

Fruit News article September 2016

As a fruit grower I understand the importance of tree fruit research. Like my peers, every season I face new challenges from insects, disease, bacteria, and weeds. To make matters worse, just about the time I think I have the problem solved, pesticide resistance rears its ugly head. Like most of you I turn to our University and Extension system for answers, and in many cases the answer is immediate. Other times the answer isn't currently known, but the researchers are working diligently to find a solution. The system works great and is a huge asset to our industry. But solutions take research, and research takes money. Each of our many challenges costs thousands of dollars and sometimes many years to find a solution. As an individual grower I don't have near enough money to tackle one or two, let alone all of the issues I face. Researchers rely on funding from many sources to keep the research going. One of those important sources is the Pennsylvania Apple Marketing Program. Over the past 5 years PAMP has carefully used grower money to support over \$350,000 in tree fruit research projects. That money has gone towards issues like controlling the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug, apple scab resistance, post-harvest decay, bitter pit in Honeycrisp, rootstock and cultivar evaluations, fire blight management, and many more.

But that's not all that PAMP does for our grower, packer and processor family. Marketing the 12 million bushels of apples Pennsylvania grows each season is a huge challenge. Since 1968 we have relied on PAMP's professional experience and marketing talent to help get the Pennsylvania Apple message out to consumers. Just like research, as individuals our advertising money doesn't make much noise in the loud merchandising world. But collectively as a fruit growing family we can continue to awaken consumers to the crunch of Pennsylvania apples and the quality of our processed products.

And then there's legislation. We all know how important a collective voice is when trying to be heard by politicians and government agencies. As an active and collaborative member of both the US Apple Association and US Apple Export Council, PAMP represents the collective voice of Pennsylvania growers, shippers and processors when it comes to policies and regulations affecting the apple industry both domestically and internationally.

All of this brings me to a point. In a few weeks you will be asked to vote for or against the referendum to retain the Pennsylvania Apple Marketing Program.

Whether you are a grower, packer or processor, PAMP represents us all. As individuals our dollars don't make much of a difference, but if we continue to join our funds as a collective fruit growing family, we can continue to battle the tough issues in the future, and continue to be a profitable industry.

Enjoy the rest of the fall,
Tad

Tad Kuntz
SHAP President