EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

PANDEMIC IMPACTS CHANGE FALL MEETING SCHEDULES

Leanne Fischbuch, Executive Director

Navigating through the public health responses to COVID-19 since March has resulted in numerous alterations to 'normal' life for farmers and farm organizations like Alberta Pulse Growers (APG). Meetings, public events, and crop walks have all changed in spring and summer 2020. Closed offices, online video and teleconference meetings, crop walks cancelled or significantly modified, and constant monitoring of travel and health are all part of the new 'normal'.

In this environment, APG is preparing for the fall and winter 2020 event agenda and discussing how meetings can be safely handled. Each summer, staff begin to plan for zone meetings. Given the current situation in Alberta, there have been questions and concerns on how to proceed with these events. APG is not alone. Marketing Council, the oversight body of boards and commissions, has provided guidance on how to engage with producers if in-person meeting plans change.

Marketing Council's guidance includes best practices for virtual meetings, teleconference or internet meetings with the aim to provide alignment with good governance practices and regulations. Many of the tips provided by Marketing Council are already employed by Alberta Pulse Growers for all our meetings. For example, prior to regional meetings, APG reviews our regulations and policies, we provide appropriate notification of meeting dates, provide materials and have processes in place for allowance of discussion and prepare for any elections that need to be held.

According to the Alberta Pulse Growers Marketing Plan Regulation, APG must hold a zone meeting 40 days in advance of the AGM. Discussion at the meeting must include sharing commission information and any discussion of issues that producers feel is important. Quorum for the zone meetings is eight producers who grow pulse crops in that zone.

For fall of 2020, the APG Provincial Board has determined that all zone meetings will be virtual. As the organization finalizes the details for how to proceed, notices will be issued shortly regarding meeting dates and structure of the meetings. APG will be asking that producers who plan on attending the virtual meetings register in advance. APG will also be issuing a call for nominations for the number of Advisor positions that are up for election in each zone shortly. The deadline for receiving all nominations is Nov. 1, 2020. Nomination forms can be accessed by contacting the APG office. If an election is to take place there will be the appropriate technology to allow capture of the membership votes.

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While we will miss discussing issues and networking in person, we will endeavour to do our best virtually to engage the membership at zone meetings this fall and at our Annual General Meeting in January.

Please monitor the APG website at www.albertapulse.com for more information as it becomes confirmed. I hope you have a safe and healthy fall and I look forward to seeing you virtually at our zone meetings.