ALBERTA PULSE GROWERS FOCUS ON HOW TO GROW, MOVE, USE PULSES IN NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

The Alberta Pulse Growers Commission (APG) will work toward the vision of having "Pulses on every farm, on every plate" over the next five years.

APG's new strategic plan, which was implemented August 1, 2020, is the result of two years of work by the Board of Directors and staff to identify and clearly articulate the plans for achieving this bold vision through implementation of a new mission. This mission is to "lead through innovation and collaboration to add value for Alberta's pulse farmers."

The organization will work on behalf of its 6,500 members in the key areas of communication, advocacy, extension and research. Communication and advocacy are woven through all aspects of APG's work, just like operations, and are fundamental to achieving core objectives. Research and extension envelop the segments where APG is directly addressing the needs of the grower community and using resources to respond to the needs of pulse farmers.

The APG Board, comprised of 12 farmer Directors, provided guidance to outline three areas of strategic focus: Grow, Move and Use. Each strategic theme is described below.

Grow is envisioned to combine the effort of the organization in research and extension aimed at APG's primary audience, farmers. This theme enables the organization to engage in important research that addresses value, agronomics, new crop opportunities, growth and markets. Key priorities for this theme include:

- Improve value per acre of pulse crops;
- 10% resource investment on new crops;
- Increase pulse grower use of the APG app;
- Pulses on every farm by 2025; and
- Support national efforts for farmers to grow marketable crops.

"Pulses on every farm, on every plate."

Success in this area will be measured primarily by acreage. APG has set target acreage at three million acres of pulses being grown in Alberta by 2025. The highest pulse acreage in Alberta to date was 2.3 million acres grown in 2016. Since then, around two million acres of pulses were grown each year.

"APG will have realized the first part of its vision of pulses on every farm with three million acres of pulses being grown each year by 2025," said APG Chair Don Shepert, who farms near St. Brides in northeastern Alberta. "This success can only be achieved through advancements in disease and pest research, combined with successful communication of this and other vital growing information to Alberta farmers."

Move describes the effort that APG will focus on using policy support measures to address supply chain resiliency. Key to this is the work the organization does with partners and colleagues through national organizations and provincial groups, as well as peer to peer efforts within Alberta. Key priorities for this theme include:

- Prioritize issue engagement with the Government of Alberta;
- Focus on logistics feedback and challenges provincially;
- Increase collaboration on rail improvement; and
- Actively support national efforts on logistics and market access.

Use encompasses the effort APG will make to reach out to specific audiences that can assist the organization in spreading the message about pulses through education, health and public trust. Use aims to engage many collaborators to achieve the new vision of having pulses on every farm, on every plate. Key priorities for this theme include:

- Focus on education and outreach to key audiences;
- Reach out to consumers where it makes sense;
- Target public trust and sustainability to increase pulse use;
- Support value-added opportunities in Alberta; and
- Partner on the 25 by 2025 national goals for diversification.

Progress on the 2020-2025 APG Strategic Plan will be included in the organization's annual reports shared with members.