



Don Shepert, APG Chair

CHAIR'S REPORT

LOCAL PROCESSING OPPORTUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES TOP OF MIND FOR NEW APG CHAIR

This is my first Chair's Report since being named Chair of Alberta Pulse Growers in January. I am looking forward to building on the hard work of the Board of Directors under the leadership of immediate past Chair D'Arcy Hilgartner and using all that I have learned from him and other recent Chairs, Allison Ammeter and Richard Krikke, to continue growing Alberta's pulse industry.

APG will remain focused on issues like market access alongside Pulse Canada and others. Increasing trade with China helped to mitigate the loss of our top market of India in 2017, but there is still more work to be done to help farmers sell more Alberta pulses. Ideally, we need to have more local processing moving forward to make us less dependent on foreign markets.

I'm the second generation on my dad's farm near St. Brides, which we bought 40 years ago. My wife Brenda and I farm a little more than a section of land. For the first 14 years we had dairy cows, and now we have beef cattle and crops. We grow peas, barley, canola and other crops in rotation. I have been growing peas since the Century and Trapper varieties years ago because peas are wonderful for the soil.

As a person who makes my living off the land and as a grandfather dedicated to giving my grandchildren the best world possible, I am very committed to

environmental issues in which I can make a positive difference, including land and water use.

For the last year, I have co-chaired the Agri-Environmental Partnership of Alberta, a multi-stakeholder collaboration of the agriculture industry, government, and environmental non-government organizations, working to proactively address agri-environmental issues from a policy perspective.

I am also the Chair of the Crop Sector Working Group, and previously chaired the FarmTech conference.

As you can tell, I'm a firm believer in the value of partnership and collaboration to achieve common goals. A strong alliance with Alberta Barley, Alberta Canola and Alberta Wheat as Team Alberta continues to gain momentum, and I'm pleased that I can depend on this strong voice to advocate on behalf of our members' interests provincially and federally.

My involvement with APG began years ago when I became the secretary for Zone 5 in northeastern Alberta. As APG grew, it wasn't hard

to stand behind the organization because of the very good work that was being done. When a director position came up, it was an easy decision to accept the opportunity to work with this forward-thinking organization. I was interested in growing peas and knew that pulses needed a network and an organization to help promote them, which remains true today.

As a new director back in 2014, I was invited to represent APG on a Pulse Canada tour to Europe. It gave me valuable insight into what other countries want from Canadian pulses, and I still draw on that experience when we discuss marketing pulses today.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank outgoing directors D'Arcy Hilgartner, John Kowalchuk, Doug Sell and Tim van der Hoek for their hard work and insights over the last several years. I am also pleased to welcome new Directors Kelisha Archer, Will Muller, Peter Konstapel and Robert Semeniuk to the board, which will have a balance of the wisdom that comes with experience and the innovative thinking and enthusiasm that new blood brings.

