

Assistance For Maple Producers

NRCS Can Assist Your Operation



Partnering with NRCS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) assists private land users in addressing natural resource concerns. Vermont has a long history of maple syrup production and in recent years, interest in maple and other types of tree syrups has increased.

NRCS assists syrup producers by providing conservation technical assistance. This assistance may lead to funding through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) under the Farm Bill or Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). NRCS conservationists work with landowners and managers to implement energy and forestry conservation practices on the farm. For many of these operations, conservation work is mostly for the sugar houses or facilities where the syrup is processed.

EQIP Ag Energy Assistance

Why does syrup production depend on energy?

The sap collected from trees is mostly water. To get to the thick consistency and rich taste we all love, water needs to be evaporated, and that takes energy. Through EQIP, energy auditors conduct an Agricultural Energy Assessment, recommending possible conservation practices to use energy wisely.



Through EQIP, energy assistance is available to producers in two ways.

1. EQIP enables the producer to identify ways to conserve energy through an Agricultural Energy Assessment, also known as a Conservation Evaluation and Monitoring Activity (CEMA 228). An Agricultural Energy Assessment is also known as an on-farm energy audit. Agricultural Energy Assessments are typically completed by a certified Technical Service Provider (TSP). Payment for the completion of an Agricultural Energy Assessment is provided through EQIP based on the type and size of the agricultural operation.
2. After an Agricultural Energy Assessment (228) is completed, a producer may be eligible for additional financial assistance to implement various recommended measures using Energy Efficient Agricultural Operation (374) conservation practice. NRCS provides financial assistance through the Energy Efficient Agricultural Operation (374) conservation practice to upgrade inefficient equipment with more efficient technology such as reverse osmosis (RO), evaporators, and high efficiency pre-heaters. These upgrades can reduce fuel burning leading to better air quality and a streamlined syrup operation.

Already Using Best Practices On Your Operation?

Consider CSP:

NRCS's Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is available for eligible maple producers to maintain and improve existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation practices to address resource concerns. Enhancements might include strengthening the forest management of an existing sugar bush or sugar bush management to establish or maintain species diversity as well as improve wildlife habitat.





(left and below) Under the EQIP practices, NRCS can help you find a more energy efficient arch, or add a pan preheater to your existing arch.



(left) Under the EQIP practices, NRCS can help incorporate reverse osmosis into your operation, which can reduce your boiling time (and fuel) significantly.

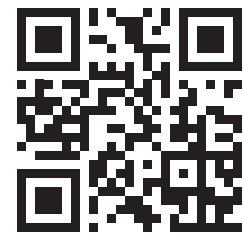
EQIP Forestry Assistance For Maple Producers

NRCS also provides assistance for forest management practices that would benefit sap producing trees. To qualify for financial assistance, producers must complete forest management practices consistent with an NRCS-approved forest management plan. Two beneficial forestry practices are as follows.

1. Forest Stand Improvement (CPS 666) includes activities that will favor maple species and other tree species used for sap collection and syrup production by forest stand improvement to reduce competition.
2. Brush Management (CPS 314) includes removal of invasive species such as autumn olive, Japanese barberry, bittersweet, or grapevines that can invade sugar bush stands.



Find your local service center here:



<https://go.usa.gov/xdXkQ>

