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An Act To Change the Grade Standards of the Maine Maple Syrup Industry

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 7 MRSA §892-A, sub-§1, ¶D, as amended by PL 2007, c. 24, §1, is further amended to read:

D. "Maple syrup," which may also be spelled "maple sirop" or "maple sirup," means the liquid derived by concentration and heat treatment of the sap of maple trees, (*Acer*) or by the solution in water of maple sugar or maple concentrate made from such sap. The solids content of maple syrup may not be less than 66% by weight or more than ~~69%~~68.9% by weight, as measured in Brix units at a temperature of 68 degrees Fahrenheit.

Sec. 2. 7 MRSA §892-A, sub-§2, as enacted by PL 1991, c. 326, §2, is amended to read:

2. Maple syrup grades. The following grades are established as the official maple syrup grade standards for the State.

A. ~~"Grade A Light Amber" means pure maple syrup that is free of any material other than pure, clear liquid maple syrup in sanitary condition; has a color no darker than the federal Department of Agriculture's visual color standard light amber or has a color for light transmittance not less than 75.0%Tc; has a delicately sweet, original maple flavor; and has a density of at least the equivalent of 66.0° Brix at 60° Fahrenheit Modulus 145. Grade A Light Amber maple syrup must be free of sugar crystals and may not be damaged in any way.~~

B. ~~"Grade A Medium Amber" means pure maple syrup that is free of any material other than pure, clear liquid maple syrup in sanitary condition; has a color no darker than the federal Department of Agriculture's visual color standard medium amber or has a color for light transmittance between the range of 74.9%Tc to 60.5%Tc; and may have a flavor that is more pronounced than that of Grade A Light Amber, but that is not strong or unpleasant. Grade A Medium Amber must meet the density requirement of Grade A Light Amber. Grade A Medium Amber maple syrup must be free of sugar crystals and may not be damaged in any way.~~

C. ~~"Grade A Dark Amber" means pure maple syrup that is free of any material other than pure, clear liquid maple syrup in sanitary condition; has a color no darker than the federal Department of Agriculture's visual color standard dark amber or has a color for light transmittance between the range of 60.4%Tc to 44.0%Tc; and may have a flavor that is stronger than that of Grade A Medium Amber, but that is not sharp, bitter, buddy or off-flavor. Grade A Dark Amber must meet the density requirement of Grade A Light Amber. Grade A Dark Amber maple syrup must be free of sugar crystals and may not be damaged in any way.~~

~~D. "Grade A Extra Dark Amber" means pure maple syrup that is free of any material other than pure, clear liquid maple syrup in sanitary condition; has a color for light transmittance between the range of 43.9%Tc to 27.0%Tc; and may have a flavor stronger than Grade A Dark Amber. Grade A Extra Dark Amber must meet the density requirements of Grade A Light Amber. Grade A Extra Dark Amber maple syrup must be free of sugar crystals and may not be damaged in any way.~~

~~E. "Commercial Grade" means pure maple syrup that is free of any material other than pure, clear liquid maple syrup in a sanitary condition; has a color for light transmittance less than 27.0%Tc; and may have a strong flavor. Commercial Grade maple syrup must be free of sugar crystals and may not be damaged in any way. Commercial Grade maple syrup may not be placed in packaged maple syrup containers and may not be sold, offered for sale or exposed for sale as packaged maple syrup.~~

~~F. "Substandard" means bulk maple syrup that fails to meet the requirements of any other grade. Such syrup may not be placed in packaged maple syrup containers and may not be sold, offered for sale or exposed for sale as packaged maple syrup.~~

G. "Grade A Golden" means pure maple syrup that is free of any material other than pure, clear liquid maple syrup in sanitary condition; has a color for light transmittance of not less than 75%Tc; has a delicate taste; and has a light to more pronounced golden color. Grade A Golden maple syrup must be free of sugar crystals and may not be damaged in any way.

H. "Grade A Amber" means pure maple syrup that is free of any material other than pure, clear liquid maple syrup in sanitary condition; has a color for light transmittance of less than 75%Tc but not less than 50%Tc; has a rich or full-bodied taste; and has a light amber color. Grade A Amber maple syrup must be free of sugar crystals and may not be damaged in any way.

I. "Grade A Dark" means pure maple syrup that is free of any material other than pure, clear liquid maple syrup in sanitary condition; has a color for light transmittance of less than 50%Tc but not less than 25%Tc; has a more robust or stronger taste than maple syrup in lighter color classes; and has a dark color. Grade A Dark maple syrup must be free of sugar crystals and may not be damaged in any way.

J. "Grade A Very Dark" means pure maple syrup that is free of any material other than pure, clear liquid maple syrup in sanitary condition; has a color for light transmittance of less than 25%Tc; has a very strong taste; and has a very dark color. Grade A Very Dark maple syrup must be free of sugar crystals and may not be damaged in any way.

K. "Processing Grade" means any maple syrup that does not qualify for Grade A labeling, including off-flavored maple syrup. Processing Grade maple syrup may not be sold in retail markets and must be packed in 5-gallon or larger containers.

Sec. 3. Contingent effective date. This Act takes effect only if:

1. The Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry receives written notification from the United States Department of Agriculture that the department has adopted the international grading system for maple syrup set out in this Act;

2. The Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry receives written notification from the International Maple Syrup Institute that the federal government of Canada has adopted the international grading system for maple syrup set out in this Act and the institute provides to the commissioner official documents from the Canadian federal government verifying this action; and

3. The Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry notifies the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Senate, the Clerk of the House of Representatives and the Revisor of Statutes that written notice of the adoption of the international grading system for maple syrup set out in this Act has been received from both the United States Department of Agriculture and the International Maple Syrup Institute.

SUMMARY

This bill replaces the existing maple syrup grading system for the State with a new grading system that has been proposed by the International Maple Syrup Institute. It proposes a uniform grade of maple syrup: Grade A for maple syrup sold at retail. The bill takes effect only upon adoption of the new grading system by the United States Department of Agriculture and the Canadian federal government and notice of those actions being provided by the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Senate, the Clerk of the House of Representatives and the Revisor of Statutes.