

# Meet the Farmers: Jenny Meyer

## Sterling Sugar Shanty

### Red Creek, N.Y.

Since it's loaded with antioxidants and minerals including Calcium, Iron, Manganese, Potassium, Riboflavin and Zinc, many health experts recommend pure Maple Syrup as a healthier alternative to refined sugar. Jenny Meyer, owner of Sterling Sugar Shanty, agrees.

"Going Maple is the healthiest way to go," she says. "You can use Maple Sugar to replace brown sugar, white sugar, or granulated sugar whenever a recipe calls for it. All forms of Maple Syrup are a good substitute to any other form of sugar in your diet."

Downtown Farmers Market visitors will find four different kinds of maple products at Sterling Sugar Shanty's booth: Maple Sugar, Maple Candy, Maple Cream and of course, Maple Syrup.

"This is as fresh as you're going to get," Jenny says, waving her hand as if to display the array of Maple products.

Maple season typically starts at the end of January and runs through April. Harvesting the syrup is a simple two-step process. Essentially, a hole is drilled into a maple tree and once the sap is collected, it's boiled until most of the water evaporates.

"We run a line through the woods to accumulate all of the sap, and this year, we spent about two months boiling," Jenny explains. "It's probably a good three to four months of intensity. We tap, collect, boil and bottle," she says.

The Meyer family owns about 2,800 trees sprawled across 20 acres in Red Creek (near Sterling) in Wayne County.

Maple Syrup is made first, then the focus shifts to Maple Cream. To make Maple Cream, the syrup is boiled down to about 236 degrees. To get the consistency necessary for Maple Candy, the syrup must be boiled to 241 or 242 degrees, then cooled and molded. Making the Maple Sugar is last on the docket.

"Everything is 100% pure Maple, and everything is fresh," Jenny promises.

Sterling Sugar Shanty was founded three years ago, but the team has years of experience. Jenny's husband and brother-in-law worked on farms around the Buffalo area when they were growing up. One of their tasks was making Maple Syrup.

"We always wanted to go into business for ourselves, and my brother-in-law was ready to move up here, so we said, 'let's do it!' That's literally how we got started," Jenny explains. "They had the know-how, and we just haven't stopped."

And Sterling Sugar Shanty truly is a family business! Jenny's daughter thought of the name, and designed the logo. This is the team's first season at the Market.

"So far, it's been great, the people and the vendors. Everybody that I've met has been really accommodating and friendly," says Jenny. "They've stopped by and said, 'We love your syrup' 'The kids love it!' 'Thank you very much!'"

Though Jenny's favorite Maple product is the Maple Cream (Hint: Read the above caption for serving suggestions!) she says nothing beats Maple Syrup on pancakes, which she loves to enjoy with her family.



The Maple Cream is Jenny's favorite product, and she's full of serving suggestions: "It can be used as a spread, or you can use it as a dip. It's great with some fruits, apples, strawberries, even pretzels. It's great in your oatmeal, great on French toast, and great on a spoon!"



Courtesy: Sterling Sugar Shanty (Facebook)

**Fun Fact:** As long as it's refrigerated after opening, Maple Syrup can't go bad. If it is left out, and grows mold, it's very easy to remove - as long as you follow Jenny's advice: "Just re-heat it up to 180 degrees, and the mold will float to the top. Skim it off, and it's harmless.. It won't affect the taste either."



/Sterling Sugar Shanty