



PULSE CANADA PRIORITIZES EFFORTS TO IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION, ENVIRONMENT AND MARKETING CHALLENGES FOR FARMERS



By Jeff English, Vice-President of Marketing & Communications, Pulse Canada

While pulse growers are hard at work seeding across western Canada, the team at Pulse Canada continues to work to advance the priorities of our industry. Whether working with growers across Canada, policy officials in Ottawa, or officials and customers in priority pulse markets around the world, our team is focused on creating efficiencies throughout the supply chain while growing sustainable demand for Canadian pulses and pulse ingredients.

This past winter, Pulse Canada kicked off work to assess the environmental impact of Canadian dry bean and faba bean production. Thanks to the dozens of Alberta bean growers who participated, along with their colleagues in Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan, the information gathered will help position Canadian dry beans and faba beans as foods with a low environmental footprint. This data is now being analyzed through a partnership with the University of British Columbia, and we look forward to sharing the results with members as they become available. There is no doubt that Canada’s pulse industry has a unique opportunity to take advantage of the global demand for more sustainable food products and food ingredients by showcasing our industry’s sustainability advantages.

However, an industry won’t grow without the emergence of new challenges. The growing interest in pea protein in the alternative protein sector has created a need to address the subsequent increased production of pea starch. Pulse Canada recently commissioned a comprehensive market research study looking at new uses for pulse starches. The study identified new, more profitable markets including pharmaceuticals and bio-plastics, as well as some new industrial uses. The end goal is to provide growers with more markets for every part of a pulse crop – raising demand

and bringing more value back to the farm gate.

Here in Canada, regulations behind labelling foods as a “source of protein” continues to hinder the growth of the alternative protein sector and the opportunity for pulse protein to cement itself as a preferred ingredient. In order to make a case for having clearer identification of plant-proteins in the grocery-store aisle, Pulse Canada is facilitating the research needed to better understand how plant protein affects the protein quality of diets and prove the importance of better food labelling. Work led by Pulse Canada’s Chris Marinangeli recently found that Canadians who eat plant-based diets are receiving most of their proteins from foods like breads and crackers. The exciting news is that getting these Canadians to diversify their protein intake through products that use pulse ingredients would not only improve their health, but would raise demand for Canadian pulses.

Of course, for Canada’s pulse industry and the grain industry overall to meet that growing demand, reliable and timely rail service is a must. While both of Canada’s national railways are speaking in terms of volumes moved, Pulse Canada and our allies around the Ag Transport Coalition have been increasing the attention of the industry and the government on the importance



Cargo ship loading takes place at the Port of Vancouver.

of on-time delivery. For too many weeks, Canada's railways have failed to meet the demand from grain handlers. Each car not spotted represents real dollars being delayed or in some instances not being delivered entirely back to the farm gate. We are continuing to draw attention to weekly performance gaps through the Grain by Train podcast, where we break down weekly car fulfillment and other issues impacting grant transportation in 10 minutes or less. Pulse growers can listen to the podcast on the Pulse Canada website, or via their preferred podcast streaming platform.

In April, the Canadian pulse industry faced a bubbling crisis at the Port of Montreal. With the Port and the

longshoreman's union at odds and a strike being triggered, Canadian agriculture paid the price. Pulse Canada played a leading role in rallying agriculture groups from across Canada to pressure the federal government to intervene and stop the strike. While the pulse industry welcomed the passage of back-to-work legislation in late April, this disruption was just the latest example of the vulnerability of Canada's supply chains. That is why Pulse Canada has renewed its call for a national conversation on supply chain resiliency, and will ensure that the priorities of pulse growers are well represented in any future discussions.

With April 1 marking the beginning of our fiscal year, our team is now

executing against a revamped two-year strategy – all aimed at achieving the pulse industry's 25 by 2025 diversification targets. We will be updating pulse growers regularly on areas of interest as we look to create efficiencies throughout the value chain while creating sustainable demand for pulse and pulse ingredients in new markets around the world. On behalf of Pulse Canada staff, I want to wish you, your family and your business a safe and productive seeding season.

If you have questions on any one of the initiatives being undertaken on your behalf, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at jenglish@pulsecanada.com.