



GRAIN GROWERS

CELEBRATING CANADIAN GRAIN WEEK IN OTTAWA

Jeff Nielsen, President, Grain Growers of Canada

This spring, I was pleased to join GGC members in Ottawa as we hosted the inaugural National Grain Week. Focused on federal advocacy, we spent a busy three days engaging with decision makers on many levels and from many departments talking about the policy issues that matter to today's grain farmers.

Our theme for Grain Week was "Innovating to \$75 Billion in Agri-food Exports" and we made sure to incorporate that idea into all messaging. The current federal government has placed a strong focus on innovation, and we all know that agriculture fits perfectly into the innovation sphere. The announcement earlier this year that the Protein Industries Supercluster would receive funding is great news for the pulse industry, and the fact that the proposal was selected among non-ag applications is a clear indication of the real growth potential of agriculture as a whole.

I am sure I speak for all of my colleagues when I say that I left Ottawa exhausted. Divided into three teams, we held 37 government meetings with MPs, Senators, and staff from the Prime Minister's Office, the Office of the Leader of the Opposition, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), Transport Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Natural Resources Canada, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA), Employment and Social

Development Canada, and Finance Canada. As a result, we were able to have substantive discussions on a wide variety of topics all around the future prosperity of grain farming in Canada.

From the perspective of pulses, we had the opportunity to discuss the India tariff and fumigation issues with elected officials as well as the Market Access Secretariat (MAS) at AAFC. These discussions were enlightening and it was encouraging to learn more about the behind-the-scenes work that is being done to resolve our trade barriers. We have strong allies in government who understand how crucial it is to keep markets open. While no one can promise a speedy resolution, it was particularly interesting to hear how the MAS ranks trade issues and just how many hundreds are being monitored or addressed at any one time.

The quick passage of an amended Bill C-49, the Transportation Modernization Act, was a top priority as well, and GGC has long advocated for the inclusion of soybeans in the Maximum Revenue Entitlement. We urged the government to ensure that the bill that has since been passed is in place by August 1.

On the more social side, GGC hosted a well-attended Parliamentary reception on Tuesday night. We welcomed about 100 guests including MPs, staff and industry. Agriculture Minister Lawrence MacAulay delivered well-received



Jeff Nielsen, President, Grain Growers of Canada

remarks, and I am always pleased to see how well the Minister engages with his critics from the Conservative Party and the NDP. The success of agriculture is a non-partisan issue and we will need all parties to work together to achieve our potential.

On the horizon, GGC is focused on seeing the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) ratified in Parliament as soon as possible. We have stressed that it is crucial that Canada is part of the first wave of signatories and I think the government is getting the message. I hope that my next update to you will celebrate ratification.

I wish all of you the best for a safe and productive Plant 2018 and thank you for your hard work to ensure a strong Canadian grain industry.