

## Fruit News article November 2016

As I sit down to write this letter, the 2016 apple harvest season has come to a close, the school tours are over, the apples are all in the cooler, the pumpkins are all sold, and my brain is overwhelmed with the lead up and conclusion of the presidential election process. I am mentally exhausted. Time to take a little break and walk around the PA Mountains in search for whitetails, and maybe catch up on a little sleep...not that I would ever sleep in the tree stand.

The “behind the scenes” work for all the winter meetings is really in full swing now. My email inbox is full of requests to meet about the educational meeting agenda, speakers, bus tours, and break-out sessions. The people in charge of heading up the Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention all year are kind enough to not tax the growers too hard during the season, but when harvest is over in November, they pounce like a tiger trying to get everything done before the deadline. The amount of work that goes on behind the scene to pull off the week long convention at Hershey is staggering. Have you ever thought about who organizes all the programming, who lines up the speakers and panels, who organizes and rents space to all the vendors, who works with the venue to make sure the rooms are ready, who makes sure the audio visual equipment is in place and working and on and on? What about those 100's of small details like who is picking up the out of state speaker at the airport, and who is in charge of making the badges for the attendees? It is a year-long process that begins the last day of the current convention to begin preparing for the following year. It is a huge job that is expertly accomplished by a small group of dedicated professionals with help and input from the grower community.

I can tell you that this year's Mid Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention is in great hands and it looks to be one of the best ever. I am looking over preliminary schedules for the speakers, the workshops, and the panels being planned, and I can tell you the information will be pertinent, innovative and will meet your needs in order to continue to be on the forefront of agricultural production and marketing. There are presentations that will motivate you, challenge you and help you find creative solutions to the issues that give you headaches each season.

If you haven't done so already, mark your calendars for January 30<sup>th</sup> through February 2<sup>nd</sup> and send in your registration, and join in the fun for the 2017 convention.

Another topic that you will read about in this issue of the Fruit Times is that the PA Apple Marketing Referendum has not passed for renewal as currently written. Losing our legislative presence on the USApple board causes us to lose our voice on the national agricultural scene. Possibly losing our physical presence in the Farm Show building where we have a voice for immediate apple issues which will impact our ability to timely respond to media and legislative issues within our state. Potentially losing our established team of professionals that work tirelessly to promote PA apples would be a huge loss that will ultimately affect our Pennsylvania Apple brand in a very competitive marketplace. Losing the research dollars that PAMP provides to SHAP will impact ongoing research projects, and hamper research on new

and innovative ideas, not to mention the trickle-down impact to our valued research team at FREC.

I personally hope we as a grower community can come together and find common ground that we all agree on to create a new and better program that will work for everyone involved. If you agree with me on my assessment of the situation, please help support the PAMP board as they work to put together a restructured program that will provide the missing pieces that a majority in the PA apple community obviously think are lacking.

If you voted “no” on the referendum, it is equally important for you to speak up. What would make you support a new redesigned referendum? Contact the PAMP board and let them know what you would like changed so PA can continue to be a leader in the competitive apple growing marketplace. There will likely be a public hearing on the issue in January. It will be important for everyone to stay involved with process and help design the program. It’s all about creating strength in numbers, finding common ground and supporting each other so the apple industry can remain viable for years to come.

“Doing business without marketing is like winking at a girl in the dark. You know what you are doing, but nobody else does” -Steuart Henderson Britt

Have a safe and wonderful holiday season,  
Tad Kuntz  
SHAP President