President’s Message

Spring has sprung. Sprayers are rolling in the orchard, trees are arriving to put in the ground, and all the other jobs of spring are stacking up waiting to be done. After one of the mildest winters I can remember, with a short spell of cold weather here in March, things have really started to move. It is always interesting discussing the beginning of the year with the public. Many seem to think that trees are on a schedule, and that they always do things at the same time every year. This is, of course, not the case, as looking back over records from the past you can see week-wide swings as to when we started each year. That is somewhat the joy and challenge of farming. We cannot just follow a calendar schedule. Adaptation and willingness to change up what we are doing is what keeps the job interesting and more than just the same monotony every year.

Just like things are taking off on the farm, SHAP is not sitting idle either. After coming off a successful Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention this year, planning for next year’s Convention is beginning to start. For all who attended, thank you for the support, and I hope that you all walked away with something new to try on your operation. Every year we meet to try and develop a program that features topics that are relevant to the Mid-Atlantic growing region. If you have any topics or presenters that you would like us to look at adding to the program, feel free to contact us and we will gladly look into it.

Our next round of Research and Extension projects has also concluded. We have selected several projects that will help give us some good information on improving our cropping systems. Topics range from irrigation management to weed control strategies. I look forward to hearing the conclusions that are reached at the end of these projects. Again, I encourage you to talk to our research partners or SHAP board members if you have any challenges you are facing that you feel are worth putting forward as future research projects. The partnership between our community and our researchers has always been a close and collaborative one that has paid us back immensely and should look to be continued.

As I conclude this President’s message to get back to work, I wish you all a productive and smooth Spring.

Andrew Schwalm

SHAP President