



Shane Strydhorst, APG Chair

CHAIR'S REPORT

BUSY FIRST YEAR WORKING ON BEHALF OF FARMERS TO GROW THE PULSE INDUSTRY

My first year as APG Chair has been a wonderful learning experience and a very busy year for me and for Alberta Pulse Growers! APG made significant investments aimed at tackling our greatest threat, root rots. We engaged policymakers on key issues affecting our farms, provincially through Team Alberta Crops, and nationally through Pulse Canada and Grain Growers of Canada. We continue to connect with farmers through summer plot tours, regional meetings, and sharing information through the APG app.

The highlight for me this year was the opportunity to participate in Pulse Canada's recent trip to China. Our small delegation, led by Pulse Canada President Greg Cherewyk, attended 16 meetings with Chinese government agencies, industry associations, and processing companies. We visited five processing facilities and learned about their operations, as well as the opportunities and challenges facing their food and feed industries. We shared key information about our Canadian farms and production practices (particularly zero till), and how our lifecycle assessments and Canadian pulse sustainability information can benefit their fractionation facilities and food companies.

This trade mission to China will bring significant value to Alberta's pulse farmers in several ways. First, this was Pulse Canada's first in-person visit since 2018 to our largest buyer of peas, and it is critical that we maintain and strengthen these long-term relationships. Canada is viewed as the most reliable supplier of the highest quality peas to China, but we cannot get too complacent with this reputation since Russia has taken 20% of the pea market share since March 2023 (particularly in very price-sensitive feed and bird-feed markets).

Second, we identified several areas for significant growth in Chinese pulse consumption, including pet foods, inclusion into human foods (even at low rates), and dairy rations. Pulse Canada can play a major role in increasing demand for pulses in these areas.

Third, we spoke a great deal about the potential opportunities of other Canadian pulse crops currently locked out of the Chinese market - lentils, chickpeas, adzuki beans, and especially faba beans. We discussed how we can and must work together to gain market access for these crops to realize the mutual benefit of these opportunities. Pulse Canada is engaging in significant post-trip communications.

Meanwhile, thank you to the APG members and stakeholders who attended zone meetings for being involved and learning about what your commission is doing on your behalf! Your comments and questions are important input for APG. I'd like to thank our advisors who completed terms this past fall. Your leadership and mentorship have helped to shape APG and bring forward new leaders. Special thanks to those who have stepped up to represent their zones as advisors! I hope it will be a rewarding experience for you, as it has been for me, and that you will soon want to serve as a director on the provincial board. Wonderful opportunities await, such as representing the pulse industry in Ottawa and internationally!

I encourage everyone to attend APG's annual general meeting on January 30 during the CrossRoads Crop Conference in Calgary, as well as the entire conference. Unlike FarmTech, CrossRoads is not focused on agronomy or marketing. However, understanding and responding to the impacts of government policies, social licence, sustainability, and rapidly changing technology are becoming just as important to the long-term success of our farms. And Drew Lerner is back to talk about the weather!