

**Voluntary Report** – Voluntary - Public Distribution

**Date:** March 02,2021

**Report Number:** BU2021-0013

**Report Name:** FAS Sofia Helps First-ever Export of US Organic Maple Syrup to Bulgaria

**Country:** Bulgaria

**Post:** Sofia

**Report Category:** Export Accomplishments - Other, Export Accomplishments - Market Access

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**Report Highlights:**

Bulgaria's leading importer of organic products, BalevBio, requested FAS Sofia's assistance to assist with the first-ever shipment of U.S. organic maple syrup to Bulgaria. Post provided extensive assistance to the U.S. exporter regarding European Union (EU) regulatory compliance. As a result, in early November 2020, the first lot of U.S. organic maple syrup at a value of \$5,000 successfully arrived. Expected sales of the product are estimated to reach \$50,000 soon.

## **General Information**

In February 2020, Bulgaria's leading organic foods importer and trader, BalevBio, requested FAS Sofia's assistance to facilitate U.S. organic maple syrup imports into Bulgaria. BalevBio is an organic market leader with a chain of retail outlets and an online store. It offers high-end products to urban consumers with average and above-average levels of income. BalevBio conducts its own imports, distribution, retail, and online sales.

BalevBio established contact with Runamok Maple from Vermont following a meeting at Natural Products Expo East in Baltimore in September 2019 as a part of a trade mission organized by Food Export Association of the Midwest USA and their European representative. Post nominated Balev Bio for this mission, given its position as a leading organic trader.

Although Runamok Maple had no previous experience exporting to the EU and the novel coronavirus pandemic slowed commercial negotiations, in late summer 2020, commercial discussion resumed. FAS Sofia assisted by providing Runamok Maple with step-by-step guidance, particularly regarding the EU's Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES) registration. TRACES is the EU's online platform for sanitary and phytosanitary certification required for the imports of foods into the EU. FAS Sofia also engaged local regulators and border authorities to ensure smooth and timely market entry.

The first lot of imported organic maple syrup, valued at \$5,000, arrived in early November 2020, just in time to be displayed at FAS Sofia's USDA booth at the InterFood and Drink trade show in Sofia. The product also arrived with Bulgarian-language labeling. Currently, the product is being distributed for sale at BalevBio retail outlets and café. Although Runamok syrup is expensive for many Bulgarian consumers, there is still a sizable high-end products market for and an increasing consumer demand for organic foods in Bulgaria. The importer is optimistic about the product and estimates \$50,000 in sales over the next few months. Reportedly, the product has no competition in its category.

The State of Vermont is the primary beneficiary from this trade link. FAS Sofia remains in regular contact with the Bulgarian importer and will continue to support its efforts to expand its U.S. product portfolio.

## **Post Contact Information**

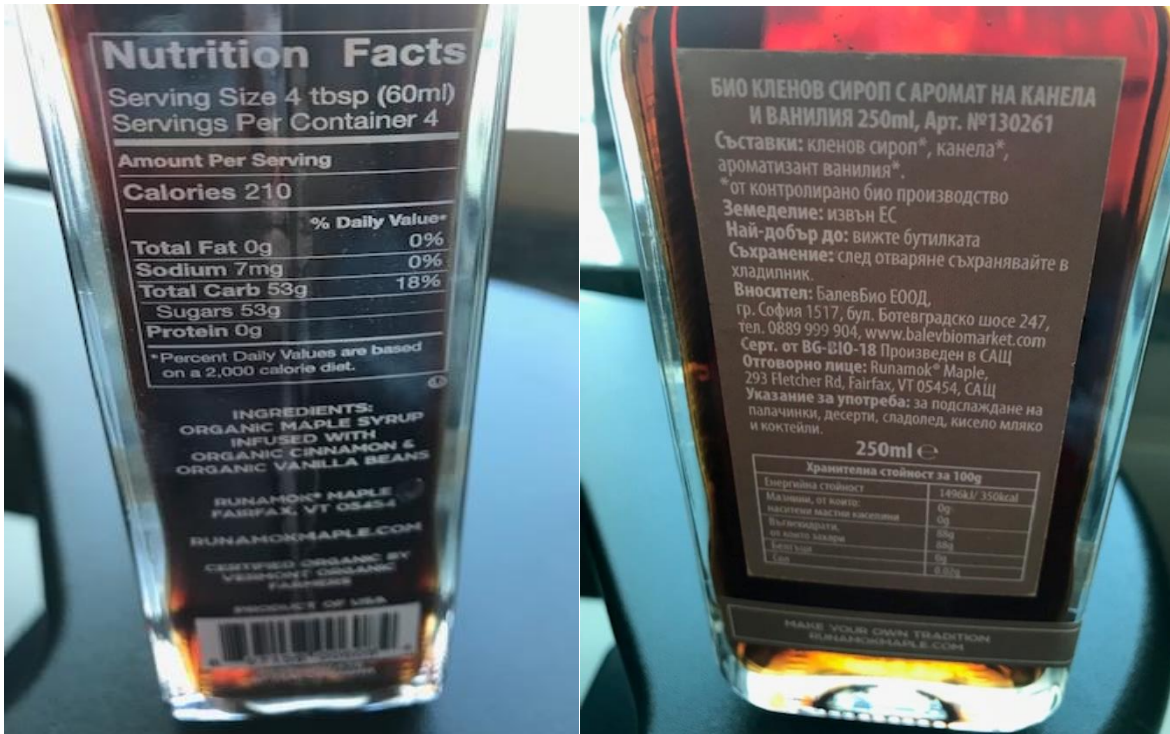
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**Appendix:**

**Runamok Maple syrup displayed at InterFood and Drink, November 4-7, 2020**



**The original label and the label in Bulgarian, as per EU labeling requirements:**



**Attachments:**

No Attachments.