***Editorial Views* April 2014**

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**Fruit Physiology Meeting in Geneva**

One of the nice things about working in fruit production is the contact and comradely feelings that exists between all the scientists and extension workers around the world. The last week in March, Rich Marini, Dave Eissenstat, two graduate students and I had the opportunity to attend an International Society of Horticulture Science (ISHS) symposium in Geneva, New York.

This was an auspicious gathering to honor eight pomology plant physiologists upon their impending retirement. Among those being honored were Scott Johnson and Ted DeJong from UC Davis, Duane Greene from University of Massachusetts, Jim Flore from Michigan State, Ted DeJong, Alan Lakso from Cornell, and John Palmer from New Zealand. Over my career I have

interacted and learned from all of them.

The symposium was preceded by a one day fruit grower’s school sponsored by Cornell (see article elsewhere in this issue). Some of you went to last year’s school where you learned about precision crop management, a topic I covered in this year’s winter meetings. There were a number of growers from the Mid-Atlantic that attended the one day school. The school even drew a retired pomologist from Maine, George Greene. I had dinner with George

Tuesday night when we arrived. For those of you wondering, George hasn’t slowed down much and is enjoying retirement. The fruit school was followed by a three day symposium on the current and future of tree fruit research. There were 140 extension and research scientists from around the world that participated in this symposium. The honorees gave invited lectures relating to their years of research in tree fruit.

There was much discussion and papers on the effects of the environment on tree physiology. As you would expect, one of the major themes was the effect of sunlight on fruit production and how over the past 50 years our understanding of its importance has changed. Of course our production system has changed dramatically in apple and cherry production. As I was

coming out of graduate school, the “modern” orchard was largely trained to a head and spread Central Leader system utilizing semidwarfing rootstocks such as M.7, M.26 and MM.111. Contrast that with today’s modern orchard consisting of supported trees on M.9 and B.9 rootstocks where instead of growing a tree structure to support a bearing surface, we are growing just the bearing surface and providing the structure. Other hot topics were the use

of precision crop load adjustment, peach and sweet cherry training systems, the evolution of plant nutrition studies and the interaction of temperature on fruit growth and development. In total there were 58 oral presentations and 40 posters on tree fruit work being conducted across the globe.

One of the highlights is the chance to personally interact and discuss what each individual is doing in his or her research. You realize that we are more similar than different and tree fruit production problems are the same whether the orchard is in Germany, Italy, Chile or Brazil.

The other thing you realize is that the number of extension and research scientists is dwindling. Their support is declining and as John Palmer stated, no money means no research and no money means no researchers. The SHAP Research committee recognizes this fact and is striving to increase research funding. All fruit growers benefit from the work that is done in the region and from the research that our colleagues in other states and countries are doing.