

Sujet traité : La récolte record de sirop d'érable n'est pas suffisante pour le Québec, qui cherche à répondre à une demande croissante / Record Maple Syrup Harvest Not Enough as Quebec Eyes Bigger Bounty

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## Record Maple Syrup Harvest Not Enough as Quebec Eyes Bigger Bounty

- Poor harvests from climate impacts push group to boost output
- Rising global demand has also sapped Quebec's syrup stockpiles



The Quebec Maple Syrup Producers' strategic maple syrup reserve warehouse in Laurierville, Quebec. *Photographer: Christinne Muschi/Bloomberg*

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A record maple syrup harvest just isn't enough for the world's top producing region.

Quebec – the source of 72% of the world's maple syrup – is ramping up output to not only quench global appetites for the pancake topper, but also to replenish depleted stockpiles that are set aside to protect Canadian farmers against bad harvests in a volatile industry.

This year's bounty of 239 million pounds was bolstered by an unusually early start to the season – though a changing climate doesn't always help harvests. Milder winters threaten to upend the delicate balance needed to make the breakfast staple, since sap used to produce syrup is only triggered when daytime temperatures flip between freezing and thawing during a narrow period in late winter.

"A couple degrees of difference has a large impact on maple syrup production in a given year," said Simon Doré-Ouellet, who is deputy general manager of the Quebec Maple Syrup Producers. The group controls most aspects of the industry in the French-speaking province.

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Maple syrup has grown into a major North American industry since Canada's Indigenous peoples taught European settlers to harvest it in the 1700s. In Quebec, home to about 90% of Canada's output, the Quebec Maple Syrup Producers represents 14,500 producers. It manages production through quotas, negotiates prices and oversees marketing.

The group has a strategic reserve of syrup – stockpiles stashed in three warehouses to help weather lean harvests. Those reserves have been depleted over the last three years, with poor seasons in 2021 and 2023 leaving them at a 14-year low.

"We really needed a good crop to fulfill both this year's demand for maple syrup, but also to start replenishing the reserve," Doré-Ouellet said. "We have to build that back."

The Quebec Maple Syrup Producers has spent the past three years issuing more taps – the spigots that draw thawing sap from sugar maple trees. The goal is to install 14 million additional taps by 2026, which would boost output by 50 million pounds. There are currently about 53 million producing taps in the province's maple forests.

"Having more taps and more producers is going to give them more of a buffer against bad years," Warren Mabee, a forestry expert at Queen's

University whose family owns a maple farm, said in an interview. “If you spread out more, you start to incorporate more producers in other places that can help to hedge.”

Read More: [World’s Maple Syrup Market Has Quebec Cartel Calling the Shots](#)

Still, attracting more producers into the traditional industry has become a challenge. Some farmers say that maple tapping isn’t as profitable as it once was given higher land prices and more costly operations. One producer, Daniel Cosman of Cosman & Webb Townships Organic, also said longtime veterans looking to hand over their operations are facing disinterest from the next generation.

“Nobody wants to take over these sugar bushes,” Cosman said. “It’s really hard work and labor is a challenge.”

For those who endure, there’s the prospect of feeding a growing global appetite for the sweet treat. The Quebec group has seen a global surge in demand, especially during the pandemic. Export volumes have been growing over the past decade at an average of more than 7% annually, according to the group.

Canadian maple syrup exports have nearly doubled since 2010, reaching 64.9 million kilograms (143.1 million pounds) as of the end of last year, according to Statistics Canada. Quebec accounted for 97% of the country’s shipments.

“The market will keep growing – and we will need to increase supply to fulfill it,” Quebec Maple Syrup Producers’ Doré-Ouellet said. “We’ve got wind in our sails.”