

October 2020 president's message

The 2021 Mid Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention is going virtual! A statement for many events that we all have gotten used to hearing over the past eight months, or so. I know that many of you have questions as to how this will work and what all will be included. In the following paragraphs I hope to answer some of those questions. But, before I do, I would like to address something first. The decision to hold the convention virtually is not one that was taken lightly. Countless hours of discussion by the Convention Committee went into this decision. We took into account everything from ability to create a program, grower/exhibitor participation, technology accessibility and financial practicality. This decision will still allow us to provide industry leading educational sessions for growers and marketers of all sizes. Additionally, we can now reach out to speakers and vendors who may otherwise be unable to participate due to logistical reasons. So, while a convention of this style will be different, in some ways it also has presented us with some unique opportunities.

When is the Convention? The Convention will be held February 8-11, 2021

Will the program be as diverse? Yes, the program will contain Tree Fruit, Stone Fruit, Marketing, and Vegetable Sessions, as well as a Spanish session.

Can I still get pesticide credits? Yes, there will be educational sessions with credits available.

Will there be exhibitors? Yes, attendees will be able to connect with vendors through a trade show component.

In the coming weeks, more information will be in the *'Pennsylvania Fruit News'* regarding the full schedule and how to register. While this will be different than what many of us are used to, I highly encourage all of you to register and attend. It takes a tremendous amount of time and effort from everyone from SHAP, PVGA, and the Horticultural Societies of Maryland, New Jersey and Virginia; as well as Extension personnel to create this amazing event each year. However, the main item that makes our convention one of best in the industry is your participation. The interaction between growers, exhibitors, and speakers is second to none. While we may not be able to have that in-person convention this coming year, rest assured we are doing everything possible to recreate that environment.

Wishing you a happy end to harvest season!

Ben Keim

SHAP President