

President's Message

Last month, I began my President's Message by saying "Happy Peach Season." By this point however, I think just using "peach season" would say it all. Perhaps some of you have other words you may want to use, but I will leave that to your discretion. It truly feels as though the past 12 months we have been living in Charles Dickens' novel, "A Tale of Two Cities." As the opening paragraph begins "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness..."

I know that many growers have struggled this year to keep peach sales moving while trying to hold price at the same time. For those growers who have had success throughout the season, count your blessings. This is the first time in many years that I have heard of peaches being dumped in the woods for lack of sales. Looking to the future, we must try and predict if we are witnessing an anomaly or the new normal. Based on conversations within our own operation and talking with other growers, we plan to remove some peach trees this winter. Trying to match the volume that you grow with the markets you serve is a constantly changing target. Hopefully, as we begin to shift from peaches to apples, we will see the market stabilize.

Speaking of apples, it appears as though we will start picking 'Honeycrisp' around the 25th of August. This is the earliest we have ever started their harvest. With the large number of 90-degree days during August, I have a strange feeling that harvest may be earlier across the board. These warm days coupled with a tight labor situation could make this the perfect year to apply various harvest management products. I hate to endorse one chemical product over another, but I will say that two of them are the backbone of our harvest plan every year. This becomes especially important when you are harvesting peaches, Gala, Premier Honeycrisp, and Honeycrisp all at the same time. Whose brilliant idea was it to plant all of these overlapping varieties? Oh wait... that was me.

I wish you all a safe, successful, and profitable harvest!

Ben Keim

SHAP President