



Wisconsin Maple Producers Association 2024 Producer of the Year



On January 4, 2025, at Wisconsin Maple Syrup Producers Association Winter Institute and Maple Vendor Trade Show in Marshfield, WI at Hotel Marshfield. Dean Bauer, Bauer Valley Maple in Cazenovia, WI was awarded the WMSPA Maple Producer of the Year Award and the Lynn Reynold Traveling Trophy. The WMSPA Producer of the Year Award Criteria are: Person or persons to be selected for this honor should be a paid member in good standing for many years. Person or persons to be selected for this honor should be a paid member in good standing for many years. Person or persons of the WMSPA should be a willing part of the association for help and ideas to further its growth. Person or persons should have a good record of helping at WMSPA functions such as; Fall Tour, First Tapping, Winter Institute, IMSI/NAMSC Convention when hosted in Wisconsin, attend meetings regularly, work at the State Fair Booth, and other things that may come up within the association. Being a delegate or officer is a beneficial part of being a paid member, but not a requirement of these guidelines.

Nestled in the rolling hills of Cazenovia, WI located in Richland County, WI a person will find many valleys in the rural landscape, once abundant with blooming farms. Among the numerous hills and valleys, there is one valley that stands out for more than just milking cows. The valley is known as Bauer Valley, hence the name Bauer Valley Maple. The tradition is making 100 % pure maple. The Bauer family has been making this sweet maple treat for five generations.

For the Bauer family, maple syrup production runs deep. In the 1900's Joe and Genevieve Bauer and other family members including nieces and nephews, who lived next door, helped collect sap and make maple syrup. In those days, they gathered with horses, homemade wooden spigots, tin pans, and metal buckets. They cooked the sap into syrup and finished it on their kitchen stove.



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In 1957, when Conrad and Helen Bauer started making maple syrup started making syrup, they used similar gathering and cooking techniques. They tapped a few trees and sold syrup for a dollar a quart to family and friends. At that time cooking was done in two different shacks in the woods. Later the syrup was made just outside the woods in a tiny cooking shack. This hobby passed down to their 5 sons.

In the 1990's, their sons continued this hobby, moving their cooking shack from the woods to an old machinery shop across from a farm house on the property. This location continues to serve as their local business, which also began in the early 1990's. In 2002, the Bauer brothers bought an evaporator to accommodate their current profits. The most recent addition to the business is a reverse osmosis machine purchased in 2016.

Currently Bauer Valley Maples tap multiple trees and produce an average of 500 gallons of syrup each year, but are looking to expand to farther grow the business. Dean Bauer known to many as "Maple Man" oversees the business and production of syrup, does all of the marketing and selling of products. Before getting a reverse osmosis, he was the one staying up all night to keep up with the sap coming in Bauer Valley Maples produces blue ribbon syrup and has won many awards.

Dean and his daughters, Allison and Emily volunteer at WMSPA booth at the WI State Fair. Dean's daughter Allison was crowned the WMSPA Maple Queen in 2011. Bauer Valley Maple's Hosted the WMSPA Fall Tour in 2017. In 2023 he was approached to host the governor at their operation to introduce the maple bill. They have been featured in many newspapers and the front page of the Milwaukee Journal sentinel. He is currently WMSPA District 6 director.

Dean is very passionate and hardworking in all things especially syrup production. He is always trying to involve the next generation of producers and loves to teach others about maple production.