



# TRANSPORTATION & TRADE ON THE MINDS OF PULSE GROWERS



By Greg Northey, VP, Corporate Affairs



This social card was circulated this summer to encourage producers to get involved by asking the federal government to prevent a potential rail strike at [stopthestrike.ca](http://stopthestrike.ca).

Canada exports roughly 85% of our pulse crops to over 120 markets around the world, with the overwhelming majority moved by rail. That is why Pulse Canada promotes supply chain performance that meets the needs of pulse growers and trade in every grain week of the year. The recent, unnecessary rail disruptions are the latest in a series of disruptions that have damaged Canada's international reputation as a reliable supplier. That is why Pulse Canada helped spearhead the #StopTheStrike campaign, advocating for the federal government to use section 107 of the Canadian Labour Code to send the railways and unions into binding arbitration while avoiding a lockout or strike. With negotiations at a standstill, the absence of federal leadership has led to slowdowns

which have a real negative impact on Canada's pulse sector.

The campaign saw over 2,300 letters sent to Ministers, with Pulse Canada and our coalition partners participating in dozens of media interviews to advance the cause. On August 22, the federal government invoked section 107, a direct request from the #StopTheStrike campaign, ordering the parties into binding arbitration and avoiding a sustained total shutdown. We know that for farmers, success for the campaign was a full rail workforce back on the job, and that is exactly what we worked to help deliver.

#### FOCUS ON TRADE

When supply chains are functioning, Pulse Canada has a proactive strategy to enhance trade opportunities and bring down barriers to trade in key

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international markets including India, China, the European Union and the UK. This strategy requires building relationships with new contacts in these markets, and strengthening existing relationships which in some cases, have been around for decades.

Recently, directors and staff have been working on increasing market opportunities for Canadian pulses in India and to generate predictability in market and trade policy. In China, we've worked to maintain Canada's position as the preferred supplier of yellow peas and explore opportunities for pea protein. And, in the EU and UK, we have continued ongoing advocacy for risk-based crop protection policies that do not impede trade. When included as part of the broader strategy, these initiatives are helping support the long-term success of the Canadian pulse industry.

## INDIA

India is a crucial market for Canadian pulses, with exports exceeding \$1.1 billion in 2023-24. That is thanks in part to India temporarily removing its market restrictions for yellow peas in December 2023, representing the first significant access for Canadian pulse growers to India's yellow pea market in over six years. These market restrictions are presently set to return in October 2024, and Pulse Canada will continue to keep members updated on whether an exemption will be extended. Pulse Canada's primary objectives in India are to enhance market opportunities and ensure predictability in trade policy. Despite the pause in negotiations for the Canada-India Early Progress Trade Agreement (EPTA) in September 2023 due to political tensions, Pulse Canada remains committed to securing improved market access and advancing opportunities in the market. In February 2024, then Pulse Canada Chair Kevin Auch led a delegation to the Global Pulse Confederation's annual convention in New Delhi. This provided the opportunity to further strengthen industry connections and monitor political developments to prevent disruptions in pulse trade, ensuring that Indian customers know Canada remains a reliable supplier ready to help them meet their food security needs.



*This social card encouraged producers to write to their MP regarding a potential rail strike.*

## CHINA

As the largest market for Canadian peas, China remains a focal point for Pulse Canada's trade efforts. Following the lifting of pandemic restrictions, Pulse Canada re-engaged with China through three separate delegations over the past year, reconnecting with key customers and reinforcing Canada's position as a leading supplier of yellow peas.

In July 2024, Pulse Canada signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the China Chamber of Import & Export of Foodstuffs, Native Produce & Animal By-Products (CFNA), and has also launched a Mandarin website to promote pulses and their benefits. These initiatives aim to strengthen cooperation and support trade. Ongoing efforts include working with in-country resources to explore market access for lentils and other pulses and navigate China's quarantine registration list. Pulse Canada will continue to work to strengthen our relationships in this important market.

## EU & UK

The EU and UK are key markets for Canadian pulse growers. In December 2023, Pulse Canada directors and staff embarked on

a significant trade mission to the region, advocating for risk-based crop protection policies that bolster trade and sustainability.

The mission included participation in the Canada-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Agriculture in Brussels and a gene editing workshop in London. These engagements emphasized the need for policies that support global trade in plant breeding innovations and ensure that Canadian pulses have fair access to European and UK markets.

These concerted efforts have been instrumental in advancing Pulse Canada's mission to secure and expand global market access for Canadian pulses. By addressing market opportunities in India, fortifying trade ties with China, and advocating for equitable policies in Europe and the UK, we have laid a strong foundation for future growth and stability in the pulse sector. With rail challenges a constant source of friction in our industry, our ongoing commitment to finding long-term solutions to the challenges we face will ensure that Canadian pulse growers remain competitive on the world stage, driving both industry sustainability and profitability.