CDL's Way

Sugaring Guide - Sixth edition | 2026

Starting Early, Thinking Long-Term

Great plans for Alex Beaudette

CDL 35

SUGARING EQUIPMENT

This year, we are celebrating 35 years of commitment to maple producers, and we are deeply grateful to those who have stood with us since the very beginning.

By the time you read these lines, the sugaring season will already be behind us. My team and I hope it lived up to your hard work, dedication, and passion. Every spring brings its share of challenges, learning experiences, and pride. It is this cycle, year after year, that shapes the strength and richness of our industry.

For 35 years, CDL has evolved alongside a tradition deeply rooted in our land. Maple production is a story of transmission, a culture lived in the forest, in the crunch of footsteps on the snow, in the sugarhouse wrapped in steam, and in the precise gestures repeated from one generation to the next. It brings families together, builds businesses, and creates memories that stand the test of time while giving lasting meaning to the work accomplished.

This is why the sixth edition of our magazine highlights the many factors that influence the long-term sustainability of a maple enterprise: the next generation, collaboration, passion, vision, adaptation, and automation.

The next generation is taking its place. Some producers are choosing to continue their family legacy, while others are entering the maple world with the desire to build a project of their own. All share the same determination: to grow their sugarbush in a context that requires agility, vision, and the ability to adapt.

Collaboration has become an essential pillar. Exchanges between producers, our field teams, and industry partners strengthen knowledge, reinforce best practices, and support the growth of businesses. Together, the industry gains stability, expertise, and confidence.

Passion remains the driving force. It fuels long days in the forest, the hours devoted to optimizing installations, the constant commitment to producing syrup of impeccable quality, and the quiet pride that accompanies every successful harvest.

Vision allows us to go further and naturally opens the door to adaptation. Sugarbush operations continue to evolve to meet today's realities: optimizing installations, improving performance, modernizing work methods, and progressively integrating new technologies.

Adaptation does not change the essence of maple production. It propels it forward and allows it to endure with strength and ambition.

Automation is gradually becoming part of daily operations. It supports teams, stabilizes performance, and simplifies day-to-day management. It allows producers to operate more efficiently, analyze data more effectively, optimize every run, and maintain greater control over their installations.

For 35 years, our commitment has remained the same: to support producers at every stage of their development, with respect for tradition and a constant drive to innovate so that the passion for maple continues to run through our veins, from generation to generation.

Thank you for being part of this story with us.

Enjoy reading this sixth edition of CDL's Way!

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Maple Rush: A Rapidly Growing Sugarbush in New Brunswick

In New Brunswick, Maple Rush has experienced steady growth since its early days. In just a few years, the operation has expanded from 10,000 to 60,000 taps, with a clear objective of reaching 100,000 taps in the medium term.

Marc-André Ouellette and Patrick Sauvageau in front of their heRO concentrator

Spread across multiple lots and operating 14 pumping stations, the sugarbush requires rigorous organization and efficient travel management, with some sites located up to 40 minutes apart.

During the sugaring season, a team of eight manages operations, supported by monitoring systems that allow remote control of pumping stations and the concentrator. In a context where acquiring new land is becoming increasingly complex, every equipment decision must support both performance and logistical efficiency. That is why Marc-André Ouellette and Patrick Sauvageau chose a strategic setup: a 5' x 16' oil-fired Master evaporator, a 21-post heRO reverse osmosis system, several CDL storage silos, four transport trucks equipped with CDL tanks, as well as an insulated, heated CDL tank. Their operation is also equipped with a complete CDL monitoring system that enables leak management across all collection sites.

AN ACCESSIBLE TEAM

From the very beginning, the owners chose to equip their operation entirely with CDL products. As their operation grew rapidly, technical support and service responsiveness became key factors. In a model where operations are spread across multiple sites and margins for error are tight during peak season, having access to fast, reliable support is an integral part of their development strategy.

Beyond the business relationship, genuine friendships have developed between members of the CDL team and Maple Rush. With several CDL employees working as maple producers in the region, mutual support comes naturally.

A LOVE FOR THE WOODS

Despite the scale of their operation and the fast pace of spring, what brings them back to the woods each year remains simple, as Patrick explains:

"When you're in the woods, the phone doesn't ring. The trees show up to work every morning. It's not the same kind of headache as other jobs."

Between truck runs, station monitoring, and expansion projects, the sugarbush holds a special place in their daily lives: a demanding yet rewarding pursuit that helps them balance their primary businesses, family life, and their passion for sugaring season.

LOOKING AHEAD

While Maple Rush has grown quickly, their vision remains long term. The goal of reaching 100,000 taps is firmly in place, along with ongoing optimization projects. The owners are considering installing a more compact evaporator to maximize space in the sugarhouse and improve operational efficiency. They are also exploring ways to reorganize road access to so trucks can back up directly for loading and unloading, reducing handling and saving time.

Each year brings adjustments. Each season improves organization. Growth does not happen by chance. It is planned, structured, and intentional.

But beyond the numbers and projects, the sugarbush holds a more personal dimension. Their sugarhouse, though compact, becomes a place for family gatherings over the course of a day or an evening. Their children, aged 5 to 8, ride along in the trucks during the season and are already talking about making syrup with their father.

For them, the sugarbush is not just an expansion project. It is demanding work, a stimulating challenge, and a space where the pace is different. A place where, despite the pressure and long days, the forest brings a sense of calm that cannot be found anywhere else.

By Neil Cruise
Ontario Regional Director

Starting Early, Thinking Long-Term

For Alex Beaudette of Good Valley Maple in Eastern Ontario, maple production did not begin as a family tradition passed down through the sugarhouse. It began with curiosity, opportunity, and the confidence of a 14-year-old willing to invest in something bigger than himself.

Alex Beaudette in his sugarbush

Today, Alex operates approximately 2,000 taps near Cornwall, Ontario. His first production season was in 2014 with just 20 buckets. The path from those first buckets to a growth-focused, technology-driven operation has been built on steady learning, strategic equipment decisions, and a long-term vision that continues to expand.

A SPARK IN THE BUSH

Maple was not originally the plan. Alex is first and foremost a dairy farmer. The family farm centers on milk production, and his daily work revolves around livestock and crop farming. But one day in the bush, while cutting cedar fence posts, he noticed something that shifted his direction.

Remains of the sugar camp

Among the cedars stood mature maple trees. Even more intriguing was the discovery of an old sugar camp on the property. Previous generations had produced syrup, though no one in his immediate household had carried the tradition forward.

That discovery was enough. If it had been done before, it could be done again.

INVESTING YOUNG

At just 14 years old, Alex purchased his first evaporator from CDL. It was a modest 2' x 4' flat pan setup, but it represented something much larger: ownership and commitment.

"I've always been a little entrepreneurial," he explains. "It seemed like something fun to do. Being able to make something."

By 2016, he upgraded to a 2' x 6' evaporator and began thinking beyond hobby scale. The shift was not simply about adding taps. It was about building a system that could support long-term growth.

FROM BUCKETS TO STRATEGY

The operation evolved quickly. What started with buckets progressed to tubing installations, vacuum planning, and carefully considered equipment upgrades. Early purchases were about making do. Today, purchases are made with expansion in mind.

Instead of temporary solutions, Alex invests in equipment that supports where he intends to go. Stainless tanks replaced improvised storage. A larger, expandable reverse osmosis system replaced an entry level unit that quickly became undersized as production increased.

That strategic thinking now allows him to run 2,000 taps efficiently on a 2' x 6' evaporator. By concentrating sap to higher levels before boiling, he has rebalanced the workload in a way that maximizes both time and fuel.

Each upgrade has been intentional. Rather than buying for a single season, he invests for multiple seasons ahead.

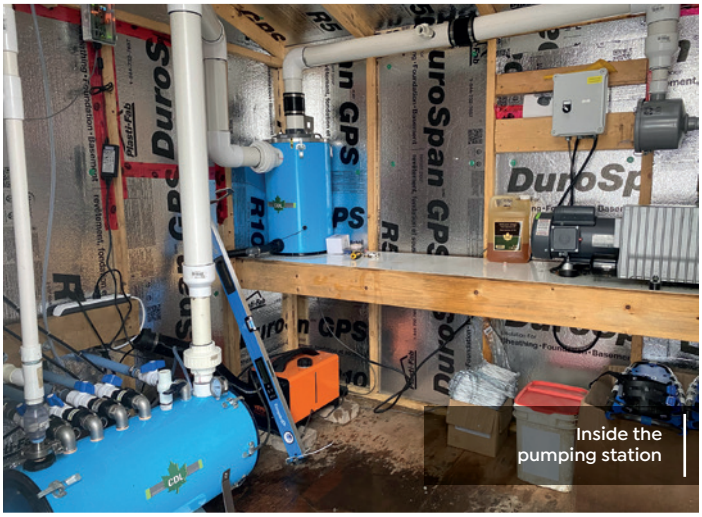
LEARNING THROUGH MISTAKES

Starting young offered one significant advantage the ability to make mistakes on a small scale.

Rolling a tractor bucket full of sap once felt catastrophic. Burning a pan during a heavy run was a stressful lesson. But those mistakes happened when production volumes were manageable.

"Starting small meant I could fail small," he says. "Now those lessons won't happen again."

The setbacks sharpened his understanding of risk. They reinforced the importance of washing pans properly, managing concentrate levels carefully, and planning infrastructure ahead of expansion. What felt overwhelming at the time became a foundational experience.



Inside the pumping station

DAIRY AND MAPLE: A NATURAL FIT

Although dairy and maple may seem unrelated, Alex sees strong compatibility between the two. Vacuum systems, plumbing, stainless welding, and mechanical troubleshooting translate directly between operations. Both require consistency, attention to detail, and a willingness to work regardless of weather or schedule.

Recent investments in a new dairy facility incorporate additional technology designed to create efficiencies. That time savings will be redirected toward maple expansion.

While dairy remains the family business, maple has become something distinctly his own.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

When asked what advice he would offer young producers entering the industry, Alex returns to the importance of thoughtful investment and long-term planning.

He encourages new producers to pace themselves, recognizing that maple equipment is a significant financial commitment. At the same time, he cautions against purchasing the smallest or cheapest options if growth is clearly part of the plan. Equipment that can expand alongside the operation often proves to be the wiser investment.

He also emphasizes building tubing systems with future vacuum in mind, even if vacuum is not installed immediately. Planning infrastructure early can unlock major yield improvements later, without requiring a full rebuild.

Above all, he stresses the importance of continuous learning. Industry events, educational resources, and strong relationships with equipment representatives have all played a role in his development. Technical conversations that once centered on basic installation now focus on system monitoring and performance optimization.

The mindset has shifted from simply making syrup to refining efficiency.

BUILDING TOWARD WHAT'S POSSIBLE

Right now, Alex is running approximately 2,000 taps, with most of his syrup sold in bulk. But his focus is not just on volume. It's on efficiency.

Within five years, he would like to see the operation reach 5,000 taps. Within ten, 10,000 taps feels achievable. The investments being made today, from upgraded RO capacity to improved monitoring and infrastructure planning, are designed to make that scale realistic rather than rushed.

Growth, for Alex, is not about chasing numbers. It is about building systems that can handle them.

THE RUSH OF THE SEASON

What keeps him motivated is not only the growth potential, but the intensity of the season itself.

Maple compresses months of preparation into a short window of high stakes production. Long nights, constant monitoring, and rapid decision making create a pace that he thrives on.

"There's something about pushing for more," he says. "How much can we get, and how well can we do it?"

It is a question that defines both his present and his future.

Maple may not have been the family business he grew up in, but it has become the one he is building for the future.

From 20 buckets in 2014 to a rapidly expanding operation today, Alex Beaudette represents a generation that is not waiting for perfect conditions or inherited infrastructure. They are learning, adapting, and making calculated decisions early.

For Alex, the season is intense, the learning never stops, and he is only getting started.

Special Collaboration: Amélie Richer
Executive Assistant and
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Temporary Foreign Workers:
A Sustainable Contribution at the Heart of Maple Businesses

For several years, more and more Quebec companies have been turning to foreign labour through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP). Long considered a temporary, last-resort solution, this approach is now emerging as a sustainable and structuring lever for many industries, including maple production.

Jordan Thibault and Cristian Orellana

At Arimé, many employers tell us week after week that the contribution of temporary foreign workers (TFWs) has become essential not only for the continuity of their operations, but also for the growth of their businesses. But how can hiring TFWs become a long-term asset for your maple enterprise?

THE IMPORTANCE OF PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

For hiring temporary foreign workers to become a sustainable and structured solution, careful planning and organization are essential. Too many companies still approach the process as a last-minute, temporary solution.

Our experience clearly shows that a proactive approach is the most efficient and profitable. This can be reflected in several forms:

• Plan worker arrivals at least 6 to 8 months in advance.

This allows you flexibility if delays occur during the Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) process, if government processing slows down, or if your worker housing inspection must be redone.

• Implement sound document management practices.

The administrative side of hiring TFWs can become complex, especially if it is neglected early in the process. Keep your documents up to date and respond promptly to requests for information, document signatures, and other administrative steps. This will prevent constant searching through files and unnecessary time loss.

• Think about a realistic and effective employee rotation.

Many employers rely on a single worker and renew their authorizations from contract to contract without considering the long-term impact. This can lead to fatigue, dissatisfaction from the worker who misses their family, and a decline in performance.

Planning for multiple workers can often be a winning strategy. Anticipate vacation periods between contracts, holiday periods such as Christmas, and other breaks. With a rotation system, you can maintain operational stability while ensuring workers have the rest they need.

Maple production relies on a short, intense, and non-postponable production window. Proper planning allows you to secure the essential labour needed during the critical moments of the season, avoid delays that can lead to production losses, and safeguard your operations year after year.

RECOGNITION AND RETENTION

Temporary foreign workers are employees like any other. It is therefore essential to apply the same human resource management practices used with Canadian employees.

Take the time to check in on their job satisfaction, ensure they understand their responsibilities, and make it a habit to acknowledge their efforts when they exceed expectations. A valued employee is far easier to keep motivated.

It is also natural for some workers to stand out through their motivation, performance, or leadership abilities. Many employers do not realize that promoting a foreign worker is entirely possible. This can be an excellent way to recognize their contributions

and encourage long-term retention while benefiting from their growing expertise.

However, changing a TFW's position requires additional administrative steps, including a new LMIA and a new work permit for the updated role.

Encouraging the retention of TFWs also allows you to stabilize and strengthen their skills, while avoiding the need to reinvest in training every year. High employee turnover is a major obstacle to business stability and performance. Beyond the direct costs of recruitment and training, it leads to operational disruption, loss of knowledge, and constant retraining.

This situation complicates medium- and long-term planning and may hinder the growth of your business, particularly in a context of labour shortages.

Investing in the skills of foreign workers within your team helps your business grow by transforming a temporary solution into a true development lever, while recognizing the human value behind every member of your workforce.

In a demanding and seasonal industry such as maple production, temporary foreign workers are not simply a last-resort solution, but rather key a structuring force that enables companies to ensure their continuity, growth, and long-term sustainability.

When well planned, properly supported, and genuinely valued, this workforce becomes a key driver of success, at the heart of business development and operational performance.

Nelson Morales in the forest

Workers using the Precision Tapper

Whether you currently employ foreign workers or are considering this option, a thoughtful approach tailored to your reality can make all the difference. In the complex world of temporary immigration, it is essential to be well supported.

Do not hesitate to contact us to discuss the most promising solutions for securing the future of your maple business.

By Marie-Philippe Rock
Communications Agent

The Sugarbush of a Lifetime

The story of Jimmy Vachon and Gaby Leclerc is, above all, a family story. Their sugarbush, Gestion M. et L. Vachon, located in Saint-Robert-Bellarmin, Quebec, originally belonged to Jimmy's father. At the time, around 1980, the operation had approximately 4,000 taps and ran on a generator. Since then, it has evolved significantly, driven by thoughtful decisions and the support of the right people.

A CHILDHOOD DREAM

From a very young age, Jimmy grew up in the world of maple syrup. "If he hadn't taken over the family sugarbush, he would have bought another one," his partner Gaby says with a laugh, illustrating just how important this dream has always been to him.

Yet, his professional path first led him elsewhere. He studied refrigeration and worked in commercial installations for arenas, slaughterhouses, and fish processing plants. Still, he returned to the sugarbush every weekend.

In 2011, Jimmy became a shareholder in the family business. Then, in 2018, he made the leap to working there full-time. Today, their sugarbush has 31,600 taps.

A SUGARBUSH BUILT AROUND FAMILY

Listening to Gaby, it quickly becomes clear how central family is to their operation. Each member has their place. She handles administration and boiling "that's my zone," she says with a smile- while Jimmy oversees operations in the woods.

From left to right: Jessika, Jérémy, Joey and Jimmy Vachon

Around them is a whole family: Joey, the youngest, Jérémy, Jessika, and the late James, whose children were literally raised in the world of maple syrup. For Jimmy and Gaby, James's presence deeply shaped the sugarbush and the sugarhouse as they exist today. His presence still lives on and continues to guide their decisions.

During the sugaring season, everyone pitches in. Jérémy takes part in every stage, from tapping to untapping, and spends much of his time at the sugarbush. Jessika helps with the barrels and wherever needed. Untapping is often done as a family.

As for the youngest, Joey, he is already fully involved in the season. Curious, attentive, and always eager to learn, he notices details in the woods that even the most experienced tappers do not always see. "He has a lynx's eye," Gaby says proudly.

Maple production is already part of his daily life. On Halloween, Joey does not choose a superhero costume, he dresses up as a CDL installer. Nothing less!

The family in the sugarbush

REBUILDING TO GO FURTHER

When Jimmy became more involved in the business, he had a clear goal: to rebuild the sugarbush.

In 2015, the decision became unavoidable. The infrastructure was aging, the tubing was becoming outdated, and the buildings were beginning to deteriorate. One particularly windy year even made them fear that some structures might collapse.

"That year, Jimmy said: next year, we make the move," Gaby recalls.

They had to start almost from scratch.

The reconstruction was an opportunity to rethink the entire operation, integrating modern, high-performance equipment: new tubing, an underground collection system, a vacuum pump, a monitoring system, four tanks, an intelligent concentrator, a syrup press, and a propane Master evaporator.

Since then, they have taken particular care to keep their sugarbush clean and well maintained. Not necessarily to the point of "being able to eat off the floor," she jokes, but because it truly matters to them.

They want the business to remain strong over time and ensure that, if one day their children choose to continue the journey, they can do so with a healthy, well maintained operation ready to carry on. This is also what led them to surround themselves with the right people to make informed decisions.

Master Evaporator (propane)

MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICES

Over the years, Jimmy and Gaby have learned to make more strategic decisions.

"Today, we can't spend without thinking. We always have to ask ourselves: is this really a priority? Will it improve the business?" Gaby explains.

They once considered major expansions. But due to labor challenges and time constraints, they chose a different path. For them, it is better to take good care of what they already have.

The goal is not to be the biggest, but to do things properly because, in their eyes, a sugarbush should never become a burden.

It should remain a passion.

A COLLABORATION BUILT ON TRUST

Throughout their journey, Jimmy and Gaby have come to understand the importance of surrounding themselves with the right people. Their relationship with CDL dates back to the early days of their modernization projects.

Gaby still remembers the first visit from Jocelyn Pouliot of CDL La Guadeloupe, now retired. For hours, he answered their questions and shared his experience in the woods.

What stood out most to them was his honesty. Rather than speculating on topics he did not fully master, Jocelyn guided them toward Serge Tanguay, now Executive Director of Business Development, and Vallier Chabot, Co-owner and General Manager both experts in evaporators.

That humility left a lasting impression. The ease of communication and approachability also helped build that relationship.

"That's what we like about CDL," Gaby explains.

"When you call, it doesn't take weeks to get an answer. There's honesty, service... and above all, real dialogue. You're not just a number."

Over time, other representatives took over through different projects, notably Jean-François Robert, who continues to advise them today.

For Jimmy and Gaby, this relationship is based on something simple: mutual trust.

PASSING ON MORE THAN A SUGARBUSH

Looking ahead, the couple hopes their children will continue the adventure but they don't want to impose anything. What matters most to them is that each person follows their own path.

Gaby often speaks about Jimmy's dream with emotion:

"His dream was to rebuild the business, make it thrive, and truly make a living from it. If one day the torch is passed on, that's life. His part will be done... and it will be up to the children to carry theirs."

Above all, what they want to pass on are their values: family, simplicity, the joy of working together, and the ability to stay positive despite challenges.

And throughout this journey, one thing remains essential: surrounding yourself with partners who share that same vision. Because beyond equipment and projects, it is human relationships that allow businesses to grow and endure.

The Sugarhouse, exterior view

By Maryse Bernier
Executive Director, Sales and Marketing

35 Years of History, Passion and Vision, Driven by Our Team

At a time when the average lifespan of a business is often limited, celebrating a 35th anniversary represents much more than a simple milestone. For CDL, this anniversary is closely tied to the journeys of the people who, over the years, have helped build the company we know today.

From left to right: Vallier Chabot, Maryse Bernier and Serge Tanguay

To revisit our history and look toward the future, I had the opportunity to speak with two colleagues who embody this continuity: Vallier Chabot, General Manager and co-owner of CDL, and Serge Tanguay, Executive Director of Business Development. Both have accumulated more than 30 years of experience within the organization.

GROWING ALONGSIDE THE COMPANY

An engineer by training, Vallier Chabot joined the family business in 1995, when CDL acquired Évaporateurs Dallaire in the Beauce region.

"My father had strongly suggested that I continue my studies in English and when I say strongly suggested, he had already enrolled me!" he recalls with a laugh. "Our father always encouraged us to develop our skills. Among the most important values our parents instilled in us was the importance of learning other languages."

Tasked with managing this new division, Vallier took his first steps as a manager. Over the years, he held the positions of Plant Manager and Sales Director before becoming General Manager, a role he continues to hold today.

"Deep down, I have always wanted to be an entrepreneur. I therefore made the conscious decision to become involved in the family business."

Today, he also serves as General Manager of PRESTIGE Maple products, acquired in February 2024, and as Chair of the Board of Directors of CDL Corporate Group.

Despite his many responsibilities, Vallier remains deeply rooted in the maple industry. Together with his brothers, Martin and Marc-André, and their parents, he operates nearly 80,000 taps each spring.

"I often say that I am a maple producer on my iPhone and iPad!" he jokes. The family sugarbush also regularly serves as a testing ground for new technologies developed by CDL. "Before offering a technology to our customers, we like to test it ourselves so that we fully understand its benefits, as well as the challenges that may come with implementing it."

FROM SWEEPING FLOORS TO EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

Serge Tanguay's journey is equally inspiring.

Originally from the Beauce region, he remembers his early days with humour: "I arrived at the Beauce plant on a four-wheeler! I was a darn good floor sweeper!"

On February 16, 1996, he joined Évaporateurs Dallaire as a student responsible for building maintenance. After studying mechanical engineering technology, he hoped to join the drafting team. Since all the positions had already been filled, he instead spent two years welding equipment on the production floor.

This experience allowed him to develop an in-depth understanding of the products and manufacturing processes, knowledge that would prove invaluable throughout his career.

Over the years, Serge moved from purchasing to continuous improvement and eventually became Plant Manager. His career would later intersect with one of the most significant events in CDL's history: the fire at the Beauce plant in March 2009.

"We had to redesign the plant layout, integrate new machinery and restart production within only a few months," he recalls.

CDL head office
Saint-Lazare-de-Bellechasse
in 2026

The challenge was enormous. In six months, the team had to produce nearly what would normally have required a full year of work.

"We introduced both day and night shifts. After several months at that pace, I remember falling asleep at my desk at 2:30 in the morning."

This period clearly illustrates the resilience and adaptability of CDL's teams.

Today, Serge leads business development. The year 2012 also marked an important turning point in his life. As he became a father, he purchased La Coulée d'Élixir, a 35,000–tap sugarbush located in Marsoui, in the Gaspé Peninsula.

This personal project quickly became much more than a maple operation. It became a true development laboratory for CDL. The challenges created by the distance pushed him to rethink traditional methods and imagine new ways to monitor, control and optimize operations.

Fourteen seasons later, the sugarbush has grown to nearly 90,000 taps and continues to play a key role in the development of CDL's equipment and software. It is a concrete example of how the best ideas often take root in real needs experienced directly in the field.

A VISION FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE

While the past 35 years have been marked by innovation, Vallier and Serge believe the greatest innovations are still to come.

"Serge is a true leader," Vallier says. "Automation was not part of our reality or our generation, but he continued to believe in it and push it forward. If Serge had not been there, we would not be where we are today."

For both leaders, innovation remains at the heart of CDL's DNA. Artificial intelligence, automation and emerging technologies all represent opportunities to advance the industry while simplifying the work of maple producers.

"Even though we have made significant progress, we are still at the beginning of something with tremendous potential," Serge believes. "We are planting the seeds of the next maple industry revolution."

However, this vision extends far beyond technology. Both share the same commitment: to keep maple production accessible and encourage new generations of producers to enter the industry.

"Maple production is one of the few industries where it is still possible to start from nothing," Vallier points out. "We need to protect that reality."

Serge adds, "Once you experience the maple industry, whether you have five taps or 50,000, you discover a passion."

A STORY THAT CONTINUES

Behind every innovation, acquisition and major milestone of the past 35 years are passionate women and men.

Today, nearly 500 employees across North America are helping to write CDL's story and prepare the next chapters of this entrepreneurial journey.

After 35 years of history, one thing remains unchanged: the desire to move the industry forward while ensuring that everyone, customers and employees alike, can find their place within it.

Guadeloupe plant
in Beauce in 2026

Read the full version
of the article online

By Anne-Sophie Couture-Goulet
Director of Marketing and Communications

A Passion Passed Down Through Generations

Marie-Pier Béliveau, 7th generation keeping the family farm alive.

In maple production, no matter the size of the sugarbush, the passion is always the same. Whether operating 500, 6,000, or 30,000 taps, there is always a smile in the voice and that spark in the eyes when a sugarmaker speaks about their world.

Marie-Pier in front of her facilities

This is certainly true for Marie-Pier Béliveau of Ferme Bélichel in Sainte-Sophie-d'Halifax (QC), for whom this passion seems to run naturally through her veins. She represents the seventh generation to carry on the family farm a place where maple production now plays a central role, even though for many years it was only part of the story.

At home, the main activity was dairy farming, a demanding job that kept the family busy 365 days a year. Maple production was more of an intense but brief season just a few weeks in the spring, but always eagerly anticipated and deeply enjoyed.

DEEPLY ROOTED CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

When Marie-Pier looks back on her early years in the sugarbush, what stands out most are the family memories.

Each spring, she would reunite with her cousins to build a small camp in the woods, which they maintained year after year. The walk to the sugarhouse was often made on foot, with the children singing together. Nearby, a small hill became the perfect place to slide and play before enjoying maple taffy.

As a teenager, she also accompanied her parents during long boiling nights, when the sugarhouse operated 24 hours a day during peak runs. Today, she watches her own children live similar experiences. This year again, they went tapping with their grandparents.

"For my parents, it was a great joy to show tapping to their grandchildren, just as they had shown me," Marie-Pier recalls.

TAKING OVER THE FARM AND CHOOSING HER PATH

Although she grew up on the family farm, taking over the business was not an immediate certainty for Marie-Pier.

It was during her first college internship Farm Management Technologies (FMT) that her path became clear.

"That's when I realized I wanted to take over the business," she explains.

The transition from her father took place gradually. Between 2008 and 2019, the transfer of the business was built step by step, allowing Marie-Pier to take on increasing responsibilities while learning alongside him.

Today, she sees that period as a true privilege.

According to her, one key factor greatly eased the transition: they shared the same vision and the same passion for maple production.

Marie-Pier Béliveau checking her water jacketed calibration tank

When the time came to officially complete the transfer, Marie-Pier saw it as an opportunity to fully integrate her partner, Philippe St-Arnaud an electrician by trade into the family farm adventure.

THE CALL OF THE SUGARBUSH

Over the years, several important decisions have transformed the family business.

When Marie-Pier finished her studies in 2006, the sugarbush had around 3,000 taps. At that time, maple production was still a seasonal activity within a farm primarily focused on dairy.

Things began to evolve a few years later. In 2016, an opportunity arose: the purchase of a nearby sugarbush. This acquisition became a true turning point.

From the very first season, results were promising: they produced 4.25 pounds of syrup per tap using old tubing they had patched together at the last minute. However, the newly acquired sugarhouse was no longer fully functional for on-site boiling, which forced them to quickly learn how to transport sap during that first season.

It was also at that moment that Philippe developed his own passion for maple production.

Then, in 2021, the purchase of another sugarbush increased the operation from 7,000 to 14,000 taps. This growth led Marie-Pier and Philippe to reflect on the future of their business, and gradually, a major decision emerged: selling the dairy herd and focusing entirely on their growing maple operation.

For Marie-Pier, this moment marked a true turning point.

"For me, it was almost like a coming out," she confides.

When she brought it up with her parents, their reaction surprised her.

"They simply said: We already knew. We could see it."

TRANSFORMING THE BARN INTO A SUGARHOUSE

Starting in 2023, Marie-Pier and Philippe undertook a major transformation to fully adapt the farm to maple production.

The former dairy barn was converted into a sugarhouse, with significant work required, including structural steel, plumbing, and electrical upgrades almost everything was redesigned. Thanks to his electrical expertise, Philippe played a central role in both design and execution.

Doubling the number of taps also led to several equipment upgrades.

Their previous electric evaporator had become too small, so the couple chose to invest in more efficient equipment. In 2024, they acquired a Master-E evaporator, which notably allowed them to reduce working hours thanks in part to automatized washing.

"Our goal was to reduce hours and gain flexibility," explains Marie-Pier.

Today, she can manage the evaporator remotely from her phone and sometimes even from the comfort of her bedroom.

Their 17,000 tap operation now includes a Master-E, a 130 gallon water jacketed calibration tank, a silo, and a 12V dual-pump sap elevator, installed with the support of Jacques Chandonnet and Michaël Labrie from the CDL Lourdes team.

THE STRENGTH OF A SOLID TEAM

Despite the evolution of the business, one thing has never changed for Marie-Pier and Philippe: the importance of family.

Grandparents, uncles, children everyone contributes in their own way.

Marie-Pier's parents still help with installations, while her uncles Bernard and Georges Béliveau regularly assist with technical tasks. Their only employee, Michaël Beaulieu-Gosselin, has been working alongside them for over fifteen years.

Even Philippe's family gets involved: during sugaring season, they make sure the family has meals ready for long days.

Each spring, they also take time to enjoy the season in a more relaxed way, organizing family days at the sugarhouse with meals, visits, and shared moments.

FINDING BALANCE

For Marie-Pier, a good season is not just about yield.

Of course, producing syrup matters. But for her, true success is measured differently.

"A good season is when we finish in a good mood, when we've had fun and given it our all... without being completely exhausted," she explains.

Alongside the sugarbush and their business St-Arnaud Électrique, Marie-Pier is actively involved in her community. She coaches her children's basketball team and sits on several boards, including Vivaco and Sollio Cooperative Group.

At home, a large room from the sugarhouse is even set up for sports during the year so she can train her children in basketball and volleyball.

A CHANGING PLACE FOR WOMEN

Over the years, Marie-Pier has seen the role of women evolve in agriculture and maple production.

She says she has never felt out of place but notes that more and more women are entering the industry.

"In fifteen years, I've seen more and more women coming into the field," she observes.

Among the women who inspire her, she mentions our colleague Natacha Bouchard, an electromechanic at CDL, whom she admires for her rigor, expertise, and strong mastery of procedures and who greatly supported her during recent Master-E improvements.

According to her, technological and operational advancements are also helping make the industry more accessible for everyone.

ADVICE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

When asked what advice she would give someone wanting to get into maple production, Marie-Pier doesn't hesitate:

"Don't worry about what others will think. Do something that makes sense for you."

She especially encourages young women to step forward:

"Go for it. There's room for everyone!"

For her, the key is adapting the operation to one's reality installing winches, adjusting equipment, and designing the sugarhouse layout to gain autonomy.

"A setup adapts to your situation," she sums up simply.

A COLLECTIVE STRENGTH

Ultimately, what Marie-Pier wants to pass on goes far beyond buildings, equipment, or the scale of their operation.

What she wants to preserve above all are the family values that have always guided the evolution of the business.

"Life is about teamwork. A couple is a team. A family is a team. A business too. No matter the role, big or small, every role matters," she reminds us.

Because for her, like in an orchestra, each person contributes to creating harmony.

And that is where the true richness of their sugarbush lies: collaboration, legacy, and recognizing the value of each individual.

Marie-Pier Béliveau in front of her Master-E

By Maxime Breton
Director of Technical Sales and Projects

Structuring the Future, One Tap at a Time

Yield per tap is often at the heart of conversations in the maple industry. Production volume remains a key performance indicator and a source of pride for many operations. However, another factor deserves just as much attention: reinvestment per tap. Though less discussed, it directly influences the stability, value, and growth potential of a sugarbush

THE STUDY

A study conducted among sugarmakers by the Quebec Maple Syrup Producers (PPAQ) highlights an important reality: a significant portion of generated revenues is continuously reinvested back into the operation.

Part of these funds is allocated to maintaining existing systems, but investments are primarily focused on collection and concentration equipment, modernization of facilities, and operational optimization.

Forest monitoring system

In many cases, these investments are also supported by financial assistance programs and grants, which help accelerate key projects and reduce the risks associated with investment decisions.

These insights provide a clearer understanding of where the true performance of a sugarbush is built.

WHERE TO INVEST

Investments are mainly directed toward infrastructure that directly impacts overall performance:

- Modernization of collection systems
- Optimization of concentration equipment
- Improvement of energy efficiency
- Reliability and upkeep of existing installations

These areas play a key role in the actual productivity of each tap. Investing in these strategic areas not only improves yields but also stabilizes operations over the long term.

HOW

Effective investment requires alignment between today's decisions and tomorrow's vision.

The relevance of an investment depends on how well it aligns with the company's long-term vision. A sugarbush that cannot expand geographically will need to optimize its existing infrastructure to increase yield per tap. Conversely, a growing operation must structure its facilities to support expansion.

In this context, grant programs can become powerful strategic levers, enabling faster implementation of key improvements.

Each decision should be evaluated through three simple questions:

- Does this investment sustainably improve my yield?
- Does it strengthen the stability and value of my operation?
- Does it align with my vision for the next five to ten years?

POSITIONING FOR THE FUTURE

In business management, investing is not only about meeting immediate needs. It is also about building a vision aligned with long-term objectives.

Companies that plan their reinvestment build a structural advantage. They improve production consistency, strengthen their assets, and reinforce their position in the market.

In the long run, a maple operation stands out not only for its production volume, but also for the consistency of the decisions made year after year.

The CDL Intelligence interface in use

By Jerad Sutton
Operations Director CDL USA

Always Improving

For John Garigliano of Catskill Mountain Sugarhouse, "Always Improving" is not a slogan. It is a survival strategy. Located in Grahamsville, New York, John operates 56,000 taps and has been in business since 2009. While he has been around maple his entire life, 2009 marked the first year he approached sugaring strictly from a business perspective. Since then, one thing has remained constant: nothing in maple production is ever constant.

IMPROVEMENT IN A BUSINESS WITH NO CONSTANTS

Weather patterns shift. Workforce availability changes. Sap flow fluctuates. Equipment evolves. John believes improvement begins with accepting that perfection is temporary. "You can never make it perfect," he explains. "If you made it perfect for this year, next year is going to be different."

Each season brings new challenges. Some years' temperatures do not get cold enough to tap. Other years refuse to warm up. In his region, production often begins in January, with full runs by mid-February and completion by late March. But even those benchmarks can change without warning.

For John, always improving means reviewing every season carefully, identifying weak points, and making deliberate, incremental upgrades. It is about choosing the right battles and strengthening one area at a time.

STAYING AHEAD INSTEAD OF CATCHING UP

In today's maple industry, reacting is not enough. John believes producers must plan two and three years ahead.

"Everything in the world is changing," he says. "You have to be ready to change with it."

He has observed that the more experience he gains, the more he realizes how much remains uncertain. That awareness fuels his forward planning. Market demand for maple syrup remains strong but meeting that demand requires preparation and foresight.

Rather than waiting for pressure to build, John invests in infrastructure and capacity before it becomes urgent. This approach allows him to remain steady when others are scrambling.

DRIVEN BY CUSTOMERS: ORGANIC AND MARKET ADAPTATION

Catskill Mountain Sugarhouse sells very little wholesale syrup. The majority goes directly to customers. That direct relationship shapes many of John's decisions.

His move toward organic production was prompted by a large customer request. His philosophy is simple: "Whatever you need, I'll do."

Although maple syrup is inherently a natural product, organic certification requires rigorous documentation, accountability,

John Garigliano and his children

and discipline. For John, that structure reinforces higher internal standards. The operation is also certified kosher, including kosher for Passover, further demonstrating commitment to customer needs.

"It's easy to cut corners," he notes. "These programs make you hold yourself to a higher standard."

Market adaptation, for John, is not about chasing trends. It is about strengthening long-term relationships and building trust.

STRATEGIC INVESTMENT IN 2025

In 2025, John made significant capital investments in new equipment. The decision was not impulsive. It was strategic.

Workforce availability has become increasingly limited, and automation paired with larger, more efficient infrastructure helps offset that challenge. The operation added two 10-post 30+ Automated HERO RO systems and one 16-post 30+ Automated HERO RO, significantly expanding concentration capacity during heavy sap runs. Sap storage and handling were also upgraded with two CDL 12'×20' silos with 16,000 US gallon capacity, helping stabilize flow during peak collection periods.

Filtration and transfer efficiency were improved through the addition of a 167 GPM stainless steel glass bead filter system, supported by thirteen CDL 5.5 HP three-phase screw pumps.

Together, these upgrades allow the operation to run more efficiently with fewer people. Automation, in particular, enables John to manage multiple processes simultaneously. Modern systems can run at peak efficiency without constant manual oversight, a capability that becomes critical during heavy sap runs when delays can quickly snowball.

Beyond productivity, automation has improved sustainability at a personal level. As a father of two young children, John values every hour he can reclaim.

"When I started, I didn't have a family. Now I do," he says. "The new machines help me spend a little more time at home. It's not much, but everything is something."

RISK VERSUS OPPORTUNITY

Every capital investment carries a risk. John evaluates decisions after each season by asking a simple question: where did we struggle?

In 2025, one major challenge was trucking logistics. Instead of purchasing additional trucks, he restructured production by moving a facility closer to the sap source. By improving logistics rather than expanding fleet size, he strengthened efficiency and reduced a weak link in the system.

For John, investing in the future is not optional. Continuous reinvestment in equipment, infrastructure, and quality is essential to remaining competitive.

"You have to continuously be investing in yourself and your future," he explains.

John Garigliano in front of his heRO concentrator

WHAT SEPARATES FORWARD THINKING PRODUCERS

According to John, the difference between thriving and struggling operations often comes down to preparation and mindset.

Forward thinking producers treat maple as a full-time business. They anticipate problems instead of reacting to them. They commit to the work required not only to survive a season, but to strengthen the business long term.

Experience plays a role, but so does discipline. The larger an operation grows, the more intentional management must become. Overlooking small details or constantly playing catch up can prevent growth.

"It comes from knowledge and being prepared for when things happen," he says.

OPPORTUNITY IN THE INDUSTRY

Despite challenges, John sees tremendous opportunity in maple.

Global demand remains strong. Advances in technology and research allow producers to increase output without necessarily expanding acreage. Today, efficiency improvements can unlock additional production from existing woods.

"You don't have to go find another sugarbush," he explains. "With what's available now, you can make more with what you already have."

In agriculture, that position is rare. Many sectors struggle with oversupply. Maple producers, by contrast, benefit from consistent demand and product loyalty.

THE REWARD

When asked about his favorite part of the job, John does not mention expansion or equipment.

"It's knowing you did a good job," he says.

Sugaring is demanding work. It requires long hours, physical endurance, financial risk, and relentless problem solving. But for those willing to commit to constant improvement, the reward is deeply satisfying.

There is a reason not everyone chooses this path.

And there is a reason John continues to push forward, season after season.

Always improving.

Special Collaboration: Tim Rademacher
Director of the Proctor Maple Research Center and
Assistant Professor, University of Vermont

Your maple trees are not all the same... and that's a good thing!

We all know it: no maple sugaring without healthy maple trees and resilient ecosystems. When we talk about resilience in maple sugaring, we often talk about biodiversity, which is typically associated with wildlife, habitats, or companion species but we sometimes overlook genetic diversity, the natural variation within maple species themselves. This diversity directly affects very practical factors: sap yield, sugar content, growth, and the ability to withstand late frosts or dry summers. In other words, it plays a direct role in the resilience and productivity of your sugarbush.

Photo of personnel at the Proctor Maple Research Center measuring sap sugar concentrations in the genetic plantation. Photo taken by Phoebe Plank of the Proctor Maple Research Center.

In maple sugaring, we mainly work with sugar maple (Acer saccharum Marsh.) and red maple (Acer rubrum L.), particularly in regions where maple sugaring builds on long-standing traditions. That said, an important reminder: all species within the Acer genus the broader maple family can be used to produce syrup, although both quantity and quality may vary from one species to another. For our two main players sugar and red maple several studies have generally shown comparable yields and sap quality. For other maple species, there is no clear consensus on their sugaring characteristics, yet they are often considered inferior. Whatever their characteristics introducing invasive species (such as Norway maple, Acer platanoides L.) is not a good idea, as they can hinder natural forest regeneration. And having personally made syrup from Norway maple, it's simply not worth it.

Each year, more than 60 million maple trees are tapped across northeastern North America, and the vast majority come from near-natural stands rather than plantations. This means that, as maple producers, you are working with the genetic variability naturally present in your forests. Just like in a herd or most other agricultural crop, not all individuals are the same: some produce more sap, others have higher sugar content, others heal better or are more resilient to environmental stress. Over time, evolution can even lead populations to become distinct enough to be classified as separate species. At the species level, sugar maple and red maple do not share exactly the same strengths and limitations. For example, red maple can thrive in wetter soils and generally adapts more easily to varying environmental conditions. Beyond differences between species, there are also more subtle variations at multiple scales.

At a local scale, two neighboring trees may consistently produce different sap volumes or sugar content within the same

sugarbush. If you have ever tapped with buckets, you will know this firsthand. At a regional scale, sugar maple populations in Abitibi do not necessarily share the same characteristics as those in Kentucky. Based on patterns observed in other plant species, Kentucky sugar maples are likely better adapted to heat and summer droughts, while Abitibi sugar maples should be more resistant to cold winters. That said, recent studies suggest that the situation may not be quite so simple for sugar maple. One thing is certain: the more we understand and maintain this diversity, the better equipped we are to adapt to ongoing global changes.

In the 1960s, genetic diversity in sugar maple was a major focus, and experimental plantations were established to identify trees with higher sap sugar content, with the ultimate goal of propagating these superior lines. One such plantation exists at the Proctor Maple Research Center at the University of Vermont. In addition, we have identified seven other genetic plantations established between 1958 and 1981 across the United States. Then technology changed everything: reverse osmosis made sap concentration easier and more profitable. As a result, the pursuit of "super sweet" maples slowed down, and genetic trials were largely left alone.

Today, 60 years later, interest in maple genetics is growing again. Even though most tapped trees still come from natural stands rather than plantations, understanding the genetic factors that influence performance and resilience remains essential. Sugar content is only one piece of the puzzle. The real pressure now comes from climate variability and pests: warmer winters, late frosts, summer droughts, extreme rainfall, and emerging insects and diseases. At the same time, expansion of maple sugaring is increasingly limited by access to new sugarbushes, bringing yield per hectare back into focus. Genetics is not just about Brix it also influences growth, healing, sap flow dynamics, and tolerance to both climatic and biological stresses. Leveraging and better understanding natural genetic diversity may becoming a key driver for sustainability, helping to increase yields, stabilize production, and maintain healthy stands.

Progress is steady: we are gaining a better understanding of differences between individuals and populations using modern scientific tools applied to sugar maple. Since 2022, we finally have access to a complete genome for sugar maple something still lacking for many other maple species. The sugar maple genome contains 626 million base pairs and 40,074 genes. By comparison, the human genome contains roughly half as many genes with around 20,000. Fortunately, there are ways to simplify this complexity, and we can also learn from other plant species. We are now revisiting earlier genetic studies and combining the historic data with new genetic and field data on key traits. The good news: we already have several simple tools at our disposal, along with genetic plantations that are now over 60 years old, where we have resumed measuring key seasonal events (first sap flow, peak flow, end of season), sap sugar content, and growth rates. Think of it as a puzzle with each observation adding a piece. The more reliable data we collect, the better we can identify trees and practices that perform well under your specific conditions.

In short, your sugarbushes are already rich in genetic diversity. Recognizing, monitoring, and, when appropriate, encouraging this diversity gives you a better chance of achieving stable yields, maintaining tree health, and ensuring long-term sustainability. In all cases, maple production depends on healthy trees capable of producing sufficient sap and withstanding changing conditions.

In your sugarbush, a maple that is not a sugar maple or one that simply "looks different" is not necessarily a problem. In fact, it can often be an asset. Resisting the urge to systematically remove everything that does not match our mental image of a "typical" sugar maple may help preserve valuable genetic diversity. Among these atypical individuals may be trees that perform best under late frosts, future droughts, or emerging pests. That said, this does not mean keeping everything indiscriminately: consult a forest engineer or maple specialist to distinguish what is truly problematic from what is simply different.

Photo of Forest Genetics Planting at the Proctor Maple Research Center. Photo by Phoebe Plank.

By Jean-François Binette
Director of Engineering and R&D

Simplifying Forest Installation with the Mobile Pumping Station

Every sugarbush is unique. Some extend across accessible, well-developed terrain. Others run through more remote areas, wetlands, or zones where conditions change from year to year. Over time, mainlines evolve, needs shift, and the realities of the land sometimes impose their own rules.

Mobile Pumping Station with tank at MMPS Côté

In this context, installing a pumping station often becomes a complex, and sometimes evolving, project. Beyond the equipment itself, producers must plan for a concrete slab, a building, access to electricity, and the required construction permits. These steps require time, planning, and resources. Once installed, the station becomes permanent infrastructure, difficult to modify and impossible to move.

For many producers, this reality can slow certain projects or limit expansion opportunities in more challenging areas.

TODAY, A NEW APPROACH MAKES THIS STEP MUCH SIMPLER.

The CDL Mobile Pumping Station, an innovative patent-pending solution, is a turnkey system fully prefabricated at the factory, delivered directly to the sugarbush and ready for connection. Upon arrival on site, it can be installed quickly without permanent construction, without a concrete slab, and without the need for a building permit.

Each station is fully equipped to ensure reliable and autonomous operation. It integrates the vacuum pump, extractor, moisture trap, transfer pump, and all the components required for proper operation. Insulation, lighting, ventilation, heating, and the electrical panel are all installed within the structure, ensuring optimal conditions regardless of outdoor weather.

This design significantly reduces installation time. Instead of planning and building a station on site, the unit simply needs to be positioned on compacted ground and connected to the system. Time spent in the field is minimized, allowing for fast and efficient startup.

BUT BEYOND INSTALLATION SIMPLICITY, IT IS THE FLEXIBILITY THAT TRULY SETS THIS APPROACH APART.

Unlike a permanent station, the mobile station can be moved when needed. It can follow the development of the sugarbush, be repositioned in a new sector, or relocated if terrain conditions require it. This adaptability becomes particularly valuable in flood-prone areas or on leased land, where building permanent infrastructure is not always desirable.

This mobility also helps reduce risks related to environmental changes and unforeseen circumstances. Producers maintain the freedom to adjust their installation as their sugarbush evolves, without being constrained by permanent decisions.

The station is compatible with CDL equipment and can be integrated into a CDL Intelligence management system, allowing precise and reliable monitoring of operations. It is also available with or without a tank, depending on the desired configuration.

Over the years, maple production has evolved, and installations must now respond to more diverse realities than ever before. Producers are looking for solutions that are efficient, reliable, and adapted to their land.

CDL is proud to offer solutions designed to simplify installation, reduce constraints, and adapt to the realities of the terrain.

Mobile Pumping Station without tank, as presented at Maple Sport Open House

USERS EXPERIENCE

From left to right:
Patrick, Mario, Michel and Sylvain Côté

Patrick Côté – Érablière MMPS Côté
Mobile pumping station with tank

"Installation is really simple. The station arrives by trailer and is placed directly in the desired location. Depending on the terrain, a few adjustments may be needed, but nothing complex. All that's left is to make the connections. We also appreciate that the station is compatible with CDL Intelligence and that it offers a complete, ready-to-use solution."

From left to right:
Maxime Breton, Jonathan Laperle, Guillaume Provençal, Mario Côté, Louis Laperle, Frédérick Côté, Jérémie Lebel and Guillaume Perreault

Jonathan Laperle – Maple Sport
Mobile pumping station without tank

"A simple, fast, and well designed installation. What we appreciated most was how easy it was to install. Whether it was connecting it to the rest of the system or positioning the station exactly where we needed it, everything was straightforward.

Since we chose the model without a tank, the station is very compact and easy to move. We only had to slightly adjust the ground to create a slope and level it no need to pour a concrete pad.

The station arrives already equipped with the essential components, such as the electrical panel and air exchanger. All that was left was to make the connections. In use, everything is simple, efficient, and intuitive."

Par Marc-André Chabot
Co-owner of CDL and Vice President, Research & Development

From Idea to Innovation: The Genesis of the Master–E

As part of CDL's research and development team, I have been involved from the earliest reflections that led to the creation of the fully electric, automated Master–E evaporator.

Its story begins around 2015. At first glance, the idea was simple: reduce the energy and time required for evaporation. From a technical standpoint, the initial results were promising. However, a limitation quickly became clear. The market for such a technology was too small to justify large scale development, and the project was put on hold.

WHEN THE INDUSTRY CHANGES, IDEAS RETURN

Over time, the maple industry evolved. Sugar bushes expanded, installations modernized, and buildings became increasingly electrified. More importantly, the human reality shifted. Labor shortages became a growing challenge, requiring producers to do more with fewer resources. At the same time, a new generation emerged with different expectations: greater control, increased automation, and less reliance on manual operations.

In this context, the idea resurfaced, but in a new form. What if electricity could become not only an energy source, but also a control lever?

THE FIRST TRIALS

From an engineering perspective, development began in 2016 with a series of prototype tests conducted in an isolated area of our Ste–Claire facility. Alongside Maurice Beauchamp, Sylvain Côté, and Steve O'Farrell, we took an exploratory approach to designing an energy efficient electric evaporator with the lowest possible operating cost.

The initial concepts were numerous. Results were mixed, but each prototype provided valuable insights. One principle ultimately reshaped our approach: the falling film method, already used in other industries. Small scale tests delivered surprisingly strong performance, confirming its potential and leading to the development of a new prototype.

THE TURNING POINT: INTEGRATING VACUUM

Under vacuum conditions, water boils at a lower temperature. Integrating this principle into the core of the system marked a turning point.

Evaporation dynamics changed completely. Temperatures decreased, thermal reactions shifted, and most importantly, the resulting product evolved. Testing revealed an unexpected outcome: depending on the parameters, it became possible to produce not only syrup, but also a maple concentrate with

Second prototype

BUILDING BALANCE

As development progressed, eventually reaching a fifth prototype close to the commercial model, a major challenge emerged. As Serge Tanguay, Executive Director of Business Development, explains, the challenge was not simply boiling differently, but ensuring that multiple complex systems worked together seamlessly.

Vapor compression, vacuum generation, thermal management, flow control, and product stabilization all had to function as one integrated system. Each component influenced the others. The challenge became one of balance. We needed to develop a technology capable of delivering a stable, consistent product at the desired Brix level, while remaining reliable and reproducible in real production environments. This is where the Master–E represents a major breakthrough. For the first time, maple producers can precisely control the final Brix level with an unprecedented degree of accuracy.

A CONTROLLED MARKET INTRODUCTION

Recognizing the innovative and demanding nature of the technology, CDL made a strategic decision to introduce it gradually. Rather than scaling production immediately, we chose to work with a limited number of producers willing to invest, test, and actively participate in advancing maple production.

To support this approach, CDL established a Technology Center in St–Henri (QC), a true applied research environment within a working sugar bush. This allows our team to test, validate, and demonstrate the technology under real operating conditions.

LEARNING FROM THE FIELD

Like any major innovation, the early years brought challenges. Despite rigorous engineering validation, certain components did not always perform as expected once deployed in real world conditions.

As early as the first season, a significant recall was required. In the second year, issues arose with Brix measurement technology. These adjustments demanded adaptability from both customers and our internal teams. Producers had to learn new operating methods, while our teams implemented corrections on installed units and refined designs for future production.

Across engineering, sales, technical service, and procurement, the entire organization mobilized to find solutions.

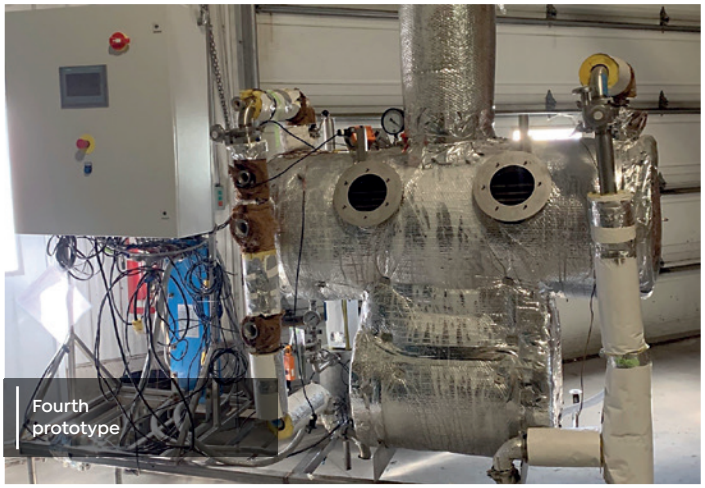
What truly defines this project, however, is the response from producers. Year after year, they remained engaged, moving from understanding to confidence, and ultimately to satisfaction as improvements were implemented.

By the third year, the technology reached a level of maturity that confirmed its full potential. Even today, the product continues to evolve. This progress would not have been possible without these exceptional customers, true partners who demonstrated trust, commitment, and collaboration.

REDEFINING THE MAPLE PRODUCT

Throughout development, a major discovery emerged. Originally designed to avoid caramelization, the Master-E ultimately made it possible to achieve something more ambitious: producing a High Brix Concentrate at 66 Brix without reaching traditional boiling temperatures, while preserving the full properties of maple sap.

According to Serge Tanguay, this capability opens the door to new applications and significant growth potential in international demand in the years ahead.



Fourth prototype

TOWARD A MORE ACCESSIBLE VERSION

Over time, another realization emerged. In North America, nearly 30% of maple production comes from operations with 10,000 taps or fewer a segment far from marginal. These producers often share a similar reality: limited time, reduced labor, but the same level of passion. For them, spending entire nights monitoring a boiler is no longer an option. This led to the development of a more compact and accessible version of the Master-E, designed to deliver the same technological foundation at a smaller scale. The Master-E 40 HP, launched at the Open House in May 2025, requires less energy, operating on a 200-amp, 240-volt power supply, making it more accessible to producers with 10,000 taps or fewer.

A CONTINUITY DRIVEN BY EVOLUTION

As you can see, and this is the beauty of research and development, an idea can emerge quietly, go through periods of dormancy, and then return in a new form. It evolves, becomes refined, and eventually fully blossoms... transforming a method once thought to be rooted in tradition.

Third prototype

By Serge Tanguay
Executive Director
of Business Development

Boiling Centers: Much More Than a Trend

Every generation brings its own wave of change, and the maple industry is no exception. The next generation is stepping in not to reject the past, but to redefine it and structure operations differently.

Today, several organizational models are emerging across the industry. Each operation evolves according to its reality, its territory, and its vision. Among these approaches, some producers are choosing to organize their production around centralized boiling centers. This model is generating strong interest and clearly reflects the ongoing evolution of maple production.

THE CÔTÉ FAMILY

For Sébastien and Émilie Côté of Roxton Pond in the Eastern Townships, maple production was never a casual choice. It is a continuation of family tradition.

Involved in the family sugar bush since childhood and working full-time since 2007, they have built their operation on hands-on experience, supported by CDL's expert team from both the Roxton store and head office.

Today, together with their family, they operate two businesses totaling nearly 90,000 taps, along with an additional 65,000 taps through leasing, sap purchasing, or custom boiling. In total, sap from more than 155,000 taps is processed through their boiling center.

Their installation reflects their ambition: three fully electric, automated Master-E evaporators, one oil-fired Master, three 21-post heRO intelligent concentrators, and a level of organization that allows just two people to manage the entire operation. On peak days, they can produce up to 510 gallons of syrup, or approximately 15 barrels per hour.

The Côté family's automated Master-E Evaporators

WHY CHOOSE A BOILING CENTER?

For Sébastien and his brother-in-law Mikael, the reasoning is straightforward. Costs are rising, new quotas are being allocated to emerging producers, and smaller sugar bushes of 3,000 to 4,000 taps often lack the means or the desire to build a complete sugarhouse. Investing in land and tapping trees is one thing. Building a sugarhouse and installing a concentrator and evaporator is another. "Boiling centers are the way of the future," Sébastien explains.

According to the family, some producers have no interest in operating independently, while others prefer to learn before making major investments. In both cases, the boiling center becomes a form of support, whether temporary or long-term.

The Côté family's heRO concentrators

SCALING PRODUCTION

The result is optimized production supported by a stable team. Several foreign workers have been with the operation for seven years, steadily building confidence and expertise. For Mikael, seeing their growth within the company is a source of pride. Automation has also changed the pace of the season. Nights are no longer spent constantly monitoring operations. They can rest and only respond when needed. The rhythm is more structured and significantly less exhausting.

The Côté family is now aiming for 200,000 taps, while remaining committed to what matters most: family.

THE PLOURDE FAMILY

For Marc-André Plourde of Érablière Yves Plourde in New Brunswick, taking over the family business was never a question. It was a given. A third-generation producer, he recently added 35,000 taps to an existing 80,000, with another 20,000 planned for next year. The operation will soon exceed 135,000 taps, with a clear objective of reaching 300,000.

Growth, for him, is instinctive. "Grow. Improve. Optimize. It's a disease," he jokes.

Marc-André Plourde in front of their boiling center

THINKING BIGGER

The family sugarhouse could no longer support expansion. Bringing in the required three-phase power for new installations was not feasible. As a result, Marc-André relocated his boiling center to an industrial park, where electrical capacity allows for future growth.

The building seemed almost purpose-built. During the first visit, accompanied by CDL representatives Samuel Beaulé and Jacques St-Pierre, measurements confirmed that everything fit perfectly.

"It couldn't go wrong. Everything fit," he recalls with a laugh.

The center was designed from the outset to accommodate up to six Master-E units, two of which were already operational during the 2026 season. The installation includes nearly 700 vacuum sensors throughout the tubing network. At external sites, two 21-post concentrators handle sap concentration.

At the boiling center itself, the setup includes a 10-post heRO intelligent concentrator, two Master-E evaporators, two 20,000-gallon silos, two syrup presses, a dynamic mixer, and insulated tanks for both cold concentrate and hot syrup.

WHY MAKE THE SHIFT?

Marc-André chose this model to continue growing despite labor shortages, rising costs, and syrup prices that do not always keep pace.

"If technology hadn't evolved, I would have stopped at 60,000 taps," he explains.

Today, with ten workers in the woods and just one in the sugarhouse, he maintains an average yield of 4.9 pounds per tap over the past ten years. Technology allows him to keep his workforce where it matters most: in the woods, not cleaning pans.

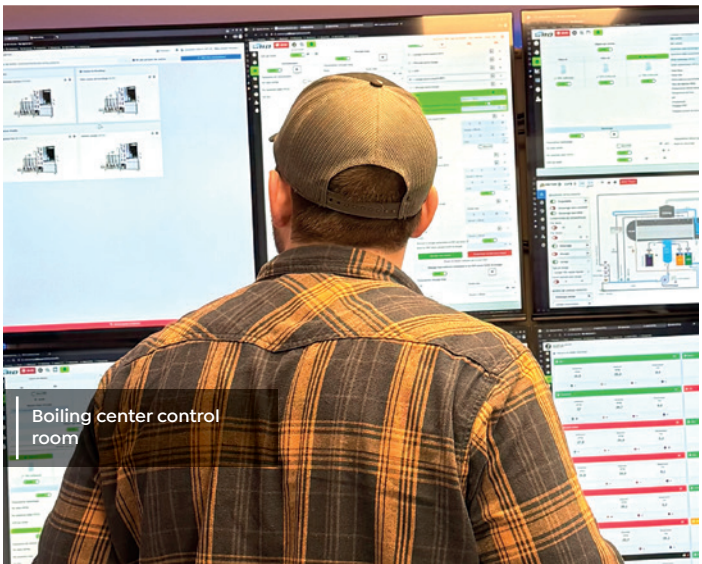
The boiling center also provides strategic flexibility. He can acquire new sugar bushes without concern for existing infrastructure, transport concentrate instead of raw sap, centralize operations, and reduce travel time.

His current challenge is clear: continue growing without compromising yield.

AN INDUSTRY IN TRANSITION

In both cases, the conclusion is the same. The maple industry is undergoing significant transformation. Labor is scarce. Quotas are evolving. The next generation brings a different vision. Maple operations are no longer developed as they were 20 years ago.

Boiling centers are not simply larger buildings. They are strategic decisions. They offer a way to structure growth, centralize operations, and better deploy labor. Above all, they represent a commitment to optimizing every gallon produced.


Boiling center control room

By Jonathan Côté
Technical Expert and Training Instructor

4.0: An Evolution, But for What Type of Producer?

Ah, sugaring season! A few weeks of intense activity. For some, it is a few weeks to generate their entire year's income. For others, it is about juggling a full-time job alongside being a maple producer. And for some, it is simply about enjoying the process and doing what they can to make their syrup for the year!

Jonathan analyzing the impact of his repairs and checking his vacuum level in real time before heading back down to the sugarhouse.

Maple production has been around for decades, and innovation has always been part of it. From the introduction of spouts and tubing, to vacuum management, the development of concentrators, high-performance evaporators, CDL Intelligence (monitoring), and the evolution of tapping techniques and work methods... everything has progressed. Today, more than ever, we're talking about 4.0. Essential for some, this "thing" is still unfamiliar to many. Let's break it down together, I'll take you into our world!

EVERY OPERATION IS DIFFERENT, BUT THE PAIN POINTS ARE OFTEN THE SAME.

For those unfamiliar with CDL Intelligence and 4.0 technologies, a typical day might look like this: a nice snowmobile, ATV, or snowshoe trip to check the pumping station in the morning. You start the pump, make sure everything is running properly. The vacuum? Oops... much lower than yesterday. What's going on? An unexpected trip just got added to the day.

Time that was supposed to be spent in the sugarhouse, boiling or processing, will have to wait.

We all know that a tight system is key to good performance. So off you go looking for leaks... one hour... two hours... three hours before finding THE leak. Thousands of steps later, you find it: a squirrel, a fallen branch on the line. You fix it, head back down to the pumping station, and the vacuum is back to normal. Back to the sugarhouse, but there's still a lot of work to do, and now you're behind schedule.

Around lunchtime, another question comes up: "The weather is great, why aren't the tanks filling?"

Back to the pumping station in a rush: a damaged pipe is letting sap leak onto the ground. Result: half a day of production lost. Disappointing. But you roll up your sleeves, fix it, and get back to work. People in agriculture are resilient, we don't give up easily.

I could go on like this. I operate a 2,300-tap family sugarbush with my parents, and we've seen our share of situations. But today, things are different.

A GRADUAL SHIFT TO 4.0

Over the past few years, we've gradually integrated various CDL Intelligence and 4.0 technologies.

Back in 2017, our first need was simple: to start and stop the vacuum remotely and get a better idea of vacuum levels in the woods. Very quickly, we realized that this real-time information made all the difference. Why? Because beyond yield, it completely changed the way we work.

We improved not only our production, but also our time management and peace of mind. At home, everyone has a job outside the farm, on top of managing our operation morning and night, 365 days a year. Everything has to run smoothly so that the limited time we have for the sugarbush is truly enough.

Jonathan reviewing data available through CDL Intelligence, allowing him to make informed decisions remotely from CDL headquarters.

In 2018, another challenge came up: managing sap backflow. Constantly having to go up to the sugarhouse to adjust or check things quickly became a constraint. Today, that system is automated, saving us unnecessary trips and allowing us to stay in control, no matter where we are.

PEACE OF MIND, FINALLY

Thanks to CDL Intelligence, we finally have peace of mind. Vacuum sensors, automatic starters for vacuum and transfer pumps, tank level monitoring with alerts, motorized valves to perform actions that once required constant back-and-forth... not to mention a real-time overview of the entire system.

A tank fills up in the middle of the night? Perfect, we get an alert. We can sleep easy.

And we're not done yet. Every year, we improve, rethink, and eliminate more pain points. We take control of our sugarbush.

- Fewer surprises
- Fewer unexpected issues
- More control
- More comfort
- Simply put-peace of mind

And there are still more projects ahead. Because a sugarbush never stops evolving.

These aren't expenses, they're investments. This isn't a luxury, it's a way of working.

4.0 is the future and the future starts today. Contact our team, we'll be happy to help you solve your everyday challenges, one step at a time!

Special Collaboration: Abby Van Den Berg
Ph.D., Associate Professor and Researcher,
Future Generations University

For the research group: Abby van den Berg, Timothy Perkins, Mark Isselhardt, Brendan Haynes, Wade Bosley, and Jed Abair
The van den Berg Institute, University of Vermont Proctor Maple Research Center, University of Vermont Extension

The Flavor of Syrup Made from Red Maple Sap

Red maple is an important species for maple production currently, and is projected to become increasingly important in the future. Its presence in sugarbushes across the maple-producing regions of the US and Canada contributes to the diversity of these forests.

Increase the resilience of these forests to stresses like diseases and insects, but as an additional sap-producing species the resilience of the maple operation as a whole is also increased. Red maple's ability to adapt to and thrive in diverse sites and growing conditions also means that, unlike sugar maple, its abundance in forests of the maple-producing region is predicted to increase under future climate change scenarios, particularly in regions where climate conditions continue to enable the production of maple syrup.

PERCEPTIONS AND CHALLENGES AMONG PRODUCERS

Despite its current and future importance for forests and maple production, there continues to be hesitation among some maple producers to include red maple as a crop tree. This stems from a persistent perception that red maple is an inferior species for maple production, producing lower yields and/or syrup of lower quality. However this perception likely originated from anecdotal observations made with past practices, processing raw sap collected in buckets, and there were no data from scientific studies of red maple yields or syrup flavor using current collection and processing practices (e.g. vacuum, reverse osmosis). To address this, we initiated a project to collect empirical data to assess the total yields and syrup flavor from red maple trees using modern sap collection and syrup processing practices.

YIELD FINDINGS FROM PREVIOUS RESEARCH

In a previous article in the CDL'S Way Magazine, we reported the results of the project's first study, in which we determined that the total syrup yields of red maple are identical to those of sugar maple when conditions are equal, as previously documented in research from the Proctor Maple Research Center. However for the yields to be truly equivalent, the sap collected from red maples must also produce syrup of equivalent quality as that produced from sugar maple sap. If one or more of the primary beliefs about the flavor of syrup made from red maple sap were true that it's somehow inferior, or that late-season off-flavors (e.g. buddy, sève) occur earlier in the season or more frequently then the effective total yields would be reduced. Thus, an essential next step in this project was to investigate the flavor of syrup produced with red maple sap. We began this by examining the fundamental question is the flavor of syrup made from red maple sap different from syrup made from sugar maple sap?

SYRUP PRODUCTION METHODOLOGY

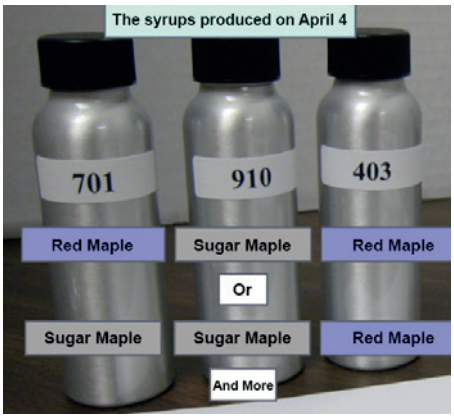
To answer this question, we conducted a study in which the flavor of syrup produced simultaneously from pure red and sugar maple sap under identical conditions was compared. Sap was collected separately under vacuum from around 500 each red and sugar maple trees growing in the same stands at the University of Vermont Proctor Maple Research Center. All components of the tubing systems were new. For each trial, the two types of sap were concentrated separately to 8% and placed into separate

Maple Processing Research Facility at the University of Vermont Proctor Maple Research Center during an experiment processing pure red and sugar maple sap concentrated to 8%.

tanks which each fed one of two, identical 3´x10´ evaporators (Fig. 1). Concentrating the two types of sap to the same level was essential to eliminate any effects that differences in their sugar concentration could have on the development of flavor even a small difference in sugar concentration would result in a difference in the length of time necessary to process the two types of sap in the evaporator, which could cause differences in flavor development between the two types of sap. The evaporators were configured with identical burner and draft settings, liquid levels in pans, automatic draw-off temperatures and settings, and quantities and location of defoamer addition. During each trial, the evaporators were started simultaneously and run continuously until the supply of concentrate was consumed (~3.5hrs). Syrup from each was collected and filtered separately and frozen until subsequent analyses. The experiment was repeated on 4 days during the 2022 maple production season: April 4, 6, 8, and 12.

SENSORY APPROACH TO FLAVOR EVALUATION

Triangle tests were conducted to determine if significant differences existed in the flavor of syrup produced with red and sugar maple sap. These tests are a standard sensory method that is simple, yet very effective at detecting slight differences in flavor between two samples. Each panelist in the test is presented with three syrup samples two are identical, and one is different. For example, to determine if a difference exists between the syrup produced with red and sugar maple sap produced on April 4, each panelist receives a different combination of the two syrups produced during that trial, two red maple syrups and one sugar maple, or two sugar maple syrups and one red maple (in a different order for each panelist) (Fig. 2). The panelists are asked to taste all three syrups and identify which one is different from the other two. If enough panelists correctly identify the "different" syrup, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in the flavor of that pair of syrups. These tests were conducted for two of the pairs of syrup produced during the experiment, the pairs produced first (April 4) and last (April 12). Twenty–two panelists with experience tasting pure maple syrup participated in the tests. The flavor of pairs was considered significantly different ($p < 0.05$) if 12 of the 22 panelists correctly identified the "different" sample.



Example trio of syrup samples in a triangle test of the syrup produced with red and sugar maple sap on April 4. Each panelist receives a different combination of the two syrups, in a different order.

RESULTS

Thirteen correct responses were given for the pair of syrups produced April 4, but only 9 were given for the pair produced April 12 (Fig. 3). These results suggest that there likely is an inherent difference in the flavor of syrup produced with pure red and pure sugar maple sap. However the results also suggest that this difference is quite subtle, because there was no difference detected in the pair of syrups produced April 12. This pair of syrup had a greater level of overall flavor development than the pair from April 4, and thus the lack of difference suggests that these additional flavor compounds were able to mask any inherent difference in flavor between the two types of syrup, indicating that any inherent difference was small.

The absence of a difference in the flavor of the April 12 pair is of interest for an additional reason. This syrup was produced very late in the season, after sap flow from trees had stopped and the daily high temperatures had been warm (≥60 °F,15 °C) for several days. If late–season off–flavors appeared earlier or more frequently in red maple sap, we would expect to detect a difference in the flavor of syrup made from red and sugar maple sap at this time. The absence of a difference suggests that late–season off–flavors do not occur earlier or more frequently in red maple sap.

Overall, the results indicate that there is likely a subtle, inherent difference in the flavor of syrup made from pure red and sugar maple sap, but that overall the flavor of the two syrups is very similar.

Pairs of syrup produced simultaneously with red maple (top row) and sugar maple (bottom row) sap under identical conditions during the 2022 production season.

CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The overall results of this project have demonstrated that the fundamental syrup yields from red maples are very good and not different from those of sugar maples, and that the flavor of syrup from both species is very similar. However it's important to remember that the two species are not the same. Red maples have their own unique requirements to ensure their long–term health, regeneration, and that maximum yields over the long–term are obtained. This includes specific tapping practices, silviculture and forest management practices, and the design and management of tubing and sap collection systems and equipment (e.g. size of mainlines, tanks, reverse osmosis capacity, etc.). For a deeper discussion of these factors and more detailed information on the studies of red maple yields and syrup flavor, additional resources from this research team are available.

Acknowledgements

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This article's contents are solely the responsibility of the authors
and do not necessarily represent the official views of the USDA.

By Maxime Breton
Director, Technical Sales and Projects

CDL Intelligence for 10,000 Taps and Under: Everyday Challenges

Sugaring season is never completely simple. It requires energy, time, and constant attention. More often than not, it's not the major issues that wear producers down, but the small, recurring frustrations that come back day after day.

Vacuum Sensor in the forest

Those areas you always keep an extra eye on.

Those pump stations that require repeated trips.

Those tanks that stay on your mind even after leaving the sugarhouse.

Those extra checks you do "just in case."

It's not dramatic but it adds up.

Over time, these frustrations chip away at your time, your energy, and most importantly, your peace of mind.

AN ACCESSIBLE STARTING POINT

We often think 4.0 is reserved for large-scale operations. In reality, for most producers, it starts much simpler: by solving one concrete issue. Not all of them. Just one.

The first step is to clearly identify it. Think back to your last sap run. When did frustration kick in? Where did you lose unnecessary time? What forced you to intervene more often than needed?

That's usually where the issue lies.

Once identified, the problem already feels more manageable. Then it's time to discuss it with your CDL representative—whether the goal is reducing travel, gaining real-time visibility, avoiding surprises, or stabilizing a more sensitive area.

SUPPORT WHEN IT MATTERS

If needed, CDL's advisory team can come on-site to assess your situation: network observation, targeted measurements, and operational analysis. The goal isn't to overhaul everything—it's to understand what will truly simplify your day-to-day operations.

SMALL ADDITIONS, BIG IMPACT

In practical terms, this might mean adding a vacuum sensor in a specific sector to quickly detect variations, installing a motorized valve to reduce trips to remote stations, or adding a level sensor to prevent tank overflows.

The system is designed to integrate naturally into your workflow, with support and training to ensure CDL Intelligence remains a simple, effective tool not technology for the sake of technology, but clarity and control.

The results are quickly noticeable:

- Fewer unnecessary trips
- Faster, more precise interventions
- Greater confidence when leaving the sugarhouse
- Less "blind" management

Take the example of Mr. Roy, a maple producer from the Beauce region with a 3,000–tap operation. In the woods, locating leaks and monitoring the tubing network represented a significant challenge. Thanks to sensors installed at the ends of the mainlines, he can now quickly identify problem areas, go directly to the right locations, and better understand how his network behaves, particularly during thawing periods and when adjustments need to be made to the lines.

At the sugarhouse and pumping station, frequent travel was also an issue due to the distance between the installations. The addition of remote start controls for the vacuum and transfer pumps, tank–level sensors, and cameras now allows him to monitor his operations at all times, directly from his phone.

This example shows that it is not necessary to automate everything to achieve tangible results. In Mr. Roy's case, the CDL Intelligence system allows him to improve efficiency, reduce travel, and respond more quickly. He can therefore continue working in the woods while the equipment is running, with greater peace of mind and without worrying about overflows.

REGAINING CONTROL

What surprises most producers isn't the technology it's the peace of mind. The ability to stay in control, even when off–site.

After solving one issue, something shifts. 4.0 no longer feels intimidating it becomes tangible and accessible. Then comes a second improvement. Then a third.

Not to automate everything, but to simplify everyday operations.

IT ALL STARTS WITH ONE

Modernizing your sugarbush isn't about following trends or trying to outgrow your neighbors. It's about choosing not to let the same issue affect your peace of mind season after season when there's a simpler way to manage it.

Sometimes, it all starts with fixing just one.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

ANDRÉ FONTAINE – Bellechasse, QC

10,000 taps

For André, the main challenge was quickly locating leaks in his network.

With monitoring in place, he now knows exactly where to intervene, without having to walk the entire system. The result: fewer trips, faster interventions, and significant time savings, especially valuable in a context where labor is harder to find.

By Jocelyn Pelletier
Product Manager - CDL Intelligence

Making Precise Decisions with CDL Intelligence: The Role of Data in a Sugarbush

Everyone would love to predict exactly when the next sap flow will happen. To pinpoint, every time, which mainline is leaking. To know a tank will overflow before the first drop even hits the ground. We all dream of having that sixth sense that never gets it wrong.

But in reality, relying solely on instinct is a bit like going all in in poker before even seeing your hand. It's not a strategy, it's a gamble. And a sugaring season is not something you leave to chance.

WHERE LOSSES HIDE

In the woods, problems aren't always obvious. A leak on a secondary line. A 5/16" line pulled out by a deer. Tubing chewed by a squirrel. A subtle break after an ice storm. Nothing dramatic. Nothing that immediately stands out.

At the extractor, the vacuum may look good. The gauge shows a reassuring number. Yet a specific section of the system may be losing two or three inches of mercury. Not enough to trigger alarm bells, just enough to quietly reduce yield across hundreds of taps.

Every passing hour becomes another gamble.

THAT IS WHERE 4.0 CHANGES THE GAME.

With sector-based sensors, decisions are no longer based on general impressions. Vacuum levels can be compared in real time. You can see that one section reaches its target vacuum more slowly. You notice that a specific zone reacts differently during a thaw. You detect unusual variations during a strong run.

Instead of walking the entire bush "just in case," you go where the data points.

WHERE IT ALL HAPPENS

In the sugarhouse, the same logic applies. A tank overflowing isn't bad luck, it's a lack of the right information at the right time. A pump starting too early. A transfer poorly synchronized. A concentrator shutting down at 2 a.m. without anyone knowing.

With real-time monitoring, these situations are no longer surprises. Level sensors prevent overflow. Temperature probes signal freezing risks. Analyzing operating cycles reveals anomalies before they turn into breakdowns.

You are no longer guessing. You are measuring.

A SUGARBUSH THAT COMMUNICATES

What sets the CDL approach apart is that information isn't isolated within a single machine. Equipment can be accessed remotely through one unified application. Producers can see what's happening in their sugarhouse, pumping stations, or specific sections of their network, even when they are not on-site.

And these systems aren't static. Through remote updates, equipment can evolve, gain new features, and improve performance without requiring physical modifications.

The vision goes even further. Work is underway to develop sensors connected directly to 5/16" lines, with the goal of making them accessible at scale and increasing their presence throughout the network. Other sensors in development could help pinpoint the exact location of a problem and even identify its nature,

The CDL Intelligence interface in use

whether freezing, slope issues, or leaks within the system.

Ultimately, the goal is full interconnectivity between equipment. Systems will be able to share data, communicate with each other, and automatically adjust to maintain optimal operating conditions.

LESS GUESSWORK IN THE SEASON

4.0 doesn't replace a producer's instinct. It removes the guesswork. You can't control wildlife, and certainly not the weather. But you can choose not to manage your season like a coin toss.

Poker is for Saturday night.

A sugarbush is managed with information. And when you have the right data in hand, it's no longer a question of luck.

It's the best hand at the table.

By Marie-Philippe Rock
Communications Agent

Growing at CDL

From the moment I joined CDL in 2025, I was entrusted with several mandates, including leading what would become my very first edition of the CDL magazine, my "baby," as I like to call it. During my hiring process, I was told that at CDL, if you want to grow, you truly can. And it wasn't just a slogan. When you take the time to listen to people's journeys, you quickly realize that growth here is a lived reality. Some, like me, arrived just a few months ago. Others have been here for thirty years. Some started on the shop floor, others in strategic roles. But they all speak about the same things: trust, teamwork, challenges... and that strong feeling of being part of something bigger than themselves.

ELARBI OUKASSOU

Based at the St-Lazare head office since 2025

Elarbi joined just six months ago. He previously worked in banking and in structured government environments, but here, he discovered something different: a strong sense of team spirit. As a cost analyst, he is building his role day by day as he learns. He feels listened to, supported, and trusted. For him, choosing CDL wasn't difficult: the history, the impact in the maple industry, the reputation. But what stands out most now is the sense of welcome, the collaboration, and the human side.

DENIS LEHOUILLIER

Based at the Ste-Claire plant since 2025

Denis already knew members of the team personally. He had long heard what it was like to work at CDL through people already there. What convinced him? Not being treated like a number. Today, what keeps him here is the quality of the people around him, "good people," as he says. He enjoys his role as a designer, continues to learn, and sees himself growing in engineering for years to come. He doesn't just talk about work. He talks about the team.

CATHERINE CARON

Based at the Ste-Claire plant since 2025

For Catherine, it all began in childhood. A sugar shack. A passion passed down by her father. Studying food engineering felt natural, and working at CDL almost just as much. She saw a real opportunity to contribute to an industry she deeply loves. Now Assistant Director of Engineering, she speaks enthusiastically about the work environment, people who love what they do, an accessible leadership team, even as the company grows. A place where you're invited to evolve.

AND THEN THERE ARE THOSE WHO HAVE GROWN WITH CDL

CARL PLANTE

Now at CDL Mégantic, with us since 1995

Carl started as a welder over 30 years ago. Since then, he has traveled across Quebec, the United States, and Ontario, working on some of the company's largest installation projects. His path hasn't been linear and that's exactly what makes it unique. "If you want to move forward at CDL, you can," he says simply. You need determination. The company opens the doors.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

JEAN-FRANÇOIS ROBERT

Now at CDL La Guadeloupe, with us since 2005

An automotive mechanic by trade, Jean-François learned to weld here. He's done it all: team leader, service, and sales. He speaks about his attachment with striking sincerity. He remembers his first weeks, when every morning a manager would come by to ask how he was doing, not out of obligation, but out of genuine interest. He compares the relationship with the company to a couple: never perfect, but when communication is there, trust grows. And that trust is what makes people stay.

PETER SEVELKA

Based at CDL Central Ontario, with us since 2008

Peter began his maple industry career back in the days of Atkinson's, long before it was acquired by CDL. Starting in shipping, he grew in a fast-paced environment where he had to learn quickly and adapt. Those qualities helped him move forward, through logistics, management, and sales, to become store manager and regional leader. What he remembers most are the relationships built along the way, with customers, teams, and mentors. He speaks about trust: the trust given to him and the trust he developed over time. Today, what he enjoys most is being in the field, meeting people, and feeling that he belongs.

GUILLAUME PERREAULT

Now at head office, with us since 2016

Guillaume also grew with CDL. Three internships during his mechanical engineering degree, working on projects still in place today. Production planning, leadership, service, now Director of Sales and Service for Canada. His journey is marked by challenges and the trust placed in him. "If you're able to make decisions and stand by them, you're able to move forward." What he appreciates most? Never being held back, always encouraged to go further. His next challenge is more personal: finding balance to stay with the CDL family for the long term. Maybe until retirement.

KORY WOODS

Based at CDL St. Albans, with us since 2014

Before joining CDL, Kory already had a strong interest in working outdoors and in the maple industry. He started in shipping and receiving but always seized opportunities. Monitoring, automation, service, management he explored multiple areas before moving into sales in Vermont. His journey has been built steadily through hard work, curiosity, and a desire to keep learning, and it's far from over.

WARREN LACASSE

Based at La Guadeloupe plant since 2016

Warren started as a welder-assembler. He wanted challenges, and found them. Floor coordinator, planning, management, plant director. Today, he oversees three production facilities. "We saw big potential in him before he saw it himself." He speaks of recognition, early trust, and constant challenges that still motivate him today.

MYRIAM GARANT

Based at the Ste-Claire plant since 2020

Myriam joined in 2020 as an accounting technician. In five years, she moved into business intelligence, then project management for financial system implementation. She loves learning and challenges. She appreciates that growth is possible if you truly want it. But she insists on one thing: growth never happens alone. It's always a team effort.

KRISTINE ROY

Based at CDL Lancaster since 2021

For Kristine, it all started with a friend's recommendation. She was drawn to the store manager role because it combined two familiar worlds: maple and customer service. Over time, by listening, observing, and interacting with customers, she gained confidence and knowledge. Today, she advises customers naturally and effectively. What matters most to her is service, real service, "with a smile," as she says, and creating a positive experience. She doesn't know where she'll be in a few years, but she knows she wants to keep learning and contributing, and feels she can do that here.

LINE DOIRON

Based at CDL Acadie since 2016

For Line, CDL has long been part of her daily life. A maple producer for over 20 years and distributor for over 10, she already understood the field before becoming a store manager. What started as helping out gradually became a growing role. She learned to better understand producers' needs, adapt to seasonal rhythms, and organize operations to respond quickly, especially during peak periods. It's demanding work, but deeply rewarding. What motivates her is seeing the impact of her work and continuing to grow year after year. And she emphasizes: none of it happens alone. Her family, her partner and son, support her every day.

What stands out from all these conversations is not just growth, it's attachment.

Maybe "the sugar bug," as some say jokingly.

Maybe the passion passed down by owners, teams, and veterans.

Maybe simply the feeling of mattering.

At CDL, the company grows.
Technology evolves. Projects expand. And people grow with it.

As Marie-Pier Jolicoeur, Executive Director of Human Resources, puts it:

"The career paths presented here show that there is no single way to grow at CDL.
As a Human Resources team, our commitment is to support each person's development while respecting their individual pace, aspirations and strengths. We believe the greatest success stories are created when talent meets the right opportunities, benefiting both our employees and the company."

If you are looking for a place where you can learn, take on new challenges, earn trust and reach your full potential, regardless of where you begin, perhaps your story could start with us!

Marie-Pier Jolicoeur
Executive Director
of Human Resources

CDL, where your career takes root!

At CDL, we are a fully integrated company, from tree to table.
This reality allows us to offer a wide range of opportunities, including procurement, production, sales, logistics, and distribution.

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AND THAT DIVERSITY IS OUR STRENGTH

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Your maple syrup projects from A to Z

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- > **Installation of mainlines and tubing**
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- > **Assembly of drop lines**
- > **Implementation of the CDL Intelligence**
- > **Turnkey installation of equipment**
- > **Repair at the sugarhouse**
- > **Modification of equipment**
- > **24/7 assistance during the sugaring season**

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