



APG COMMITS FUNDING TO PROJECT TO REDUCE CARBON FOOTPRINT AND ROOT ROT RISK

The Alberta Pulse Growers Commission (APG) is investing \$500,000 into a research initiative that will address several challenges to growing pulses, especially the risk of root rot, which continues to be a major issue for Alberta pea and lentil farmers.

“This research initiative will be instrumental in addressing a number of the challenges facing pulse growers in the province, especially root rot complex,” said APG Chair Shane Strydhorst. “This investment supports the board’s strategic targets for supporting root rot research which has set a bold goal of eradicating the risk that root diseases pose to pulse crops in Alberta and western Canada.”

APG’s \$500,000 investment will leverage \$6 million for the PEACE (Pea Climate-Efficient) project, which will develop climate-resilient, low carbon footprint field pea as a preferred rotation crop through the inter-disciplinary integration of genomic technologies. The research will be conducted by Dr. Marcus Samuel, University of Calgary, and Dr. Sateesh Kagale, National Research Council, Saskatoon. This four-year project will reduce the carbon footprint of Canada’s food production systems by building their resiliency, environmental sustainability, and economic growth potential.

Earlier this year, the APG board committed \$3 million over the next five years with the potential to be amplified by matching from other funding sources. Today’s investment into the PEACE project also received

funding from partners, as well as Genome Alberta and Genome Canada.

“The process to receive Genome Canada funding is very competitive and speaks highly to this project’s merit,” Strydhorst noted. “The board is investing grower funding taken from service fees on pulse crop sales to address this challenge. It is critical for APG to use these funds for our members in addressing issues and supporting the success of the sector.”

APG has invested in root rot research projects since the disease became an issue 10 years ago. Peas, lentils and, to a lesser extent, dry beans are all susceptible pulse crops.

APG was first introduced to the pathogen *Aphanomyces euteiches* in 2013, and it was immediately identified as a serious threat to pulse production. This discovery was a catalyst to research efforts aimed at managing root diseases.

Over the last 10 years, APG has made significant effort to understand the disease, correctly diagnose it and address the intricacies of the complex interaction between plant, pathogen and environment. Research has resulted in farmers having the knowledge to better assess the risk, but there haven’t



Suspected Aphanomyces root rot.

been any significant breakthroughs for farmers who want to plant pulses for the crop’s economic and sustainability benefits.

“Research resulted in more being known about the disease, but root rot remains a threat that we need to mitigate for our farmers,” Strydhorst explained. “The board continues to be committed to finding a solution to root rot so that all pulses can continue to be viable crop options for Alberta growers.”