



INTERNATIONAL MAPLE SYRUP INSTITUTE, IMSI

IMSI STATEMENT OF PURPOSE & ROLE

SEPTEMBER 2020

IMSI STATEMENT OF PURPOSE - The International Maple Syrup Institute (IMSI) will act on behalf of the maple industry on issues affecting the interests and the economic viability of the various sectors of the industry.

What is the IMSI's mission?

The IMSI will promote the use of pure maple syrup and protect the integrity of the product while encouraging cooperation among all persons and groups involved in the maple industry.

Who makes up the IMSI?

The IMSI's membership is comprised of North America's maple producers, maple producer associations, individual maple producers large and small, maple products manufacturers, packers and exporters, equipment manufacturers and connected agro-science and technology institutions.

The IMSI, along with its member associations represents and supports the many thousands of small local, rural maple farmers across North America that produce natural, pure maple syrup consumed and exported globally.

What does the IMSI do?

The IMSI does two main things. 1) **It provides an active member-based forum** for advancing ideas to develop the maple industry and promote maple syrup. 2) **It advocates for the industry** in government, trade, and environmental affairs. The IMSI Regulatory Affairs Committee serves as a voice in legislative and regulatory matters on behalf of the maple industry.

Why did the industry create the IMSI?

The IMSI is the only association that represents the whole industry. It has a non-profit charter Without the IMSI, the industry would be unable to stand for itself. From a lobbying and intervention perspective, the industry would be disorganized and vulnerable, with no credible voice to defend it. All industries have such an organization to represent and defend their members.

What kind of issues does the IMSI take on?

When important issues like the California Prop 65 court challenge come up (requiring health warning on maple syrup packaging) or when a discriminatory label regulation such as 'added sugar' is proposed, the IMSI goes into high gear, lobbying and fighting and coordinating a response for the whole industry. If issues like that went unresolved, they could have had very serious consequences such as shutting maple syrup out of large markets and detrimental effects on the consumer confidence and the reputation of pure maple syrup as a healthy, contaminant free food. Maple syrup sales could have been decimated across North America for all sellers big and small.

The IMSI also played a major role in standardizing the grading system throughout the US and Canada. The IMSI supports research and provides information and educational opportunities through the development of programs like the maple grading schools and provides sales and marketing guidance and leadership on current industry issues and challenges. These benefits are for all members and producers large and small. This could not be done without full membership representation and involvement.

What happens at board meetings and who can attend?

The IMSI has about 4 Board of Directors meetings a year and they are a forum for all industry sectors to meet and discuss issues and joint strategies. This gives everyone the opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas and understand each other. The board members have the floor at meetings, but all members and members of associations are welcome to attend as observers and can propose agenda items and present them at meetings.

How are the costs of membership distributed?

The cost of membership is shared proportionally by all members therefore smaller associations, individual members and other smaller organizations pay only a small share of the total budget. However, they get the full benefits of any IMSI initiative, and the same information and same access to meetings and they are equally valued within the organization.

EXAMPLES OF SOME CURRENT AND PAST IMSI INITIATIVES AND THEIR IMPACT

Funded and developed the IMSI Maple Grading School curriculum and supports ongoing learning. Overall quality of maple syrup has improved and close to one thousand maple producers have attended.

Successfully guided the formulation and adoption of clear and uniform industry grade definitions. (US & Canada). Maple syrup packaging now presents a uniform and clear grade description for consumers resulting in higher aggregate sales, less consumer confusion, and higher confidence in the product.

Lobbied FDA and reversed discriminatory 'added sugar' label prescription in the regulations. This prevented a serious issue with misrepresenting sugar as an additive in maple syrup and causing confusion with consumers that would have negative effects on sales. All sellers of maple syrup large and small benefited.

Monitors, and acts on threats to the industry. The IMSI currently monitors proposed FDA and CFIA legislation regarding maple farm food safety that could complicate operations and processes and farm gate sales practices. We are also tracking proposed changes to the recommended daily sugar intake that would change the nutritional facts panel information very unfavorably if no countervailing action is taken. The IMSI is monitoring environmental regulations, readying to intervene in favor of the industry and its sustainable practices.

Regularly informs all members of its activities and Board of Director discussions with minutes and summaries of important topics as well as information, links, and guidance on current issues and opportunities.

Helps producers and packers leverage market opportunities and understand changes in consumer behavior that affect maple sales and communications and guide the development of innovative new products.

Collaborates with leaders in maple agro-science and technology such as Center Acer in Quebec, University of Vermont, Maine, and Cornell. A significant body of knowledge is available to maple producers to increase productivity and reduce costs by applying improved techniques of production.

The IMSI is an influential endorser of research and research grants: because the IMSI speaks for the whole industry, IMSI letters of support are sought by all maple researchers.

The IMIS is developing a new Standard of Identity and applying for CODEX listing. This will help all producers and sellers by preventing counterfeit, artificial or adulterated products that falsely claim to be real maple syrup.

The IMSI Website (currently being revised) is one of the main sources used by the media and journalists for accurate and timely information. It is a source of unbiased and correct information that helps writers dispel misinformation about pure maple and related value-added products. The website also lists all relevant maple information sites in the US and Canada, including all maple associations and individual members and includes all on going work being done on behalf of all industry stakeholders by the IMSI.
