



Commercial Maple Practices Workbook

Annette Chrétien, Brenda Murphy, and Bryce Gunson, Wilfrid Laurier University, July 2015

This workbook is designed to provide people with the information they need to either begin producing maple products or to expand their existing operations in Ontario. We hope that producers from other jurisdictions might also find the information useful.

Commercial Maple Practices Workbook

Acknowledgments

We wish to thank the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Ontario Maple Syrup Producer's Association, and Wilfrid Laurier University for their generous support of this project. We want to thank all of our team members for their insightful and inspirational contributions. Finally, we wish to thank all of our participants who gave so generously of their time and wisdom to make this project happen.

Maple Syrup Innovation Toolkit

This workbook is part of a larger suite of final documents, called the Maple Syrup Innovation Toolkit, that are part of the final deliverables for this project. These documents include five summaries of work completed at earlier stages of this project, two workbooks (one Aboriginal-focused, one commercial industry-focused), a policy brief, and a video (<https://youtu.be/zLjyvmwe18Q>). The toolkit can be accessed at www.resilientresearch.ca

Contact Us

For more information about any aspect of this project, please contact Brenda Murphy, bmurphy@wlu.ca or Bryce Gunson, bgunson@wlu.ca 519 756 8228 ext. 5405. Our mailing address is Wilfrid Laurier University, 73 George St., Brantford Ontario, N3T 2Y3 attn. Bryce Gunson.

Suggested Citation for this Document:

Chrétien, A., Murphy, B., & B. Gunson (2015). Commercial maple practices workbook. A report submitted to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 23p.



Commercial Maple Practices Workbook

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 Where Are We Now?	4
2.1 Technology and Equipment	4
2.2 Human Resources and Skills Inventory	6
2.3 Social and Cultural Practices	7
2.4 Environmental Relationships	8
2.5 Economic Profile	9
3.0 Where do We Want To Be?	11
3.1 Technology and Equipment	11
3.2 Human Resources and Skills Inventory	12
3.3 Social and Cultural Practices	13
3.4 Environmental Relationships	14
3.5 Economic Profile	15
3.6 Our Vision Statement.....	15
4.0 How Do We Get There?	16
5.0 Resources	17
5.1 General Information	17
5.2 Technology and Equipment	18
5.3 Human Resources and Skills	19
5.4 Social and Cultural Practices	21
5.5 Environmental Relationships	21
5.6 Economic Profile	22

Commercial Maple Practices Workbook

Introduction

The Commercial Maple Practices Workbook is designed to provide people with guidance and information to either begin producing maple products or to expand their existing operations. The workbook is loosely based on a process called Appreciative Inquiry (AI).¹ This process supports developing a clear goal, a sense of purpose and strategies for building your maple operation or expanding on your existing operation. Rather than ‘troubleshooting’, AI provides an emphasis on what’s going well and on what assets can be used to help build your dream operation.

The information provided in this workbook was determined by a series of interviews and focus groups that were conducted throughout Ontario over the span of three years as part of research funding provided by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA). Through this research we developed two maple values models that are presented in this introduction to help provide a broad overview of maple practices and the commercial maple industry.

From the commercial industry side, Figure 1 is a diagram of the maple value system for Ontario. In a value system, operations across an industry work towards some common goals while also focusing on making their business distinctive. In the case of maple, we’ve tried to capture some of these common goals in the values box, focused on sustainability, at the centre of the diagram. As part of a value system, the emphasis is on differentiation, rather than competition for the same market segment. Businesses can differentiate themselves by doing something a bit different or a bit better than others. Perhaps you are a talented chef who loves people – in this case your business could be distinctive by developing a restaurant, a bed and breakfast or a retail outlet that sells your unique maple-inspired food products.

In the diagram we outline the range of operations and activities typically undertaken by maple producers, starting with working in the sugar bush and ending with the production of value-added products. We hope that it provides you with a baseline to understand the industry and inspires you to dream about how maple can contribute to your wellbeing and sustainability. We also hope that that you can grow beyond this model – maybe you’ll discover a niche we didn’t identify!

¹ For more details on Appreciative Inquiry see, Cooperrider, D. L., & Whitney. (2005). *Appreciative inquiry handbook*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Commercial Maple Practices Workbook

Governance Context: Government and Industry Rules and Regulations

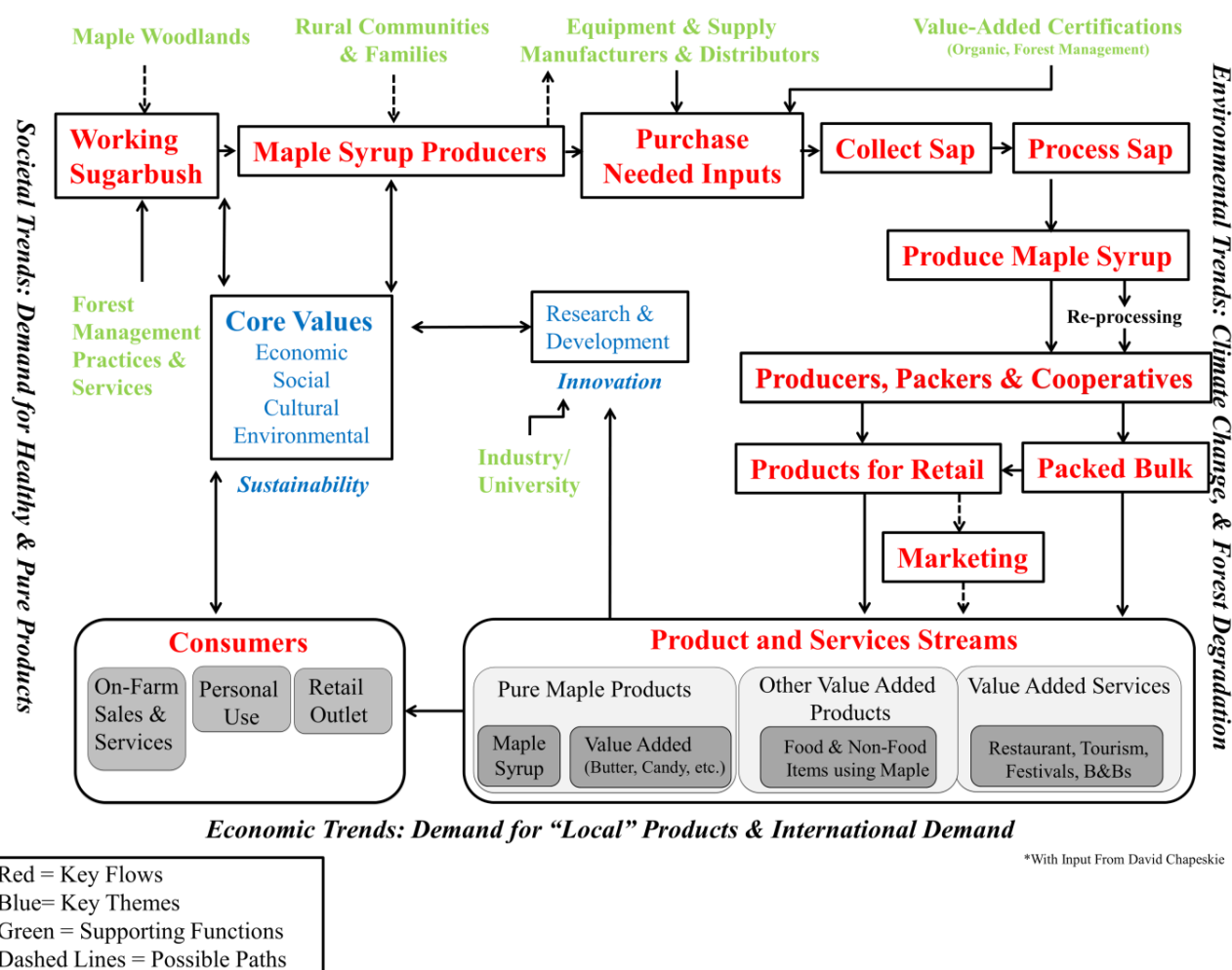


Figure 1 - Maple Syrup Commercial Industry Value System

Each operation will be unique and there is room in either system for every kind and size of operation. You can focus your operation at any point or multiple points within the value system. You can also start at one place in the system and then move on to other points or scale up/down over time. Maybe you want to focus on gathering sap for now or making syrup for your family or community. Later on, if it works with your values, you might decide to sell your surplus sap to a neighbor that has a large evaporator. Still further on, perhaps you might decide to start boiling your own syrup for commercial sale. You can refer to the model as you complete this workbook to help you think about where you are now and where you might want to be in the future. For additional information, please see the other components of the Maple Syrup Innovation Toolkit that can be accessed at (TBA).

In this workbook, we focus on three stages: 1) Where Are We Now? 2) Where do We Want to Be? and 3) How do We Get There? The first stage provides producers and potential producers with various assessment tools to measure and outline what their maple operation looks like or what they would want it to look like. This type of exercise allows producers to identify the strengths and challenges of their

Commercial Maple Practices Workbook

current practices. It also facilitates thinking about where producers might want to either expand or extend their practices. With that in mind, section 2 provides producers with some specific exercises that can help to envision what type of maple operation they would ideally prefer. By identifying where they would like to go with their maple practices, producers can then move to section 3 where specific tools and resources are provided to help them achieve their goals.

Finally, throughout this workbook, additional information is provided in the margins. Various stories and words of wisdom drawn from our previous interviews and focus group are featured as an added source of information and inspiration. Also included are additional factual comments that can help you think about important issues that might arise in developing your operation.

2.0 Where Are We Now?

The first step in this process provides operating maple producers or potential producers with assessment tools to help them determine the scope of their current operations. This part is divided into separate sections that are not necessarily mutually exclusive. In other words, there can be some overlap since many different aspects of producing maple products are interconnected.

In this step, five categories are provided to help you assess your current operation. Within each category, check off all the items that apply, or could apply to your operation. The information collected as part of this step will help you develop an accurate profile of your current operation or helps you to think about your potential operation including the areas of strength and the areas that need some improvement. As you work through this section, you can review where you are in relation to the value system presented above. You can use this model as a reference as you fill out the tables below.

2.1 Technology and Equipment

In this table, you will assess the technology and type of equipment you use or might need to use for your future operation. This assessment can help you determine if you have the necessary tools to accomplish your ultimate goals with regards to maple practices and production.

	We do this well	We'd like to do this better	We'd like to do this
We use spiles or spigots that protect the health of trees			
We use buckets to harvest sap			
We use horses to collect sap			
We use machines (i.e., ATV, motor vehicle, snowmobile) to collect sap			
We use pots to boil sap			
We use lines or tubing to collect sap			
We use reverse osmosis equipment to pre-process and concentrate sap			
We use a commercial evaporator to boil sap			
We use a homemade evaporator			
We use wood or pellets for boiling sap			
We use gas, oil or propane for boiling sap			

Commercial Maple Practices Workbook

We use electricity for boiling sap			
We use the appropriate gauges to assess sugar content and grading			
We use hot packing methods to process syrup			
We use cold packing methods to process syrup			
We use commercial containers to store syrup			
We use various non-commercial containers to store syrup			
We process maple sap in a dedicated space that we keep clean and tidy (i.e., sugar house)			
We process maple sap outside			
We process maple sap in our home			
We have chainsaws and other necessary equipment to harvest the firewood we need			
We have a generator for electricity			
We have office equipment to run our operation (i.e., computer, phone, printer, photocopier, etc...)			
In planning our operation for the next few years, we have sized our sugarhouse and equipment for the size we want to grow into			
We use energy efficient equipment to save time and money			
We consider access to after-sale service and support when buying equipment			
Other technology and equipment			

It is important to remember that older equipment can sometimes contain lead which is hazardous for human consumption.

Hot packing prevents mold and bacteria development.

Equipment dealers can provide helpful advice in choosing the equipment that is right for your operation.

If lack of time is constraining your current business or future growth, seek out equipment that can cut your workload. A reverse osmosis system, for instance, can substantially reduce your boiling time.

Commercial Maple Practices Workbook

2.2 Human Resources and Skills Inventory

In this table, we provide a list of human resources and skills that are related to running a maple operation. All of your skills and abilities are important whether they have been learned through experience in the home or with the family, at work, school or in the community.

	We do this well	We'd like to do this better	We'd like to do this
My family participates in our maple production			
My community participates in our maple production			
We hire extra help during maple season			
We plan for extra help well in advance			
We have at least one person that has first aid training			
We involve experienced sugar makers to help us with our operation			
We have someone who knows how to use a computer for researching needed information or communication			
We have someone who knows how to do effective marketing of our products			
We have someone who is trained in office skills (i.e., typing, filing, writing business letters, keeping track of supplies, bookkeeping, etc.)			
We have people who are good at construction to help with our operation			
We know how to package our products efficiently and to meet food safety standards			
We have the knowledge necessary to design a facility that will meet the needs of our operation			
We know the building codes and other community bylaws that might affect our operation			
We know the health safety regulations about maple production			
We know how to produce products that are safe for commercial distribution			

Emerald Ash Borer and the Asian Longhorn Beetle are two invasive species causing concern among maple producers. If you must buy firewood for your operation, source this wood carefully to avoid bringing in an unwanted pest.

Maple operations contribute substantially to rural sustainability by providing employment, paying property taxes, spending money for goods and services at other local businesses, providing a funding source for volunteer organizations, developing social networks, holding family-friendly events for both locals and tourists, maintaining maple bush natural spaces, etc.

Commercial Maple Practices Workbook

We have the required transportation and vehicles for our operation			
We have the knowledge we need to manage our forest sustainably			
We have the required skills for chainsaw operation and firewood management			
We know how to make a budget and keep track of our financial costs and profits			
We know how to write reports and grant applications			
We know how and where to sell our products			
We know how to organize community events and other special activities during maple season			
As needed, we seek out opportunities to upgrade our knowledge and skills			
Other skills and knowledge			

To help with planning for the upcoming maple season, some producers book school tours and other events up to a year in advance.

If you plan to donate syrup for a local event, it should be processed and bottled according to Ontario guidelines.

2.3 Social and Cultural Practices

	We do this well	We'd like to do this better	We'd like to do this
We hold an opening ceremony to kick off the season			
We undertake ongoing activities such as regularly checking the health of our sugar bush, doing woodlot maintenance and cutting firewood in advance of the next sap season.			
We hold tours for local communities or tourists			
We use sap and syrup for medicinal purposes			
We work with local school boards and other organizations to promote maple			

Some producers talk about being "bitten by the maple bug". Once that happens, maple becomes an important and enriching part of their lives and businesses.

Commercial Maple Practices Workbook

We hold celebrations for the local communities			
We use maple instead of processed sugar for health reasons			
The maple season gives us a chance to get together with friends and family			
We connect with other members of the maple industry to share information or develop mutual business interests			
Maple practices are being passed down from generation to generation			
Activities involving maple are an important part of our lifestyle, family			
Other social and cultural practices			

Look for opportunities to feature your operation at local events and festivals

Many sources agree that climate change could impact the wellbeing of the trees over the next 50- 100 years.

2.4 Environmental Relationships

For maple producers, land stewardship is vital to having a thriving operation over the long-term. Without healthy trees, sap production will falter and sugar content will decrease. More broadly, maintaining vibrant, diverse sugar maple ecosystems can contribute to plant and animal biodiversity, reduce flooding risk and increase the quality of water supplies. If trying to attract the public to your operation, beautiful, natural spaces can also become an important way that you can draw people in and differentiate your business. Each location will have something interesting and unique that can be highlighted.

Your sugar bush helps deal with climate change by absorbing carbon out of the air.

With the continued spread of West Nile (carried by mosquitos) and Lyme disease (carried by ticks) anyone working in the sugar bush should take the proper precautions to protect themselves.

	We do this well	We'd like to do this better	We'd like to do this
We follow sustainable forest management practices			
We undertake ongoing activities such as regularly checking the health of our sugar bush, doing woodlot maintenance and cutting firewood in advance of the next sap season			
We monitor our sugar bush for pests and			

Commercial Maple Practices Workbook

invasive species			
We manage our trees for the benefit of future generations			
We have access to land and enough maple trees for our operation			
We have developed rental or other agreements with our neighbours to access the land, trees and sap that we need for our operation			
We have a stable leasing agreement to use Crown land for harvesting sap			
Other environmental relationships			

2.5 Economic Profile

Your use of maple sap, syrup and other products could be personal, family-based, commercial, or any combination that works for you. Some producers focus on harvesting just enough sap for a hobby operation. Others choose to scale up to commercial production. Your maple syrup business can contribute in different ways to your income. Some producers incorporate maple to help diversify farm income and reduce risk or take up maple as part of their retirement plans. Others make maple during a slow time for their main business or take on maple in addition to full-time employment. Still another group turn their maple operations into full-time, year-round operations and/or focus on value-added products. Maple production provides endless possibilities! Refer back to the value system model for some ideas – but don't let that constrain what could work for you.

	We do this well	We'd like to do this better	We'd like to do this
We produce maple products (sap, syrup, sugar) for personal use			
We produce maple products (sap, syrup, sugar) for our extended family			
We manufacture maple products (sap, syrup, sugar) for the community			

*"There's a lot of really interesting ways that we can show maple and really showcase it as a beautiful ingredient, because that's what it is."
-Focus group participant*

Consider pairing your interest in maple with something else you are passionate about or good at such as art, wine, cooking, graphic design, etc.

We need to get outside of the mindsets that maple syrup is just for breakfast and is just used in the Spring, we want to teach people about the health benefits of maple syrup and its use as an ingredient for a wide variety of dishes.

Many commercial maple operations contribute to local employment – from short-time seasonal work to full-time, year round jobs.

Commercial Maple Practices Workbook

We manufacture maple products (sap, syrup, sugar) for commercial purposes			
We sell only enough maple products to cover production expenses			
We sell maple products to supplement our primary income			
We sell maple products as our primary income			
We produce some value-added products (i.e., maple butter)			
Value-added products are an important part of our business			
Value-added products are the main/only focus of our business			
We provide value-added services (i.e., pancake houses, guided tours, hiking trails)			
We've aligned the products we produce and the marketing we do with the customers we are trying to reach			
We've developed a marketing strategy and online profile that supports our business goals			
We've developed our label, logo, written materials, etc. to help us showcase our distinctive product and/or services			
We focus our efforts on making top quality products and offering good customer service			
We've chosen the third-party certification opportunities that support our marketing strategies and business goals (i.e., organic)			
We develop alliances with other members of the industry to further our mutual goals and build our businesses			
Other components of our economic profile			

Specialty syrup bottles or value-added products can be marketed as gifts for local gift baskets, corporate or government events, weddings, and so on.

If you aren't "tech savvy" maybe you have a family member, kids or grandkids who can help out with a web presence and social media.

3.0 Where do We Want to Be?

The process of developing a Vision Statement can help you take a realistic look at your operation and/or your dreams for the future. This statement can be one sentence, but is usually one or two paragraphs that describe where you want to be. Here is an example of what a Vision Statement might look like:

With regards to our maple operation, we would like:

- A sustainable forest management plan that protects our trees for the next 50 years
- A succession plan for passing on our operation to the next generation in 10 years
- Yearly involvement with a local festival
- To scale-up our operation from 500 to 2000 taps in the next 3 years
- To learn more about making value-added products by attending industry-sponsored events
- To increase our yearly net income by X\$ over the next 5 years

The in-depth knowledge of your operation, or potential operation that was gained through the assessment in the previous section can help you envision where you want to be in the future. In this section, we provide you with some blank tables. To fill these in, take the information from the assessment you did above and copy the items that you would like to do better, or that you would like to begin doing. Think about specific goals that you have in this category and jot them down in the space provided. These goals can become components of your final vision statement. Again, refer to the value system model for inspiration or to locate your maple practices. Think about what makes, or could make your operation distinctive and who you might want to align with to help everyone achieve mutual goals. The video developed for this project provides some great examples of how different Ontario maple operations have chosen to specialize and differentiate their businesses (see <https://youtu.be/zLjyvmwel8Q>).

Try to be specific in developing your vision. Set a time frame, as well as some details of exactly what it is you want to accomplish. For example, do you want to increase your operation from 100 taps, to 1,000 taps? Do you want to accomplish your goal within one year, two years, or five years? As a final task in this section, consider reviewing the notes you took for each category and developing a vision statement that summarizes your goals and aspirations.

You don't have to produce maple syrup to be in the maple business. Maybe you just produce sap or you focus on value-added products.

The right fuel source for your operation will vary depending on availability, operational considerations, characteristics of the available equipment and personal preference.

Keeping your equipment and lines clean and in good repair will help you to produce a quality syrup with a more consistent flavour.

3.1 Technology and Equipment

Commercial Maple Practices Workbook

We'd Like to Do This Better	We'd Like to Do This

Based on the items you identify above, provide more details of what you will need to accomplish your goals in terms of technology and equipment. Try to be as specific and detailed as possible.

Some suggest that if you are on pipeline and have a good reverse osmosis system and evaporator, you can go solo to about 2,500 to 3,000 taps. Once your operation gets much bigger you are going to need help.

Keep your eye on social and food trends. For instance, eating local and organics are growing market segments right now. Sap water is another trend to watch.

Spend some time and effort to create a label that represents your product and business. Also consider a unique bottle design. Both will contribute to making your product distinctive.

3.2 Human Resources and Skills Inventory

Commercial Maple Practices Workbook

We'd Like to Do This Better	We'd Like to Do This

Based on the items you identify above, provide more details of what you will need to accomplish your goals in terms of human resources and skills. Try to be as specific and detailed as possible.

If you want to run a festival or other event on your property or if you have volunteers helping with your operation, make sure you have the proper insurance coverage.

Find your story. Be proud of your history and operation and share that with your customers. Make sure your marketing, branding, labelling and logos reflect your story.

3.3 Social and Cultural Practices

We'd Like to Do This Better	We'd Like to Do This

Based on the items you identify above, provide more details of which social and cultural practices you want to include or strengthen in your operation. Try to be as specific and detailed as possible.

Commercial Maple Practices Workbook

3.4 Environmental Relationships

We'd Like to Do This Better	We'd Like to Do This

Based on the items you identify above, provide more details of what type of environmental relationships you want to foster or strengthen. Try to be as specific and detailed as possible.

Just like wine, many people believe that the taste of maple syrup is influenced by the local terrain or “terroir”. If you can describe the characteristics of your woodlot, climate and soils that contribute to your unique flavour, you can help your customers understand why your syrup is special.

Your sugarbush might have other resources you could think about harvesting. This could include leeks and mushrooms.

Maple sugar is a simple value-added product where there seems to be growing demand.

Commercial Maple Practices Workbook

3.5 Economic Profile

We'd Like to Do This Better	We'd Like to Do This

Based on the items you identify above, provide more details of what you will need to accomplish your economic goals. Try to be as specific and detailed as possible.

When thinking about what part of the maple value system you'd like to focus on, consider your yearly time commitments and preferences. If you don't have time to chase sales in August and marketing doesn't appeal to you, consider focusing your efforts in the Spring and wholesale your product to another member of the industry.

3.6 Our Vision Statement

Given the goals we outline above our vision statement is:

Developing networks and personal service are key for many operations. For instance, personally delivering an order and meeting with the manager could lead to future opportunities.

The key to retaining customers in the long run, is to make top quality syrup and offer good customer service.

4.0 How Do We Get There?

Once you have developed your goals and vision statement, then you need to follow up with a detailed action plan to make your vision a reality. For some priorities you may need additional information before you can fully develop your plan. In the last section of this workbook we provide some links that you might find useful. You might also want to refer to the Maple Syrup Innovation Toolkit (TBA)

From the goals and vision statements that you outlined above choose your top three to five priorities and copy them into the table below. In this step you will plan how to accomplish those goals. You want to be as specific as possible. Identify who you will need to involve or consult to accomplish those goals and the specific activities that you will need to undertake. Also, establish a time frame and location for completing the activities you need to accomplish your goals. Some priorities can be accomplished quickly. Other goals may take a considerable length of time and additional resources. Many people find it useful to start with a priority that is quickly or easily accomplished. Finally, be sure to revisit your workbook and action plan every few months to keep you on track in accomplishing your goals.

Think carefully about where to locate your sugar house and/or retail outlet. Think about accessibility for yourself and your customers as well as other factors such as privacy and visibility.

When choosing equipment, consider how the various components will work together. For instance, the size of your evaporator should be matched with the number of taps, your capacity to filter, the need/size of reverse osmosis, and so on.

Commercial Maple Practices Workbook

Top Priorities For Our Maple Production	Who Will be Involved?	What Activities Need to be Accomplished?	Where and When Will this Activity Happen?

Forester and woodlot associations as well as conservation authorities can be good sources of information about sustainable forestry practices. Choose someone with sugar bush experience; managing for optimal sugar production has different requirements than a timber/lumber operation.

Make sure your marketing tools match your target market. You might not need a website if your business will be focused on wholesaling rather than retail.

5.0 Resources

Below, we have provided a number of resources and web links to help you get started on your new endeavour. This list is not exhaustive, but it can serve as a good starting point.

5.1 General Information

Provides lists and links regarding what is available online about maple syrup.

<http://www.sugarbush.info/links/>

Some interesting statistics and information about maple in Canada

<http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/pick-choisir?lang=eng&p2=33&id=0010008>

http://www.agr.gc.ca/resources/prod/doc/horticulture/maple_rep_2013-eng.pdf

This article explains maple as a key Canadian non-timber forest product and outlines the potential impact of climate change.

<http://www.jrcd.ca/viewarticle.php?id=664&layout=abstract>

5.2 Technology and Equipment

A video providing an overview of a modern sugaring operation.

<http://www.cornell.edu/video/history-and-production-of-maple-syrup>

Making maple syrup in your backyard.

<http://jimmar.hubpages.com/hub/Making-Maple-Syrup-in-the-Back-Yard>

Equipment Dealers

CDL

<http://en.cdlinc.ca/about-us.aspx>

Dominion and Grimm

<http://www.dominiongrimm.ca/>

Lapierre Equipment

http://www.sugaringequipment.elapierre.com/default_en.asp?no=107

Leader Evaporator

<http://www.leaderevaporator.com/>

L.S. Bilodeau

http://www.lsbilodeau.com/Produits_offerts/Equipements_derablieries/Evaporateurs/evaporateur-extreme.shtml

Especially if you use social media or have public access on your property, remember that information and pictures can spread quickly. Always present a professional image and make sure your facility is clean and well organized. "You've got to be aware that your operation could be out there on the internet and you're not even aware of it."

-Focus group participant

There is an ongoing debate regarding which is better for packaging maple syrup – glass, plastic or tin and which size bottles are best. Bottom line: it depends on your capabilities, preferences and your target market.

5.3 Human Resources and Skills

Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Commercial maple products that will be distributed beyond the provincial borders are controlled by federal regulations. See the following links for details.

Maple products regulations:

<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/C.R.C., c. 289/index.html>

Grading:

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/about-the-cfia/acts-and-regulations/regulatory-initiatives/sfca/progress-on-the-consolidation-of-food-regulations/volume-7/eng/1421414090137/1421414090700>

Labelling:

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/food/labelling/food-labelling-for-industry/maple-products/eng/1392414400422/1392414462687>

Maple products facilities:

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/food/processed-products/manuals/maple-manual/eng/1378096004584/1378096061989>

CFIA fees:

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/about-the-cfia/acts-and-regulations/fees-notice/maple-products/eng/1306471300406/1307762501190>

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

In Ontario, maple products are regulated through Regulation 119/11 and the Food Safety and Quality Act:

<http://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/110119>

<http://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/01f20>

Maple Industry Associations

Ontario Maple Syrup Producer's Association

This is an excellent resource for those needing more information about the Ontario maple industry. For those who join the association, information about maple best practices, financial planning, marketing and other topics is provided. See the producer information tab for upcoming events, information on maple regulations, density testing, Asian Long-Horned Beetle, making maple confections, the new proposed grading system, a report on the economic impact of the maple industry in Ontario and other information.

<http://www.ontariomaple.com/>

See this link for a good summary of Ontario regulations, contact information, etc.

http://www.ontariomaple.com/pages/maple_regulations/

Easy and/or free marketing approaches include word of mouth from loyal customers, roadside signage, contacting local retail outlets, donating product to local festivals and getting articles into local newspaper and television. Websites, Facebook and other social media such as Twitter and LinkedIn can also be effective. And, don't forget about related opportunities such as Groupon, WagJag, Trip Advisor and so on.

Commercial Maple Practices Workbook

North American Maple Syrup Council

This organization represents the commercial maple producing American states and Canadian provinces.

<http://www.northamericanmaple.org/>

International Maple Syrup Institute

This organization provides marketing to the industry and promotes the use of pure maple syrup.

<http://www.internationalmaplesyrupinstitute.com/>

Aboriginal Associations

Assembly of First Nations

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is a national advocacy organization representing First Nation citizens in Canada, which includes more than 900,000 people living in 634 First Nation communities and in cities and towns across the country.

<http://www.afn.ca/index.php/en>

Congress of Aboriginal Peoples

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) is one of five National Aboriginal Representative Organizations recognized by the Government of Canada.

<http://abo-peoples.org/>

Metis Nation of Ontario

MNO was created to represent Métis people and communities in Ontario who are a part of the Métis Nation.

<http://www.metisnation.org/>

Metis Federation of Canada

MFC's vision is to represent all Métis from all regions of Canada.

<http://www.metisfederationofcanada.ca/home.html>

Canadian Métis Council

The Canadian Métis Council (CMC) is dedicated to the concerns of the Métis people regarding culture, harvesting rights, education, health, youth, justice and other related issues.

<http://www.canadianmetis.com/Who.htm>

Chiefs of Ontario

The Chiefs of Ontario is a political forum and secretariat for collective decision-making, action, and advocacy for the 133 First Nations communities located in Ontario.

<http://www.chiefs-of-ontario.org/>

Part of marketing is education. You need to teach your customers what questions to ask when they buy syrup and related products. Consider posting information about the history of your operation and the details of your processing. Also consider having a taste testing station if you run a retail operation. Let customers compare grades and batches and provide them with some information about what is all means.

Commercial Maple Practices Workbook

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada

<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100010002/1100100010021>

Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs-Government of Ontario

<http://www.ontario.ca/ministry-aboriginal-affairs>

5.4 Social and Cultural Practices

How to make maple syrup – an important Ojibwa food.

<http://www.native-art-in-canada.com/how-to-make-maple-syrup.html>

A Mohawk legend

<http://www.indiancountrynews.com/nfic-columnists/doug-george-kanentiio/11541-a-mohawk-legend-the-origins-of-maple-syrup-and-sugar>

The maple legend told in the Mohawk language

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dy41JoXU3KQ>

An Iroquois legend

<http://www.d.umn.edu/~tbates/curriculareresources/MapleSyruping/CheifWoksisStory.pdf>

A summary of several legends

<http://www.ancientworlds.net/aw/Post/1105592>

A summary of the values associated with maple syrup production, drawn from our ongoing work

<http://www.tigurl.org/images/tiged/docs/activities/1719.pdf>

A depiction of historical Aboriginal maple production and the sharing of this knowledge with settlers.

https://www.historicacanada.ca/content/heritage-minutes/syrup?media_type=&media_category=32

A variety of links associated with Native American maple tree mythology.

<http://www.native-languages.org/legends-maple.htm>

5.5 Environmental Relationships

The environmental stewardship unit at AFN works with the context of the four basic elements: earth, air, water and fire.

<http://www.afn.ca/index.php/en/policy-areas/environmental-stewardship>

OMSPA has a financial planning tool that lets you compare the costs and profits of various choices and helps you build your business case. This is an important step if applying for grants or loans.

If managed with care, your sugar bush can contain a substantial diversity of wildlife, plants and trees.

Commercial Maple Practices Workbook

These links provide information regarding the potential impact of climate change on maple syrup

<http://firstpeoples.org/wp/maple-syrup-threatened-by-climate-change/>

<http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/blog/posting.asp?ID=1340>

<http://adaptation.ouranos.ca/en/adaptation/vulnerabilities-impacts/activities/forest/maple-syrup-production/>

This link provides information about growing and managing trees.

http://www.omafr.gov.on.ca/english/crops/pub840/p840order.htm?_ga=1.171454697.819256675.1357227211

This model forest is part of the network of 15 model forests from across Canada.

Its goal is to develop new ways to sustain and manage forest resources.

<http://www.eomf.on.ca/>

This site provides information about invasive species.

<http://www.invasivespeciescentre.ca/SitePages/default.aspx>

This site provides information about species at risk in Canada.

<http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=24F7211B-1>

5.6 Economic Profile

Entrepreneurship

These links provide tools to help you think about entrepreneurship and small business ownership.

<https://www.goforthinstitute.com/resource/self-assessment-entrepreneurs>

<http://www.comag.ca/smallbusiness.pdf>

http://www.bmo.com/pdf/Entrepreneur_E_FNL.pdf

<http://www.ontario.ca/business-and-economy/small-business-advice-support-services-regulations>

<http://www.onebusiness.ca/starting-business>

Economic Development Resources

The Chiefs of Ontario have worked in collaboration with a number of partners to develop a variety of resources

<http://chiefs-of-ontario.org/ec-dev-resources>

This link is an online database of Aboriginal businesses in Ontario, and the products and services they provide.

<https://www.lrcsde.lrc.gov.on.ca/aboriginalbusinessdirectory/>

If targeting the European or Asian markets, consider what type of third party certification might appeal to those customers (e.g. Forest Stewardship Council).

When designing labels, test how they will last over time as customers use the product. You want the label to look fresh and still be readable even after the product has been in the fridge for some time.

Commercial Maple Practices Workbook

Designed for Aboriginal people, this toolkit provides business development supports, tools and information to help you start and operate a successful business
<http://www.ontario.ca/document/aboriginal-business-development-toolkit>

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Information about world maple trends and opportunities – see bottom of page about maple syrup and honey.

<http://www.agr.gc.ca/eng/industry-markets-and-trade/statistics-and-market-information/by-product-sector/horticulture/horticulture-foreign-and-domestic-market-opportunities/?id=1410083148842>

Organic Certification

This list, found on Sugarbush.Info., provides information regarding organic maple product regulations, certification and associations.

<http://www.sugarbush.info/links/organic-certification/>

Preparing and Selling Maple-Related Food Products

Information of making maple candy, butter, taffy and sugar

http://www.ontariomaple.com/pages/value_added_maple_products/

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9F3vyHr-1U>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r62frHB3EHI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ygD8a-cLOE8>

If you are thinking of preparing or selling food products, you may need to contact your local health unit to ensure your facility meets industry standards and is following food safety guidelines

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx>

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/publichealth/foodsafety/clean.aspx>

An example of a value-added experience focused on maple

http://www.aboriginalexperiences.com/#!_programs

The online market and international market is seen as having many opportunities. It doesn't require any physical infrastructure or retail store labour and there's limited competition. However, you need to develop your online presence, think about how you'll handle shipping and you'll need the right type of insurance coverage. You'll also need to adhere to federal regulations and standards.