

President's Message

Greetings,

Hopefully as you read this, apple harvest will be over or at least you can see the light at the end of the tunnel. Labor has been a challenge this year, especially with a large crop. All reports say the quality of the crop is excellent.

Planning is well underway for the 2015 Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention. I look forward to another very good convention and hope for good weather. Pre-registration will be in next issue of this newsletter and be sure to make your room reservations early.

We have had several meetings to discuss the need for Grad student housing at the Fruit Research and Extension Center. The building that has been used for the past 30+ years is no longer in good condition to house students. FREC is looking to build new housing. It will be a real challenge to have this building constructed and ready for occupancy by spring. Alternate housing may be needed if this cannot be accomplished. We are open for any suggestions! Discussion is ongoing for funding of this building project.

The 2015 Farm Show is also fast approaching. Remember when the call/email comes asking for help to man the Apple Booth, apple sampling table and the young growers booth, PLEASE volunteer your time. This is our largest fund raiser of the year. It is also a good time for growers to have the opportunity to speak with consumers about the wonderful quality of Pennsylvania fruit.

I hope this finds everyone healthy and ready for some well-deserved down time.

Tim Weiser, President

Editorial Views

By Dr. Rob Crassweller

"A Preview of Hershey"

While there can always be last minute changes, the fruit program for the Mid Atlantic Fruit & Vegetable Convention is pretty well set. Thanks to all the growers who helped serve on the program committee and to my colleagues at FREC, PSU, Rutgers University, Virginia Tech and University of Maryland who provided suggestions on topics and speakers and who also "volunteered" to make presentations. We start working on the annual program in April with the planning meeting; although the initial Convention committee composed of representatives from the various organizations meet in March to outline the general flow to the event and decide on registration fees, exhibitor fees, and Tuesday's keynote speaker.

I'm pleased to announce this year's keynote speaker is Russell Redding, Dean of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences at Delaware Valley College. This year's Goodling lecture will be presented by Alan Lakso from Cornell University on Tuesday morning. He will be discussing the development and use of the MaluSim carbohydrate model for thinning. The next day he will be talking about water use under northeastern growing conditions for apple trees. Tuesday afternoon will be devoted to a pruning workshop titled "Forget the Art of Pruning – It's all Science." Tara Baugher helped organize this session and will feature Peter Hirst and Johnny Park from Purdue University and project leaders on the Specialty Crop Grant project on automating pruning in apples and wine grapes. Other speakers include Jim Schupp and Jay

Harper from Penn State. The afternoon will finish with a grower panel on computer assisted pruning.

Wednesday will begin with a presentation on the NEWA weather and pest modeling and then a panel by growers that have been using the system. Gary Thompson, Associate Dean for Research, will be talking about the importance of grower funded research and its importance. Peter Hirst will be presenting a second talk about apple flower development. His team has made some very interesting observations that are changing what we know about apple flowering. (You can read about some of his findings elsewhere in this issue.)

Wednesday will also feature a grower panel on innovations some growers have adopted to help with their fruit production business's. Other presentations on Wednesday include control options for internal worms, wooly apple aphids and the latest on a low cost harvest assist device.

Thursday will be potpourri of topics including a grower panel on adjusting spraying based on tree size, information on worker protection standards, best management practices to minimize bitter pit on Honeycrisp, evaluation of new fire blight resistant pears as grown in Michigan and fire blight management strategies in the wake of 2014 experiences. Thursday afternoon will begin with another presentation on sprayer application; followed by a panel on the use of social media to promote your business, and preliminary results on an Asian pear trial and help in determining harvest maturity of Asian pears.

The stone fruit session will be held Wednesday afternoon through Thursday morning. The Ernie Christ lecture will be presented by Bill Shane from Michigan State. There will also be a presentation on the PSU peach rootstock trials, a grower panel on peach varieties, marketing and promotion concepts of peaches, and BMSB and its effects on IPM in peaches.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the meeting. I would also remind you that the 9th Annual Mid-Atlantic Cider contest will be held on Tuesday. I hope you will enjoy the meeting and pick up some new ideas that will make you more profitable.