



NUTRITION NOTES

THE POWER OF COLLABORATION

By Debra McLennan, RD, APG Food and Nutrition Coordinator

The mission of APG's strategic plan is to lead through innovation and collaboration to add value for Alberta's pulse farmers. Under the USE strategic theme, collaboration has been the key to success for the 2021/2022 food and nutrition activities. With the cancellation of so many in-person events this year, collaborating with other commissions and organizations provided APG the opportunity to effectively connect with our key audiences by leveraging levy dollars to develop and participate in education focused programming and resources.

Stronger Together!

March 16, 2022, saw the much-anticipated launch of three new topics on the *Project Agriculture* website. These new topics include *Agriculture Histories* for Grade 7 Social Studies, *Sustainable Practices* and *Food Diversity* for Grades 7 and 8 Science curriculums. *Project Agriculture* is a free online education program for teachers and students that is aligned with the Alberta curriculum and offers classroom activities, original videos profiling Alberta farmers and agriculture-specific information for students from Grades 7 to 12. The creation of these new topics would not have been possible without partnering with Alberta Canola, Alberta Wheat, and Alberta Barley. This project received 50% of its funding from the Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, and the remaining 50% from collaborating commissions. This funding collaboration allowed *Project Agriculture* to expand to encompass more educational topics and agriculture sectors, including crops. These curriculum-aligned topics meet APG's goal of education and outreach to key audiences like Alberta teachers, as well as address public trust and sustainability. *Project Agriculture* was originally designed and implemented by Alberta Milk, Alberta Chicken



Debra McLennan and Tara Baycroft in the Alberta Canola kitchen preparing to record food demonstrations for our teacher convention presentations.

Producers, Alberta Turkey Producers, Alberta Hatching Egg Producers and Egg Farmers of Alberta. With the development of these new topics for *Project Agriculture*, we have created a cross-commodity partnership that will provide future opportunities to create more topics so we can continue to bring Alberta's robust agriculture sector to the forefront of the classroom.

Collaborating with Alberta Canola for the 2022 teacher conventions resulted in the greatest uptake to date on teacher convention presentations! The *Crops in a Box*

elementary school presentation was viewed by 586 teachers and the junior/senior high school presentation, *You Eat What You Are: What's Your Food Story?*, was viewed by 469 teachers for a total of 1,055 teachers through seven conventions. This is a 400% increase from the 2019 and 2020 APG only presentations! This increase in participation can be attributed to the topics, the Crops in a Box teacher resource package and more teachers participating in the online convention format than 2021. This collaboration builds on the strengths of the staff from both organizations to create presentations that share the story of pulses and canola through curriculum-linked topics. This was a great way to share the newly created Pulse Café along with an assortment of Alberta Canola's Chase Duffy material with elementary school teachers who signed up for the *Crops in a Box* resource package.

July 2021 saw the beginning of another great collaboration with nine Alberta agricultural organizations, along with Agriculture for Life (Ag for Life) and Inside Education. Spearheaded by Alberta Canola, a letter was sent to Education Minister Adriana LaGrange seeking support to include agriculture in the Alberta curriculum and programs of study for all applicable grades and subjects, in addition to asking Alberta

Education to establish an agriculture and natural resources education advisory group. This advisory group would include stakeholders from the commodity organizations, Ag for Life, and Inside Education to advise and provide input on how fact-based agricultural content and examples relating to general and specific learner outcomes can be applied to Alberta’s curriculum and programs of study across all grades and subjects. The letter also provided an appendix of examples of how agriculture content could be infused into current curriculum. While we continue to wait to officially hear from Minister LaGrange, we met with NDP MLAs Sarah Hoffman, Opposition Deputy Leader and Education Critic, and Heather Sweet, Rural Economic Development, Agriculture & Forestry Critic to share the work to date on this request. The group will continue to follow up with government to keep this important initiative moving forward.

Ag for Life is another important partnership that allows APG to leverage levy dollars to provide agriculture education across the province to students and consumers. Ag for Life is the new home for the Classroom Agriculture Program (CAP), which APG has participated in for many years. CAP is presented to Grade 4 students and explains the importance of agriculture in Alberta through storytelling and fun activities. Ag for Life’s multi-faceted “Know Your Food” initiative launches this summer. This program includes a one-of-a-kind “Know Your Food” trailer and complementary website that will contain additional information to what will be in the trailer. This mobile agriculture education unit will be travelling this summer to fairs, festivals and stampedes and then visiting schools in the fall with the goal of engaging Albertans in meaningful conversations about agriculture and food production.

Education is a key activity to achieving APG’s vision, Pulses on every farm, on every plate.



Crops in a Box Resource Package for elementary school teachers who attended presentations at teacher’s convention.



Virtual meeting with Alberta NDP MLAs discussing work of our commodity groups to ask Alberta Education to include agriculture in the future curriculum development and programs of study for all grades and applicable subjects and to form an Agriculture and Natural Resources Advisory Working Group to collaborate on future curriculum development and ensure credible resources are included in future curriculum.

Collaborating with other, like-minded groups has proven extremely successful in helping APG connect with key audiences to build public trust by sharing key messages about pulses and their positive impact on human health and sustainability. Developing and linking programs and resources to the education curriculum

will provide an ongoing avenue for sharing our pulse story with teachers and students now and in the future.

Do you have a question about pulse nutrition or APG programs? You can contact me at dmclennan@albertapulse.com or (780) 986-9398 ext. 109.