

1989  
Sweet tradition continues

# Hundreds at Purple Valley syrup fest

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PURPLE VALLEY — A sweet tradition continued this weekend for Bill Glassford.

Twenty-two years ago Glassford's mother-in-law decided to hold a maple syrup festival on her farm near here.

After a couple of years, the festival moved about three kilometres down the road to the Purple Valley Community Centre where it has been held ever since.

But the Glassford family continued to supply the syrup.

At this year's festival held Saturday, he stood outside the Community Centre selling small plastic jugs of the syrup from the back of his pickup truck.

Inside the gates, hundreds of people ate pancakes drenched in the same syrup — about 120 litres of it in all. The festival also featured a turkey shoot, music, pony rides, games and crafts.

"We're pretty well the only ones left around here making syrup," said Glassford.

Until about eight years ago, he and about three other local producers supplied the festival. The others stopped, but Glassford said he can't.

"It gets to be sort of a tradition after a few years. Once you've done it for 10 or 15 years you hate to stop doing it," he said between transactions with customers.

Glassford runs a 320-hectare (800 acre) beef farm.

About one-quarter of the land is bush where he places about 650 taps each spring.

The syrup he sold Saturday belonged to last year's stock but it was all "guaranteed fresh."

"Syrup is syrup. It never goes



Sun Times photo by Willy Waterton

## Bill Glassford sells some maple syrup to Al Pollard of Port Elgin on Saturday

bad," Glassford told a customer.

The first sap of this season ran Good Friday.

"It ran like crazy when the sun was shining, then as soon as the sun went in it quit," he said.

Sap flows most easily when the nights are frosty and daytime temperatures rise to about 5 Celsius in sunshine.

Glassford collects the sap in buckets before transferring it to

tanks which are taken to a sap house.

It takes about 40 litres of sap to make one litre of syrup.

A wood-fired evaporator in the

sap house can produce about 45 litres of syrup a day.

Last year, Glassford's sugar bush produced 320 litres of syrup. All of it is sold from the farm.