

# maple



## Highlights

- Snow started in late January and we received too much snow accompanied by high winds over the next several weeks causing severe damage to much of the sap collecting infrastructure in the province.
- Costs incurred by producers as they attempted to prepare their operations for the season were much higher than normal.
- Average sap and syrup yields were very poor.

## Sector Overview

Nova Scotia maple producers reported that sap was collected from just over 351,000 taps in 2015. That is the lowest number of trees tapped in Nova Scotia since 2009 even though until 2015 the number of taps has been steadily climbing each year. We estimate the number of trees that were not tapped in 2015, and the sap not collected from, was over 108,000. The Maple Producers Association of Nova Scotia (MPANS) estimates that, including the 108,000 mentioned above, sap collection infrastructure for over 200,000 taps was damaged by the 2015 winter storms.

Based on reports from commercial producers, it is estimated that they made just over 86,000 litres of maple in 2015. Despite the average price received per litre increasing, the farm gate value on the industry decreased to \$1,176,500, the lowest since 2009.

The maple industry in Nova Scotia has faced challenging times before such as the mid-1980s when it experienced several years of maple tree decline. The challenges that it faces now, however, may be even greater. The weather is causing uncertainty and damage to infrastructure and the trees more frequently than ever before. Good sugar maple stands are being cut down at an alarming rate for bio-fuel, for firewood and other uses. It takes several decades for a sugar maple to grow to tappable size.

Opportunities are presenting themselves despite the increasing challenges, and it is a cause for some optimism:

- The AgriRecovery program will, when announced, provide financial assistance to help producers repair or replace components of their sap collection systems. If the work is done to current recommendations, it will mean that operations should obtain better yields over the next several years.
- Export sales of maple products are growing quite rapidly.
- As the next generations take over the maple operations, they bring new ways of doing things and new energy.

## Major Initiatives

### Education initiatives

Best practices document update – Perennia (Elaine Grant) and William Allaway of Acadian Maple Products took the lead with MPANS and Home Grown Success (HGS) providing the funding.

Cost of Production study and report – Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture (NSDA) Policy and Corporate Services Branch took the lead with guidance and input from MPANS, from producers, and from Perennia (Dale McIsaac). This study will provide good information to producers and the industry as they plan for the future.

At the MPANS fall tour in October, there were learning opportunities for producers. Discussions and demonstrations were held about cleaning and sanitizing tubing systems; marking tapholes so old tapholes can be easily identified when tapping the next spring; and properly supporting lateral lines and main lines.

#### AgriRecovery

Both MPANS and Perennia (Dale McIsaac) worked with representatives of NSDA to make and support the case that the maple industry and producers in Nova Scotia needed and deserved assistance through the Federal/Provincial AgriRecovery Program. Things were proceeding in a timely fashion until the federal election call put everything on hold. The best we can now hope for is that a program will be announced in January of 2016. Because the program was delayed by many months, several producers will not be completely ready for the 2016 maple season. The result once again will be lower production.



## A look Toward 2016

The maple industry in Nova Scotia will continue to grow and become more efficient. Key to this is education of producers and extension. Perennia (Dale McIsaac) is working with MPANS on the following initiatives. The HGS will hopefully provide some financial assistance.

- Tapping seminar in January 2016 – This all-day seminar will feature a guest presenter from Quebec.
- Fall tour and seminar in October 2016 – The tour/seminar will be held in the Earltown area. A guest speaker from Vermont will be featured.
- Quality workshop in late fall 2016.