

## President's Message 12-20

As I sit in the office and begin to type, it is a rather cool and breezy day. Many of the leaves have fallen from the trees and light ice coverings on morning puddles are becoming more frequent. Thankfully, for many growers, a very challenging season has come to an end. The election has come to an end (more or less) and the ever-changing world due to COVID-19 continues to be a factor on everyone's mind. Yet as another year begins to wrap up, we are busy preparing for the next growing season. Fall pre-emergent herbicide is being applied to get a jump on next years weed control. Fertilizer is being spread to replace any nutrients removed from the past crops. Trees will be removed in anticipation of the next crop to be planted on that site. Why do I bring up some of these things that seem so basic? It is because it's always better to try and get a head start and look ahead to what's coming up. If not, it becomes too easy to fall behind. For example; we have a saying on our farm when it comes to pruning: "If you're not finished, then your behind". While it may seem silly, the point still remains that it is always better to try and be out in front of things to better prepare. Who knows - maybe if I prepare to attend a Flyers hockey game next year, it might actually happen! (*haha*)

This would normally be the time of year where I would update you on the new items to be offered at the Farm Show and how to sign up to volunteer. As you all are well aware, though, the 2021 Farm Show has been cancelled. While some aspects are being attempted virtually, we, as a board, have determined it would be unpractical and logistically impossible to try and participate this way. We are still actively working with all the personnel at the Farm Show to have the apple industry represented in some way, however, if and what that would be are still unknown. Needless to say, this will have a negative financial impact on our organization since the Farm Show is one of our largest funding sources for research. Rest assured, our overall financial stability is very strong, and we still plan to fund both Research and Extension projects in 2021.

I would encourage all members to participate in the virtual Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention this February for multiple reasons. The most obvious reason is the vast amount of educational sessions you have access to. Secondly, this is when the annual business meeting of SHAP always takes place. This meeting covers the same topics that are addressed at our board meetings and allows the board to update members as to the year's events. It also is the perfect time for members to ask any questions that they may have about the goals of SHAP or ways in which you can become involved. It is my hope and goal that many of you will be able to participate in our annual meeting.

I wish all of you a wonderful and safe holiday season!

Ben Keim  
SHAP President