



News from the Northern New York Agricultural Development Program

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Maple Producers Needed for NNYADP Maple Profitability Research Project

Lake Placid, NY – The Northern New York Agricultural Development Program (NNYADP) 2013 Maple Research Project is in search of maple producers for research on improving sap yields and maple business profitability.

NNYADP-funded maple research supports the opportunity for Northern New York to double its maple income to more than \$10 million, based on a survey by Cornell University Northern New York Maple Specialist Michael Farrell.

Farrell, director of Cornell's Uihlein Maple Forest in Lake Placid, NY, says research data from maple tap spout-and-dropline combination trials at the Uihlein forest since 2010, and from similar evaluations conducted at Parker Family Maple Farm in West Chazy, NY, in 2011 and 2012 have shown promising results for improving yields by as much as 100 percent in some cases.

A dropline is the length of tubing that runs from a spout on the tap into the tree to the lateral line that collects sap.

Researchers are looking for obtain more data to identify which spout-dropline combinations have the best potential for consistent gain in sap volume under the varying maple season conditions in Northern New York. More sap equates to more syrup and increased profitability for sugarmakers.

Farrell is seeking Northern NY maple producers who are themselves testing spout-dropline combinations in their own sugarbushes and have enough land that two trial units with similar trees, aspect, elevation, etc. can be established. Participating producers will record data on volume and sugar content as well as the time and money invested in the maple equipment and installations associated with the research.

NNYADP grant funding is available to cover the cost of installing water meters to measure sap volume and refractometers to measure sap sugar content in the participating sugarbushes.

This research will produce calculations comparing costs vs. the amount of sap collected with the various spout-dropline combinations. A cost/benefit ratio will be determined using the current price of maple syrup to help producers evaluate the best strategies for making their sugaring operations more productive and profitable.

Farrell laid the groundwork for this new NNYADP-funded research by working with Parker Family Maple Farm in West Chazy, NY, in 2011.

“We tried eight different combinations of spouts and droplines at Parker Family Maple Farm. The total amount of sap flow was measured every time a load of sap was collected and transferred to the sugarhouse. The results in the first year indicated the opportunity for sap gain,” Farrell says.

The work at Parker Family Maple Farm continued in 2012 and Farrell developed a protocol for determining the best spout-dropline combinations in other sugarbushes that will be applied at the sugaring operations that participate in the 2013 research trials.

Producers interested in participating in the Improving Sap Yields and Profitability in NNY Maple Sugaring Operations project may contact project leader and Northern New York Maple Specialist Michael Farrell, 518-523-9337, mlf36@cornell.edu by February 1, 2013.

The farmer-driven Northern New York Agricultural Development Program provides research, outreach, and technical assistance to all sectors of the agricultural industry in Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties. The program has funded maple sector projects on the impact sugarbush thinning on maple production and maple forest management, and production workshops on making value-added maple confections. Learn more online at www.nnyagdev.org. -30-