***Editorial Views***

*By Rob Crassweller*

**March & April Observations**

The big news continues to be the impasse on the state budget. First of all, thank you to all the fruit growers in Pennsylvania who have taken the time to contact either the Governor or your State Legislators to encourage them to reach an agreement. Over the nearly 30 years I have

been writing this column, it seems like every 4 to 5 years we have a state “budget crisis.” I have to admit this is the longest hold out I have ever seen. While the big news has been the impact upon Extension and 4H programs, there are many other ripple effects of a potential lack of

budget agreement. If the budget is not resolved, then all the research stations could be shuttered including FREC and Rock Springs. I just received trees for a new apple rootstock trial with M.9 Nic29, G.41 and G.935 with two cultivars. We also have trees coming for several new

cultivars including the next advanced selections from the Midwest Apple Improvement Association. If the issue is not resolved and the stations are shut down, we do not know if we will be able to take care of existing or new plantings or if we would even be allowed to set foot on the properties. At Rock Springs, it is hard to keep the public off the farm and many people walk their dogs there on weekends, but due to liability we may not be able to work with the rees. Maybe, I will need to borrow a dog and “take walks.” To see a greater list of potential impact

go to <http://agsci.psu.edu/news/budget/budget-impactson-the-college-of-agricultural-sciences>.

We finished up our winter tree fruit meetings the first week of March. We had a lot of good discussions on the topics. We should be posting the Power Point presentations soon on the Tree Fruit Website. I would encourage you to take a look at the site since there is a lot of other information on tree fruit production at the site. (<http://extension.psu.edu/plants/tree-fruit>) There are also several videos on various topics that you can direct your browser to from the site.

As I mentioned in the winter meetings, Jon Clements from the University of Massachusetts has a website devoted entirely to information on the Tall Spindle system (<https://ag.umass.edu/fruit/resources/tall-spindle-apple>).

Last month was the warmest February on record and March seems about ready to follow the same trend. Out pruning in mid-March, I could see some green tissue on early varieties like Empire. Although I hate to say it, there does not seem to be a lot of difference in flower development in Pennsylvania from south to north. Normally we expect to see two to three weeks difference in flower development from the Maryland border to the New York border. The

two week extended forecast suggests that temperatures will remain warmer than normal. Right now I suspect everyone is scrambling to finish pruning and applying early dormant sprays of copper.

Planning is underway for the 2017 Mid Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention. The Convention Committee met in Hershey last week to decide on possible pre-conference workshops, meeting room assignments, registration and exhibitor fees and initial joint programs. I plan on holding

a program planning meeting sometime in the middle of April to develop topics for the tree fruit sessions. If you have any ideas about speakers or topics drop me a note at rmc7@psu.edu.