

THE EVOLUTION OF APG RESEARCH

By Dr. Jenn Walker, APG Research and Extension Manager

Since its inception in 1989, research investment has been one of the key priorities of the Alberta Pulse Growers. It isn't a far stretch to see the connection between the investments in breeding programs, integrated pest management and best management practices and the launch of pulse crops as a key element in profitable farm enterprises across the province.

Research funding is a complicated process. It involves a number of moving pieces, extensive amounts of paperwork, number crunching and conversations. Critical to the entire process is the identification of research priorities. Every five years, the pulse industry across Canada sits together to evaluate where we are, what we know, what we don't know and what we need to do about the gaps. This is brought back to the provincial level where pulse farmers across Alberta are invited to provide their thoughts and engage with the board and staff to further refine Alberta specific research needs.

Over the course of my tenure as APG Research Manager, there has been a significant change in the sophistication of research projects funded by the membership. Genetic improvement through supporting breeding programs remains foundational to continued growth and sustainability. Much effort has been made to ensure that the varieties of peas, lentils and dry beans available to pulse growers are not only high yielding but address the disease and



"It is only the farmer who faithfully plants seeds in the spring, who reaps a harvest in the autumn." – Forbes magazine founder B. C. Forbes.

quality parameters that are faced in the field and demanded by the industry.

Over the last 10 to 15 years, agronomic research in pulse crops has evolved from crawling to walking to running. Now, rather than focusing on the broad strokes of best management practices, we are dealing with specifics, honing our craft as opposed to learning the basics.

The people in the network are critical to the success of a flourishing

research environment. The world of pulse research is fortunate to have passionate, committed scientists who are leaning into the challenges we face (aka *Aphanomyces*) and dream of the potential of pulses not only on every farm but also on every plate.

We hope you enjoy this brief collection of stories. They represent a lot of hard work. Work that we are committed to for the betterment of the entire agricultural industry.