

FACT SHEET: NY Agriculture Literacy Day

On one spring day, 13 New York City public schools, 58 classrooms and over 1,300 2nd graders learned that maple syrup comes out of a tree, not out of a bottle or a can.

NY Ag Literacy Day provides 2nd graders with the opportunity to learn about New York state agriculture – where food comes from and the people who are involved in growing and producing it. This year students learned all about maple syrup through classroom activities and the reading of a book that told the story of maple syrup production.

Spoons Across America is the county coordinator for New York City, covering the boroughs of Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens, partnering with New York Agriculture in the Classroom.

Agricultural literacy is the basic knowledge that all citizens need to make informed decisions impacting their health.

Spoons trained volunteers to conduct the lesson plan and to read and discuss Marsha Wilson Chall's *Sugarbrush Spring*. Spoons also donated a copy of the book to participating classrooms and New York Agriculture in the Classroom (the agency overseeing NY Ag Literacy Day) donated a book to each school library.

NY Ag Literacy Day 2008:

PART ONE: The Spoons volunteers read *Sugarbrush Spring* and students learned that the process of harvesting maple syrup has changed little in over 200 years.

PART TWO: Students participated in a tasting of maple syrup, noting the color, texture, aroma and flavor. They compared pure maple syrup with commercial brands that are found in supermarkets.

PART THREE: Classroom literacy activities addressed learning standards in the following areas: English language arts, science living (environment and systems thinking), career development (knowledge about different careers), and social studies (geography and economics).

SPECIAL VISITOR: Ms. Billie Pickert, a maple syrup producer from upstate New York, visited two schools and engaged children in activities to illustrate the harvest and production of maple syrup. Students learned how to tap a tree, tasted fresh sap and compared it against finished syrup.

The Teachers Say...

"It's a great program for the students to learn about agriculture and they loved it."

"We need to have more programs like this – if there are other farmer colleagues that could do this it would be awesome!"

"Thank you! The program was wonderful and kids were very enthusiastic."

The Students Say...

"I learned they don't have maple trees or maple syrup everywhere."

"So that is how we get the syrup? I want to learn more."

"I learned you need cold weather to make maple syrup."

Taste Explorations

"It's like maple syrup juicy water."

"I tasted bumble bees but it smells like pancakes."

"It tastes like honey and makes my throat feel better."

Our mission: Spoons Across America® is a 501c3 not-for-profit organization dedicated to educating children, teachers, and families about the benefits of healthy eating. We work to influence the eating habits of children through hands-on education that celebrates the connection to local farmers and the important tradition of sharing meals around the family table.

Our Partners: New York Agriculture in the Classroom (NY AITC) educates youth, teachers, and consumers about agriculture and the food and fiber system. NY AITC is a partnership between Cornell University, the NY State Department of Agriculture and Markets, the NY State Education Department and the New York Farm Bureau. www.nyaged.org

Our Ethical Stewardship: Spoons Across America is committed to the ethical stewardship of our donors' and partners' dollars. From Farm to Table, Inc. (d/b/a Spoons Across America) is a registered charitable organization; Federal Tax ID# 74-3030135. A copy of our most recent financial information may be obtained directly from the Office of the Attorney General, NY State Department of Law, Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271. For more information, visit www.SpoonsAcrossAmerica.org.

