

News Release

8-19-14

NEW PRODUCER ASSOCIATION PROMOTING MAPLE SYRUP IN THE MOUNTAIN STATE

Maple syrup producers are forming an organization to help bring attention to the industry in West Virginia. The WV Maple Producers Association bylaws are being finalized and the group is seeking more members and a higher profile for Mountain State maple syrup.

“The first purpose is for people to have knowledge that we can make maple syrup here,” said Mt. Storm resident Robert Reed. “We have 25 people so far and we’re trying to get more. We know there are more people in the state.”

Another goal is to increase marketing of WV Grown maple syrup.

“We’ve got to get people to understand – we can do this. I’ve tasted syrup from lots of states, and I’ll admit I’m biased, but I think we’ve got the best,” Reed said.

And it’s yet another agricultural product that can use existing resources to contribute to the state’s economy. A 40-gallon barrel of finished syrup can bring as much as \$1,100, Reed noted.

The recently passed Farm Bill contains provisions referred to as the “tap act” to help maple-producing states with marketing and education programs, and Reed wants West Virginia to get its fair share.

He noted that most people associate maple syrup with states further north than West Virginia, such as Maine and Vermont. However, West Virginia’s climate and topography combine to create good conditions for maple syrup production – not to mention the fact that the Sugar Maple has been the state tree since 1949.

Ideal conditions, Reed says, are nighttime temperatures of 20-30 degrees, above-freezing daytime temperatures and lots of sunshine to promote the budding process.

“You have to pay attention to the weather year-round,” he said. “When the leaves are on, we want rain and sunshine. From September on, we need lots of sunshine.”

While the state has always had a number of people who head to a “sugar camp” in late winter, Reed says numbers dwindled before picking back up in recent years. But the potential is far greater than the current number of producers. The percentage of Red Maple and Sugar Maple is increasing in West Virginia’s forests.

Membership in the association is \$30 and includes membership in a national organization and subscriptions to related publications. For more information, visit the WV Maple Syrup Producers Association Facebook page, or email wvmaplesyrupproducers@gmail.com.