

## Can Pure Maple Syrup Help Reduce Chronic Inflammation?

*First-ever Global Symposium Convenes to Review Latest Science on Natural Sweetener*

**Longueuil, Quebec, April 3, 2017** – The first-ever global symposium solely dedicated to sharing the latest scientific discoveries on the potential health benefits of 100% pure maple products from Canada took place on April 2 in San Francisco at the 253rd annual meeting of the American Chemical Society (ACS), the largest scientific society in the world. At the symposium entitled, “Chemistry and Biological Effects of Maple Food Products,” scientists from around the world shared the results of their research that expands the science of maple’s potential impact on several areas affected by chronic inflammation. These include metabolic syndrome, brain health and liver disease, as well as maple’s emerging link to a healthy gut microbiome.

The global symposium was organized by Dr. Navindra Seeram, who currently serves as chairman of the Division of Agricultural and Food Chemistry of the American Chemical Society, and has extensive experience examining the impact of phytonutrients in foods such as berries and pomegranates. In collaboration with the Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers, Dr. Seeram has been studying the unique properties of maple in his laboratory at the University of Rhode Island since 2009. The results of his research stimulated the interest of the global scientific community, which has uncovered additional health benefits of pure maple products.

A new University of Rhode Island study highlighted at the symposium revealed the presence of inulin, a type of carbohydrate recently discovered for the first time in maple syrup. Inulin is a complex carbohydrate (natural dietary fiber) that acts as a prebiotic and works to encourage the growth of “good” or beneficial bacteria in the gut. Inulin joins the other beneficial polyphenols, vitamins and minerals already identified in pure maple syrup. This latest discovery could allow maple to be classified as a functional food.

In addition, a new study conducted on animals and also revealed at the symposium, focused on the beneficial effect of a symbiotic (prebiotic and probiotic) maple sap drink in recovering gut flora balance, which may have been lost for several reasons, including treatment with antibiotics.

“A healthy gut, with a balance of beneficial bacteria, helps to stimulate and support a healthy immune system. A healthy immune system, then, can help protect the body against chronic inflammation,” said Dr. Seeram. “Chronic inflammation has shown a potential link to brain conditions such as Alzheimer’s disease. As such, this research provides additional information linking pure maple syrup, a unique natural sweetener, to brain health. However, additional animal studies, along with eventual human studies, would be required to confirm these initial findings.”

This year, two newly discovered additional compounds with antioxidant properties and potential health benefits have been identified in the lignan’s family, bringing the total count of known phytonutrients in maple products to 65. This may help support discoveries made over the past few years on the inherent properties of maple syrup from Canada that comes directly from the sap of the maple tree, making it an all-natural product with unique health benefits. Discovered in 2011, a unique, polyphenolic molecule in maple syrup, Quebecol<sup>1</sup>, and one of its analogues (isoquebecol, recently synthesized), have demonstrated that it significantly decreases the production of inflammation mediators.

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<sup>1</sup> Li, L., Seeram, N.P. Quebecol, a novel phenolic compound isolated from Canadian maple syrup. *Journal of Functional Foods* 2011, 3, 125-128.

“The 7,500 Quebec-based maple producers are committed to pursue the funding of new research to help further identify the positive health impacts of pure maple,” said Serge Beaulieu, President of the Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers. “This is why we have chosen to work with Dr. Seeram along with other researchers. Dr. Seeram’s tremendous experience studying the impact of phytonutrients in plants and fruits has propelled maple research since he began studying the natural sweetener in 2009. There is still much to discover about maple’s health benefits and the scientific community has only begun to uncover the tip of the iceberg. We will continue to allocate resources to research on maple products to discover its impacts on the human body.”

Inflammation is a normal part of a healthy immune response and is a biological process that helps heal injury and fight infection. When inflammation becomes uncontrolled or chronic, it plays a role in exacerbating a variety of health-related issues. There are several ways to help prevent and combat chronic inflammation. A diet rich in foods that contain polyphenols, such as green tea, red wine, fruits and vegetables – and potentially pure maple syrup from Canada – may be beneficial for supporting a healthy immune system.

The Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers does not promote an increase of sugar consumption. When choosing a sweetener for moderate use, it appears that 100% pure maple syrup from Canada has more healthful compounds compared to some other sources of sugar.

### **About the Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers and Maple Products from Quebec**

The Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers (FPAQ) was founded in 1966. Its mission is to defend and promote the economic, social and moral interests of some 7,500 Quebec maple businesses, as well as to develop initiatives that collectively market the products that flow from Quebec’s 44 million taps. The quality work of these maple producers has made Quebec the source, on average, of 72 percent of the world’s maple syrup production and 90 percent of Canada’s maple syrup output. Together, Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia contribute the other 10 percent of Canadian production.

FPAQ proudly promotes the reference brand Maple Products from Quebec in addition to coordinating the international promotion and value creation of Canadian maple products on behalf of Canada’s maple industry. In this capacity, the FPAQ leads and directs the research efforts of the Réseau international d’innovation des produits d’érable du Canada.

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