



**Report**  
*of the*  
**New York State Maple Task Force**

David Campbell, *Chair*

*Presented to the*  
**New York State**  
**Department of Agriculture and Markets**

October 2009

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## Executive Summary

### Opportunity

Underdeveloped Capacity: New York State Maple has the most tappable maple trees of any state or province and tremendous potential for growth, as only .5% of the nearly 300 million potential taps are utilized each year. According to one Cornell study, if New York were to tap its maple trees at the same rate that Vermont does, it would produce ~1.2 million gallons of maple syrup, nearly four times its current level of production. As things now stand, New York is the third largest maple producing state, fluctuating for second place with Maine based on the weather patterns of a particular season.

Unmet Need: New York is a net importer of maple syrup, which indicates that there is a significant level of demand in the state that could be met with New York State product.

### Obstacles

Businesses: According to NASS, there are approximately 1,500 maple producers, but well over half of these producers are small scale. Current producers need to raise the level of the production and new producers need to enter the business. There are also an unknown number of producers who do not report their production to NASS, making the actual level of syrup production difficult to determine.

Marketing: Small independent producers do not produce a unified New York Maple identity or presence, and need to scale up while maintaining their traditional small craft roots.

Distribution: A key fact of retail food sales today is of increasing consolidation of larger and larger food stores. Grocers typically have dozens of locations that do large volumes of business. It is not unusual for a retailer to place orders for tens of thousands of units, a size that is well beyond the capacity of a small producer to package and ship.

### Recommendations

Increase productivity of current producers: The Task Force, together with the New York State Maple Producers Association, has identified funding to help deploy reverse osmosis machines to the industry, which could provide a tremendous increase in the output of current producers. A new “check-valve spout adapter” is also now available on the market — quick adoption of this technology could also lead to an immediate spike in maple production.

Increase number of producers: A public-private partnership can help to increase the number of producers through education, financial incentives, and technical support.

Increase the amount of leasing: New York’s best kept secret for the maple industry is the fact that producers and landowners who lease their forestland may qualify for reduced property taxes (agricultural assessment) as a result. Doing more outreach on the mechanisms of qualifying for agricultural assessment could lead to a large increase in the number of taps being leased.

Marketing: New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets has helped secure the services of a marketing agency to develop a new marketing strategy and brand for New York maple. Additionally, the department has helped to secure the services of a larger bottling plant to fill larger orders that retail chains need.

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## The Maple Task Force

On March 25, 2009, the Department of Agriculture and Markets announced the formation of a Maple Task Force to address the issues facing the maple products industry in the state.

Comprised of thirteen members from across the state, the task force was directed to determine how New York State can increase its maple syrup output enough to challenge Vermont's place as the largest maple producer in the United States.

### The Task Force:

- Ben Benjamin, *Ben & Judy's Sugarhouse*, W. Edmeston, Otsego County
- Mike Bennett, *Bennett's Sugar House*, Glens Falls, Warren County
- Chair David Campbell, *Mapleland Farms*, Salem, Washington County
- Mike Farrell, *Cornell Cooperative Extension, Uiblein Forest Sugar Maple Research Station*, Lake Placid, Essex County
- Mike Hill, *Valley Road Maple Farm*, Warrensburg, Warren County
- Dwayne Hill, *Shaver-Hill Farm*, Harpersfield, Delaware County
- Andy Hurlbut, *Hurlbut's Maple*, Canton, St. Lawrence County
- Lyle Merle, *Merle Maple*, Attica, Wyoming County
- Mary Jeanne Packer, *New York State Maple Producers Association*, Watkins Glen, Schuyler County
- Mike Parker, *Parker Family Maple Farm*, West Chazy, Clinton County
- Eric Randall, *Randall Maple*, Alexander, Genesee County
- Steve Rider, *Sugarwood Hill*, Lowville, Lewis County
- Keith Schiebel, *Vernon Verona Sherrill FFA Chapter*, Verona, Oneida County
- Chuck Winship, *Sugarbush Hollow Maple Syrup*, Wayland, Steuben County

The task force met three times over the course of 2009, and heard presentations and discussions with representatives from NYS Dept. of Ag & Markets, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC), United States Department of Agriculture /Rural Development (USDA/Rural Development), Cornell, FarmNET, and a marketing agency, the Pinckney-Hugo Group. The group's findings are presented here.

## The Maple Industry

Pure maple syrup is unique in that it is only produced in the northeastern United States and Canada, yet has a worldwide market. The first annual agricultural product of the region, more maple could still be made and sold, given the strong current demand and available production capacity. Maple appeals to both traditional and new consumers, as there has been significant growth in maple as a health food and as an affordable delicacy. Demand remains strong, and maple currently sells for as much as \$55 per gallon.

In the face of such strong demand, limitations to additional supply could be relieved through public and private cooperation. The actual physical production of maple occurs under tight constraints of time and weather. Over five weeks, sap must be collected and reduced to syrup. Unprocessed sap cannot stand long before spoiling, so one of the key factors in maple production is the ability to quickly convert as much sap as possible to syrup. A degree of uncertainty about the final outcome of the crop is created by the fact that volume and quality of sap are not directly under the control of the maple producer, affecting the final outcome of a season. Labor and physical plant are two persistent limitations that always need to be addressed.

Like practically all agricultural producers in New York, maple producers are small family-owned operations. The USDA Agricultural Census for 2007 estimates the number of maple syrup producers at 1,313, and producers are overwhelmingly small. Fifty-three percent of producers have fewer than 500 taps:<sup>1</sup>

### New York Maple Producers by Size

	#	%
1 to 99 taps	304	23.2%
100 to 499 taps	426	32.4%
500 to 999 taps	217	16.5%
1,000 to 1,999 taps	164	12.5%
2,000 to 2,999 taps	90	6.9%
3,000 to 4,999 taps	60	4.6%
5,000 to 9,999 taps	41	3.1%
10,000 taps or more	11	0.8%

A major obstacle to the growth in New York's maple industry is the small scale of such a large number of its producers. In the face of increasingly consolidated retail channels, a maple producer needs to be able to provide larger orders to satisfy minimum requirements. Many producers in New York ship their syrup out of state to be packaged for sale to such larger retailers.

The global maple syrup crop has been strong for the past two years: 2008 saw a 30% increase in

<sup>1</sup>. USDA Agricultural Census, 2007.

output, while 2009 saw a 22% increase.<sup>2</sup> The increase in the 2009 crop was spread across all maple-producing regions: Quebec produced 9.92m gallons of maple syrup from 34.7m taps,<sup>3</sup> while production in the United States reached a sixty-five year high of 2.33m gallons from 8.6m taps (1.5m (17.4%) of these were in New York). New York’s 2009 production was up by 10% over 2008, producing 362k gallons, or 15.5% of the national total, ranking third behind Vermont (920k gallons (39.5%)) and Maine (395k gallons (16.9%)).<sup>4</sup>

**Top Maple States**

(thousand gallons)

	<u>New York</u>	<u>Maine</u>	<u>Vermont</u>
1998	<u>263</u>	170	360
1999	<u>222</u>	190	370
2000	239	270	480
2001	220	232	290
2002	260	275	510
2003	210	285	460
2004	255	290	550
2005	222	265	510
2006	253	345	650
2007	228	250	640
2008	<u>328</u>	240	710
2009	362	395	920

*NB: underlined indicate NY as second rank*

Over the past few years, the maple industry has launched an aggressive campaign to raise its position. The New York State Maple Producers Association (NYSMPA) now has over 500 members, and has launched a coordinated marketing campaign to promote New York maple. In 2009, NYSMPA members hosted over 350,000 visitors at 126 different sugarhouses at the fourteenth annual Maple Weekend™ Promotion. A watershed moment in the NYSMPA’s promotional efforts was its board’s decision to establish a voluntary two-cent per container or twenty-cent per gallon bulk assessment as a source of funding for research, education, and marketing by the New York Maple Foundation, a new non-profit organization. Together, the Association and the Foundation show that they will continue to be an active voice for maple products and producers in New York State.

New York definitely shows a substantial potential for growth in maple production. There is evidence to suggest it could far surpass Maine’s second-rank position. According to one Cornell study, if New York were to tap its maple trees at the same rate that Vermont does, it would produce 1.2m gallons of maple syrup, nearly four times its current level of production.<sup>5</sup> The question of ability to increase maple output can be addressed by looking at the rate at which the existing maple stands are tapped. This ‘utilization rate’ is a rough measure of potential output, and

<sup>2</sup> USDA 2008 and 2009 Maple Syrup bulletins.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers, 6/17/09. Converted here from 109.4m pounds at rate of 11.02 lbs/gallon, per USDA practice (see NASS New England, “Maple Syrup 2009,” June 12/ 2009, footnote p. 5). Number of taps: Statistics Canada: “Snapshot of Canadian Agriculture, 2006.”

<sup>4</sup> NASS New England, “Maple Syrup 2009,” June 12/ 2009, p.2.

<sup>5</sup> Farrell, M. 2009. Assessing the growth potential and future outlook for the US maple syrup industry. In: Gold, M.A. and M.M. Hall, eds. *Agroforestry Comes of Age: Putting Science into Practice*. Proceedings, 11th North American Agroforestry Conference, Columbia, Mo., May 31-June 3, 2009. p. 99-106.

at .5%, New York's utilization rate is about a quarter of Vermont's 2.1% utilization rate. Maine has the second largest utilization rate of all states at .9%, with the majority of the taps in a concentrated area near the Quebec border. The fact of New York's underutilization supports the suggestion that gains in maple tree utilization could be easily realized in New York and that New York could readily expand its maple output.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>. Farrell, M. 2009. Assessing the growth potential and future outlook for the US maple syrup industry. In: Gold, M.A. and M.M. Hall, eds. *Agroforestry Comes of Age: Putting Science into Practice*. Proceedings, 11th North American Agroforestry Conference, Columbia, Mo., May 31-June 3, 2009. p. 99-106.

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## Findings:

### Increasing the production of New York Maple

#### ***Need for more producers***

##### The Problem

Many landowners in New York State are unaware that maple syrup production can be a profitable business with strong demand. Discussions with the Task Force identified a lack of infrastructure to assist in technology transfer across the state. Although the Cornell Maple Program provides many workshops and educational opportunities across the state, their impact is limited by the low number of staff available.

Quebec, which dominates the world maple industry, has a very aggressive program to develop maple output. Over the past thirty years, the province has created cost-sharing programs to help producers acquire production equipment, permitting the tapping on Crown Lands, and a Technical Assistance program, where twelve Technical Service Providers travel the province to provide technical assistance to producers.

In 2009, Cornell surveyed 1600 landowners in NYS to determine the barriers and incentives for utilizing maple trees for syrup production. The survey asked landowners if they felt the maple trees on their property should be tapped, and the results were encouraging, as 7.2% responded that they would like to tap themselves, 10.8% would like someone else to tap their trees, while 40% do not want any tapping and 42% are unsure. Since many more landowners would like to produce syrup than are currently involved in the maple industry, the survey asked these landowners what the main barriers have been to becoming a maple producer. Among those who would like to tap themselves, the main barriers are time (53%), the initial cost of buying equipment (28%), not having enough help (23%), and not knowing how to get started (21%). For those who think others should tap their trees, the main barriers are time (57%), never having thought about it as an option (38%), and not knowing how to get started (23%). For those who don't think their trees should be tapped, the main reasons are not having enough maples (49%) and concern among the effect of tapping on sawtimber value (34%). Finally, the main barriers among those who are unsure of whether their trees should be tapped are having never thought about it as an option (47%), having no interest in the process (44%), and a lack of time (44%).

Many land owners in New York state are unaware that maple products qualify for agricultural tax exemptions, which can be a substantial incentive.

##### Recommendations

- Via its website and downloadable brochures, the Cornell Maple Program (CMP) and NYSMMPA should increase promotion to land owners to produce maple or to rent out maple stands to maple producers.
- Via its website and downloadable brochures, the CMP and NYSMMPA should further publicize that maple production is eligible for agricultural use value land assessment.
- The Cornell Maple Program currently has two demonstration and research forests with maple operations – the Uihlein Forest in Lake Placid and Arnot Forest near Ithaca. There is a need to create a few key programs to expand the promotion of maple production. The Task Force recommends continuing maple schools across the state as a function of the Maple Program

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and Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) system. The Task Force would also like to see CCE or Department of Agriculture and Markets field a number of “Technical Service Providers” to help new and established producers to expand their production.

- Currently the Cornell Maple Program is applying for a NYFVI (New York Farm Viability Institute) grant to create a volunteer “Master Sugarmaker” program similar to a ‘master gardener,’ or ‘master forest owner’ program. The Task Force supports this initiative, as these Master Sugarmakers could essentially serve as “Technical Service Providers” if funding is not available to hire such staff positions.

## ***Tapping on State Lands***

### **The Problem**

As noted above, Quebec has encouraged the tapping of maple trees on Crown Lands. Vermont has also recently begun allowing private producers to tap on state lands. In New York, maple trees on some state lands have been tapped for private production, but this practice has ended from disuse. Tapping is also currently taking place in the New York City watershed on lands owned by the Department of Environmental Protection. Article 9 of the State Environmental Conservation Law calls for state forests to be used for the highest economic benefit of the people of the state, a requirement that justifies the logging of state lands. However, previous research in Quebec has demonstrated that tapping is in fact the most profitable use of a maple stand.<sup>7</sup> The NYSMPA, together with Farm Bureau and the Department of Agriculture and Markets, has been in conversations with DEC on developing such a program, and the DEC’s Bureau of State Land Management met with the Task Force at its July 29th meeting. Nearly 750,000 acres of privately held forests have easements held by the Bureau, and DEC is willing to bring the owners of such lands together with maple producers to discuss the potential for those lands to be tapped. One obstacle to allowing multi-year tapping contracts on state land is that current law allows only for short-term contracts. A change in the ECL would be required to allow tapping contracts for multiple years in the same way that oil and gas exploration companies can draw up mineral exploration contracts.

### **Recommendation / Action Steps**

- DEC should convene a meeting between maple producers and conservation easement holders and facilitate a discussion on tapping of trees.
- State law should be proposed to allow multi-year contracts for maple tapping on state land.
- An advisory committee on tapping on state lands should be formed, with DEC State Forester’s involvement, to identify specific state areas that could be tapped immediately, with an objective of identifying another twenty areas.
- DEC should develop criteria to be used when reviewing existing stands of trees to determine which trees have a potential to be tapped.
- DEC and the maple industry should develop a pilot tree-tapping project.

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<sup>7</sup>. MRN-MAPAQ Rapport. 2000. *Contribution du territoire public quebecois au developpement de l’acericulture*. Ministère des Ressources naturelles et Ministère de l’Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l’Alimentation. 95 pp.

- Make this a priority discussion topic at the new Forest Products Development Council.

## **Public Funding for Expansion**

### **Reverse Osmosis Machines**

A key technological breakthrough in maple production is the introduction of reverse osmosis (RO) machines for reducing sap to syrup. Traditionally, maple is reduced by heat provided either from wood or fossil fuels. Reverse osmosis is approximately twice as fast as traditional evaporation methods, an improvement that relieves a bottleneck in maple production, as sap cannot be stored for future reduction to syrup. They are more efficient than evaporation, as they do not dissipate energy into the atmosphere, and there are environmental benefits from RO machines, as all sources of electricity produce less CO<sub>2</sub> than wood burning. A machine costs approximately \$25,000, which can be prohibitive for small producers.

### **Action taken**

Reverse Osmosis Machines: At the 8 May Task Force meeting, the Department of Agriculture and Markets and USDA/Rural Development presented information regarding possible funding opportunities to help the industry acquire ROs.

The Department of Agriculture and Markets discussed the process of developing regulations for the Upstate Revitalization Agricultural Economic Development Program. Currently, there is a total appropriation of \$30m that could be used for a series of grants and loans. From this total, it is possible that a program to support the purchase of RO machines may be eligible. Currently this program is still going through rule-making.

USDA Rural Development spoke to the Task Force about the USDA Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) grants that have been awarded to maple producers in NYS and other states in previous years. In Vermont, at least twenty-five matching grants were awarded for RO installations. The Task Force discussed the need for supporting producers in making applications for RO installations; and recommended that this would be a role for the NYSMPA. The Department of Agriculture and Markets provided letters of support for individual producers, and applications were prepared and submitted to USDA. On September 25, USDA Rural Development announced that it was awarding grants to 15 New York maple producers for RO machines and energy efficient equipment upgrades. The total value of these awards is \$89,833.

The Task Force recommends that support for individual producers' applications become an annual initiative of the Association.

Both speakers emphasized that a key element to grantsmanship in these economic development grants is to point out the public benefit of such grant applications. The public benefits in this case are:

- 1) environmental gains through less pollution
- 2) economic development as general engine of economic activity in rural communities
- 3) increase in American production of an agricultural commodity.

### **Further recommendations**

- The NYSMPA should consult with Farm Credit to plan out administering an RO (and other

equipment upgrades) revolving loan program for members of the industry in anticipation of the final approval of the Upstate Agricultural Economic Development grant program which would fund the loans.

- NYSMPA should prepare an application for administering a NYS block grant under the Upstate Agricultural Economic Development Program.
- NYSERDA should be approached to see about developing a grant program as part of ARRA and the greenhouse & RGGI.

### **Business Strategies for Growing the Maple Industry**

If the maple industry had a detailed planning tool to help maple producers expand their business or to use to bring new producers into the industry, it could help remove barriers to entering the business and enable the industry to increase its overall production.

At the 29 July Task Force Meeting, FarmNET made a presentation on their work in helping agricultural enterprises to expand their business. Funded by New York State and the New York Farm Viability Institute, FarmNET helps farms and agribusinesses with financial and business guidance.

Recently, FarmNET finished a program that helps the apple industry to increase production as well as providing guidance to producers just entering the sector. Among other things, this planning toolkit helps apple growers to find opportunities to expand their industry. A Department of Agriculture and Markets grant paid for the development of this manual, which cost approximately \$200,000 and took nearly three years to complete.

### **Recommendations**

- The Task Force requests the Department of Agriculture and Markets to fund and work with the Cornell Maple Program to produce a guidebook to developing or expanding a maple business, similar to that created for the apple industry. Cornell may have already begun work on some components of this piece.
- While the NYSMPA currently has a summary brochure on getting into the maple industry (that the Association developed in partnership with the Cornell Maple Program), an organization like FarmNET could produce a more substantial follow-up piece for people showing interest.
- The NYSMPA should publicize the work of FarmNET in order to raise the awareness of producers of what FarmNET can do for maple producers with its current programs.

### **Agricultural Assessments**

Under New York law, maple production is an agricultural activity and is eligible for agricultural assessment on real property. On the 8 May meeting of the Task Force, the Department of Agriculture and Markets' Agricultural Protection Unit presented information on the maple industry and agricultural protection. Farms now automatically receive fifty acres of agricultural exemption for 'farm woodlands,' which is not especially well known.

Scenic Overlays: Over recent years, some scenic overlays across the state have come in conflict with the various right-to-farm provisions of the state Agriculture & Markets Law (AML). The

department can assist in clarifications in such cases.

Future Maple Tree Orchards: Currently, newly planted vineyards and fruit orchards receive an agricultural exemption as a reflection of their being an agricultural property. However, this right is not always extended by local assessors to Maple Tree Orchards (whether the land is owned or leased); and the AML needs to be revised to clarify that this should indeed be the case.

Maple Products definition: AML currently defines maple sap as an agricultural product. Extending this definition to maple syrup and maple sugar would extend the definition of agricultural protections that would be beneficial to the industry.

Buildings/Codes – Sugarhouse exemption: Buildings used for agricultural processing and sales are not qualified for agricultural exemptions. The State Building Code does not specifically mention maple or maple production facilities. Some producers are not able to obtain building permits for sugarhouses categorized as agricultural buildings and instead have to be permitted as manufacturing – causing undue expense related to overdesign/overbuild.

Buildings/Codes – public access: there is ambiguity on the question of public access to sugarhouses. Agritourism in the maple industry revolves around allowing visitors to watch syrup being made. Under current law, agricultural buildings cannot be places for employment, public assembly (including visitation) or processing. In an effort to avoid unnecessary difficulty, this issue should be resolved.

## Recommendations

- The State Building Code should be amended to allow for public access to sugarhouses as an agritourism activity.
- All pure maple products should be explicitly defined as agricultural products under the AML.
- Maple Tree Orchards should be explicitly defined as agricultural lands analogous to orchards or vineyards.

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## **Findings: Increasing New York Maple Sales**

### ***Market Share in New York State***

#### The Problem

Despite the advantage of being closer to the retail customer, New York State maple products have a smaller share of the retail market than products from other states. There is clearly enough New York demand for maple that could be met by New York producers.

#### Recommendation & Action Steps

A coordinated public-private partnership to promote New York maple can help address this challenge. The NYSMPA has already taken decisive first steps to meet this challenge by establishing a voluntary container assessment to help fund such an effort. The newly formed non-profit New York Maple Foundation administers this assessment. The Department of Agriculture and Markets has also provided \$50,000 in funding, and has secured the services of the Pinckney-Hugo Group, a Syracuse marketing firm with experience in marketing food products, to help. The Pinckney-Hugo Group met with the Task Force at its July 29 meeting to present ideas for the branding program. A marketing strategy is being developed for New York maple and emphasizes maple as local New York craft traditional product. The new marketing campaign, “*New York Maple. Taste the Tradition,*” was unveiled by Governor Paterson at the State Fair on August 27.



### ***Bottling Capacity***

Bottling Capacity: Another potential avenue for public funding of expansion in the industry was an initial suggestion that public funding be applied to the development of a maple bottling plant in Lewis County. The Lewis County Department of Economic Development funded a statewide survey of current maple producers to determine the level of support and quantity of bulk syrup that could supply a central maple processing plant. Task Force member Michael Farrell of Cornell Cooperative Extension conducted this survey and presented his findings to the task force meeting of May 8. Perhaps surprisingly, the survey found that there was minimal support for such a proposal. New York is actually a net importer of bulk maple syrup and there isn't nearly enough bulk syrup currently available to make such a facility profitable. Approximately ¼ of producers said they would consider expanding their production of syrup if such a bottling plant were available, but these intentions could change over time. Furthermore, there are many large producers that are concerned of the potential competitive threat such a plant might pose.

As an alternative to a new bottling facility in Lewis County, the Department of Agriculture and Markets has helped to facilitate expanding the bottling capacity for the maple industry by bringing Nelson Farms, of Cazenovia, together with the NYSMPA, to provide a larger scale bottling capacity to New York Maple. Once their scheduled expansion is completed, Nelson Farms plans to be able to bottle up to a thousand gallons per day of maple syrup provided in barrels by producers. In combination with the newly developed marketing program mentioned above, New York Maple could be shipped in large quantities to larger retailers.

The Department of Agriculture and Markets has also facilitated discussions between NYSMPA and Wegman's and other large grocers. These negotiations are anticipated to result in large orders of New York branded maple, using the new logo, pictured here, and packaging.

The program also allows individual maple producers (whether they are members of the NYSMPA or not) to use the new logo in conjunction with their current advertising, packaging, and marketing programs.

### **Special Events**

One aspect of increasing sales is the special event. A key element of the maple industry's marketing program is to have visitors to sugarhouses or the place where the maple is produced. Every spring, the industry hosts a series of 'maple weekends' to build interest in maple. In addition to the matter of public access to production buildings, maple producers face confusion as to regulation of sale of prepared food at such events. The Department of Agriculture and Markets' Division of Food Safety met with the Task Force on its 8 May meeting to help clarify this matter.

Normally, departments of health regulate the sale of prepared food. The Department of Agriculture and Markets has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the New York State Department of Health on the sale of food at producers or processors, such as maple producers. Among other things, the MOU delineates regulatory responsibility in such cases. The MOU clarifies that if more than 50% of the business at the location is prepared or restaurant-type food for consumption on the premises, it's a DOH matter. If the product sold is more than 50% raw food, then regulatory responsibility lies with the Department of Agriculture and Markets. It is also the case that some local Boards of Health are unaware of their authority on this matter.

Some maple producers serving food (or processing food products for public consumption) at special events find that the need for an annual permit for food sales is costly and burdensome. However, discussions at the Task Force meeting determined that maple producers could apply for a 20(c) home kitchen exemption for food processing, if the volume or types of food processed or produced would not exceed the limitations of a 20(c) permit.

### **Recommendations**

- The Task Force recommends that the NYSMPA prepare a pamphlet explaining the regulatory framework for special events and serving food, and make it available on its website.

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## Summary of Recommendations

### **Statutory**

- State Environmental Conservation Law should be amended to allow multi-year contracts for maple tapping operations on state land in the same manner that multi-year oil and mineral exploration contracts are permitted.
- All pure maple products should be explicitly defined as agricultural products under the AML.
- Under the Agriculture and Markets Law, maple tree orchards should be explicitly defined as agricultural lands analogous to orchards or vineyards.
- Additional funding for the Cornell Maple Program to include technical service providers and enhanced maple sugaring schools.

### **Regulatory**

- NYSERDA should be approached to see about developing a grant program as part of ARRA and the greenhouse & RGGI.
- The State Building Code should be amended to allow for public access to sugarhouses as an agritourism activity.

### **Administrative**

- DEC should convene a meeting between maple producers and conservation easement holders and facilitate a discussion on tapping of trees.
- DEC and the maple industry should develop a pilot tree-tapping project, with an advisory committee on tapping on state lands that would include the DEC State Forester's involvement. This project would identify specific state areas that could be tapped immediately, with an objective of identifying another twenty areas later.
- DEC should develop criteria to be used when reviewing existing stands of trees to determine which trees have a potential to be tapped.
- The Task Force requests the Department of Agriculture and Markets to fund and produce a guidebook to developing a maple business, similar to that created for the apple industry.