



tinest of pinholes can cause loss of suction, and lines to freeze and be obstructed.

As with so many agricultural operations, sugaring is time-intensive and subject to production pressures, says Mark. “You have to do everything as efficient as you can, whether you’re farming or making maple syrup. ... Everything figures in. And to stay competitive in the business, you have to go with it. You have to keep up on technology.

“And thank goodness we have the kids here with us. Young help is key to working these new technologies,” says Mark, cutting his eyes toward “the kids.”

Adds Hope, “We feel really fortunate that we’re doing what we do. Not everyone can say that they have their family this close by. We’re lucky we have our kids here and they enjoy doing what we do. It’s nice.”

As is, she says, the time she gets to spend with neighbors during sugaring. “It’s a lot of hard work on top of our other jobs, but having company helps make it fun. We’re so glad the tradition of people visiting continues, and,” she adds with a smile, “that my mother still makes those doughnuts.” **FL**

Clockwise from left A sure-footed tractor helps the Colburns check tubing during sugaring; Syrup that’s bottled and ready to go; Samples of “sticky gold” await grading; “During sugaring,” says Mark, “we all pitch in and do a little bit of everything. It’s a joint effort for sure.”



Twice the Tractor

“**CHEAPER ISN’T ALWAYS BETTER** as far as getting the job done,” says Mark Colburn about work on his multifaceted farm.

“Originally, we had purchased a 135 Kubota in the M series,” he says of the tractor he planned to use for spreading manure, as well as mowing, baling and transporting hay. “We had a bit of bad luck with the first one, ended up getting another one. Beginning at haying, we had a bit of bad luck with that one.”

Price, says Mark, had been the main reason for his decision to buy the Kubota. Yet frustrated with its performance, he decided to visit Northeast Farm Sales & Service and test-drive a Massey Ferguson® 6485. His son, Devin, had recently purchased an MF1660 and was extremely happy with everything from its turning radius and fuel efficiency to power and durability.

After driving the MF6485, Mark says he was sold immediately. “It’s twice the tractor of the lesser brand.” The advantages are plenty, he says, including ...

- **POWER** “It pulls the manure wagon up hills without a problem.”
- **EASE OF USE** “The 6485 is definitely user-friendly. The controls in the cab are easy to find and understand.”
- **COMFORT** “The climate control [cab] is second to none. The cab is mounted on rubber, so it’s free-floating, and so is the air-ride seat. You don’t feel the bumps as bad.”
- **THE DYNA-6 TRANSMISSION** “There’s never a gear in there that you can’t find to get the job done.”
- **FUEL EFFICIENCY** “Whether you’re at low rpm or high rpm, the fuel efficiency is still equivalent to the smaller tractors that we have around here on the farm.

“There’s always plenty to do [on this farm] and the 6485 is a big part of it,” Mark says. “The only thing I don’t like about my tractor is I can’t have two.”



VISIT WITH THE COLBURNS.

Scan the code with your phone to see a video of the Colburn farm, or visit myFarmLife.com/maple for more about the sugaring industry.

Percent increase in production in the U.S. since 2008: **70%** ///

Number of taps placed in U.S. trees in 2013: **10.6 million**, 10 years ago: **6.8 million**

FarmLIFE /// Winter 2013

15