



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 19, 2021

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Vermont Maple Recognizes Outstanding Members
Awards Presented at Vermont's Annual Maple Meeting

WESTFORD, VT, July 19, 2021 –

The Board of Directors of the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association (VMSMA) selects members each year for its Annual Maple Awards: Outstanding Sugar Maker, Vermont Maple Person of the Year, and the Sumner Williams Lifetime Achievement Award. The 2021 Awards were presented by Sam Cutting IV at the Association's Annual Meeting held on Zoom on July 13, 2021.

Outstanding Sugar Maker Award: James Buck, Washington VT

The VMSMA Board selects a Vermont sugar maker, individual, or family who sets a good example for other sugar makers to follow in cleanliness, food safety and production practices. In addition, nominees for this award help the maple industry by participating in county and statewide fairs to promote and educate future sugar makers and the general public on the benefits of pure Vermont maple syrup. This year, the Award was presented to James Buck.

James has repeatedly demonstrated a strong commitment to the Vermont maple industry through his work at his family's sugarbush and also through his work with the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers Association and his county association. James represents the majority of VMSMA's membership; he combines a full-time job, balancing family responsibilities and a love of sugar making. James also represents a great number of newer sugar makers who have started from scratch. Like many sugar makers, he started sugaring on a very small scale in his backyard. And like many sugar makers, his operation and his commitment to maple has grown over the years. James and his father bought a chunk of land, cleared it, made their own lumber, and built their own sugarhouse. They are also concerned about the future of maple and have developed their sugarbush by continuing to thin and improve their woods for future generations.



Vermont Maple Person of the Year: Mark Cannella, UVM Extension

This award is presented to someone whose work benefits the entire maple industry and who may or may not be a sugar maker themselves. As a Farm Business Management Specialist with UVM Extension, Mark Cannella works with Vermont's farms to help develop fiscal management tools and data. Mark's work is invaluable to Vermont's maple producers as well as the entire industry and their associated lending institutions. He has attended and presented at many maple conferences to share his knowledge and research with producers and other industry experts. Although Mark is not currently a maple producer, he cut his teeth sugaring when he was actively involved in the Shelburne Farms sugaring operation.

Sumner Williams Lifetime Achievement Award: Mark Isselhardt, UVM Extension

This award is presented in memory of Sumner Williams, the Assistant Director of the UVM Proctor Maple Research Center. In honor of him, the VMSMA Board recognizes outstanding service and dedication to the Vermont maple industry. This year's recipient is Mark Isselhardt, Vermont's Maple Specialist with UVM Extension. Mark works in the research field of maple and has worked tirelessly to provide the tools and knowledge to producers from Vermont and beyond that really make a difference. His research on achieving high sap yields, managing healthy sugarbushes, and creating efficiencies in syrup production has been invaluable to the maple community. Mark goes above and beyond to share his expertise with producers as well as being readily available and open to talk all things maple with any sugar maker. He has also been a huge part of the success of VMSMA's Annual Maple Conferences.

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The Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association (VMSMA), founded in 1893, is one of the oldest agricultural organizations in the United States and represents over 1,000 members. The VMSMA helps to promote and protect the branding of pure Vermont maple products and to serve as the official voice for Vermont sugar makers. Our members take great pride in maintaining a prosperous maple industry and a working landscape that future generations will enjoy. Vermont sugar makers produce over 2 million gallons of maple syrup annually (about one half of the production in the United States). More information at www.VermontMaple.org.