



## PERSPECTIVES

# INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE IN MOROCCO SHOWS THAT PULSE PROBLEMS ARE SIMILAR THE WORLD OVER



*Souk Jemma el-Fnna Market*

The 7th International Food Legume Research Conference (IFLRC) was held from May 6-8, 2018 at Playa de Congres, Marrakech, Morocco. Scientists from over 42 countries participated in the conference and gave updates on research work on legume crops worldwide.

The event was hosted by global research-for-development organization International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) and The International Crops Research Institute for the

Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), among others. Various topics covered during the conference included genomics, genetics, genetic resources, breeding, agronomy, physiology, abiotic stresses and their management, biotic stresses and their management, ecosystem services (biological nitrogen fixation, carbon, water and nutrient footprints), nutritional quality, post-harvest management and value addition, and marketing, promotion and policies. Various targeted workshops were held during the conference as well as covering

chickpea, lentil and grass pea, faba bean, and pigeon pea harmonization of data management systems and big data analytics.

Among Western Canadian scientists at the conference were Alberta Agriculture and Forestry's Mark Olson (Unit Head – Pulse Crops, Spruce Grove) and Dr. Manjula Bandara (Special Crop Research Scientist, AAF, Brooks), Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Dr. Deng-Jin Bing (Research Scientist, Lacombe) and University of Saskatchewan's

Dr. Bunyamin Tar'an, Dr. Steve Shirliffe, Dr. Rosalind Bueckert, Dr. Kirstin Bett and Dr. Tom Warkentin, as well as Dr. Stan Blade, Dean of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences at the University of Alberta.

APG Research Officer Dr. Jagroop Gill Kahlon was invited to present a research talk at the pea workshop during IFLRC about disease tolerance in peas. She was immensely impressed with the plethora of research and newer technologies being utilized in pulse crops.

"Attending such events gives you a very different perspective on problems related to production and marketing of pulses and such an international platform gives one the opportunity to think outside the box," she explained. "Although grown in such different agroclimatic zones and bred for such different end uses, pulses have essentially the same problems, such as coping with abiotic and biotic stresses and breeding for tolerance against such stresses. Research work updates from all over the world reinforces one's beliefs in pulse crops and the direction taken by pulse growers of trying to find newer end uses and markets for our pulses."

She gave the example of Dr. Colin Douglas from the Queensland

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) who informed on the tripled production and export of mung beans and the creation of the international mung bean improvement network for coherent mung bean research. Meanwhile, Dr. Petr Smykal, professor Department of Botany, Faculty of Science, Palacký University in Olomouc, Czech Republic, is looking at ways of breeding pea with its wild relatives to bring in some of the desired characteristics like tolerance to diseases back to the pea genome without having to compromise the yield attributes.

Dr. Kadambot Siddique, University of Western Australia, talked about genotypic variation in phosphorus use efficiency among chickpea germplasm and how Australia is working on ways to harness them. Dr. Rebecca McGhee from Washington State University talked about opportunities around direct seeding of winter pulses and some recent findings of higher yield of the winter peas from the experiments at the Pullman, Washington campus in comparison to spring pulses.

Pulses are an important component of Moroccan diet, Gill Kahlon noted on her journey. Beans, peas and lentils are often used in staple cuisines. Delegates

enjoyed pulses in salads, main dishes and breads. Local markets, called souks, have various lentils available for purchase and add a lot of colour and texture to the dominant olive and dates scenery. The 8th IFLRC is scheduled to be held in 2022 in Kenya.

To learn more about the conference, visit [www.legvalue.eu/news-and-events/events/iflrc-2018-international-food-legume-research-conference](http://www.legvalue.eu/news-and-events/events/iflrc-2018-international-food-legume-research-conference).



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*Top: Souk trader looking at his lentils. Left: Alberta team breaks lentil bread with delegates from other countries. Right: Lentil bread, chicken tagine and olives.*