

# *President's Message*

It is fascinating how certain phrases or sayings seem to persist over the years. The adage, “a big crop gets bigger and a small crop gets smaller,” certainly is appropriate for this year’s crop. The good weather at cell division coupled with timely rainfall has resulted in a large crop for many portions of the state. While it is almost always a good problem to have a larger crop than anticipated, it can come with some challenges.

A large crop means that harvest management becomes much more critical. If it takes five days longer to harvest one variety due to larger volumes, you need to pay close attention to your next variety to make sure quality doesn’t suffer. For some growers, finding sales for additional fruit can become an added challenge. Granted, having fruit in storage gives some flexibility to find additional sales; it’s important to keep in mind varieties that don’t store well or have a smaller marketing window. With this year’s heat in late August, ‘Premier Honeycrisp’ is one that comes to mind. Additionally, a larger crop can lead to what our farm calls, “infrastructure issues,” or in much more basic terms, bins and storage. While all of these items can cause challenges throughout harvest, I suppose they are much better than the alternative ... a small crop and reduced returns.

We have just started picking ‘Fuji,’ and the nights are finally starting to cool. It is much nicer to have a temperature of 40 degrees at sunrise as opposed to 60 degrees. With these cooler nights, the background color on ‘Pink Lady’ is starting to fill in as well. For us, ‘Pink Lady’ harvest is like seeing the white flag come out at the end of a race (one lap to go for those who are unfamiliar). It has been a long—and at times challenging—year, but once the last bin leaves the field, I hope we all can breathe a sigh of relief. Or for those that continue to have months of packing ahead, at least take a breath!

Ben Keim

SHAP President