



2026 Provincial Priority Guideline



Pulses.

On every farm, on every plate.

What are pulses?

Pulses are the edible seeds of leguminous plants that are harvested solely for the dry grain. They are a subgroup of legumes and are known for being high in protein, fibre, and essential nutrients, while being low in fat. Lentils, dry beans, field peas, chickpeas, faba beans, and lupins are pulses. These pulses are not only nutritious and high in protein, but they also fix nitrogen in the soil, reducing the need for nitrogen fertilizers, improving soil biodiversity and overall soil health.

Who we are:

Based in Leduc, Alberta Pulse Growers Commission is a not-for-profit organization that supports over 5,400 Alberta farmers who grow pulses, including field peas, dry beans, chickpeas, lentils, faba beans, soybeans and lupins. Through a refundable levy based on 0.75% of the cash sale on pulse crops sold in the province, Alberta Pulse Growers conducts research, administrative, marketing, advocacy and extension activities on behalf of our members.

With five zones, 10 staff, and a farmer-elected Board of 12 Directors, Alberta Pulse Growers promotes the benefits of including pulses in a sustainable crop rotation and in a healthy diet through research and marketing initiatives, all to increase production in Alberta. We lead through innovation and collaboration to add value for Alberta's pulse farmers.

Alberta Pulse Growers (APG) works to:

- **Encourage pulse production** across all types of farms in Alberta, regardless of size or primary crop.
- **Promote pulse consumption** as a regular part of people's diets, both locally and globally.

Pulses are good — for you and for Alberta farms!



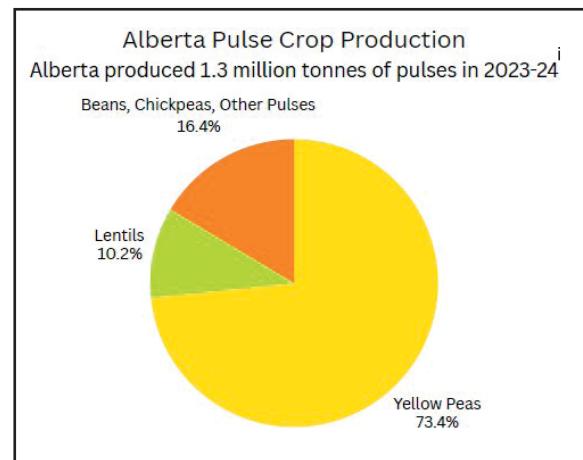


Economic Driver

Alberta's pulse sector is a high-growth, high-value contributor to the province's agri-food economy—producing over 1.3 million tonnes annually, supporting 5,400 farmers, and generating nearly \$1 billion in exports.

Alberta's pulse sector is a dynamic and rapidly expanding component of the province's agri-food economy. Alberta is a national leader in pulse production, projected to contribute 43% of Canada's peas, 10% of lentils, 10% of chickpeas, and 15% of beans in the 2025–26 crop year.ⁱⁱ

The province is home to approximately 5,400 pulse farmers. Pulse acres in Alberta were approximately 200,000 in 1990 and have grown to 1.9 million in 2025, with field peas (1.25 million acres) and lentils (526,000 acres) dominating.^{iii & iv}



Alberta's pulse exports are a major economic driver. In 2024–25, the province exported approximately 1.196 million tonnes of pulses and the estimated export value reached \$840 million CAD, underscoring the sector's growing contribution to Alberta's economy.^v Pulses are also among the most lucrative crops for Alberta producers, with average prices for key pulses significantly outpacing traditional crops.

Beyond profitability, pulses offer substantial agronomic and environmental benefits. They fix atmospheric nitrogen, reducing fertilizer costs and emissions. Their role in crop rotations improves soil health, breaks disease cycles, and boosts yields of subsequent crops. Pulses also support sustainable farming practices through water efficiency and compatibility with zero-till systems.

Global demand for pulses is projected to grow 23% by 2034, reaching 8.6 kg per capita, up from 7 kg today. This growth is driven by rising health and sustainability awareness, urbanization, and the rise of plant-based foods.^{vi}



Achieving Alberta's Export Goals

Ensuring uninterrupted market access for Alberta pulses is critical—for the province's economy and for global food security. As a reliable source of affordable, high-quality protein, Alberta pulses help feed millions in key export markets like India, China, the United States, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Türkiye, United Arab Emirates, Italy, and Mexico, where they support nutrition and food system resilience.

Alberta's pulse exports play a vital role in meeting rising global demand for affordable, sustainable protein sources, particularly in regions facing food security challenges. Pulses such as field peas, lentils, chickpeas, dry beans, and faba beans are increasingly sought after in key markets including China, India, Bangladesh, Türkiye, and the United Arab Emirates. China leads in imports of yellow peas for feed and fractionation, while India remains the largest consumer of lentils and chickpeas, accounting for 30–35% of global pulse imports. Bangladesh and Pakistan are experiencing rapid growth in demand due to urbanization and dietary reliance on pulses. Europe and North America are also expanding consumption, driven by plant-based food trends.

Alberta benefits from Canada's surplus in field peas and lentils, with projected ending stocks of 1.275 million tonnes and 780,000 tonnes respectively for 2025-26, enabling consistent export capacity. Canada is expected to remain the top global pulse exporter. Alberta's top export destinations in 2024-25 include India, China, Bangladesh, the U.S., and Türkiye, aligning with global trends. Overall, world trade in pulses has grown over 40% in the past decade, with per capita consumption projected to increase 23% by 2034, underscoring the strategic importance of maintaining strong export channels.^{vii}

Challenges in Core and Growth Markets

While well positioned, and despite global demand, Alberta farmers face growing protectionism in key export markets and varying barriers to maintaining existing markets and impending diversification capacity.

China

- Retaliatory Tariffs: 100% duties on Canadian peas in response to EV and other trade disputes is having a catastrophic effect on Canada's pulse industry. The tariff has reduced the price farmers receive for peas, limited marketing opportunities, and disrupted global supply chains.
- Market Diversion: China now sources peas from Russia and Ukraine.
- Unpredictable Access: Alberta producers are shut out and access remains uncertain.

India

- Policy Volatility: Unpredictable trade policy creates uncertainty.
- Protectionism: Subsidies and Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) favour domestic production.
- Technical Barriers: Phytosanitary measures increase risk and compliance costs.
- Self-Sufficiency: India aims to eliminate pulse imports by 2029.
- Competition: New trade deals are putting Canadian exports at a disadvantage.

Bangladesh and Türkiye

- Growing Demand: Growing markets need consistent engagement and competitive pricing.
- Limited Infrastructure: Export logistics and port capacity hinder scale.

European Union and Southeast Asia

- Non-Tariff Barriers: Pesticide residue limits, labeling, and sustainability rules.
- Regulatory Complexity: Fragmented rules across countries require tailored strategies.

Requests

Trade Advocacy and Diplomacy

- Maintain provincial pressure Federally and advocate against the Federal EV mandate linked to China's 100% pea tariffs.
- Maintain a strong North American trading system.
- Support Federal renewal of Canada's relationship with India, build Alberta's relationship with India.
- Increase collaboration between national, provincial, and Alberta Export/Agri-Trade Offices in key markets (India, China, UAE, Indo-Pacific).
- Advocate Alberta's role in federal trade talks with market-specific data.
- Promote Alberta-branded sustainability and traceability to build trust and engage buyers.

Market Diversification

- Support trade missions and B2B delegations to India, Bangladesh, Southeast Asia, and Africa.
- Develop export readiness programs for pulse producers targeting emerging markets.

Regulatory Support

- Generate Alberta-based scientific data to challenge unjustified SPS barriers.
- Create a provincial unit to help exporters navigate foreign regulations.

Branding and Market Intelligence

- Launch a global "Grown in Alberta" pulse branding campaign.

Stakeholder Engagement

- Lead Alberta trade missions and agri-food roundtables in key markets.
- Collaborate with prairie provinces for federal pulse advocacy.
- Support international research partnerships on pulse innovation and sustainability.



Developing Streamlined Corridors

Alberta's pulse sector relies heavily on exports, but strained transportation infrastructure—especially rail and port systems—threatens its global competitiveness and farmers' profitability. Strategic investments in inland terminals, supply chain logistics, and rail policy reform are urgently needed to maintain market access and reliability.

Alberta's pulse sector is export dependent and provides food, nutrition and geopolitical security around the world. Despite the sector's global reach, Alberta's transportation infrastructure and logistics systems are increasingly strained, threatening the province's reputation as a reliable supplier. Efficient, timely, and cost-effective transportation is essential to maintain competitiveness and ensuring farmers receive fair market value.

Canada's rail system is central to pulse exports, yet it faces persistent challenges. Container shortages, outdated infrastructure, and monopolistic rail practices have led to delays, increased costs, and reduced market access. These issues are compounded by port inefficiencies, such as rain delays in Vancouver and limited infrastructure in Prince Rupert. Without strategic investment and policy reform, Alberta risks losing ground in key export markets.

Challenges

Alberta's pulse sector faces serious transportation and logistics challenges that threaten global competitiveness. Chronic rail issues—delays, poor maintenance, and outdated braking—damage Canada's reputation as a reliable exporter. Farmers bear the cost through demurrage fees, missed shipping windows, lower cash bids, and reduced profitability. Container availability remains a challenge post-COVID as 30% of peas and lentil exports, and 100% of other pulses, rely on containers, which are now more expensive and harder to procure. Port infrastructure further compounds the issue: drawbridge interruptions and rain delays in Vancouver, coupled with underutilized capacity in Prince Rupert, slow down shipments. Unlike competitors such as Australia, Canadian ports lack covered loading areas, halting operations during inclement weather.^{viii} Alberta lacks adequate supply chain and container handling for sensitive markets. Labour disputes and limited rail interswitching create regulatory bottlenecks, raising costs and restricting movement. These systemic issues threaten pulse growers and the broad agri-food sector's sustainability and reliability.

Requests

Infrastructure and Logistics

- Invest in rail capacity to ease bottlenecks and boost export reliability.
- Enhance supply chain and container handling for sensitive markets through infrastructure investment, industry collaboration, and targeted incentives.
- Support supply storage development, improve inland container logistics, and foster partnerships with ports and logistics providers.
- Collaborate interprovincially with port authorities to install weather protection at loading zones, advocate for infrastructure upgrades, co-fund inland improvements, ensure Alberta's needs are reflected in port planning, and enable stakeholder input on reducing delays.

Rail Policy Reform

- Advocate for permanent interswitching (e.g., 500 km radius) to boost competition and reduce transport costs.
- Partner with industry and provinces to present a unified case for Federal regulatory reform.
- Highlight the economic impact of limited rail competition on Alberta's export sectors, including pulses.
- Incentivize industry to supply Alberta-specific rail cars or improve fleet access.

Strategic Collaboration

- Advocate for infrastructure upgrades and coordinate with federal partners to maintain product flow during labour disputes.
- Explore opportunities to expand the use of Prince Rupert as a strategic export hub for pulses due to its more efficient and weather-resilient features.





Adopting an Innovation Focus

Research, innovation, and extension are essential to achieving three million acres of pulse production in Alberta.

Research in pulses is critically important for Alberta's agricultural and economic future. Alberta has a strong track record of innovation in pulse research, including advancements in yield, disease resistance, and variety development that have increased pulse yields by 35% over the past decade. This research boosts Alberta's pulse sector competitiveness globally. Pea breeding investments yield a 14.1% annual return—outperforming most public R&D and driving strong agricultural growth.

RDAR has co-funded 70% of APG's active research projects (21/30). APG has invested nearly \$3 million in funding to co-funded projects. These research projects are critical to strengthening and maintaining Alberta's competitive advantage in pulse crops.

Projects have advanced new crops like lupin, expanded faba bean opportunities, and supported innovations in protein extraction, fermented ingredients, and coproduct valorization—boosting market access and value-added processing. These investments help producers boost yields, income, and export diversity while meeting global demand for sustainable plant-based foods. Continued research positions Alberta as a leader in high-quality, sustainable protein.

Challenges

Alberta Pulse Growers faces challenges securing stable, long-term provincial research funding critical to sector growth. While RDAR offers support, the loss of government-run research stations and extension services limits effective deployment—especially for complex issues like *Aphanomyces* root rot, which hinders pea and lentil expansion. Without strong extension programs, new growers lack guidance to adopt pulses. Short-term funding models do not align with the 10 to 15-year cycle needed for variety development, soil health, and disease management. Without consistent commitment, Alberta risks losing momentum in pulse innovation, farm profitability, and export potential.

Requests

- Support applied research by providing funding for commission-led long-term research, field-based agronomic studies that complement RDAR's project funding.
- Ensure RDAR funding keeps pace with inflation.
- Fund weed, disease, and pest surveys to support integrated management and protect pulse yields and quality.
- Establish a dedicated pulse research role at the Western Crop Innovation Centre with \$10–20 million over five to 10 years.
- Restore and expand extension services through college programs and unbiased regional specialists who connect science to farm practice - independent of commercial bias.
- Support Alberta's agriculture colleges with targeted funding to train future agronomists and researchers via hands-on apprenticeship models (e.g., EU system).
- Advocate for increased federal AAFC research funding and restoration of lost scientist roles. Ensure Alberta's infrastructure supports collaborative pulse research and long-term innovation.
- Enhance industry engagement in the design of Federal/Provincial programs, like SCAP, to ensure they are practical, effective, and aligned with producer needs.
- Ensure SCAP provincial paperwork is streamlined and reduced to ensure efficiency in the application process.





Ensuring Alberta's Long-term Viability

Pulse farmers rely on healthy ecosystems—wetlands and native vegetation support pollination, pest control, water regulation, and soil health, all vital for pulse production and long-term land viability.

Pulse farmers depend on healthy ecosystems. Natural assets like wetlands and native vegetation

- Support pollinators and beneficial insects and natural predators for pest control
- Improve water retention and filtration
- Enhance soil health, especially in pulse rotations.

Pulses also benefit ecosystems by fixing nitrogen, reducing fertilizer use, and boosting soil microbes.

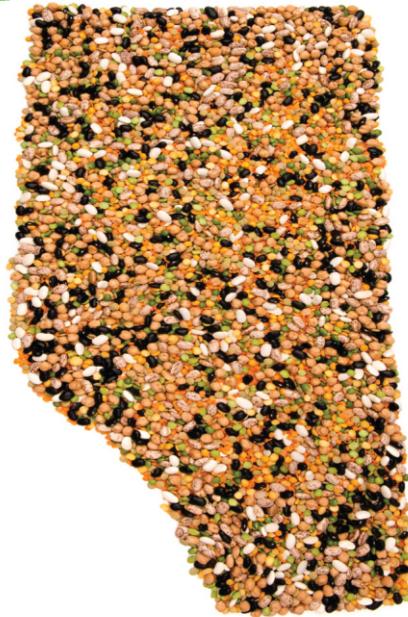
Challenges

Despite their ecological value, Alberta's natural assets—wetlands, grasslands, and forest patches—are increasingly lost due to economic and policy pressures. Meanwhile, Federal water monitoring programs fail to track pesticide and nutrient loading effectively due to poor coordination. Issues including trespassing, and biosecurity breaches, undermine trust and limiting data collection essential for evidence-based policy. Rising land values and the growing presence of institutional landowners, including foreign ownership and large funds like Ontario Teachers Pension Plan and Canada Pension Plan, are incentivizing farmers to fully utilize their land, leaving little room for conservation. Urban sprawl and zoning conflicts have also contributed to the loss of hectares of Class 2 and 3 prime agricultural land in the past decade. Alberta's Wetland Policy and regulations are limiting farmers' ability to adopt adaptive water tools like controlled tile drainage, which could reduce drought and flood risks. Programs such as the Ecosystem Services Grant Program (ESGP) lack key features—third-party monitoring around equity safeguards, and retention-based payments—that would make conservation more viable and appealing for landowners.

Requests

- Reform Wetland Policy to remove EPA approvals for managing surplus water on the landscape to enable seeding in a timely manner and facilitate adaptive water tools like tile drainage and strategic dugouts for spraying and emergency fire preparedness.
- Fund and implement a provincial water monitoring program focused on pesticide and nutrient loading, building on existing pilot projects led by Alberta Pulse Growers and Team Alberta Crops. Ensure the initiative respects landowner rights and biosecurity—avoiding the trust issues seen in federal programs.
- Use regional planning to reduce farmland loss and land-use conflict, and introduce measurable indicators in the SSRP to track land conversion and urban annexation.
- Monitor foreign and fund-based farmland ownership.
- Strengthen ESGP by mandating third-party or peer-based monitoring, develop criteria to support smallholders, and prioritize retention-based payments with safeguards and governance mechanisms.
- Ensure community-led design through farmer consultation and offer flexible, competitive compensation.





Agriculture as Alberta's Identity and Opportunity

Agriculture is a vital part of Alberta's economy, heritage, and rural communities—contributing 2.5% to GDP and generating \$22.2 billion in farm revenues in 2020, the highest in Canada.^{ix} The sector employs 44,700 Albertans, mostly full-time, and is Alberta's largest renewable industry.^x

Though only 20% of Albertans live rurally, agriculture plays a major role in the province's economy, environment, and global reputation. Pulses support soil health, climate resilience, and economic diversification. To unlock their full potential, Alberta must actively champion the sector through meaningful engagement with producers, researchers, and educators.

Requests

- Establish long-term research roles in pulse agronomy and breeding, modeled on successful provincial examples.
- Invest in producer-led field networks for trials, demos, and regional innovation.
- Support localized demonstration and adoption programs that help producers trial new technologies and practices tailored to Alberta's diverse agro-ecological zones.
- Modernize applied research infrastructure through college and institutional partnerships to attract top scientists.
- Restore and modernize Alberta's applied research infrastructure, partnering with colleges and research institutions to attract top-tier agricultural scientists and maintain world-class facilities.
- Develop an agricultural engagement strategy with roundtables, extension hubs, and public campaigns to position agriculture as central to Alberta's future.



Endnotes

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