

President's Message 1-21

Happy New Year! At this point, all I can say is that 2021 will be different than 2020. For better or for worse, no one can predict – but it will be different.

While we are only at the beginning of winter 2020/21, it already feels more like winter than the past several years. In mid-December, we received about 8 inches of snow, which is significant considering that last year we didn't have any snow. While mounting the plow to the tractor, I admittedly even forgot what size wrenches were needed. But it is amazing how fast things start to come back once you begin a project. One of the many reasons I enjoy snow this time of year is that it makes things easier to see while pruning. The white background allows me to see if I am detailing enough, or getting too greedy by leaving extra branches in for more fruit. As the weather has been relatively nice, we have gotten off to a good start and I hope that your pruners have been able to take advantage of the weather as well.

Another item that makes it feel like winter is the Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention. While it may seem like I have drilled this into your heads the past several months (which I have), it is because so many people have worked hard to give you the best program possible. From Maureen working with all the exhibitors and sponsors, to Rob and all the program chairs, Daniel with the many technical aspects, and Don coordinating the poster sessions and YGA Lunch and Learn. Later in this issue, you will find a schedule of the educational sessions and information on how to register. I would like to highlight one session in particular, and that is the "Lunch and Learn" on Wednesday, February 10th. This session will focus on color enhancement techniques and potential effects on quality. In addition, there will be a grower panel to discuss their impressions of these techniques. The reason that I am highlighting this is because the two items that have the greatest effect on profitability are size and color. Also, please note that even though this session is during the lunch hour, it's okay to eat while watching. I suppose that's one nice thing about being virtual.

By the time you all read this, the EPA's comment period for the review of several fungicides will most likely be over. Those fungicides were: Difenoconazole (Inspire Super, Aprovia Top, Quadris Top, Academy), fenbuconazole (Indar), ferbam, thiram, and ziram. I hope that many of you were able to submit comments as to how important those products are to the profitability and sustainability of our industry. If the comment period ends up being extended, I would encourage any of you who did not participate initially to submit your own thoughts.

I look forward to interacting with all of you during the convention!

Ben Keim
SHAP President