



MAPLE SIRUP MARKETING IN GEAUGA COUNTY, OHIO



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INTRODUCTION

Production of maple sirup and maple sugar in the United States historically has been concentrated in parts of New England and the Great Lakes States. The development of cane and beet sugar production in the United States was accompanied by the almost complete disappearance of maple sugar and sirup production areas in Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, Illinois and midwestern states other than a few bordering on the Great Lakes. Commercial production is limited to 10 states at the present time. Ohio is one of them.

Statistics relative to United States production, price and imports are shown for selected years in Table I. Declining importance of United States production and the increasing importance of imports is clearly evident.

Production and imports available for consumption has varied from .47 pounds per capita of maple sugar equivalent in 1918 to as low as .12 pounds during some recent years. These per capita figures indicate a significant downward trend in per capita use of these products. However the use of cane and beet sugars increased from 74.1 pounds per capita in 1918 to 98.1 pounds in 1958.

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TABLE I

MAPLE SUGAR AND SIRUP PRODUCTION, TREES TAPPED, AVERAGE PRICE
RECEIVED BY FARMERS, AND IMPORTS, U. S.
SELECTED YEARS, 1918-58

Year	Trees Tapped	Production			Price				Imports for Consumption	
		Sugar	Sirup	Total Product in Terms of Sugar	Avg. Total Production Per Tree		Per Pound of Sugar	Per Gallon of Sirup	Sugar ²	Sirup ³
	Thousand Trees	Thousand Pounds	Thousand Gallons	Thousand Pounds	As Sugar ¹ Pounds	As Sirup ¹ Gallons	Cents	Dollars	Thousand Pounds	Thousand Pounds
1918	17,053	11,383	4,141	44,511	2.61	0.33	--	--	3,807	--
1922	15,198	5,227	3,370	32,187	2.12	0.26	--	--	3,201	1 ⁴
1926	13,948	3,585	3,504	31,617	2.27	0.28	29.3	\$2.12	3,446	203
1930	13,158	2,134	3,712	31,830	2.42	0.30	30.2	2.03	9,735	1,575
1934	12,099	1,044	2,444	20,596	1.70	0.21	24.9	1.33	2,976	1,316
1938	11,380	705	2,770	22,865	2.01	0.25	28.4	1.61	3,946	39
1942	10,046	560	2,987	24,456	2.43	0.30	37.7	2.26	7,121	4,791
1946	8,257	310	1,351	11,118	1.35	0.17	65.5	3.30	4,207	2,221
1950	8,146	257	2,024	16,449	2.02	0.25	77.8	4.13	6,549	5,282
1954	6,391	132	1,656	13,445	2.09	0.26	87.1	4.63	6,643	4,096
1958	5,075	51	1,191	9,528	1.88	0.23	(5)	4.48	6,006	7,235

¹Assuming that 1 gallon of sirup is equivalent to 8 pounds of sugar.

²Includes maple sirup through September 21, 1922.

³A gallon of sirup weighs about 11 pounds.

⁴Included with maple sugar through September 21, 1922.

⁵No longer reported separately.

Source: Agricultural Statistics, 1952 and 1956 (46, 89) Sugar Situation, A.M.S., March, 1960, P. 37. n

TABLE II
 MAPLE SUGAR AND SIRUP PRODUCTION, IMPORTS AND
 APPARENT PER CAPITA CONSUMPTION IN U. S.
 SELECTED YEARS, 1918-1958

Year	U.S. Production In Sugar Equivalent	Imports In Sugar Equivalent	Percent Imported	Apparent Per Capita Consumption Sugar Equivalent
	Thousand Pounds	Thousand Pounds		Pounds
1918	44,511	3,807	7.9	.47
1922	32,187	3,201	9.0	.32
1926	31,617	3,594	10.2	.30
1930	31,830	10,880	25.5	.35
1934	20,596	3,928	16.0	.19
1938	22,865	3,974	14.8	.21
1942	24,456	10,605	30.2	.26
1946	11,118	5,823	34.4	.12
1950	16,449	10,390	38.7	.18
1954	13,445	9,622	41.7	.14
1958	9,528	11,268	54.2	.12

Table II presents both U. S. production and imports as well as per capita use^{1/} from 1918 to 1958 by selected years.

With the decline in United States production as shown in Table II, it is of interest to examine the trend of production in some of the most important producing states. Table III shows this for the period 1935 to 1957 inclusive for 8 states.

While Ohio's recent production has fallen to less than half the volume in the late 1930's, it still has remained the third most important state except in 1957 when Ohio ranked fourth. Ohio has ranked either third or fourth in production since 1850 except in 1900 when it ranked first.

Most of the production of maple sirup and maple sugar in Ohio is concentrated in Northeastern Ohio. Well over one third of the total Ohio production is from Geauga County. At one time this county held the distinction of having the most intensive sugar bush operation per square mile of any area in the United States.

The purpose of this study is to determine the selling practices used by Geauga County maple sirup producers. The remainder of this publication will be devoted to this.

PART I

MARKETING PRACTICES

Maple sirup produced in Geauga County finds its way into the market through both wholesale and retail channels. Sales at retail were partly

^{1/} Assuming no carryover.

TABLE III

ANNUAL MAPLE SIRUP AND SUGAR¹ PRODUCTION BY STATES,
1935-1957², IN THOUSANDS OF GALLONS

Year	Ver- mont	New York	Ohio	Penn.	Mich.	Wis.	New Hamp.	Mass.	Me.	Md.
1935	1,613	1,045	306	174	100	83	112	88	49	18
1936	999	769	342	110	99	69	51	36	29	21
1937	1,000	679	402	163	101	74	69	76	38	37
1938	1,563	620	284	100	66	49	92	56	48	27
1939	954	750	371	134	106	106	61	66	34	26
1940	1,103	803	333	116	75	104	65	62	51	25
1941	783	616	254	116	97	34	51	61	18	13
1942	1,350	955	178	133	104	90	71	67	28	19
1943	1,116	854	193	98	135	48	69	69	28	16
1944	983	851	280	136	168	50	60	64	21	24
1945	369	283	136	55	82	23	26	25	10	11
1946	639	449	80	46	63	28	37	39	11	11
1947	801	690	160	92	142	66	52	44	18	10
1948	637	434	111	63	81	48	40	31	12	15
1949	578	541	150	97	112	59	42	41	12	17
1950	888	511	150	117	94	105	67	56	34	14
1951	740	471	130	101	99	80	59	55	20	12
1952	671	419	145	105	116	66	56	35	30	14
1953	487	278	126	86	78	82	49	33	16	15
1954	680	425	123	124	94	75	58	47	18	20
1955	634	496	113	104	72	58	48	55	13	11
1956	606	431	153	114	65	77	50	48	11	12
1957 ³	819	503	91	82	70	119	65	47	18	9
Total	120,009	14,200	4,611	2,466	2,219	1,593	1,350	1,201	567	397
Avg.	870	617	200	107	96	69	59	53	25	17

¹Sugar converted to nearest gallon of sirup based on 8 pounds per gallon.

²Source: Agricultural Statistics, U.S.D.A., 1937-1958.

³Estimated.

on egg routes operated by producers through the East Cleveland Farmers Market, at roadside stands, by mail order and directly from the producer's home. Volume through each of these was not determined but in total 56.2 percent of the sirup was disposed of through these outlets in 1959. At wholesale, some producers sell to stores direct, some to maple sirup dealers in both bulk and cans, some to other producers who need it for their retail outlets, some to the Geauga Festival, and some to the Burton Chamber of Commerce.

The Burton Log Cabin Chamber of Commerce Operation

Burton, Ohio, has the only municipally owned and operated sugar camp in the North American continent. This sugar camp is operated wholly under the auspices of the Burton Chamber of Commerce.

During the maple sirup season, the quaint old log cabin in the park will be seen nearly encircled by travelers' cars from far and near. Route 87 is not a main transportation artery into Cleveland. However, the attraction of this log cabin operation has drawn thousands of visitors each year into Burton.

Those who are interested may see maple sirup in the making from about the third week in February to the second week in April. The evaporators are hand fired with wood, and maple cream and sugar are stirred to the delight of all who witness it.

The sales room in the log cabin is crowded each weekend by consumers waiting to purchase their supply of maple products. Visitors from many distant states are not uncommon each week of operation.

A further point of interest for visitors on the weekends in Burton include the pancake, sausage, and maple sirup breakfasts and dinners served by the Rotary Club and Fire Department on Sundays. The Geauga County Historical Society in Burton also opens its own building filled with valuable collections and maintain an old fashioned country store.

There is a lot for visitors to see and do in Burton on a Sunday afternoon in the maple season. This is undoubtedly one reason the town literally bursts at the seams for room over the weekends.

The Geauga County Maple Festival in Chardon

The Geauga County Maple Festival was first conceived in 1926 by A. B. Carlson, a Chardon hardware dealer. The festival is primarily a maple sirup promotion program based on the romance and tradition of maple sirup production in Geauga County.

The Maple Festival is usually timed to approximate the close of the maple sirup season. It has been found that interest in maple sirup products usually falls off rapidly after the Festival has been held. The Festival was held in 1961 on April 7, 8, and 9 at Chardon.

The Festival Board of Directors operates the enterprise as a non-profit corporation. There are about forty directors of the corporation, all of whom reside in Geauga County. Each of these individuals contributes his time to preparing and planning for the Maple Festival during the year.

The Board of Directors elects a slate of officers at its annual meeting, and this executive committee holds regular meetings throughout the year.

PART II

SALES BY REPRESENTATIVE GEAUGA COUNTY PRODUCERS

This study is based on information obtained from 52 Geauga County sirup producers concerning their production and marketing for 1959. Table IV presents production information concerning these producers classified by number of sap buckets hung in 1959.

Past history of production by these 52 producers was not determined. However, the production record of one farm for which records were available from 1884 to 1954 is shown in Table V.

TABLE IV

PRODUCTION OF MAPLE SIRUP BY 52 PRODUCERS
OF GEAUGA COUNTY, OHIO, 1959

Group	Buckets Hung	Number of Producers	Sirup Produced		Per Bucket
			Total	Per Producer	
I	200- 799	12	1,522	127	.24
II	800- 999	9	2,346	261	.29
III	1000-1199	9	2,473	275	.27
IV	1200-2499	14	5,000	357	.25
V	2500-4800	8	6,790	849	.26
Total and Averages		52	18,131	349	.26

TABLE V

MAPLE SIRUP PRODUCTION OF ONE FARM
IN GEAUGA COUNTY, OHIO, 1884-1954

Year	Buckets Hung	Sirup Produced (Gallon)	Price Received Per Gallon
1884	175	88	\$ 0.75
1889	267	100	0.70
1894	300	125	1.00
1899	310	212	1.00
1904	318	179	1.00
1909	400	445	1.10
1914	550	180	1.17
1919	600	325	2.25
1924	700	403	2.25
1929	840	260	2.25
1934	1200	260	1.50
1939	1160	412	2.00
1944	1000	579	3.35
1949	750	274	5.00
1954	500	171	5.00

This table indicates that the owner of this farm has realized between \$40,000 and \$50,000 since 1884 from maple sirup sales or an average per year between \$600 and \$700. Highest income for years shown was \$1939.65 in 1944.

U. S. Government grades and standards for maple sirup have been established and price differentials for Ohio producer have been rather wide between Grade A and the lower grades. The average price received by the 52 producers included in this study was \$5.64 for Grade A and Fancy and \$3.15 for the lower grades. Grade labeling of maple sirup is voluntary in Ohio, and very few producers in Geauga County and Ohio use grade labels on their product. Table VI shows the production of the 52 producers by grades of sirup.

TABLE VI
PRODUCTION OF MAPLE SIRUP, BY GRADE,
BY 52 PRODUCERS OF GEAUGA COUNTY,
OHIO, 1959

Group	Fancy and Grade A (Gallons)	Grade B Or Lower (Gallons)	Total (Gallons)	Grade B Or Lower (Percent)
I	1,401	121	1,522	8.6
II	1,830	516	2,346	21.9
III	2,267	206	2,473	8.3
IV	4,517	483	5,000	9.7
V	6,481	309	6,790	4.6
Total	16,496	1,635	18,131	9.0

With only 9 percent of production as Grade B or lower, the average price in 1959 was 22.4 cents lower than if all sirup had been graded Fancy or A. Prices received by grade through various outlets are shown in Table VII.

TABLE VII

AVERAGE PRICES RECEIVED PER GALLON FROM SALE OF
MAPLE SIRUP BY 52 PRODUCERS OF
GEAUGA COUNTY, OHIO, 1959

Outlet	Fancy and Grade A	Grade B And Lower	Other
Retail:			
Mail Order	\$7.27	\$ --	\$ --
Local Sales	5.99	4.94	--
Wholesale:			
Direct to Stores	6.46	--	--
Dealers, Cans	5.35	3.50	--
Dealers, Bulk	3.82	3.04	2.31
Weighted Average	5.64	3.15	2.31

Average income from sales during 1959 amounted to \$1616 per farm. Income ranged from \$300 to a high of \$6500 for the 52 producers. Over 3 percent of production was used at home and almost 6 percent was held over for sale in 1960. Disposition of the 1959 production by the 52 producers is shown in Table VIII.

Volume of production had but little relation to method of sale except when comparing the groups of highest and lowest production. The group with lowest production disposed of a higher percent of their production at wholesale than other groups and less at retail. Producers with the highest production disposed of more than twice as much at

TABLE VIII

DISPOSITION OF 1959 MAPLE SIRUP PRODUCED
BY 52 GEAUGA COUNTY, OHIO, PRODUCERS

Group	Sold at Retail		Sold at Wholesale		Home Use		Carried Over	
	Gallon	Percent	Gallon	Percent	Gallon	Percent	Gallon	Percent
I	669	44.0	690	45.3	153	10.0	100	0.7
II	1,319	56.3	880	37.5	111	4.7	36	1.5
III	1,506	60.9	873	35.3	73	2.9	21	0.9
IV	2,776	55.5	1,962	39.2	161	3.2	101	2.0
V	3,920	57.7	1,884	27.8	112	1.6	874	12.9
Total	10,190	56.2	6,289	34.7	610	3.4	1,042	5.7

retail as at wholesale and also carried over almost 13 percent of the year's production. The purpose of the carryover being that of making sure they would have sirup for regular customers the next year. Home use (including gifts) of sirup averaged 11.5 gallons per producer with practically all producers using at least 8 gallons for the year.

Wholesale Outlets

From the total production of 18,131 gallons produced by the 52 producers in 1959, a little over a third or 6,289 gallons was sold through wholesale channels. The importance of each of these outlets is shown in Table IX which shows percent of the sirup sold at wholesale going through each channel. Practically all Grade B sirup went through whole-sale channels.

TABLE IX

PERCENT OF WHOLESALE SALES, BY SPECIFIED OUTLET,
OF SIRUP PRODUCED BY 52 GEAUGA COUNTY,
OHIO, PRODUCERS IN 1959

Outlet	Grades		Total
	Fancy And Grade A Percent	Grade B Or Less Percent	
Store Sales	16.9	--	16.9
Local Dealers	26.4	14.4	40.8
Large Producers	5.1	--	5.1
Geauga Festival	13.3	--	13.3
Burton Chamber of Commerce	11.1	--	11.1
Undetermined	8.0	4.8	12.8
Total	80.8	19.2	100.0

Containers

The 52 Geauga County producers sold their sirup through outlets as shown in Table VII. Bulk sales were in drums belonging to purchasers. The remainder of sales was in tin cans and glass containers of several sizes. Percentage of sales through bulk and through glass and tin cans is shown in Table X.

TABLE X

PERCENT OF SALES OF MAPLE SIRUP AND SUGAR BY TYPE OF CONTAINER
BY 52 GEAUGA COUNTY, OHIO, PRODUCERS, 1959

Group	Drums Percent	Tin Cans Percent	Glassware Percent	Sugar Sales Percent
I	42.7	52.7	4.6	--
II	34.0	65.8	0.2	--
III	19.9	80.1	--	--
IV	22.6	72.8	4.0	0.6
V	5.5	87.5	5.5	1.5
All Groups	18.8	76.9	3.6	0.7

The difference in price received by producers for sirup in cans compared to bulk in drums was \$1.53 per gallon. Group V - those producers with an average production of 849 gallons in 1959 - sold 80 percent of their wholesale volume in cans while only 5 percent of the sirup disposed of at wholesale by the small producers in Group I was in cans.

Information concerning amount of sirup disposed of in each type and size of container was obtained from 32 of the 52 producers. This is shown in Table XI.

In a study "Ohio Maple Sirup -- Some Factors Influencing Production"^{1/} it was found that in 1946-1949, 86 percent of the sirup sales by 60 Northeast Ohio producers was sold in gallon tin cans, 4.4 percent in half-gallon cans, 0.6 percent in quart cans, 0.3 percent in one pound glass jars and 8.7 percent in bulk.

Data were furnished by the 52 producers in the 1959 study sample from which it was possible to determine most usual price received at retail for the various units and cost of containers. These facts and the gross return per gallon of sirup after subtracting cost of containers are shown in Table XII. Labor costs of filling various sizes of containers were not determined precisely but the concensus of producer estimates was that 3 minutes were required for filling gallon cans, 4 minutes for 2 half-gallon cans, 8 minutes for 4 one quart units and 10 minutes for 8 pint containers. No labor costs were subtracted in arriving at the gross return per gallon.

^{1/} Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 718.

TABLE XI

SALE OF MAPLE SIRUP BY 32 GEauga COUNTY, OHIO,
 PRODUCERS BY TYPE AND SIZE OF CONTAINER, 1959

Type and Size of Container	Number of Producers Using	Gallon Equivalent	Sales Percent
Bulk (Drums)	22	3,187.50	24.9
Gallon Tin Cans	29	5,667.00	44.3
$\frac{1}{2}$ Gallon Tin Cans	25	2,197.00	17.2
Quart Tin Cans	17	1,251.00	9.8
Smaller Tin Cans	3	20.12	.2
Quart Glass Bottles	1	39.00	.3
Pint Glass Bottles	3	112.00	.9
$\frac{1}{2}$ Pint Glass Bottles	1	165.75	1.3
Smaller Glass Bottles	1	15.25	.1
Maple Cream and Sugar	1	126.75	1.0

TABLE XII

CONTAINER COSTS AND COMPUTED RETURNS PER GALLON FOR
 FANCY AND GRADE A MAPLE SIRUP RETAILED BY
 GEAUGA COUNTY, OHIO, PRODUCERS, 1959

Container	Retail Unit Price	Gallon Price Equivalent	Container Costs		Return Per Gallon Less Container Cost
			Per Unit	Per Gallon	
Gallon-Tin	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$0.31	\$0.31	\$5.69
$\frac{1}{2}$ Gallon-Tin	3.25	6.50	0.26	0.52	5.98
Quart-Tin	1.75	7.00	0.20	0.80	6.20
Pint-Tin	1.00	8.00	0.18	1.44	6.56
Quart-Glass	1.75	7.00	0.16	0.64	6.36
Pint-Glass	0.90	7.20	0.10	0.80	6.40
12 oz.-Glass	0.75				
8 oz.-Glass	0.60				
Maple Cream and Sugar					
1 pound unit	1.50	12.00	0.05	0.40	11.60

Based on data in Table XII producers received about 37 cents per gallon for the extra labor involved in filling and selling containers of half-gallon capacity or less compared to returns for sirup in gallon cans.

MAIL ORDER SALES

Mail order sales by the 52 producers amounted to 1.6 percent of the total sales. In addition to these sales by producers were mail order sales by the Kiwanis Clubs of Geauga County, the Geauga County Maple Festival and the Burton Chamber of Commerce. Volume sold by these three organizations by mail was not determined but was estimated to be greater than that by the producers. A 1953 study of sales by 253 producers in Vermont showed that more than 20 percent was sold by mail order.

Average gross return for mail order sales was \$7.27 per gallon which was \$1.28 higher than for local retail sales. The average carton cost was 12 cents per gallon. Mailing charges were usually paid by the buyer.