



ALBERTA FIELD PEA IS FIRST NORTH AMERICAN AGRI-FOOD COMMODITY WITH ENVIRONMENTAL PRODUCT DECLARATION

The Alberta Field Pea is the first agri-food commodity to be certified with a globally-recognized Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) in North America.

“An EPD shows the world that Alberta pea growers care about environmentally responsible farm practices,” said Chair D’Arcy Hilgartner of Alberta Pulse Growers (APG). “By creating an EPD, APG can communicate in a credible and transparent way to its stakeholders about the environmental impact of Alberta pea production. An EPD is a powerful business and marketing tool for APG and its members to stake a claim as being environmentally responsible.”

APG worked collaboratively with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (AF) through the process of applying and

receiving an EPD certification. This EPD is based on the 2016 life cycle assessment (LCA) that was completed using Alberta pulse producers’ on-farm information. To view the Alberta Pea EPD, visit www.environdec.com/en/Detail/epd1047.

“By obtaining an EPD, it demonstrates that the LCA work done by APG and AF meets strict criteria from international standards for environmental sustainability performance,” explained Aung Moe, AF Environmental Footprint Agrologist. “This creates credible and transparent information on environmental performance of field pea production in Alberta.”

An EPD is a globally recognized, third-party verified, standardized environmental marketing

communication tool under the International EPD® System. Because all EPDs in a product group use the same rules, the data of this EPD can be compared with EPDs of other products to highlight differences. This certified declaration will enhance the Alberta Pea brand reputation, as well as strengthen trust with its customers and consumers. The primary purpose of having an EPD is to show the environmental performance of Alberta field peas to supply chain members in local and international markets.

“Pulses provide a good news story with their proven health and nutritional benefits and we’ve always shared the positive impact pulses have on the environment and now with the EPD, we have the science to back our claims,” said Debra McLennan, APG Food and Nutrition Coordinator. “This

declaration is an important milestone for Alberta field peas as we see consumers increasingly making food choices that align with their desire for transparency and environmental sustainability in the food supply.”

McLennan added that food companies and ingredient manufacturers around the world recognize this desire and are looking for ways to improve their environmental footprint with the foods they currently produce as well as with new product development. The Alberta Pea EPD provides the trusted transparent environmental performance benchmark that will indicate to consumers that peas are an environmentally friendly food/ingredient. The EPD also serves as a value-added attribute that can be used to market peas to food companies and value chain purchasers who are looking for product differentiation and brand promotion of environmentally friendly products for their customers.

The Alberta Pea EPD indicates international acceptance of the scientific evidence to support the environmental benefits of the crop production of peas. There has been a rapid growth in the number of food and agriculture companies publishing EPDs in Europe and around the world. The International EPD System recently announced that there are now 1,000 registered EPDs from over 37 countries. As of February 2018, there were 139 agri-food EPDs published ranging from pasta, olive oil, bread and cheese to kiwi fruit and apples.

Barilla, an international food company famous for its pasta and sauces, is one of the major agri-food companies that have been leading the industry in both LCA and EPD certification. By earning certification for Alberta peas, APG is following in the footsteps of leading food suppliers like Barilla, which started to conduct life cycle assessments in 2000.

Initially, Barilla’s aim was to understand the potential of the methodology and to improve the know-how of the whole supply chain, said Luca Ruini, Director of Health, Safety, Environment and Energy for the Group Supply Chain at Barilla. In 2008 LCA came to form a part of Barilla’s business strategy, which increased the need for measuring and communicating environmental performance. Now, it is fully integrated in the company’s Good for You, Good for the Planet sustainability strategy.

“We think that this approach must be as robust and transparent as possible,” Ruini said. “The EPD could be a way of guaranteeing transparency and verifying robustness, due to the Product Category Rules preparation.”

The starting point was to register an EPD for Barilla durum wheat semolina pasta in 2009. By 2017, more than 60 products covering all Barilla brands had been certified.

The company developed its own way of working towards declaring the environmental impact of its products, the Barilla EPD Process, which Ruini

said was the first EPD process that has been developed in a food company. Barilla assumes that the environmental issue will be considered important long term. Its Good for You, Good for the Planet strategy states that the aim of the company’s EPD process is to decrease the environmental impact of Barilla products.

When Barilla prepared the EPD for its pasta products, it was discovered that the cultivation of durum wheat is the most important phase in terms of environmental impact.

“As a result, Barilla launched a specific project called Barilla Sustainable Farming (BSF) to understand how to reduce the use of fertilizers,” Ruini added. “This project proved very successful, partly due to the many experts from different fields that came together. By 2017, more than 180,000 tonnes of durum wheat have been cultivated according to BSF in Italy and the project is ongoing in Greece.”

Funding for the Alberta Field Pea EPD project was provided in part through Growing Forward 2, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.



Green split pea and cauliflower soup.