

# Michigan Apple Committee

## NEWS



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### **Michigan Apples and Hard Cider Go Hand in Hand**

**GRAND RAPIDS, Mich.** – The popularity of craft beverages has grown immensely in the last 20 years, and the hard cider has quickly become one of the fastest growing sectors within this industry.

From 2008 to 2016, the number of hard cider drinkers increased from 6.8 million to 24.5 million. The popularity of hard cider can be explained by its characteristics that make it appealing to various groups of consumers. Similar to beer and made like wine, hard cider appeals to both men and women. Hard cider is naturally gluten-free, providing consumers with gluten intolerance or celiac disease an alternative to beer and wine.

The Michigan Apple Committee is supportive of the hard cider industry and their work with Michigan Apple growers.

“Demand generated from Michigan cideries creates an additional revenue source for local farmers and often uses apples that may not otherwise be sold any other way. Cider also gets consumers thinking about apples at a place they have never considered them before,” said John Behrens, president of the Michigan Cider Association.

There are over 80 wineries and cideries that produce hard cider in Michigan. Michigan cider makers work with Michigan Apple farmers to grow specific cider apple varieties that are needed to produce hard cider. Many of the apple varieties produced in Michigan, such as Cortland, Winesap and Northern Spy (and others), are used to give hard cider a unique sweet yet acidic taste. Cider makers feel the best ciders present a blend of tannin, acidity and sweetness using a variety of apples. They will often come up with their own blends of varieties to achieve a unique flavor.

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“The demand for locally produced food and beverages grows every day. Cider makers based in Michigan are fortunate to have access to a large supply and vast array of locally grown apples,” said Diane Smith, executive director of the Michigan Apple Committee.

Consumers can support Michigan Apples and Michigan produced hard ciders not only in retail stores and cider mills, but also at restaurants and bars.

“Seek out a Michigan Cider and discover a new favorite beverage. Michigan Cider uses more Michigan-grown ingredients than either the beer or wine industries, so by choosing Michigan Cider consumers are acting as great supporters of local agriculture,” said Behrens.

The Michigan Apple Committee is a grower-funded nonprofit organization devoted to marketing, education and research activities to distinguish the Michigan apple and encourage its consumption in Michigan and around the world. For more information, visit [www.MichiganApples.com](http://www.MichiganApples.com).

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