



**Hard Cider in the North Central Region:**  
Industry Survey Findings and Opportunities for Rural Development

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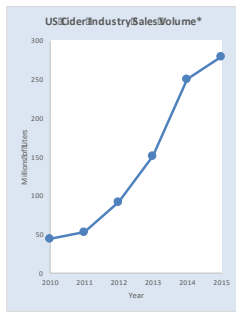
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**Background**

- Hard cider is a rapidly growing industry nationwide
- Cider research is limited



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**About the Survey**

- Surveyed cider businesses in the North Central Region
- Received 44 complete responses
- Purpose: better understand the hard cider industry, constraints and opportunities it faces, and priorities for future research



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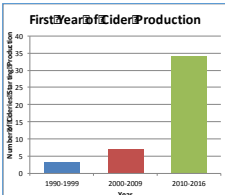
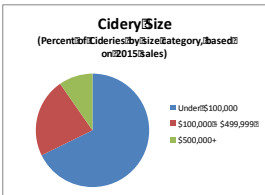
**Survey Results:**

**1. Cidery Profiles**

- The typical cidery is a small, startup company

**Employees (Average of All Cideries)**

Full time = 1.4  
Part time = 1.7  
Seasonal = 1.0




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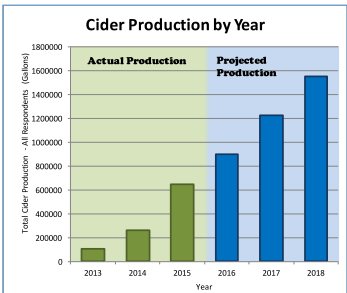
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**2. Industry Growth**

- Production increased more than six-fold between 2013 and 2016
- Companies project continued growth for the near future
- 74 percent of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that there is still substantial room for growth in the cider industry

Cider maker quote: "I don't see a whole lot of bottlenecks."




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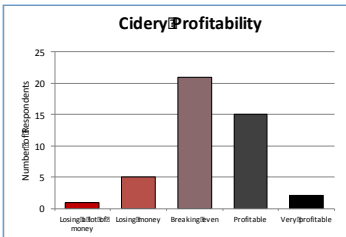
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**3. Profitability**

- Less cideries are "in the red" than "in the black"
- Many are "breaking even"
- Considering that many of the cideries are still startup companies, this is promising

Cider Maker Quote: "I put that we are 'breaking even' as a cidery. This is only because we have had to invest a lot of money into equipment these first 2 years. We should start seeing more profit this year."




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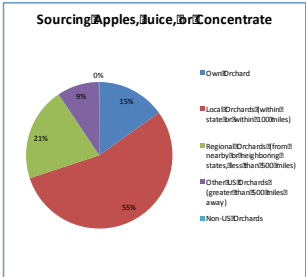
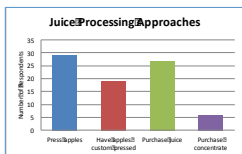
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**4. Sourcing and Processing Apples**

- Cider maker survey respondents support local orchards
- In comparison, the nation's largest cider producer, Angry Orchard, purchases primarily apple juice concentrate from non-US orchards<sup>1</sup>



1. The Boston Beer Company, 2015 Annual Report.

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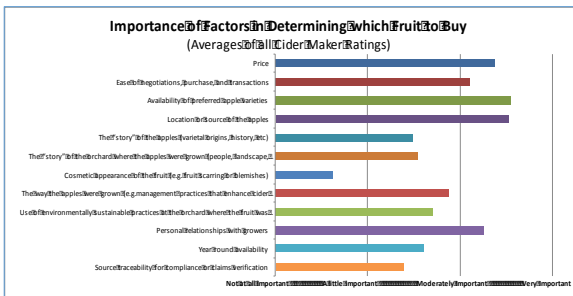
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**Prices Paid for Apples**

Cider Maker Quotes on biggest challenges in sourcing apples, juice or concentrate:

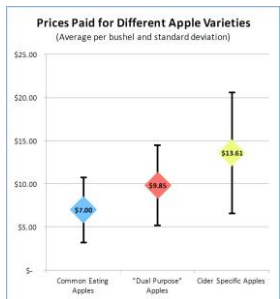
*"convincing local farmers to grow more cider apples and less dessert apples."*

*"Huge demand for good cider apples, very little supply."*

*"Competition for the varieties we need to make quality cider."*

*"They [cider apples] are WAY too expensive and way over rated IMHO for a common cider made to sell to a larger base."*

*"Orchards can sell their juice at farmers markets for way more than we can pay for cider so getting heirloom and cider apples is very hard, very expensive and almost not worth it."*




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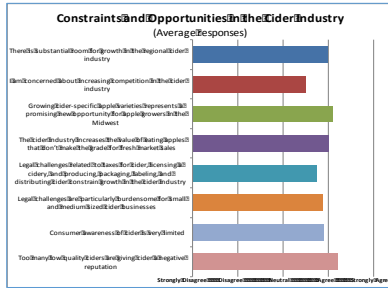
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**7. Constraints and Opportunities**

**Cider Maker Quote:**  
*"Too many consumers get off on the wrong foot with cider. They've tried a few sweet, soda-like ciders from places like Woodchuck and Angry Orchard, and they think, "oh, I don't like cider; it's too sweet." The adolescent branding from these companies further tarnish cider's image, and ciders are often relegated to a junky corner of retail stores where craft beverage drinkers rarely venture."*




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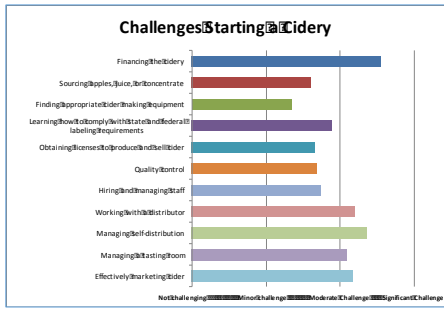
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**8. Challenges Starting a Cider**

- Financing, marketing, and distribution were the greatest challenges




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**Greatest Challenges In Starting a Cider Quotes:**

*"We are all fighting over one tap handle. If we can get two at most accounts that will help."*

*"Cost and profitability in the wholesale market."*

*"Working effectively with a distributor."*

*"American culture of drinking (750ml are a hard sell for a non-sharing, individualistic society)."*

*"There is a lot of education involved in growing the market at this point. Mostly from the stand point of how it differs from mass produced, sweeter ciders made with concentrate."*

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9. Research Preferences

- Cider makers could benefit from new research on a wide range of topics
- Research into market preferences and successful business practices edge out other preferences




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Research Preferences Quotes:

"For us, making good cider is the easy part. Selling it is what is hard. I'd like to know what package format is the most profitable. What type of bottles/cans do cider drinkers want to buy?"

"Listserve or exchange site related to available apples/juice from local growers. Outreach between growers and juice producers with cideries."

"What are the economics and cultural practices of growing cider specific fruit in the Midwest?"

"Breeding/selecting/finding cold climate cider apples. Sub acid, tannic apples. Bitter sweets."

"For wine, there are whole fields of study in oenology, viticulture, and wine marketing. Researchers in cider have only started to scratch the surface."

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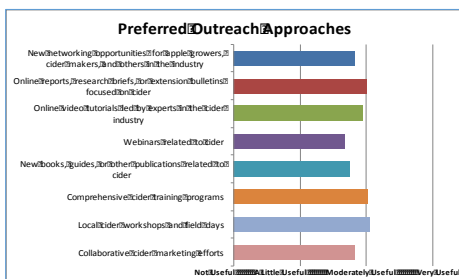
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10. Preferred Outreach Approaches

- Webinars were least preferred... oops!




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**Closing Cider Maker Quote:**

*"I think we can make world class cider in our region, but it will take work and cooperation as a whole... In the end, we believe great cider balances on the apple, so the better apples we can grow or source the better our cider will be. We hope that most, if not all, Upper Midwest cider makers find ways to use local apples because, to us, that is the beauty of wine/cider, the taste of the region."*



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**Contact Info**



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