

Listening Sample Task 2 - Script

Ms. Normandin, thank you for joining us. Recently, there's been a lot of discussion about a global maple syrup shortage. How serious is the situation from your perspective?

It's certainly a challenge, but I wouldn't describe it as a crisis. Demand has risen sharply worldwide, while production last year was lower than usual. However, Quebec's strategic maple syrup reserve was created precisely for circumstances like this, so we're well positioned to respond.

The reserve seems to play a central role. Could you explain how it is being used this year?

Of course. By February, we will release approximately 50 million pounds of maple syrup, which represents about \$150 million in value. The reserve itself can hold up to 100 million pounds, so even after this release, we will still maintain a buffer for future uncertainty.

Well that's a relief. But why wasn't there enough maple syrup made last year anyway?

Honestly, it was the weather. A warmer winter shortened the sap-collection season, resulting in around 133 million pounds of syrup, which is about 40 million pounds less than the previous year. Likewise, increased rain made collection a challenge. As producers, we work very closely with natural conditions, and fluctuations like this are unavoidable.

At the same time, exports have increased significantly. Why is global demand rising so quickly?

Several reasons. Maple syrup is increasingly seen as a natural alternative to sugar, which appeals to health-conscious consumers. In addition, international markets have expanded rapidly. Canadian exports, most of which come from Quebec, have risen 21 percent since early 2020.

You've mentioned the United States in previous interviews. How does its situation affect Quebec's supply?



The U.S. does not maintain a strategic reserve. They sold all of their 2021 production, so when demand rose again, they turned to Quebec suppliers. This has increased pressure on our supply, but again, that is exactly why our reserve exists.

Some consumers are worried about shortages or price increases. Should they be concerned?

Not at this point. The reserve was established by producers back in 2000 to stabilize the market during years of high demand or low production. This year, this back-up inventory is merely functioning as intended.

Looking ahead, what steps are being taken to prevent similar shortages in the future?

We're planning for growth. Over the next three years, we intend to add seven million new taps to the 50 million trees already used annually. And if global consumption continues to grow, there's still room to expand further.

Finally, what does Quebec's role mean in the global context?

Quebec produces nearly 75 percent of the world's maple syrup and exports to over 60 countries. That responsibility is significant, and our goal is to ensure long-term stability for producers, consumers, and international partners alike.

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