President’s Message

Well, another harvest is in the books. It’s always a good feeling when that last bin of apples comes off the trees and either goes in the cooler or on the truck. Now it’s time to catch up on all the little odds and ends that have been piling up since the start of harvest. Whether it is equipment to fix, sprayers to winterize, books and records to update; work never seems to end, but at least the pressure of getting the crop off is in the rearview mirror. As soon as harvest is done, I have always found it a good idea to make a list of things that didn’t go as planned or worked the way that I had hoped they would. With everything still fresh in my memory, it makes it a lot easier to begin evaluating what changes could be made to improve things. I am a big believer in that there is always something to improve and work towards whether it be small goals like not leaving pruners in the orchard for the mower to find, to the adoption of a new growing system. If you continue to do something that isn’t working without trying to improve it, then you fall into the definition of insanity.

While this may be the beginning of our slow time of the year, many things continue to happen in our industry. In November, interviews began to fill the vacant position at Rock Spring that opened following the retirement of Dr. Crassweller. There appears to be a solid group of candidates applying for the position. This process has happened at a much faster speed than any of us expected. While I am sure it wasn’t the only factor, I do think SHAP’s strong relationship with State College has helped push this forward, showing them how much we value that position and the support it has provided our industry. I personally look forward to working with whichever candidate is ultimately chosen to improve the PA fruit industry.

As we move closer to January, I would like to thank our Farm Show Committee for all the hard work they have been putting into getting ready for the 2023 PA Farm Show. From new products for sale, such as peach salsa and apple cotton candy, to new signage and displays for our booths, they have been working very hard to improve our space and attract attendees to stop at our booths. The Farm Show is a big contributor to SHAP’s ability to fund research projects that directly support our region’s growers. Sign-ups to volunteer at the booths have gone live, and I would like to ask everyone to consider signing up for a shift or two to help us make the 2023 Farm Show a success.

Andrew Schwalm

SHAP President