



Robert Semeniuk, APG Chair

CHAIR'S REPORT

APG PLANS FOR IN-PERSON MEETINGS AFTER A TOUGH GROWING SEASON

The big story that we didn't anticipate has obviously been the "heat dome" and the effect it had on pulses and other crops across the province. Weather is cyclical, of course, and I have heard the prolonged heat compared to three different weather events in the last 60 years. The biggest difference has been the dome that trapped hot ocean air over us. I saw the pea and faba bean flowers blasting in my fields in northeastern Alberta, with the plants producing fewer pods as a result. Our yields are down, as are those of many Alberta farmers, and it was something beyond our control.

A lot of areas that had previously been drowning in water were able to survive the drought. The irrigated farms south of Highway 1 were able to withstand the heat, but some of those farmers are reporting a bad year for mould due to the heat. Others were hit hard by grasshoppers. You can read updates from each of APG's five zone chairs in a new section on page 28. Many Alberta farmers are in a situation where they will be making a crop insurance claim, and that is precisely why it is there. APG held meetings as often as once a week with AFSC and Alberta Agriculture officials throughout the summer in order to ensure that helpful supports

for producers were rolled out as quickly as possible.

If predictions are correct that extreme heat events are going to be increasingly common here, the real mitigation will be through research. As with many problems in pulse production and agriculture in general, research is the key to having less impact from this issue in the future. Abiotic stresses, such as those from drought and extreme heat, are areas of great interest and APG is actively working with a team of scientists on methods and traits that help pulse crops mitigate these kinds of stresses.

Following the so-called "Harvest from Hell" in 2019 and the COVID-19 complications last year, we are due for a great year in 2022. The light at the end of the tunnel is shining a bit more brightly as everyday life gets closer to pre-pandemic norms.

With the COVID-19 restrictions being lifted, it will be great to get that personal interaction again. Re-establishing social connections will serve as a great mood booster, especially after such a trying growing season. Farming is a stressful job that is essential to providing the rest of the world with food. If you need help, reach out to someone. There are tips and contact numbers below for mental health supports.

We have all become so good at online meetings that we could easily keep meeting virtually, but the one thing we have been missing is the face-to-face interactions with people and the conversations it sparks. I am really looking forward to the zone annual general meetings in November and December, as well as the FarmTech Conference and APG provincial AGM on January 26. I look forward to seeing you there!

RESOURCES FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND MANAGING STRESS

The impact of this year's weather conditions on Alberta's crops have understandably caused additional stress for farmers and their families.

If you or someone you know needs help managing stress, please don't delay in seeking assistance at:

www.albertahealthservices.ca/injprev/Page4875.aspx

Albertans having thoughts of suicide should call **Health Link** at 811 or the **Mental Health Help Line** at 1-877-303-2642, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The DoMoreAg Foundation also has great resources available to take care of your mental health. Find them at: www.domore.ag