***Editorial Views***

*By Dr. Rob Crassweller*

***Graduation***

Another crop of agricultural students has graduated from Penn State and the other land grant and agricultural schools across the nation. I attended the undergraduate ceremony held in the Bryce Jordan Center in the afternoon on Mother’s Day and then marched in the Graduate

School at the same venue in the evening.

An article appears in this issue about the potential uptick on jobs for these students. A study from Purdue University reports that in the next five years there will be nearly 58,000 jobs per year looking for qualified candidates in the agricultural related fields. The majority will be in management and business areas (see chart to the right). However, it is estimated that there will

only be, on average, 35,400 graduates with expertise in food, agriculture, renewable natural resource or the environment. Interestingly, women will make up more than half of the food, agriculture and related fields graduates. Female graduates will make up 52% of the bachelor’s degrees, 55% of the master’s degrees and 48% of the doctoral degrees.

The increased job opportunities are probably related to the generational change in the work force. When I joined the work force after graduating, there were a number of openings at universities. A sizeable portion of the pomology faculty members were retiring as having come

out after World War II. In the late 1980’s however, that boom had dried up. Now the group that was hired during that period are approaching retirement age. The question is, where are the replacement individuals in extension, research and teaching going to come from? There have been few graduate students entering the applied agricultural fields. In the last few years the

majority of graduate students have been produced by plant biotechnology programs that have very little experience with field work. Increasingly, the candidates for applied

positions have been filled by foreign students. What is worse, the new responsibilities that are being placed on the new hires. Individuals may cover such diverse crops as tree fruit, small fruit and vegetables for both extension and research areas and in some cases required to teach. The wide diversity of crops can mean that the new hire is spread so thin they are not capable of keeping up with the new changes. With all this it will be an interesting next 5 years.

Elsewhere you should also see the announcement for the Penn State Field day to be held at FREC on July 9. There will be a full day of activities including demonstrations in the morning on harvest assist machinery, sprayer calibration and automated pruning. You will need to register for the meeting by contacting FREC. Kari Peter is in charge of the meeting and indicated she put in a request for comfortable temperatures and sunny skies.