

## LABELING YOUR PRODUCT

Once your maple syrup is finished and packaged, it's ready for marketing. If you are giving your precious sweet stuff away to friends and family, you don't have to worry much too about your containers and labeling. But as soon as you start marketing your syrup, you will fall under the food manufacturing and packaging requirements of your state. In Michigan, the Food and Dairy Division of the Michigan Department of Agriculture is responsible for assuring proper labeling of foods and other consumer packages. All states will have similar, if not identical, rules since the labeling code derives from federal regulations.

In a nutshell, labeling law requires 3 main items:

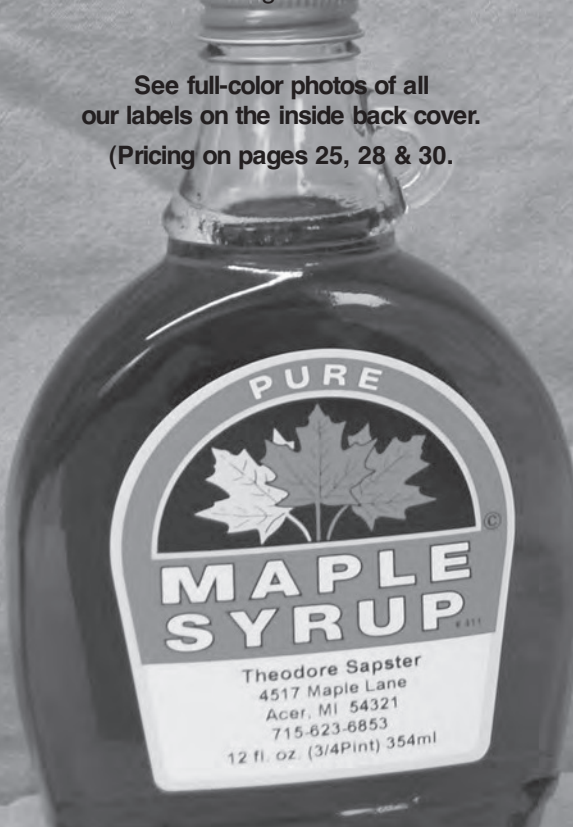
- **Identity of the commodity** The product identity must be the common or usual name of the food and must be prominently displayed on the principal display panel of the label. All required information must be printed in a type size of at least 1/16 inch in height and must be conspicuous and easy to read.
- **Net quantity of the contents** Because maple syrup is a liquid and easily pourable, it must be sold and labeled by fluid ounce or volume (e.g.: "12 fl. oz.") and both metric and pound measures must be declared. Either may be the primary declaration—for example, "Net wt 16.9 fl oz (500 ml)" or "Net wt 500 ml (16.9 fl oz)". It must be printed in the lower third of the label in a minimum type size and surrounded by sufficient clear space to be prominent.
- **Name and place of business** The name and address of a responsible party must be declared in a single block and the address must include street address, city, state, and zip (if the street address is listed in a current telephone directory under the same name, the street may be omitted). For better visibility to your customers, you may want both your name and a business name (Joe's Sugarbush) and a phone number, but those are not required.

**Nutritional Facts** Although nutritional labeling has been required on most foods since 1994, there are several exemptions, including food produced by small businesses (businesses packing fewer than 10,000 units per year). While most of us are exempt, if you choose to include nutritional information on your containers, they must follow the exact format required by law.

If you are packaging products containing more than one ingredient (confections or dressings, for example) an **ingredients list** is also required. The label must include a complete list of ingredients in order of descending predominance by weight and listed by their common or usual name. Of course, maple syrup contains only 1 ingredient—maple sap—and therefore requires no ingredient list other than the product identification.

Finally, labeling law requires that all packaged food distributed from a manufacturer, processor, packer, or re-packer must have a meaningful **batch or lot code**.

See full-color photos of all  
our labels on the inside back cover.  
(Pricing on pages 25, 28 & 30.)



### New Rules for Small Michigan Producers

The state of Michigan recently enacted a new cottage food law that allows maple syrup producers to make and market their syrup to the general public without licensing and inspection, provided they sell less than \$10,000 of product per year.

Many small producers fit in that category, but this exemption comes with a few caveats. First, sales must be directly to the public (for example at a roadside stand, farmers' market or school fundraiser). Sales may not be made over the internet, through another retail store or wholesale to another packer. Second, unlicensed sugarmakers must follow the labeling laws discussed above, plus the addition of the following statement (in min. 11 point type):

**MADE IN A FACILITY THAT HAS NOT BEEN INSPECTED BY  
THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.**

Call on our staff to help you with all your labeling needs.  
We have many fine full-color labels in stock and most can be  
personalized with your address and quantity declaration.

