

## President's Message, November, 2018

Well, that's over. Thank God. I have been through a few seasons now, and I can honestly say that this one has been the most challenging. What looked like a crop of diamonds in July, steadily looked, and got worse and worse as the season wore on. I know that most, if not all of you, experienced the same.

The Thanksgiving holiday has recently passed, and I believe we have much to be thankful for. Simply living in a country that provides us the freedom to own property and struggle through such a crappy year is a gift that many around the world can't imagine. I don't mean to make light of the difficulties this season has created for many of you. I know that farm income will be down, and for many of you it may be difficult to tighten your belts enough, but this is a great country, and a great industry to be a part of.

As we celebrate the Holidays and prepare for the New (better) Year, it's time to think about the Farm Show, apple dumplings and ice cream. The Farm Show committee has been busy this year, preparing for a bigger and better show. With a newly designed exhibit area and a new court of champions display case in the Main Expo Hall, we are encouraging growers to submit entries for the fruit display. I realize that fruit quality was less than we hoped for this year, but remember, it was pretty much the same for everyone. Through the efforts of our Farm Show committee, the PA Department of Agriculture has built us a new, beautiful (I'm told), refrigerated display case to be placed next to the butter sculpture. Let's fill it up.

You can register your entries on the PA Farm Show website, through what appears to be a fairly simple process. Set-up for judging of fruit entries will be on Thursday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>. For those of you who need assistance getting your entries to the show, the extension service has offered to help. Contact Daniel Weber, Tree Fruit Extension Educator at (717) 334-6271, ext. 83850 or [daniel.weber@psu.edu](mailto:daniel.weber@psu.edu).

There will be an opportunity for those of you with farm markets to have your market location displayed on a map of Pennsylvania in the Main Expo Hall (details on how to get on the map on page 10). We are also asking those of you with markets to consider staffing the Apple Sales Booth in the Main Expo Hall with your crew. Bring your flyer to be handed out during your shift.

Whether you run a market or not, we could use your help at one of the three stations staffed by SHAP. The Apple Sales Booth, mentioned above, the Food Court Booth, selling Apple Dumplings, Slushies, Cider, Donuts and Fresh Apples, or the Ag Explore Learning Station, next to the Fruit Display in the Main Hall.

This volunteer work done at the Farm Show benefits us growers in many ways. It provides us an opportunity to interact with our customers in a way we don't often get. We can educate them on issues such as food safety, farm labor shortages, even pesticides. We can put a friendly face on the fruit they are picking up in the grocery aisle. It is also a chance to catch up with old friends in the industry and to make new ones. These booths are the major fund-raising effort SHAP uses to support research and extension. SHAP provided an average of \$200,000 in research funds for fruit crops in each of the last four years, just over \$250,000 last year. Much of this funding was generated at the Farm Show by volunteers working for our organization. I would like to thank all who have worked in the past and ask all who can to consider signing up for a shift or two this year.

This year's Farm Show dates are January 5<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>. Please try to find time in your schedule to work a shift or two. You can sign up quickly and easily by going to the SignupGenius website that has been set up at: <https://bit.ly/2NPRzs7>. There are three tabs at the top, one for the Ag Explore Learning Station (displayed when you open the page), one for the Apple Sampling and Sales Station and one for the Food Court Sales Booth. Make sure you click on the tab for the booth you wish to work. It's simple, doesn't take much time, and will save your county coordinator from the hassle of calling people up to fill the slots. Please get online now and sign up. If you're forgetful like me, it won't happen if you don't do it now. Then you'll be getting a phone call later.

Wishing all of you a Safe, Healthy and Happy Holiday Season, and a Better New Year!

Chris Baugher  
SHAP President