

UVM Vermont Legislative Research Shop

Vermont Maple Sugar Farm Relief Research Report #2

Continuations of research dealing with relief of maple sugar farms due to the recent ice storm in Vermont have provided us with more detailed information.

Jan Jamrog (802/658-2803), employee of the Farm Service Agency involved with the disaster assessment of the recent ice storm, provided information about federal funding for maple sugar farmers. Federal funding will take the form of an Emergency Conservation Practice; 64% of cleanup costs will be paid by the federal government, the remainder left for the farmers to pay. The exact dollar amount of this funding will not be figured until a full clean-up assessment has been done.

Bill Clark (802/325-3203), President of the Vermont Sugar Makers Association told us that 10% of the normally tapped trees will be out for at least 1998. He also stressed that this assessment was preliminary because many farmers would not be able to fully assess the damages until at least spring.

Brian Stone, a Vermont Forest Department employee (802/241-3675), and also a member of the board on the Vermont Sugar Makers Council, relayed to us recommendations made by the Council. The Council feels that the best way for the VT State Legislature to help the sugar maple farmers would be to offer some low-interest loans. These loans would help defray some of the costs of repairing downed lines. Mr. Stone also relayed that these low interest loans would not cost Vermont a great deal, but would greatly benefit the sugar maple farmers and the industry. Mr. Stone also expressed that a tax break or subsidy would be ineffective. This is because the trees won't fully recover for up to twenty-five years, and the farmers would need the financial support for that period of time.

The overall financial impact is impossible to assess at this time. Farmers will not be able to realize the financial impact until after this seasons maple sap harvest, and they have had a chance to assess the damage to their trees.

Completed by Group # 2

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