



Robert Semeniuk, APG Chair

CHAIR'S REPORT

NEW CHAIR'S PRIORITY IS KEEPING PULSES PROFITABLE AND A STAPLE IN FARM ROTATIONS

This is my first Chair's Report since being elected to lead the Alberta Pulse Growers following our AGM in January. I am looking forward to building on the work of the Board of Directors under the leadership of immediate Past Chair Don Shepert.

I am working to ensure that pulses stay profitable and become a staple in everyone's rotation. That's a big part of APG's Vision: Pulses on every farm, on every plate. Unless we keep pulses profitable, we'll never achieve that. APG has to make it easy for producers to grow pulses profitably by funding useful research into issues like Aphanomyces and being supportive of new markets for pulses, including local processing facilities.

I am a fourth-generation farmer near Smoky Lake. I started farming with my father in 1993, and in 2000 I took over the operation completely. I went into partnership in RAS Farms in 2001 with my wife, Angela, who worked off the farm as a CPA. We ran a custom grain hauling business for five years and then in 2007 decided to go into the custom fertilizer spreading business. In 2008, the business was large enough that Angela retired from her job and came to the farm full-time. We retired from all the custom

businesses by the end of 2016 and just focused on the grain farm, which is when we created RAS Family Farm Ltd. We are the proud parents of two teenaged children.

We've had the good fortune to be a part of some awesome organizations over the years. We are graduates of the CTEAM program and were honoured to be presented with the Outstanding Young Farmer (OYF) award for Alberta in 2012. We represented Alberta at the national OYF event in PEI that year and made some amazing connections through that organization. We joke that because of being OYF Alumni, there isn't anywhere across Canada that we could go and not have somewhere to stay! When travel between provinces is acceptable again, of course.

My parents started growing maple peas in the early '80s and we have continued with pulses ever since. I was an Advisor in Zone 5 and participated on the Research committee before serving as Zone 5 Chair. I joined the APG Board as a provincial Director in 2018 because it always interested me to be part of the discussion on the future of pulses. I believe pulses have an extremely bright future and will become a bigger crop for Alberta due to all the positives they create, but we have some hurdles to cross and I'm pleased to have a voice in knocking them down.

A rare positive that came out of the meeting restrictions caused by COVID-19 is that APG and many other organizations experimented with online voting. Back in 2008, many APG members said they would like to have voting via internet as an option for the AGM, and this year, it happened. We will have to see what that will look like when we can all meet in person once again, but at least we know it's possible.

APG also held its first Tailgate Talk: Aphanomyces & Other Root Rots in April with plans to offer more interactive discussions over the growing season. Stay tuned to the APG app to be the first to find out about these virtual events. I hope to see all our members in person soon, but please participate in online events until that is possible.

