APG PARTICIPATING IN NEW PROVINCIAL RESULTS DRIVEN AGRICULTURE RESEARCH ORGANIZATION

Nodulation, shown here on a faba bean plant near Vegreville last year, is one of many indicators of plant health that researchers study.

Representatives of Alberta Pulse Growers' Commission began working over the summer as a member of the advisory committee for Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR), which was created by the Alberta Government to guide and fund agricultural research.

RDAR is a non-profit, producer-led company that operates at arm's length from the Government of Alberta. This new organization will determine and fund industry-wide research priorities to enhance the competitive advantage of Alberta farmers.

Early this year, the provincial government consulted with farmers, industry and key partners in the agricultural sector about the future of agricultural research. From that engagement, an Alberta Agriculture and Forestry news release stated that there was a consensus that farmers, in collaboration with others involved in research, are best positioned to determine agricultural research priorities.

The news release stated that RDAR's structure takes the best parts of previous research models, such as Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency (ALMA) and Alberta Crop Industry Development Fund (ACIDF), as it ensures research reflects the priorities of farmers and ranchers. It is imperative that agriculture research in Alberta achieves outcomes that can be applied in the field and on the ranch.

An interim board and CEO established RDAR with the mandate to support results driven agriculture research priorities and programs that will increase competitiveness and profitability of Alberta's agriculture industry. Its vision is that Alberta's agriculture and food sectors achieve their full potential through producer-led, strategic investments in research and innovation.

"We know a new system needs to be established with the voices of producers strongly considered and driving research initiatives while working in a collaborative environment with scientists and others," RDAR Interim Board Chair Dr. David Chalack stated in the release. "This new model will ensure predictable, long-term funding. We're looking forward to working with our partners to make that a reality."

At press time, research funding was expected to begin flowing by September 2020 and achieve full operational capacity by March 2021. Through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, $2 million in grant funding will be provided this year to support initial operations, which is expected to allow RDAR to begin focusing on priority research right away.

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