

MORE RESILIENCE FOR PEAS: FRESH APPROACH TO DROUGHT TOLERANCE

If you replay the past 10 growing seasons in your mind, how many were dry in your area? Now consider that climate change could cause dry years to occur more often in the future than they have in the past.

Giving pea varieties better drought tolerance through traditional plant breeding takes a long time, perhaps 12 to 13 years. Transgenic breeding, while far quicker, is not an option.

Dr. Ravinder Goyal, Lacombe-based Research Scientist with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, is working on a third way to improve drought tolerance in peas. His aim is to modify the rhizobia in the roots in such a manner that the plant tolerates drought better.

Just imagine what this could do for pea yields and grower profitability in dry years. Now picture the same approach someday bringing the same benefit to other pulse crops.

This project was paused in 2020 due to COVID but seems poised to go full steam ahead in 2021.

“My team has all the necessary material to take the project forward,” Goyal said. “I am optimistic that the labs will become fully functional soon, and we will resume our research and product development journey.”



Dr. Ravinder Goyal wants to make peas more resilient in the face of drought. His idea could also hold promise in other pulse crops.

