

Connecticut Weekly AGRICULTURAL REPORT

Dannel P. Malloy, Governor
Steven K. Reviczky, Commissioner
Steve Jensen, Editor



Connecticut Department of Agriculture
March 10, 2015



Hebron maple producer Wayne Palmer attaches a float box that regulates the level of sap in the flue box of his enormous wood-fired evaporator, capable of boiling more than 130 gallons of sap per hour.

CT MAPLE PRODUCERS BEGIN LATE SEASON, POISED FOR LONG-TERM GROWTH

By Steve Jensen, Office of Commissioner Steven K. Reviczky

As temperatures hovered around 50 degrees for the second day in a row today, the man who represents Connecticut's maple syrup industry made a declaration that the state's 200-plus producers have been waiting to hear for many long, cold weeks.

"The sap ran yesterday and is running again today," Mark Harran, President of the Maple Syrup Producers Association of Connecticut, said from his Litchfield farm. "The season has finally begun!"

Harran predicted that the 10-day forecast calling for prime sap-flowing conditions – nighttime temperatures in the mid-20s and daytime in the 40s – will bring a collective sigh of relief from his sugaring cohorts. The winter of seemingly endless single-digit temperatures at night and in the 20s during the day was simply too cold to bring sap up from the roots and into awaiting buckets or plastic lines hung from the trees.

"I don't think any syrup has been made in Connecticut so far this year," Harran said. "But once the sap releases it's going to run well. It's going to be a short and late season, but I'm optimistic it will be a good one."

While sugaring typically begins in mid-February, this is the second straight year that the season was delayed until after the first week of March.



"Last year we didn't start until March 11," Harran recalled. "And we had what I consider an average or normal season. We were pretty discouraged and then all of a sudden it started gushing from the trees and it wasn't the disaster that it looked like it was going to be."

Across the state at his Winding Brook Sugar House in Hebron, Wayne Palmer has gotten used to the seasonal roller-coaster ride he's been on for more than two decades.

"I've never seen two bad years in a row and I've never seen two good years in a row," Palmer said as he worked on the enormous wood-fired evaporator that is the anchor of his operation. "This year looks like it's going to be a 3-week season, at best."

When trees begin to bud in early April, the sap becomes bitter and unusable for maple products. One increasingly-popular technique - especially key during a shortened season - is the use of a

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PA LIVESTOCK SUMMARY

Avg. Dressing

SLAUGHTER COWS:

breakers 75-80% lean	103.75	109.25
boners 80-85% lean	103.00	109.25
lean 85-90% lean	96.50	103.00

CALVES graded bull

No 1 95-120lbs	378.75	422.50
No 1 80-90lbs	373.00	420.00
No 2 95-120lbs	336.50	383.75
No 2 80-90lbs	352.00	379.50
No 3 80-120lbs	227.75	301.75

SLAUGHTER STEERS

HiCh/Prm2-3	161.50	165.00
Ch1-3	158.25	161.50
Sel1-2	151.50	156.25

SLAUGHTER HOLSTEINS

HiCh/Prm2-3	146.00	149.00
Ch2-3	140.50	144.75
Sel1-2	135.00	140.25

SLAUGHTER HEIFERS

HiCh/Prm2-3	160.00	162.50
Ch1-3	155.50	159.50
Sel1-2	149.50	154.75

VEALERS Utility 60-120lb

67.00	158.00
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SLAUGHTER LAMBS: Non-Traditional Markets:

ch/pr 2-3		
40-70 lbs	297.00	327.00
80-130 lbs	215.00	242.00
90-130 lbs	170.00	222.00
130-200 lbs	108.00	162.00

SLAUGHTER EWES: 2-3

150-200 lbs Good	86.00	122.00
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BUCKS

120-160 lbs	112.00	160.00
160-300 lbs	90.00	127.00

SLAUGHTER GOATS: Sel.1, by head, est.

30-40 lbs	137.00	160.00
40-60 lbs	142.00	180.00
60-80 lbs	200.00	240.00
80-100 lbs	257.00	285.00
Nannies/Does: 80-130 lbs	225.00	260.00
130-180 lbs	270.00	275.00
Bucks/Billies: 100-150 lbs	220.00	250.00
150-250 lbs	325.00	350.00

NEW HOLLAND, PA. HOG AUCTION

Sold by actual weights; prices quoted by hundred wt.

48-52	250-350 lbs	48.00	50.00
52-56	250-300 lbs	51.50	59.00
Sows, US1-3	400-500 lbs	35.00	47.00
Boars	200-300 lbs	26.00	39.00
	400-700 lbs	8.00	11.00

WHOLESALE FRUITS & VEGETABLES**NEW ENGLAND GROWN****Boston Terminal and Wholesale Grower Prices**

	LOW	HIGH
ALFALFA SPROUTS, 5LB	14.00	14.00
APPLE, RED DEL, 88, USXFCY	22.00	22.00
BEAN SPROUTS, 10LB	7.00	7.00
CIDER, APPLE 4-1 GAL	24.00	24.00
PARSNIPS, 25LB	24.00	30.00
TOMATOES, 25LB, GRHSE, VR	20.00	22.00
TOMS, CHERRY, GHS, 8/10 OZ	23.00	24.00

SHIPPED IN

APPLE, FUJI, NY, 88, USXFCY	28.00	28.00
APPLE, GRANNYS, 88, WAXFCY	32.00	34.00
APPLE, GALA, PA, 88, USXFCY	31.00	31.00
BEANS, GREEN, FL, BU, MCHPK	20.00	20.00
BEETS, RED, TX, 12	16.00	18.00
CABBAGE, NY, 50 LB	8.00	9.00
CARROTS, CA, 16/3LB	20.00	22.00
CORN, BICOLOR, FL, 4DZ	20.00	22.00
DANDELION, GA, 1-3/5BU, 12	18.00	20.00
EGGPLANT, FL, 1-1/9BU	14.00	16.00
GRPFruit, WHT, FL, 4/5BU, 27	18.00	19.00
LETTUCE, ROMAINE, TX, 24	26.00	28.00
PEAR, D'ANJOU, WA, US#1, 120	28.00	32.00
PEPPERS, GRN, FL, LG, 1-1/9BU	12.00	14.00
POTATO, RUSSET, ID, 50LB, #1	19.00	22.00
SPINACH, BABY, CA, 4LB	10.00	11.00
STRAWBERRIES, 8-1LB, FL	8.00	15.00
SWEET POTATOES, LA, 40LB	28.00	30.00

HAY**LANCASTER, PA/PRICE PER TON**

	PREMIUM	GOOD
ALFALFA	240.00-355.00	220.00-240.00
MIXED HAY	250.00-410.00	210.00-245.00
TIMOTHY	260.00-375.00	210.00-240.00
STRAW	127.00-235.00	

**NORTHEAST/USDA WEEKLY
RETAIL LAMB**

SHLDR BLD CHOP	4.99	6.99
SHLDR RND BN CHOP	7.39	7.49
BREAST	3.49	3.99
RIB CHOP	10.99	10.99
WHOLE LOIN	9.99	9.99
LOIN CHOPS	5.99	16.99
BNLS LEG	6.99	7.99
SHANK	5.99	5.99
STEW MEAT	4.99	5.49

MIDDLESEX LIVESTOCK AUCTION

Middlefield, CT., March 9, 2015

Bob Calves:	LOW	HIGH
45-60 lbs.	50.00	55.00
61-75 lbs.	140.00	145.00
76-90 lbs.	325.00	330.00
91-105 lbs.	335.00	340.00
106 lbs. & up	350.00	360.00
Farm Calves	370.00	380.00
Starter Calves	45.00	52.00
Veal Calves	150.00	195.00
Open Heifers	115.00	175.00
Beef Heifers	130.00	137.50
Feeder Steers	167.50	180.00
Beef Steers	148.00	165.00
Stock Bulls	150.00	195.00
Beef Bulls	n/a	n/a
Replacement Cows	n/a	n/a
Replacement Heifers	n/a	n/a
Boars	n/a	n/a
Sows	n/a	n/a
Butcher Hogs	n/a	n/a
Feeder Pigs	5 @	30.00 each
Sheep	n/a	n/a
Lambs	n/a	n/a
Goats each	157.50	235.00
Kid Goats	n/a	n/a
Canners	up to	104.50
Cutters	105.00	109.00
Utility Grade Cows	110.00	114.00
Rabbits each	10.00	55.00
Chickens each	5.00	17.00
Ducks each	10.00	15.00

NORTHEAST EGG PRICES USDA

Per doz. Grade A and Grade A white in cartons to retailers (volume buyers)

XTRA LARGE	1.49	1.69
LARGE	1.43	1.57
MEDIUM	1.19	1.32

NEW ENGLAND SHELL EGGS

Per doz. Grade A brown in carton delivered store door. (Range)

XTRA LARGE	2.07	2.17
LARGE	2.03	2.13
MEDIUM	1.52	1.62

PA FEEDER PIG SUMMARY

US # 1-2 30-40 lb	100.00	135.00
40-50 lb	130.00	130.00
US # 2-3 30-40 lb	80.00	200.00
40-50 lb	95.00	115.00
50-60 lb	105.00	120.00

FOR SALE

1-R. Blumenthal & Donahue is now Connecticut's first independent NATIONWIDE Agri-Business Insurance Agency. Christmas tree growers, beekeepers, sheep breeders, organic farmers and all others, call us for all your insurance needs. 800-554-8049 or www.bludon.com.

2-R. Farm, homeowner and commercial insurance—we do it all. Call Blumenthal & Donahue 800-554-8049 or www.bludon.com.

3-R. Gallagher electric fencing for farms, horses, deer control, gardens, & beehives. Sonpal's Power Fence 860-491-2290.

4-R. Packaging for egg sales. New egg cartons, flats, egg cases, 30 doz and 15 doz. Polinsky Farm 860-376-2227.

5-R. Nationwide Agribusiness Insurance Program, endorsed by the CT Farm Bureau, save up to 23% on your farm insurance and get better protection. References available from satisfied farmers. Call Marci today at 203-444-6553.

8-R. CT non-GMO grain and corn. Hay and straw. Pleasant View Farms. Louis. 860-803-0675.

19-R. 1988 International Model 1954, 22 foot body, excellent condition. New tires. \$12,000.00. Call Al 203-223-4853.

MISCELLANEOUS

6-R. Farm/Land specializing in land, farms, and all types of Real Estate. Established Broker with a lifetime of agricultural experience and 40 years of finance. Representing both Buyers and Sellers. Call Clint Charter of Wallace-Tustin Realty (860) 644-5667.

17-R. Free professional advising sessions for farmers - CT Farm Risk Management and Crop Insurance Program. One-on-One confidential sessions with an agri-business professional to discuss farm related issues. Dates available Feb., March, April. www.ctfarmrisk.uconn.edu

FARMERS' MARKETS SEEKING VENDORS**SATURDAYS:**

- Bethany/ikearns@bethany-ct.com
- Tolland/deerecarol@sbcglobal.net
- Suffield/cupolahollowfarm@aol.com
- South Windsor/southwindsorfood@gmail.com
- Willimantic/stephanie.clark@growwindham.org
- North Guilford/naplesfarm@sbcglobal.net
- Bloomfield/sblessinghww@sbcglobal.com
- Lebanon/pchester@lebanonct.gov
- Meriden/EdPeczynski@yahoo.com

SUNDAYS:

- Avon-Farmington Valley/fvfarmersmarket@gmail.com
- Woodbury/guskaloidis@earthlink.net
- Voluntown/voluntownedc@gmail.com
- Colchester/colchesterfarmersmarket@yahoo.com

WEDNESDAYS:

- East Haddam/easthaddamfarmersmarket@gmail.com
- Hartford – Homestead/jmitchell@chrysaliscenterct.org
- Darien/judisedor@hotmail.com

THURSDAYS:

- Trumbull/robmartini41@yahoo.com
- Newington/yal@jmalogos.com

FRIDAYS:

- Andover/nanasworld@comcast.net
- Cromwell/cromwellfarmersmarket@comcast.net
- Danbury/andreaqarner@citycenterdanbury.com
- Farmington/bdayton@farmingtonlibraries.org
- Plainville/farmersmarketplv@yahoo.com

TUESDAYS AND FRIDAYS

- Hartford - Old State House/Betsy.Bradley@cga.ct.gov

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vacuum-pump system that helps draw sap from the tree much more efficiently.

"The pump basically triples the amount of material you can get out of a tree in a given time," said Palmer, a retired auto-body mechanic and fourth-generation sugarer.

Last Friday, Palmer's pump sat idle on a trailer in his garage, waiting for its first trip this season to a state forest in Glastonbury where over the past few years he has drilled about 500 taps.

Palmer began working in the Meshomasic State Forest in 2009 after receiving permission from the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and with the help of a USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant administered by the state agriculture department and awarded to the state maple syrup producers association.

Similar projects under the grant by two other producers are happening on state land in Harwinton and Litchfield. The goal is to greatly increase the amount of sugar maples tapped statewide in Connecticut, where now only about 70,000 of the state's 10 million eligible maple trees are in production.

"Although our annual production is still relatively modest, maple syrup has become one of the iconic crops of Connecticut," agriculture Commissioner Steven K. Reviczky said. "I believe there is ample opportunity for the industry to grow significantly in our state, and our agency is eager to work with producers to make that happen."

The grove of maples that Palmer taps in Meshomasic – known in the business as a "sugarbush," sits about 1,000 feet off the road and down a steep grade.

The sap flows naturally downhill through five miles of plastic tubing to a collection tank. It is then pumped uphill into a storage tank carried in Palmer's truck.

Without the vacuum pump, he said, harvesting the sap by carrying traditional collection buckets by hand would be nearly impossible.

The pump is powered by a utility pole that Palmer paid to have installed at the site. It is one of several advanced techniques that are becoming standard in the sugaring industry.

Another is the use of reverse-osmosis (RO) membranes that draw water out the sap and greatly reduce the time needed to boil it down to syrup.

Sap is 98 percent water, which is why it takes 30-40 gallons to make a single gallon of maple syrup. The syrup that Palmer sells at his farm and supplies to roadside stands, restaurants and other outlets is 67% maple.

"There's a huge difference in the flavor," between locally-produced syrup and most commercial varieties, he said, which may contain maple levels of less than five percent.

That is part of the reason that Connecticut Grown maple syrup is regarded as some of the finest in the world, and typically sells for \$22 to \$24 a quart – about double the national average.

Sitting on Palmer's dining room table as he spoke were six half-gallons awaiting pickup from a member of the Hebron Historical Society, which will use them to make maple milk during the Hebron Maple festival, delayed until March 21-22 because of the harsh weather earlier in the month.

Harran, who in addition to representing Connecticut's producers serves as President of the International Maple Syrup Institute, would like to see the state's roughly \$1 million annual maple industry grow exponentially through the tapping of more trees and the accelerated use of technology like reverse osmosis.

Outside of the three eastern provinces of Canada, maple is only produced in the six New England states, as well New York, Pennsylvania and a few states in the upper Midwest.

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Harran sees those millions of untapped Connecticut maples as valuable potential suppliers to the market.

"People have tried to grow maples in other parts of the world but they always end up dying," he said. "Here in the Northeast we've got what they need. I believe they love our glacial soils."

The CT Dept. of Agriculture is promoting maple syrup during the month of March on several state radio stations, as well as Pandora radio and the agency Facebook page: www.facebook.com/ConnecticutGrown and at CTGrown.gov/maplesyrup.

The ads feature the message: "What do pancakes, ice cream, vegetables, coffee and oatmeal have in common? They all taste better with Connecticut Grown maple syrup. Find a sugarhouse near you at CTGrown.gov/maplesyrup and tap into the sweetness."

Also visit our Pinterest page, pinterest.com/GrowCTAg, for sugaring facts, maple syrup recipes and sugarhouses open to the public.



Clockwise from top left: Wayne Palmer enters his sugarhouse in Hebron; the firebox of his evaporator, in which he said he once burned more than a cord of wood in a single day; two half-gallons of Palmer's finished product sit on the woodpile next to the sugarhouse.

Advertising Rates: Fifteen or fewer words: \$3.75 per insertion. More than 15 words: 25 cents per word per insertion. Ads must be related to agriculture in Connecticut and are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Payment must be received by noon on Friday before publication the following Wednesday. Make check or money order payable to the Connecticut Dept. of Agriculture, and mail copy and remittance to the department at 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106. For more information contact Jane.Slupecki@ct.gov or call 860-713-2588.

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