

Maple Syrup Producers Optimistic Towards Season

Weather conditions optimal for sap production, high quality syrup

ROCHESTER, N.Y. –March 16, 2009- Warm and rainy weather across western New York has significantly boosted the quantity of sap production for many sugar bush operators. With the return to more seasonal weather patterns—averaging 40 degrees during the day and 20 degrees at night—many maple syrup producers are looking forward to large sap runs.

“Most sugar bush operators are in the first stage of the season,” said Bob King, Ph.D., director of the Agriculture and Life Sciences Institute at Monroe Community College. “Recent rains have provided ideal moisture and soil conditions. We expect a slow and steady release of moisture in the soil that will result in good sap flow and a full season,” said King.

Overall, the quality of maple syrup is expected to improve. More seasonal temperatures promote the production of clear, sweet, and odorless sap that yields a much lighter and delicate maple syrup grade. Maple syrup prices are expected to be similar to last year’s, with most syrup selling from \$18 to \$25 per quart depending on grade.

The syrup season in western New York is expected to run until mid-April. Once a tree is tapped, it normally runs sap from four to six weeks. Many producers reported tapping during the end of February and are on target for average production levels.

Cool soil temperatures also help to delay bud swell in the tree—preventing sap from becoming “buddy” sap. Buddy sap features a very unpleasant odor due to physiological changes in the tree (i.e., not due to microbial activity). Buddy sap is not desirable for use and signals the end of the season.

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*The New York State Maple Producers Association, comprising 500 members, will host **Maple Weekend** on March 21-22 and March 28-29. The goal of the weekend is to share the real taste of the mouth-watering maple syrup with the public while also demonstrating the various ways to make it. Visit www.mapleweekend.com for more information.*

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