaring Operation?

By Sean Horan Climate Smart Agriculture & Forestry Professional

Who, or What Exactly is NRCS?

The USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) provides farmers and private landowners with assistance to address natural resource concerns on their land. The NRCS motto is 'Helping people help the land,' and to achieve that goal, NRCS works to provide both technical and financial assistance to forest landowners. The process starts with the local NRCS field office. The field office staff are there to listen to your goals, visit your forest, and guide you through the process of working with the agency. There are a number of great resources out there (like this one) that can help you figure out how to work with NRCS, but the first step is to stop by your local field office and talk with your district conservationist (find your local office and contact here).

The What & Why for Maple Syrup Producers

NRCS assistance can take many different forms across an operation, from helping plan and manage your sugarbush, to upgrading your sugarhouse to be more efficient. Starting in the forest, assistance usually begins with an NRCS forest management plan, or FMP for short. An FMP is an extremely useful document that provides a comprehensive summary of your forest land (different forest types, species present, quantity of trees, etc.) as well as recommendations on future management activities to help address resource concerns, meet your land objectives, and improve the overall health and vigor of your forest. The NRCS can provide a list of licensed foresters approved to write an FMP as well as an outline for what is required in the plan. The agency can also provide financial assistance through cost-share for a considerable amount of the plan cost. If you already have a plan through a different avenue, don't worry! NRCS can help fit that plan to NRCS standards. In addition to an FMP, NRCS can also help with planning the actual activities. NRCS calls them 'practices' and they're not only practices for general forestry management like thinning, crop tree release, etc., but also a whole bundle of activities specifically meant for sugarbush management like establishing species diversity, reducing soil impacts during management activities (i.e. collecting sap, thinning), and more.

These practices are meant to help build a resilient and healthy forest, addressing resource concerns like soil health, erosion, under or over stocking, increasing species diversity, addressing invasive species concerns, and more. As we continue to see increased frequency and intensity of precipitation events and more sporadic winter seasons, thoughtful forest management is becoming even more important to address these uncertainties and make sure Maine forest owners can provide maple syrup for generations to come.

Moving over to the sugarhouse now, NRCS can also help with your boiling operation. Through an agricultural energy assessment, NRCS practices can help identify ways to improve your existing setup. This can include items like more energy efficient lighting and improvements to the boiling system

Continued on page 10...

Producer Spotlight ...Continued from page 2

Lessons learned and future plans

As a small producer, we strive to utilize the same technology employed by the large producers, including pipeline on high vacuum, reverse osmosis, high pressure filtering, and automatic draw off, to name a few. So, each new technology has involved a learning curve to make it a seamless part of the process and improve efficiency. We make mostly dark syrup which is preferred by our customers. Many of our lessons regarding pipeline installation, high vacuum, and making great syrup with a wood arch were learned through trial and error.



Our first evaporator.

While our sugarbush is relatively flat, and trees spread out, we strive to add a few taps each year. Consistent with our desire to demonstrate the advanced technologies of sugar making, we will be adding a preheater or a steam away and a hood. We also are adding swappable syrup pans that can be changed out with minimal effort.

MMPA membership

Participating in a trade organization is something I have done with my other businesses over the years. MMPA provides one voice for Maine producers, whether small or large. I also find the publication very informative.

International Maple Grading School

Two Days of In-Person Lectures and Hands-On Demonstrations

(See page 9 of the newsletter for add'l information and links.)

Friday, October 25 and Saturday October 26, 2024

8:30 a.m. Start Time, Both Days

Falmouth Regional Learning Center, Falmouth, Maine

International Maple Grading School is for maple producers, bulk syrup buyers, state inspectors, and others needing to accurately grade maple syrup or judge maple product entries at fairs and contests. Quality control issues are also addressed. This school provides a strong scientific base combined with intensive hands-on exercises. This approach enables participants to learn how to grade or judge maple products with confidence.

Cost/Registration Fee: \$145

- Capacity: 25
- Payment is per person for the two-day class.
- Registration fees are non-refundable; this may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

For more information or a reasonable accommodation, please contact Jason Lilley at jason.lilley@maine.edu or phone 207.781.6099. You can register online.



MMPA is hosting the 65th Annual Conference of the North American Maple Syrup Council (NAMSC)

The Annual Meeting will be held at the [Double Tree by the Hilton, Portland, Maine](#). This 4-day program includes technical sessions on the latest research and technology relevant to the industry, sugarhouse tours, networking with peers, a trades show, and more. Plus, the event will be located just inland from the beautiful coast of Portland, Maine.

In addition to the business meetings, there will be an all-day tour on Wednesday with 2 sugarhouse stops, Lone Pine Brewery, Pineland Farm, and Cumberland Fairgrounds where you will see sawmill, museum, sugarhouse, blacksmith shop, cash bar/social and a lobster bake, Tuesday & Thursday workshops, and technical sessions, music and more.

Tuesday's Companion Tour will take participants to the heart of downtown Portland, Maine's largest city. Portland is one of the few working waterfronts left in the United States. We will start our tour in the "Old Port", then board the Narrow-Gauge Train and relax on their beautiful historic train cars while we take in beautiful views of Casco Bay all while hearing fascinating history about the Maine's railroading as well as the sights along the route.

Then visit the most photographed lighthouse in the world! Portland Headlight, which is located on the shores of Fort Williams Park in Cape Elizabeth. We will take in the beauty of the stunning shorefront and tour the award-winning Museum that was the former Keepers' Quarters.

All information is up online at our website, including Hotel link, Schedule, Contest and more at, www.mainemapleproducers.com



“Be Sure It’s Maine Pure”

North American Maple Syrup Council 65th Annual Conference

October 21st through 24th, 2024

Double Tree by Hilton, Portland, Maine



Registration Form

Full Registration (Oct. 21st thru 24th, 2024) Includes: admission to all workshops, Wednesday all-day tour, trade show, program book, and the following meals: Tuesday breakfast, lunch and “Be Sure Its Maine Pure” dinner, Wednesday breakfast, lunch, and Lobster Bake or (steak or chicken), Thursday breakfast, lunch and banquet. Does not include Companion tour	\$ 590.00	# _____	Lobster _____ Steak _____ Chicken _____
Late Full Registration (if received after Sept. 15th,2024)	\$ 685.00	# _____	
Tuesday Oct. 22nd Companion Tour: (34-person limit) Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad, Kens Seafood Place for lunch (lunch on own), Portland Head Light /Museum.	\$ 75.00	# _____	
Late Tuesday Companion Tour (if received after Sept. 15th,2024)	\$ 100.00	# _____	
Tuesday Oct. 22nd - One Day Only Registration Includes lunch, trade show, admission to all Tuesday tech sessions, and program book.	\$ 125.00	# _____	
Thursday Oct. 24th - One Day Only Registration Includes lunch, trade show, admission to all Thursday tech sessions, and program book.	\$125.00	# _____	
Late One Day Only Registration (if received after Sept. 15th,2024)	\$150.00	# _____	
TOTAL DUE			\$

Name(s) of attendee(s) _____

Sugarhouse name _____

Address _____

City/State _____

Zip/Country _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Payment to be US dollars and must be accompany this form. No cancelation refunds after Sept.1st,2024. Send form and check, payable to “MMPA”, to Lexi Merrifield, PO BOX 143, NEW VINYARD, ME 04956

Reserve your rooms, using this link:

<https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/pwmmmdt-mpl-3c04d501-bbd7-460e-bf60-a1cb1a1f0490/> or

call Direct 1-207-756-6519

"Be Sure it's Maine Pure"
Preliminary Conference Schedule

Monday Oct. 21st, 2024	
9:00am-4pm	Vendor Set Up
9:00am	Registration Set Up
9am-4pm	Antique Room Display Set Up
TBD	NAMSC Committee and Delegates Meetings as necessary
Noon-6pm	Registration Open, Contest Entries - Syrup/Candy/Cream/Sugar/Photo
Noon-6pm	Silent Auction/ Auction Items Drop Off
4pm-6pm	Informational Workshop/Round Table/Social/Cash Bar
	Dinner on your own - 15 plus restaurants within 10 min.
Tuesday Oct 22nd.	
6:30am- 8:30am	Breakfast Buffet
8am-6pm	Registration Table Open
	Contest Entries- Syrup/Candy/Cream/Sugar/Photo
8am-6pm	Trade Show
10am-4pm	Antique Exhibit Room Open
	Silent Auction Room Open/ Auction Items Drop Off
9am-3pm	Companion Tour, Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad, Kens Seafood for lunch on own, Portland Headlight and Museum
9am-Noon	Workshops- TBD
Noon-1pm	Lunch-
1pm-3pm	NAMSC Annual Meeting - Open to All
1pm-3pm	Workshop-TBA
5pm-6pm	Social/Tradeshaw
6pm-9:30pm	<i>"Be Sure it's Maine Pure"</i> Buffet, Music/Dance
Wednesday Oct. 23rd	All Day Tours
6:30am- 8am	Breakfast
7am - 8am	Registration table/Syrup/Sugar/Candy/Cream
8am-Noon	Morning Tours-Dunn Family Maple/Lone Pine Brewery/Merrifield Farm
1:30pm	Afternoon Tours-Pineland Farms-Morgan Horse Farm / Sugarhouse/ Dairy barn
3:30pm	Cumberland Fair Grounds- Farm Museum, Sawmill, Sugarhouse, Blacksmith Shop
3:30pm-8pm	Social/Cash Bar, Lobster Bake, Music, Head back to Hotel
Thursday Oct. 24th	
6:30am- 8:30am	Breakfast
8:00am- 3pm	Trade Show
8am - 8:30am	Entries last call Syrup/Sugar/Candy/Cream
9am-3pm	Antique display
9am - 3pm	Silent Auction Ends
9am - 4pm	Technical Session - See schedule, page 8 of newsletter
Noon-1pm	Lunch
3pm	Trade Show Break Down
5pm-8pm	Social, Banquet Buffet, Award, Auction items
Friday Oct 25th	Grading School
Saturday Oct 26th	Grading School

North American Maple Syrup Conference

Tech Session Agenda

Technical Session Blocks by Time, Room, and Theme.

Note that each block will include several speakers, including Producers, Industry Reps, Extension Educators, State Inspectors, and more. The full tech session agenda will be released shortly. (See Upcoming Events on Page 9 of the newsletter FMI and links.

	Room 1	Room 2	Room 3
Time Block	Tuesday Morning		
Theme	Associations and Collaborative Approaches	Social Media Marketing	Chemistry of Sugaring
Time Block	Tuesday Afternoon		
Theme	The State of the Maple Market	Climate Change	Syrup Quality
Time Block	Thursday Morning		
Theme	Sap Collection Best Practices	Hobby to Sales - Scaling Up	Food Safety Regulations & Programs
Time Block	Thursday Afternoon		
Theme	Equipment/ Vendor Spotlights	Sugarbush Management	Business Mgmt. (Sales, Organic Cert., Estate Planning)

UPCOMING EVENTS

(Note: Emailed newsletter recipients, you can click on the highlighted links for details. Printed version recipients, use the https:// address with each listing.)

Invasive Plant Identification and Management Workshops

Viles Arboretum, Augusta

Monday, September 9, 2024, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

[Register Online](https://umaine-extension.formtitan.com/ftproject/events?eventid=a1cUy000001RgsD) <https://umaine-extension.formtitan.com/ftproject/events?eventid=a1cUy000001RgsD>

North American Maple Syrup Conference

October 21-24 in Portland, Maine

[View the Full Schedule](https://mainemapleproducers.com/events/namsc-north-american-maple-syrup-conference/#schedule1) <https://mainemapleproducers.com/events/namsc-north-american-maple-syrup-conference/#schedule1>

[Tech Session Agenda](#)

[Register Here](#)

International Maple Grading School (See page 4 of the newsletter for more details)

Friday, October 25 and Saturday October 26, 2024

Falmouth, Maine

[Program Details and Agenda](https://extension.umaine.edu/maple-grading-school/upcoming-schools/annual-international-school/) <https://extension.umaine.edu/maple-grading-school/upcoming-schools/annual-international-school/>

[Register Online](#)

Monthly MMPA monthly meetings. First Thursday of each month at 7: 00 p.m., Farm Bureau, Augusta and via Zoom.

Ongoing Maine Woodland Owners upcoming events/workshops. Go to <https://www.mainewoodlandowners.org/about-us-2>

Upcoming Maine Fair Schedule



Aug. 6-11	Topsham Fair*
Sept. 15-21	Farmington Fair
Sept. 22-28	Cumberland Fair
Sept. 29-Oct. 6	Fryeburg Fair

*First presence at the Topsham Fair. Fair organizers bought a building and wanted MMPA to educate about maple syrup and for the Association members to sell maple syrup. We were awarded "Best New Vendor" this year.

Extension Pipeline, NRCS, ...continued from page 3

with equipment like a reverse osmosis (RO) machine, evaporators, and pre-heaters. From forest management to sugarhouse operations, NRCS has the technical expertise and financial assistance opportunities to help build upon the great conservation and management of our working forests.

But Don't Just Take Our Word For It

Cornville based Libby Maple run by Jay and Kathryn Libby is a great example of the positive benefits to be seen from collaborations with NRCS. The 150-acre forest with 1200 taps (hopefully soon to be 1700) has worked with NRCS through various programs on both forest management and operations efficiency. Currently enrolled in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), the Libbys are implementing multiple NRCS forestry activities aimed at improving their sugarbush. When asked what they would like to share about their work with NRCS, Jay and Kathryn said: "The biggest help the NRCS has provided to us is the consultation and advice. There are many programs they can help with depending on individual needs and where they are in the development of their sugarbush. The cost share program has helped us with the extra push to thin the sugar bush which is labor intensive and usually provides very little payback in terms of wood produced from the operation. The program also has helped us with energy savings. We were able to replace our old boiler with a highly efficient one that has saved time, fuel, and electricity."

This is merely a snapshot of the assistance that NRCS has to offer to forest landowners and maple syrup producers. If you would like to learn more, please reach out to your local NRCS office. We don't bite! But don't take our word for it. We will close out with a few additional thoughts Jay and Kathryn wanted to share: "The NRCS office in Skowhegan has provided us with opportunities that we had no idea existed to grow our small business. The staff have been a great source of advice and knowledge. NRCS has provided us with the financial help and most of all it's been people who are willing to help. We are treated with kindness and respect every time we enter the building. We cannot express how grateful we are and sincerely appreciate all of the help that we have been given. We are confident that our business will continue to thrive with the partnership with the NRCS and we are excited to continue to work with them to complete all of the initiatives."



Libby Maple located in Cornville is collaborating with the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) to make improvements to their operation.



4th Annual Maine Maple Fall Fest October 12 & 13, 2024

Application

(Application due by October 2, 2024)

Sugarhouse Name: _____ Dates Open: _____

Contact Person: _____ Hours Open: _____

Venue Address:

Town: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Description of events: (please email descriptions to dunnfamilymaple@gmail.com

Errors in transcription will be addressed if possible but the MMPA and its officers are not held liable.)

PLEASE MAIL TO:

Maine Maple Producers
C/O Scott Dunn
419 Chicopee Rd.
Buxton, ME 04093

Questions: please contact Scott Dunn 207-671-4262
dunnfamilymaple@gmail.com

Blueberry Walnut Bread

Ingredients:

2 eggs
1 cup sour cream
½ cup pure Maine Maple Syrup
½ cup sugar
1 tsp. Vanilla
½ wheat bran (or flaxmeal)
1 ½ cup unbleached flour
½ tsp. salt
1 tsp. baking soda
1 cup fresh wild Maine Blueberries (you can use frozen berries; rinse in warm water and drain.
1 cup chopped walnuts
2 Tbl. pure Maine Maple Sugar or cinnamon sugar (optional).

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
In mixing bowl, beat eggs, sour cream, pure Maine maple syrup, sugar and vanilla. Stir in bran. In a separate bowl, sift flour, salt, and baking soda. Add flour mixture to wet ingredients and stir gently until just moistened. Stir in blueberries and walnuts.
Pour into standard sized greased loaf pan and sprinkle with Maine maple sugar or cinnamon sugar if desired.
Bake 40-50 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean.

Recipe from: <https://www.facebook.com/MaineMapleProducersAssociation>

Details inside for the 65th Annual
Conference of the North American
Maple Syrup Council (NAMSC)
PORTLAND, MAINE



c/o Lyle Merrifield
195 North Gorham Rd.
Gorham, ME 04038
Quarterly Newsletter (September 2024)

