President’s Message

Well, 2023 is here. While for the next month I’m sure I will continue to date things 2022, that year is now in the rearview mirror. I hope the holiday season was a good chance for all to relax and spend time with loved ones despite the sudden drop in temperatures that showed up. As I visited family in Florida, I couldn’t help laughing at all the complaining about how cold it was, as the coldest temp I saw was 30 degrees. Walking around in a light sweatshirt while others around me might as well be in snowsuits backdropped by palm trees is always an entertaining sight. In keeping with the weather of 2022, this winter seems like its going to be another rollercoaster of constantly shifting temperatures and weather effects. Worrying about pipes freezing to playing in the mud is getting old.

As I sit down to write this, the 2023 Pennsylvania Farm Show is a week away. Thank you to all who have signed up to volunteer their time staffing our two booths. Thank you also to our Farm Show Committee for their tireless effort in putting this show on. From designing our displays and improving our booths to introducing new products to sell, our committee members have put forth great effort to make this a success. New items on the menu for this year are peach salsa and apple cotton candy. While raising funds for SHAP is an important part of this event, it also provides us with a good opportunity to engage with the public in how our industry works and new things coming from it. Many parts of what we do seem like a no brainer to us, but often the questions I get at the booths show that what we see as common knowledge isn’t that common for most of the public. It still amazes me people don’t know that apples will last if you put them in the fridge.

Unfortunately, this New Year is already starting off with a disappointment. As many will know, the Farm Worker Modernization Act was not addressed by Congress before the recess. Despite the efforts of groups like US Apple, it looks like we’ll be waiting a while for more traction on this important issue to our industry. As we see another large increase in the AEWR wage, our labor costs seem like they are going to continue rising each year making it more and more expensive to produce our products. While unfortunately this issue is not one we managed to get traction on, I think it still shows that we as an industry need to support ourselves in our houses of legislation.

Hope to see many of you at the Mid Atlantic Convention at the end of the month.

Andrew Schwalm

SHAP President