

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

THE HARVEST FROM HELL

The 'Harvest from Hell' describes the ending to an already challenging year. At the outset of the season farmers were wondering if there was going to be rain, then as the season progressed, some producers continually wished for water and others hoped the tap would just turn off. Finally, what should be an optimistic and happy time, harvest encroached with yet another early snowfall and tough conditions. While pulses were not as badly affected as other crops like canola, cereals or some high value crops like sugar beets or potatoes, our farmers don't just grow pulses, they grow everything.

When my family farmed, I only recalled once or twice the difficult harvest period where crops remained under snow. Once there was even harvest on Christmas Day – just to get the crop off, but never the recent string of consecutively poor harvest seasons. Grain drying is becoming a normal occurrence on many farms and as farmers move into a new calendar year, it comes with added costs. The federal insistence of a carbon tax will come to Alberta, just when Alberta farmers had some relief from provincially imposed carbon taxes this past year. APG continues to work on this issue with our colleagues to see how farmers' efforts can be recognized for sequestering carbon. The new year has come and APG is poised to continue pressing government bringing forward messages from farmers.

Before 2019 ended, I was pleased to attend and present an update on behalf of the provincial board at the regional meetings. It was good to see the producers come out to

learn what has been happening with their organization. As I mentioned in the meetings, APG is celebrating 30 years as a commission starting in 1989. I can say for APG, the things we do today are different than what we did 30 years ago. Advocacy tops the list with the most significant change happening within the past five years. Also, formalized, direct and deliberate collaboration that brings us together as organizations demonstrates maturity and evolution.

It is this type of advocacy that has kept us busy in the fall including work to continue to get clarification on Alberta Transportation's Mandatory Entry Level Training, sharing with government the challenges that our members have had finding Class 1 drivers. We were assured agriculture was not alone with the challenge of Class 1 driver shortages. Team Alberta continues to provide suggestions and we are available to the government for clarification on the implementation of the program. All Team Alberta members as well as our other crop sector colleagues place a strong emphasis on safety on the roads.

We have met with Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism to learn where the ministry is headed with respect to agriculture. The development of markets and emphasis on new opportunities is of keen interest to the pulse industry as farmers need alternative options for selling their crops and the rural economy is always looking for diversification.

APG continues to meet with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry officials and has been intensively working on



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an industry perspective on 'farmer-led' research, defining research and extension and making sure that multiple options are presented for the government to consider. APG is concerned with the budget for agriculture, emphasizing that services to the farmers for business risk management, as well as research and extension are closely considered before any changes are made.

APG is moving beyond sharing with farmers how to grow pulses to making sure you can maximize the yields, minimize the risk and have a variety of market options to which to sell your products. General information on pulses will still be available, but we continue to innovate and drive the growth of the sector. Harvests from Hell seem to become an unfortunate regularity and we strive to be there to assist the industry the best way we can, through advocacy, research and extension.

