

Press Room

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**Two bad seasons, growing demand mean higher maple syrup prices**  
*The Associated Press & Local Wire*

Gov. John Baldacci has kicked off the maple syrup season by tapping a tree on the Blaine House lawn. But the treat won't come cheap this year.

Michael Smith from the Maine Maple Producers Association says two bad syrup-production years coupled with increased demand have depleted Maine and Canadian syrup surpluses totaling 60 million pounds. That means prices will be up. Smith predicts an increase of 20 to 30 percent.

Many syrup producers like Smith and Ed Jillson of Jillson's Farm Stand in Sabattus say they have to buy syrup to keep up with demand. Jillson says demand is so steep he "can never make enough."

Nearly 7.3 million taps were sunk into trees by American syrup producers last winter, and more than three-quarters of those taps were in New England and New York. U.S. agricultural statistics show Vermont leads Maine in syrup production, followed by No. 3 New York.

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