



# Transportation and Marketing Acer Access and Development Program

*Fiscal Year 2017*

## *Description of Funded Projects*

**Number of Grants Awarded:** 3  
**Amount of Funds Awarded:** \$900,000.00

For more information, please visit the grant program's website: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/acer>

**NOTE:** The project descriptions below were provided by the grant recipients.

### Iowa

**Recipient:** Iowa State University of Science and Technology  
Ames, IA **Award Amount:** \$346,800.00

**Project Type:** Producer and Landowner Education

#### ***Moving Production of Maple Syrup as a Sustainable Specialty Crop in the Upper Midwest Forward through a Suite of Educational Platforms Geared Towards New and Established Maple Producers***

Iowa State University of Science and Technology will assist and educate established engaged and unengaged producers, new or expanding hobby producers, and non-producing landowners that wish to make their woodlots available for maple production. Project staff will specifically support the maple producing association members and non-members of six Midwest states (Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Iowa, Indiana, and Illinois) as well as in the Inter-Tribal Maple Syrup Producers Cooperative with direct, face-to-face learning opportunities, workshops, and field based events all while offering educational outreach to the entire maple production region through written, online, and video platforms. Areas of focus will include: 1) increased the knowledge and adoption of technology to more efficiently produce high quality, food safe maple sap, and syrup from existing taps; 2) increased taps per established producer by utilizing a new clearinghouse that geographically links producers in a location with local landowners willing to rent or lease woods for production; 3) informed landowners/managers of potential revenue from renting/leasing woodlots for maple production and how to formalize the process; and 4) increased overall production through Maple 101 schools (in person and online content) geared towards potential producers or hobbyist looking to expand in the Midwest. This effort will also create a single point of contact for maple serving several Midwest states to spearhead education events, handle producer questions, create and disseminate maple information from one easily accessible site.

## Vermont

**Recipient:** University of Vermont and State Agricultural College  
Burlington, VT

**Award Amount:** \$349,484.00

**Project Type:** Producer and Landowner Education

### ***Outreach to Improve Yields and Profits for Maple Producers***

The University of Vermont and State Agricultural College will increase production per tap of maple syrup, increase total U.S. maple syrup production, and increase net revenue for producers throughout the maple-producing region of the U.S. by increasing producer knowledge, awareness, and understanding of best, sustainable practices in maple production through the development and deployment of a multi-faceted education program and resources and to conduct new research to answer a critical need on sustainability of maple production given seasonal and climatic uncertainties. Specifically, project staff will develop a maple industry web portal to serve as an information hub for disseminating education to maple producers on best management practices (BMPs) to increase yields per tap, total production, and provide positive net economic returns. Educational videos will also be produced about maple production best management practices to increase yields per tap, total production, and net economic returns. Project staff will conduct research in critical areas to identify new maple tapping practices to increase and maintain yields and production given changing seasonal conditions and specific weather challenges. This research and information about best practices will be presented at maple conferences, meetings, and open-houses throughout the maple-producing region of the United States.

## West Virginia

**Recipient:** West Virginia Department of Agriculture  
Charleston, WV

**Award Amount:** \$203,716.00

**Project Type:** Producer and Landowner Education

### ***Expanding the Maple Industry in West Virginia and the Central Appalachian Region through Research and Education***

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture will build upon recent educational and research efforts to accelerate the growth of the maple industry in West Virginia and the central Appalachian region by increasing producer knowledge of the environmental, social, and economic factors that influence sap and syrup production in the central Appalachians. Specifically, project staff will investigate the feasibility and establish a "Southern Syrup Research Institute" at West Virginia University. Additionally, staff will work with producers to develop an identifiable marketing strategy for maple syrup and maple products produced in the central Appalachians. Efforts will also be made to expand the production of maple syrup and maple products in West Virginia and the central Appalachians through the development of online extension and training programs.