



PULSE CROP

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A collaborative effort from:



CONTACT US:

Rachel Peterson
Communications Manager
rpeterson@albertapulse.com

Pulse Crop News is produced twice per year
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RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:

Alberta Pulse Growers Commission
#101, 4721- 47 Avenue, Leduc, AB T9E 7J4
Telephone: (780) 986-9398 / 1-877-550-9398
Facsimile: (780) 980-2570
office@albertapulse.com | albertapulse.com

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Pulse Crop News is the official journal of and published by Alberta Pulse Growers. This is a producer organization funded by sales of pulse crops (beans, peas, lentils, faba beans, chickpeas, lupins and soybeans) grown in the province of Alberta.

Current circulation of this quarterly publication is 6,500+ copies and is distributed to producers, government, and industry involved in the special crops field.

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Publications Mail Agreement No. #40041861

On the cover: APG Chair Will Muller at his farm near Bow Island where he grows beans, lentils, peas and chickpeas in rotation.

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CHAIR'S REPORT

New Chair embracing the role to benefit fellow growers

BY WILL MULLER

APG Chair

Hello fellow producers,

If you would have told me years ago when I first joined the Alberta Pulse Growers Commission that I would be writing this as your provincial chair, I wouldn't have believed you. Back then, I was entirely intimidated by the organization and everyone involved. I certainly didn't grow up in a family that pushed me into agricultural commissions; I blame curiosity for ending up here, and I am trying to fully embrace it.

After accepting a chair position that my instincts begged me to reject, I found myself on a "wild ride" to India with Pulse Canada within weeks, holding out a sliver of hope that I'd at least get a glimpse of the Taj Mahal, which thankfully I did. While the sightseeing was secondary, the mission was huge: Witnessing firsthand how India desperately needs Canadian pulses to cover their four-month reserve shortfall while navigating one to 10-acre farms, wheat subsidy traps, and transit issues. I learned they don't want "fake meat." They want real, high quality Canadian protein, which we can supply with our pulses. Ultimately, the trip proved that while board chairs come and go, our real job is ensuring Canadian farmers remain India's go-to pulse partners so we can keep feeding 1.5 billion people.

Closer to home, we snagged our first ever invite to the Western Premiers' Conference. The networking window was so tight it took a bit of pure aggression just to get a short chat in with the premiers. The real highlight was staying up late talking shop with our new Minister of Agriculture, Tara Sawyer. Most of us already know Tara from her previous roles with Grain Growers of Canada, so I was very happy to see this new opportunity for her, and I think we can all agree we will be glad to work alongside her.

Of course, while I was handling things closer to home, the fear of missing out was still real as our Executive Director Leanne Fischbuch and Zone 4 Director Bev Wieben took

off on a crucial mission to China. They were over there strengthening vital trade ties, navigating post tariff dynamics, and opening doors for Canadian peas and pulse ingredients. Between high level meetings with Chinese Customs and the Ministry of Commerce to push for access on lentils, faba beans, and chickpeas, and attending the China Pea Conference, they covered a lot of ground. The takeaway was clear: While Chinese fractionators genuinely value our pea quality, low-cost competition from Russia and Argentina is ramping up. It made it obvious that sustained market presence, product diversification, and strict adherence to quality standards like our "Keep It Clean" glyphosate messaging are essential to holding our ground.

But whether we are talking about India, China, or Edmonton, running APG is like a three-legged race with staff. As producers, our focus is naturally on our fields, so we rely heavily on our incredible staff to keep the wheels turning behind the scenes while we manage the madness of spray schedules and irrigation pivots. That partnership is exactly why grassroots representation matters. This year highlighted just how diverse our growing zones are. While those of us farming inside the Palliser Triangle were complaining over bone dry sandy soil, directors in the north were literally riding snowmobiles off their roofs. What keeps a farmer awake at night down south isn't even on the radar a few hours away. To ensure every unique corner of Alberta is represented equally, we need your voice. I strongly encourage everyone to attend our upcoming fall zone meetings. Take it from me, stepping up as a zone advisor is a rewarding way to put one foot in and help steer our industry.

To close, I want to extend my sincere gratitude to each of you for granting me the privilege to serve as your chair. Being in this role is a continuous learning curve. I certainly don't have all the answers, but it gives me an invaluable platform to learn and speak up directly on the real, day to day issues we all face on our own farms. It is a true honour to represent our collective voice, and I look forward to continuing our work together to push our industry forward. Thank you for your ongoing trust and support. 



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Work on APG priorities to be highlighted at fall meetings

BY LEANNE FISCHBUCH

APG Executive Director

Spring and summer 2026 have been busy seasons for Alberta Pulse Growers (APG) directors and staff. In this edition of *Pulse Crop News*, we highlight some of the organization's key activities, including market outreach, discussions with farmers and elected officials, important industry announcements, and the behind-the-scenes work that helps shape APG's priorities for the coming year. These efforts will set the stage for our fall regional meetings and the important conversations ahead.

This spring, APG prioritized activities with Pulse Canada, the national organization representing Canada's pulse and special crops industry. A key focus was supporting market development in two of our largest export markets: India and China. This national priority included a significant trade mission involving directors, industry representatives, and staff who travelled directly to these markets. The engagement has already made an impact in several ways. Read more about APG member involvement on page 12.

Another summer highlight was APG's advocacy during the Calgary Stampede. The Stampede provides a unique opportunity to connect with elected officials and senior government staff. While APG's focus at the event is not direct public outreach, we recognize the value of engaging specifically with policymakers and decision-makers. With representatives from all levels of government attending and hosting their own events throughout the 10-day festival, the Stampede remains an important venue for advocacy and relationship building.

Summer is also a valuable time for crop walks and direct farmer engagement. APG partnered with Alberta Canola and Alberta Grains to host the Alberta Crop Diagnostic Days at Lakeland College, Western Crop Innovations, and, new this year, Lethbridge Polytechnic. Thank you to our partners, farmers, and industry participants who attended and contributed to these events. These diagnostic days

continue to be the premier commission-led crop diagnostic events of the summer and provide an excellent opportunity for producers to have challenging agronomic questions answered by industry experts.

In mid-July, APG and Saskatchewan Pulse Growers announced a significant investment in the University of Saskatchewan's Crop Development Centre lentil breeding program. Speaking at the joint announcement during Ag in Motion, former APG Chair Shane Strydhorst emphasized the importance of the partnership and the opportunities it creates for Alberta lentil producers. Lentil production in Alberta has grown steadily since 2011, supported by APG investments in research focused on expanding production into non-traditional growing areas and encouraging industry development of purchasing hubs that help farmers diversify their operations and strengthen crop rotations.

This spring, APG was also busy planning the next round of research investments. Working closely with provincial pulse partners and Pulse Canada, APG has helped to develop the National Pulse Research Strategy. Having a national research strategy supports the industry's objective to coordinate research investment and support the long-term profitability, competitiveness and sustainability of the pulse sector. It also prepares the pulse sector for future funding opportunities. The strategy will be launched to researchers from across Canada this November at the Canadian Pulse Research Workshop (CPRW 2026), hosted by Saskatchewan Pulse Growers.

With only two editions of *Pulse Crop News* published each year, it can be challenging to keep members informed about everything happening within the pulse industry. To stay connected throughout the year, we encourage members to subscribe to APG's monthly e-newsletter, Pulse Check. Register at albertapulse.com/2026/08/sign-up-for-appgs-pulse-check-member-e-newsletter/ to receive timely updates directly in your inbox so you don't miss important pulse industry news and opportunities. 



Presenters at the announcement included: Stuart Lawrence, Saskatchewan Pulse Growers; Ana Vargas, University of Saskatchewan; Curtis Pozniak, University of Saskatchewan; Daryl Harrison, Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan; Shane Strydhorst, Alberta Pulse Growers; and Penny McCall, Government of Saskatchewan. (Photo courtesy of Saskatchewan Pulse Growers)

VARIETY DEVELOPMENT

APG welcomes new lentil breeding partnership

The Alberta Pulse Growers Commission (APG) is pleased to partner with the University of Saskatchewan's Crop Development Centre (CDC) and Saskatchewan Pulse Growers to develop lentils that benefit a growing number of pulse farmers in Alberta.

"Thanks to research investment by Alberta Pulse Growers, lentils are now being planted and successfully grown in non-traditional lentil growing regions of Alberta, such as the Peace in the north," said APG Chair Will Muller.

"With the expansion and interest in our province, we are excited to once again be supporting innovation in lentil breeding and foster new and improved genetics for this crop."

The program, which will be led by CDC plant breeder Dr. Ana Vargas, will develop lentils for improved yield, improved disease resistance (Anthracnose, Ascochyta blight, *Aphanomyces* and *Fusarium* root rots), as well as herbicide tolerance focused on Groups 5 and 14. Breeding will take place in Saskatoon and leverage testing sites in Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Vargas is working on traits that will not only increase yield but also improve the disease package and increase resilience in the face of abiotic stress. She is early in her career, and APG is pleased to be a part of the efforts to set her up for success.

APG previously participated in CDC lentil breeding efforts with Dr. Bert Vandenberg, and Dr. Manjula Bandara with Alberta Agriculture in Brooks who was linked to the CDC.

CDC's strong history of pulse breeding and variety development began in 1978 when the Laird lentil was first released in Canada. Since then, hundreds of CDC pulse varieties have been released. The agreement announced in July at Ag in Motion reflects a commitment to commercialize new varieties with royalties on all acres, including those planted with farm-saved seed. Royalties flow back to breeders, which encourages further lentil breeding advancements. This creates a merit-based system where royalties flow to those breeders developing the varieties that farmers grow. APG and other funders, where applicable, will also receive a portion of royalties to reinvest in strategic program areas.

"Variety development has proven to have a high return on investment, and we are excited to fund the advancement of lentil genetics," Muller explained. "It makes sense to pool resources, reduce administrative burden and avoid duplication by investing together through partnership. APG is looking forward to sharing ideas and goals with the team through the advisory committee, ensuring that the farm is the primary beneficiary of this work."

Lentils are currently the second most commonly grown pulse crop in Alberta after field peas. 

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NET PROFIT INCREASE WITH AGTIV THRIVE[®] BIOLOGICAL INOCULANTS

LENTIL

30 \$/ac*



PEA

20 \$/ac*



CHICKPEA

42 \$/ac*



* AGTIV THRIVE[®] vs competitor average. Net profit based on July 2026 crop prices, average yield increases in trials and cost of product deducted.



POLICY

Beyond the rodeo: Why the Calgary Stampede matters for APG

BY JACQUELINE MEDALYE

APG Government and External Affairs Strategic Advisor

For most Albertans, the Calgary Stampede is about rodeo action, pancake breakfasts, and celebrating our western heritage. For Alberta Pulse Growers (APG), however, Stampede is also one of the most important advocacy opportunities of the entire year.

While thousands of people gather to enjoy the festivities, another kind of work is taking place behind the scenes. Politicians, senior government officials, industry leaders, business organizations, and stakeholders from across the country converge on Calgary for nine days of networking, conversations, and relationship building. In government relations circles, Stampede is widely recognized as one of the most important opportunities of the year to connect with decision-makers in a setting that is far more accessible and informal than the traditional halls of government.

Nevin Rosaasen, Sustainability and Government Relations Manager, and I were on the ground throughout Stampede this year representing Alberta Pulse Growers as its government relations team.

Over nine days, we attended more than 20 government relations and stakeholder engagement events. Many of these events were invitation-only and depended on the relationships APG has spent years building with elected officials, government staff, industry associations, and public policy leaders. The results were significant.

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TOP TO BOTTOM: APG's Jacqueline Medalye with Hon. Heath MacDonald, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Hon. Nolan Dyck, Parliamentary Secretary of Indigenous and Rural Policing; Hon. Tara Sawyer, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation; and APG's Nevin Rosaasen.

APG's Jacqueline Medalye with Hon. Devin Dreesen, Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors.

APG's Jacqueline Medalye and Nevin Rosaasen with NDP Leader Naheed Nenshi, Opposition Leader.

As government relations professionals often say, Stampede is about touchpoints. It is about strengthening relationships, making introductions, reconnecting with decision-makers, and ensuring that when important issues emerge, **our organization is already a trusted voice at the table.**

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Over the course of the week, we met with nearly every provincial MLA active in the Stampede circuit, for a total of 43 MLA touchpoints. We met with Premier Danielle Smith and Opposition Leader Naheed Nenshi. We met with nearly 20% of Alberta-based federal MPs as well. We also met with Alberta Senators and key ministry staff responsible for files that directly impact pulse producers.

To an outside observer, that may sound like a busy social calendar. In reality, it is strategic advocacy. The greatest value of Stampede is not found in formal presentations or scheduled boardroom meetings. As government relations professionals often say, Stampede is about touchpoints. It is about strengthening relationships, making introductions, reconnecting with decision-makers, and ensuring that when important issues emerge, our organization is already a trusted voice at the table.

For pulse growers, this matters more than ever.

Governments are making decisions on issues such as agricultural competitiveness, sustainability initiatives, market diversification, trade development, transportation infrastructure, environmental policy, research investments and election priorities. Those decisions do not happen in isolation. The organizations that are consistently present, engaged, and constructive in their relationships with government are often the organizations that are consulted when policy is being developed. That is where APG's work at Stampede delivers value to members.

Every conversation helps ensure that decision-makers understand the contribution pulse growers make to Alberta's economy, rural communities, export markets, and environmental stewardship. Every relationship built today creates an opportunity to influence discussions tomorrow.

One of the highlights of this year's engagement efforts was APG Director Joe Rowbottom joining federal Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Heath MacDonald for a farm tour and roundtable discussion with Team Alberta Crops. Opportunities like these allow producer organizations to share firsthand perspectives directly with federal decision-makers and ensure the voice of Alberta agriculture is heard at the highest levels.

Just as importantly, Stampede provides something that is increasingly rare in modern politics: Time.

A brief conversation over coffee or at a pancake breakfast often creates a stronger connection than a formal meeting scheduled months in advance. Ministers, MLAs, MPs, political staff, and stakeholders are all gathered in one place, allowing discussions to happen naturally and organically. Those informal conversations frequently become future meetings, policy consultations, or collaborative opportunities.

For APG, Stampede is also the unofficial starting line for next year's advocacy. Many people assume government activity slows down during the summer months. The reality is quite different. While legislatures may not be sitting, ministers continue travelling, political staff continue developing priorities, and governments begin preparing for the legislative and policy agendas that will emerge in the next session. Summer is often when priorities are shaped and relationships are strengthened behind the scenes.

The conversations APG has during Stampede frequently become the foundation for follow-up meetings throughout the summer. That is precisely why APG invests time and resources into being present at Stampede. Effective advocacy is not about showing up only when an issue becomes urgent. It is about building credibility before decisions are made. It is about ensuring government understands the needs of pulse growers before policies are drafted. It is about creating relationships that enable APG to advance member priorities.

The Calgary Stampede is where relationships are built, doors are opened, and future opportunities are created. When the tents come down and the crowds go home, the real value remains. The connections made, conversations started, and trust built during those nine days will continue to support APG's advocacy efforts for months to come.

For Alberta pulse farmers, that means a stronger voice, stronger relationships, and a stronger position at the decision-making table for our members. 

Conversations at the farm gate: Minister MacDonald meets with Team Alberta Crops

BY AMANDA HARDMAN

Policy Coordinator, Team Alberta Crops

Team Alberta Crops welcomed the federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the Honourable Heath MacDonald, and senior officials from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada for a farm tour and roundtable discussion on the opportunities and challenges facing Alberta crop producers. The visit on July 6 marked the second year that Team Alberta Crops has facilitated on-farm engagement with the Minister.

Hosted by Alberta Canola Director Jeff Frost during Calgary Stampede week, the visit brought together representatives from Alberta's crop and beekeeping organizations to showcase modern farming operations and provide direct feedback on policy issues affecting producers across the province.

The morning began with a tour of Frost's grain handling, storage and drying facilities near Olds. As guests moved through the bin yard, Frost explained how investments in on-farm infrastructure can help producers manage crop quality, reduce risk, and improve marketing opportunities. The tour offered a firsthand look at the significant capital required to operate a modern grain farm and served as a natural starting point for broader discussions about farm competitiveness and profitability.

Succession planning quickly emerged as a key topic. Representatives spoke about the importance of policies that support intergenerational farm transfers, improve access to capital for young farmers, and encourage entrepreneurship within Canadian agriculture.

Attendees emphasized that ensuring family farms can successfully transition between generations is essential to maintaining a strong and productive agricultural sector.

As the tour transitioned into a roundtable discussion, participants spoke about the importance of maintaining competitiveness and resiliency within the agriculture sector. Business Risk Management programs, including AgriInsurance and AgriStability, were highlighted as essential tools for helping producers manage risk and adapt to increasingly unpredictable growing conditions.



Minister MacDonald spoke with producers, including APG Zone 2 Director Joe Rowbottom (second from left) at Jeff Frost's operation near Olds, AB. (Photo courtesy of Alberta Grains)

Representatives also emphasized the need for continued investment in agricultural research and innovation, including plant breeding, agronomy and producer-driven science. Discussions touched on seed and regulatory modernization, access to crop protection tools, and the importance of ensuring producers can adopt new technologies and crop varieties quickly and efficiently.

Trade, market access, and transportation infrastructure were also key themes. Participants stressed the importance of maintaining reliable export opportunities, strengthening



Throughout the discussion, a common message emerged: Policies that support productivity, competitiveness, innovation, and successful farm transitions will help ensure Canadian agriculture remains strong for future generations.

supply chains, and investing in critical infrastructure that supports Canada's position as a trusted supplier of agricultural products around the world.

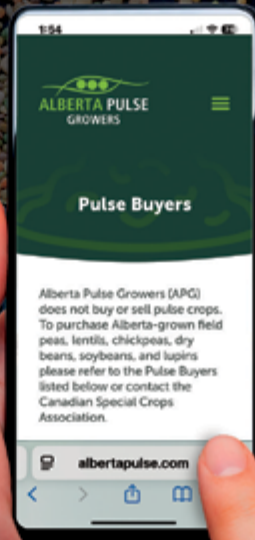
Throughout the discussion, a common message emerged: Policies that support productivity, competitiveness, innovation, and successful farm transitions will help ensure Canadian agriculture remains strong for future generations.

By combining an on-farm tour with direct policy discussions, the visit provided an important opportunity for federal decision-makers to see firsthand how national policies affect producers at the farm gate.

The discussions reinforced the importance of maintaining a competitive, innovative, and productive agricultural sector to support Alberta agriculture and Canada's broader economy. 

FIND YOUR PULSE DEALER

For the most up-to-date contact information for pulse dealers in Alberta, visit our website and search by crop type and services offered.



albertapulse.com/dealer



BY JEFF ENGLISH

Vice-President of Public Affairs



Pulse Canada builds on long-term partnerships with trade missions

Over the past several months, Pulse Canada led international trade missions to India and China, reinforcing the value of face-to-face relationship-building in two of Canada's most important pulse markets. Alberta Pulse Growers representatives took part in both missions, ensuring Alberta's growers had a direct voice in discussions shaping market access and long-term demand for Canadian pulses.

India: Reinforcing trust during a pivotal moment

From March 1 to 5, a Pulse Canada delegation travelled to India alongside representatives from Alberta Pulse Growers, Saskatchewan Pulse Growers, and the Canadian Pulse and Special Crops Trade Association. The timing was significant as the visit coincided with Canada and India's announcement to negotiate a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), as well as the establishment of a Canada-India Pulse Protein Centre of Excellence.

Terry Youzwa, Pulse Canada's outgoing Chair, summed up the purpose of the trip: "These trips are about showing up and listening. When we sit down with customers and partners in India, it reinforces that Canada is committed for the long haul."

Despite India's push to grow domestic pulse production, delegates heard that the country will continue to count on imports. Limited arable land, a wide range of farm sizes, and unpredictable weather mean India typically holds only a few months of pulse supply on hand — creating steady demand for reliable exporters like Canada. Government policy, including tariffs, procurement programs, and stockpiling decisions, will keep shaping the market, which is why sustained dialogue with Indian counterparts remains essential.

The mission also pointed to new opportunities beyond bulk exports. Rising protein demand in India's urban centres and growing investment in food processing are opening doors for pulses in ready-to-eat meals, snacks, and fortified foods, in addition to their established role in public nutrition programs. Throughout the visit, importers reaffirmed that quality — consistent moisture levels, uniform size, and minimal damage — remains a key reason Canadian pulses keep their competitive edge.

"When you look at the fundamentals, the demand is there," said Shane Strydhorst, incoming Chair of Pulse Canada. "Our job is to stay connected to the market so we can bring that signal back home. That helps farmers understand where the opportunities are — not just this year, but over the long term."

China: Strengthening a decades-long relationship

From June 22 to 26, a nine-member delegation — including provincial grower representatives and industry directors — travelled to Beijing and Zhaoyuan to build on a trading relationship that spans decades.

A highlight of the mission was the renewal of Pulse Canada's memorandum of understanding with the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Foodstuffs, Native Produce and Animal By-Products (CFNA), extending a partnership first formalized in 2023. The two organizations also took part in a mutual recognition ceremony acknowledging their years of collaboration.

In Zhaoyuan, delegates presented at the 2026 China Pea Conference, sharing insights on Canadian pulse production and global ingredient trends, alongside a farmer panel



Left to right: SPG's Carl Potts and Stuart Lawrence; APG's Bev Wieben; SPG's Terry Youzwa, who was Pulse Canada Chair at the time; APG's Leanne Fischbuch; Pulse Canada's Greg Cherewyk; and Mike James, Richardson International CPSCA representative, were part of the Canadian delegation to China.

focused on production practices and sustainability. In Beijing, discussions included expanding market access for Canadian faba beans, lentils, and chickpeas, with delegates meeting representatives from China's Ministry of Commerce to review trade protocols.

The mission also produced a new technical collaboration: Pulse Canada will partner with China's Institute of Food and Nutrition Development on an industry white paper connecting Canadian pea ingredients to China's food and nutrition priorities. Sections of the paper are targeted for release in November 2026, with completion expected by spring 2027.

Why these missions matter for growers

Both missions underline a consistent theme: Canada's reputation as a dependable, high-quality supplier is built and maintained through direct, ongoing engagement. Whether in New Delhi or Beijing, buyers and government

counterparts alike want to see Canadian representatives, including growers, at the table.

For Alberta's pulse growers, that translates into practical benefits: continued market access; a stronger voice in shaping trade policy discussions like the Canada-India CEPA; and new avenues for demand growth as both countries' food industries evolve. These relationships also help protect Alberta growers from market shocks, since diversified, well-maintained trade corridors give the province's pulse sector more than one reliable outlet for its crop in any given year.

Pulse Canada, working with Alberta Pulse Growers and other provincial partners, will continue this engagement in the months ahead. Growers can expect further updates as both initiatives move forward, along with continued reporting on how these international relationships translate into demand at the farm level. 🌱



Farmers are paying for a transportation system that isn't working

BY BRUCE R. BURROWS
Executive Director

Farmers can do everything right through the growing season and still lose out if their crop cannot get to market.

That is the reality of growing grain in an export-dependent country. More than 70% of Canadian grain is sold abroad, and approximately 94% moves by rail.

For pulse growers in Alberta, rail and port service disruptions leave few practical alternatives. Alberta pulse crops move through the same corridors as other western grains, so a disruption at the Port of Vancouver hits pulse sales as hard as it hits wheat or canola. Grain backs up, delivery opportunities shrink and overseas customers look elsewhere.

That is why earlier this year, Grain Growers of Canada joined partners in the Ag Transport Coalition's *Too Much on the Line* campaign, to put a number on that risk.

The resulting analysis found that a one-week disruption affecting rail and port operations during peak shipping season could cost the grain sector nearly \$540 million, with more than 90% of that loss coming from missed sales rather than extra costs.

A lost grain sale does not wait for us once service resumes. Buyers have their own timelines to meet and other suppliers ready to fill the order.

The damage can also begin well before a strike or lock-out. As uncertainty grows, railways may begin reducing service, exporters become more cautious and customers start making other arrangements. The analysis found that

a looming work stoppage can erase up to \$112 million in sales before it officially begins.

Farmers pay for those losses too, with fewer delivery opportunities and lower prices. Repeated disruptions also cost Canada something harder to rebuild, a reputation as a reliable supplier, built over years and put at risk by a single missed shipment.

Those findings put a number on something we had already seen firsthand. The current approach to labour relations in transportation keeps failing the people who rely on it. That is exactly the case we made when we launched the campaign, timed to land while the federal government was consulting on changes to Canada's labour relations framework.

We were not alone in that assessment. In June, the Senate Transport and Communications Committee reached the same conclusion.

In response, the grain sector has put forward practical recommendations. We want to see a special mediator appointed early enough to keep negotiations moving and ensure both parties are bargaining in good faith. When an agreement cannot be reached, the federal government also needs a clear process for weighing the wider economic harm and resolving a dispute before the supply chain shuts down.

The critical question now is what the government does with our recommendations and the committee's findings.

A one-week disruption affecting rail and port operations during peak shipping season could cost the grain sector nearly \$540 million, with more than 90% of that loss coming from missed sales.

Preventing labour disruptions, however, is only part of the challenge. The people who keep grain moving also need infrastructure capable of supporting them.

The Port of Vancouver Gateway Strategy, announced this year, is one of several steps needed to move growing volumes of grain from farm to market. For Alberta pulse growers, that gateway is the main route to overseas customers.

Grain Growers of Canada welcomed the strategy and its focus on rail capacity, reliability and resilience. At the same time, we urged the federal government to prioritize one of Canada's most critical supply chain bottlenecks, the aging Second Narrows rail crossing, which remains outside its current building and investment plans.

Alberta pulse growers rely on that same rail network to reach export markets, and the crossing's limited capacity and lack of redundancy put the entire gateway at risk.

Infrastructure and labour relations are two sides of the same problem, and I have spent much of my career working on both, including in the rail and marine sectors before joining Grain Growers of Canada this spring. One lesson has remained consistent: shipment by shipment, reliability earns trust, but a single disruption can destroy it.

Canada's customers need to know we can deliver. Farmers need to know the system will work when their crop is ready to move.

With labour reform and transportation infrastructure both on the federal agenda, Ottawa has an opportunity to address both sides of that equation. 🌱



Several infographics were designed to promote awareness and encourage participation in the campaign.



Participants from 42 countries gathered to focus on pulses in Dubrovnik, Croatia.

RESEARCH

APG research staff participate in key international legume discussions

BY DR. JAGROOP GILL KAHLON

Research Program Manager and Field Scale Research Lead

Alberta Pulse Growers Commission's research team participated in the Fifth International Legume Society Conference (ILS5), which was held from June 8-12, 2026 in Dubrovnik, Croatia. The conference was organized by the International Legume Society (ILS) in cooperation with the University of Zagreb Faculty of Agriculture. APG also sponsored the conference. Participants from 42 nations gathered on one pulse-focused stage in Dubrovnik.

Building on the success of previous conferences held in Novi Sad (2013), Tróia (2016), Poznań (2019), and Granada (2023), ILS5 brought together researchers, academics, industry representatives, and professionals from around the world to discuss recent developments and innovations in legume science and production.

The conference provided an excellent platform for knowledge exchange and professional networking. Participants were able to engage with leading international experts and learn about the latest research and industry advancements in the legume sector. The scientific program was comprehensive and covered a wide range of topics, including:

- Legume breeding and genomics;
- High-throughput phenotyping;
- Sustainable cropping systems;
- Biotic and abiotic stress resistance;
- Health and nutritional benefits of legumes;
- Pulse crop value chains; and
- Emerging technologies and innovations in legume research.

The presentations and discussions offered valuable insights into current challenges and opportunities in legume production, contributing to a deeper understanding of the role of legumes in sustainable agriculture, food security and human nutrition.

APG Research and Extension Manager Dr. Jenn Walker chaired a session titled "Crop Breeding: Challenges, Tools, Strategies And Achievements." This session showcased the latest advances in legume genetics, genomics and breeding technologies, with a strong focus on improving yield, herbicide tolerance, resource-use efficiency, adaptation, and crop performance.

Presentations highlighted the use of modern tools such as genome-wide association studies, QTL mapping, knowledge graphs, transformation and genome-editing technol-

ologies, and simulation-based breeding strategies to accelerate genetic gains in pulse crops.

Overall, the session emphasized how integrating genetic diversity, advanced analytics, and innovative breeding approaches can support the development of more productive, resilient, and sustainable legume varieties.

Dr. Jagroop Gill Kahlon, APG's Research Program Manager and Field Scale Research Lead, chaired a session titled "Biodiversity and Beneficial Plant-Microbe Interactions." As the title suggests, this session focused on plant-microbe interactions, symbiotic nitrogen fixation, and the role of microbial communities in legume adaptation and productivity.

Presentations explored how legumes interact with rhizobia, mycorrhizae, and soil microbiomes, highlighting advances in high-throughput screening, genomics, metabolomics, and gene-editing approaches to improve biological nitrogen fixation and crop resilience. Overall, the session emphasized leveraging both plant and microbial diversity to enhance sustainable agricultural systems and reduce reliance on synthetic nitrogen inputs.

In addition to the scientific sessions, the conference featured several social and networking events that fostered collaboration among participants. One of the highlights was the Legume Football Cup, which encouraged informal interaction and team spirit among attendees. The gala dinner provided an opportunity to connect with colleagues and

establish new professional relationships in a relaxed setting.

Canada was well represented at the conference. Posters and presentations were given by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada staff from Lacombe, Lethbridge and Guelph, in addition to scientists from Lakeland College and University of Saskatchewan. Opportunities like these are rare when the legume/pulse community comes together from all around the world to discuss the common issues in production and marketing of various pulse crops. It also serves as an important venue to exchange ideas and the latest cutting-edge technologies in pulse crop research.

The conference was hosted in the historic city of Dubrovnik, one of the Mediterranean's most renowned destinations and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The city's impressive medieval architecture, fortified old town, and scenic coastal setting enhanced the overall conference experience and provided a unique cultural backdrop for the event. Pulses are an important piece of Mediterranean and Adriatic diet, and it was reflected well in the cuisines served at the conference.

Overall, participation in the Fifth International Legume Society Conference was highly rewarding. The event successfully facilitated the exchange of scientific knowledge, showcased cutting-edge research and industry developments, and strengthened international collaborations within the global legume community. The experience provided valuable insights and connection that will support future research, innovation, and application in the field of legumes. 🌱



APG Research and Extension Manager Dr. Jenn Walker (left) chaired a session titled "Crop Breeding: Challenges, Tools, Strategies And Achievements."



Dr. Jagroop Gill Kahlon, APG's Research Program Manager and Field Scale Research Lead, chaired a session titled "Biodiversity and Beneficial Plant-Microbe Interactions."



PRICES

Cycles move pulse markets

BY CHUCK PENNER

LeftField Commodity Research

Looking back at pea, lentil and chickpea markets in 2025/26, a person could be excused if they think prices have gone nowhere (or worse). It's true there's been very limited movement in pulse prices over the last year and that perception can shape people's expectations for 2026/27. If we look back further though, we see that these periods of flat markets are more of an exception than the norm.

It's normal for markets to move higher and lower in cycles. These include the typical seasonal cycles within a single marketing year, but larger (and sometimes longer-term) moves don't occur at regular intervals. The reasons vary for these larger cycles, and a brief history lesson will help explain the main but certainly not all of the underlying causes.

The most obvious reason for a large-scale shift in prices is a major weather event in Western Canada. The most memorable was the 2021 drought when yields for peas and lentils dropped roughly 45% from the previous year and production plummeted. Back then, Canadian pulses dominated global trade more than they do now and the reaction was extreme, with prices spiking to multi-year highs and (for peas) hitting record levels. In other years though, big yield changes can cut the other way; the high yields in 2025 are one of the main reasons for weaker prices in the past marketing year. (See Fig. 1.)

Shifts in Canadian acreage also drive cycles, both higher and lower. Following 2021/22, prices came down quickly as global buyers waited for supplies to rebound. For green peas and green lentils however, another higher high was still ahead in 2023/24. Canadian acreage of green peas dropped sharply, which kept supplies very low. Seeded area of green lentils also declined and yields were reduced by dry conditions in key growing areas of the southern prairies, causing supplies to tighten further.

It's worth noting that Canadian acreage of yellow peas and red lentils also declined in 2023/24 and 2024/25, but this was also when yellow pea production was ramping up in Russia and red lentils were expanding in Australia. The increased production from competing exporters partly offset the impact of smaller crops in Canada and kept a lid on those prices.

Those first two drivers of price cycles — Canadian yields and acreage — are related to the supply situation but the demand side of the equation can be just as large of a factor. The price chart shows the first major spike for pulses showed up in 2015/16, in the middle of two straight years of weak monsoon rains and low pulse production in India. This triggered a sharp rise in its pea, lentil and chickpea imports and kept prices elevated until production in Canada and elsewhere started to respond. (See Fig. 2.)

The extended lows of the price cycle that lasted from 2017/18 to 2019/20 were also the result of demand

factors, this time a drop-off in Indian purchases. Favourable weather allowed Indian farmers to produce larger pulse crops again, which lowered the country's import needs. The impact on prices was made worse by India's decision to restrict trade with tariffs and other measures.

The history lesson is a reminder that any or all of these factors will continue to cause prices to cycle, whether it's next year or beyond. The current environment of depressed prices will change. Canadian weather conditions, farmers' acreage decisions, crops in India and changes in trade policy will show up at some point or other. And if several of these occur at the same time, the reaction could be large.

In the short-term, there are already signs of potential problems with Indian pulse production, with a real possibility that El Niño will affect not just India's 2026/27 crop but could extend beyond that. If so, that could be the catalyst for the next upturn in price cycles for pulses.

If prices don't start to cycle higher over the winter, there's a good chance Canadian farmers will be discouraged from planting as many pulses in 2027. In that event, it would be an additional reason for the start of a turn higher for pulse prices. On the other hand, if the Indian situation causes prices to rally this winter, Prairie farmers could decide to increase acreage which would then keep a lid on potential gains.

Shifts in global production will continue to affect the size of price cycles in the future. When Canada dominated the export trade of peas and lentils a few years ago, any hiccups in the Canadian crop had an oversized impact on prices.

But when pulse prices rose, especially after 2021/22, farmers in other countries took note and responded with increased acreage and production. Australia now produces more red lentils than Canada and the Russian pea crop is considerably larger than Canada's. Kazakhstan has also become an important producer of both red and green lentils in recent years. With more pulse production spread across multiple countries, the odds of a total collapse in production are reduced and the potential for extreme price peaks becomes less.

Farmers' planting decisions for the coming year can take some of these price-driving factors into consideration. If concerns about the upcoming Indian crops actually come to pass, one of the factors supporting an upturn in prices would already be in place.

When prices are depressed, like they are currently, there's a good chance seeded area will decline in Canada and elsewhere. These price signals that discourage acreage are often the start of the next cycle higher. As the old saying goes, "the best cure for low prices is low prices." Contrarians who "zig" with their acreage when others "zag" could be rewarded.

Of course, the timing of the next cycle is difficult to predict, as the multiple factors described above (and others) don't follow a precise schedule. And while history can be a useful guide, it's important not to use the rearview mirror too much. Basing next year's crop decisions on last year's situation is usually not the best strategy. Next year's conditions are almost guaranteed to be different than the current year. 🌱

FIG. 1: CANADIAN PEA & LENTIL BIDS

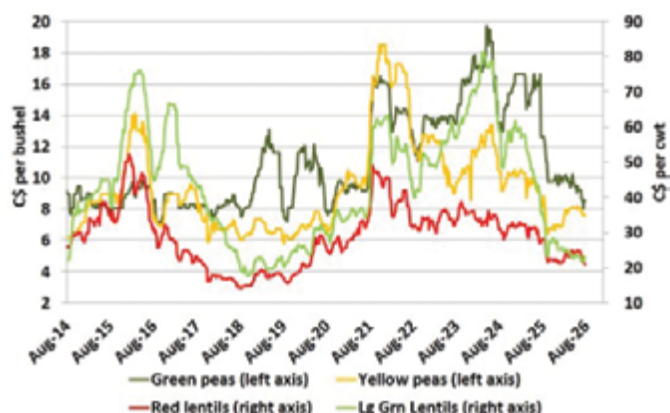
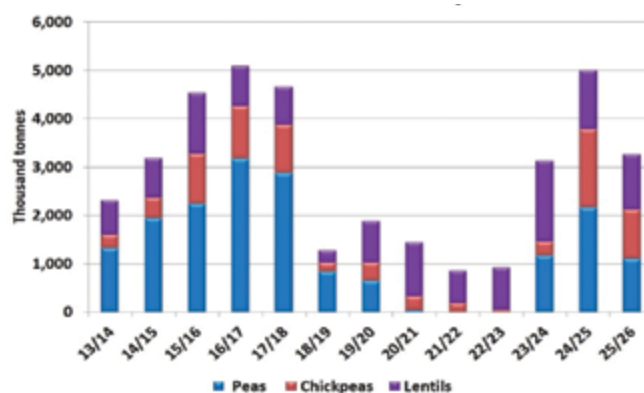


FIG. 2: SELECTED INDIAN PULSE IMPORTS





Dr. Parthiba Balasubramanian examines a field of dry beans.

INDUSTRY AWARD

Dry bean breeder honoured with 12th annual Innovator Award

Alberta Pulse Growers (APG) selected Dr. Parthiba Balasubramanian, who continues to develop dry bean cultivars with useful traits for farmers, as the winner of the 12th annual Alberta Pulse Industry Innovator Award.

"Each year, APG recognizes a person or organization whose progressive thinking and tireless efforts helped build Alberta's pulse industry into the flourishing sector that it is today," said APG Chair Will Muller. "Parthiba has been responsible for developing many dry bean cultivars with traits appreciated by growers in southern Alberta, including myself."

Alberta pulse farmers and distinguished guests were on hand to celebrate Balasubramanian and his achievements at an award lunch during APG Joint Director-Advisor meetings in Calgary earlier this year.

Farmers recognize Balasubramanian's research contributions that have demonstrated success and advanced the

growth of pulses in their businesses. The strength, consistency and performance of the dry bean cultivars developed by his program regularly provided, and continue to provide, excellent returns to the farm gate.

"Parthiba's traditional scientific breeding techniques and strong attention to traits combine high yield with early maturity, lodging resistance, and enhanced resistance to white mould and bacterial diseases," Muller explained.

"This is in addition to improved seed quality such as size, shape, colour and colour retention traits for commercial production under irrigated conditions in Alberta and Saskatchewan which are held in high regard by pulse farmers."

Balasubramanian was nominated for the award by APG's Zone 1, which is comprised of pulse farmers in the southern Alberta region with the climate to grow dry beans. Fellow scientists celebrated Balasubramanian's accomplishments



FAR LEFT: Dr. Balasubramanian hosts a tour of his lab at AAFC.

LEFT: (Left to right) Past Innovator Award Winner Blair Roth, APG Chair Will Muller and APG Director-at-Large (Bean) John Kolk congratulate Dr. Balasubramanian (second from right) following the Innovator Award presentation.

in a video that was shown during the ceremony and is available on the APG YouTube channel at bit.ly/3UjpRb4.

"I am truly humbled to receive this award," said Balasubramanian, who is based at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) Lethbridge Research and Development Centre. "I accept this award on behalf of the team members who have been part of the dry bean breeding program in Lethbridge in the past and in the present. It is their hard work, dedication and work ethic that has made the accomplishments of the program possible. We have been very fortunate to receive funding from various organizations, and it is because of the funding that we have been able to do the things we do in the breeding program."

Balasubramanian earned a Bachelor of Science (Agriculture) at Annamalai University in India prior to arriving in Canada in 1995 to pursue graduate studies at the University of Saskatchewan. He received the University of Saskatchewan Graduate Scholarship, which made it possible for him to pursue his Master of Science at the Department of Crop Science and Plant Ecology. He earned a PhD in 2002 from the Department of Plant Sciences at the University of Saskatchewan.

After completing his PhD, Balasubramanian worked as a post-doctoral fellow for a year in the pulse crop breeding program. He was then hired as a research scientist (dry bean breeder) at AAFC Morden, MB, in September 2003. Upon the retirement of Dr. Hans-Henning Muendel, who was also a recipient of the APG Innovator Award, Balasubramanian transferred to AAFC Lethbridge as a research scientist (dry bean breeder) in July 2007.

Since then, he has been leading the dry bean breeding program at AAFC Lethbridge.

Balasubramanian's passion for pulses has been evident throughout his career.

"I indicated in my graduate studies application to the University of Saskatchewan that I am interested in research projects involving pulse crop breeding," he recalled. "I was offered the opportunity to do research on dry bean quality as part of my M.Sc. thesis. That started my involvement with dry bean. The research project for my PhD thesis was also on dry bean."

Dry beans have come a long way since that time, and Balasubramanian has been an integral part of that progress.

"Early maturing dry bean cultivars (95 days to maturity) with high yield potential have influenced irrigated crop rotation in southern Alberta," he explained. "Early maturity has enabled some growers to follow dry bean (a low residue crop) with winter wheat (to prevent soil erosion). As in the past, growers continue to experiment with new practices to identify practices that will work best on their farm — a recent example is strip tillage in dry bean. The objective of the dry bean breeding program is always to deliver the best genetics possible to the growers so they may realize the full yield potential on their farm under diverse agronomic practices."

He said that a highlight of his time as a bean breeder has been the extent to which the industry and growers have

(continued on next page)

recognized the value of the dry bean breeding program at AAFC Lethbridge and trust the cultivars from the program by growing them on their farm.

When asked which of his accomplishments is most significant, Balasubramanian said it is yet to come!

"I realize the dry bean cultivars from the breeding program have had an impact on the industry and growers," he noted. "However, I would like to develop dry bean cultivars that combine all six traits – early maturity, high yield, lodging resistance, seed quality, resistance to common bacterial blight and partial physiological resistance to white mould. Dry bean cultivars that combine all six of the above traits will have a greater impact on the industry and growers (productivity and economic prosperity), and the environment (reduced use of crop protectants) compared to the current cultivars. The dry bean research team and collaborators at AAFC Lethbridge with funding from various organizations including AAFC, growers and Bunge are working very hard to achieve this objective."

Balasubramanian sees a bright future for the dry bean industry in Alberta.

"At the grower and industry meetings, I see everyone including growers, buyers, exporters, researchers, as well as organizations such as Alberta Pulse Growers and Pulse Canada, working together for the overall benefit of the pulse industry in Alberta," he said. "As long as all pillars of the pulse industry (crop research being one of the pillars) are being listened to and work together, the future remains promising."

Alberta Pulse Growers celebrated its 25th year as a commission by launching the Alberta Pulse Industry Innovator Award and presenting the organization's founding president, Lud Prudek, with the first annual award in 2015. Since that time, the award has been presented to acclaimed pulse researcher Ken Lopetinsky, life-long pulse supporter Blair Roth, Dr. Hans-Henning Muendel who developed numerous bean cultivars, Kirsty Ross (Piquette) who was instrumental in building the field pea industry in northeastern Alberta, Mark Olson who explored new pulse varieties and production methods in many roles including as Alberta Agriculture's Unit Head for Pulse Crops, APG's first vice-president Craig Shaw, and posthumously to seed grower Cliff Cyre. In 2023 former Pulse Canada CEO Gordon Bacon received the honour, in 2024 pea breeder Dr. DJ Bing was named the winner, and in 2025 the honour went to pulse disease expert Dr. Syama Chatterton. 



Nominate someone you know for the 13th annual

INDUSTRY INNOVATOR AWARD

Entry Deadline: Dec. 11, 2026

For more information, visit albertapulse.com/industry-innovator-award/



Accomplished food scientist recognized

Alberta Pulse Growers' Executive Director Leanne Fischbuch presented Dr. Jay Han with a letter of recognition upon his retirement from the Alberta Food Centre in Leduc.

Fischbuch stated in the letter: "APG is deeply grateful for the leadership, dedication, and passion Dr. Han has brought to the pulse sector throughout his career. His work has shaped research, inspired students, supported industry growth, and expanded the possibilities for pulses in Alberta and beyond. With great respect and appreciation, we wish Dr. Han every happiness in retirement. His legacy will continue to influence and benefit the pulse industry for years to come."

NOMINATIONS

APG seeks Advisors in all zones to grow pulse industry

Pulse producers who want to grow the province's pulse industry while developing their own leadership skills are invited to let their names stand for election as an Alberta Pulse Growers (APG) Advisor at their zone meeting this fall.

"Any interested pulse farmers are strongly encouraged to join the APG team," said APG Chair Will Muller.

"I began as an Advisor like most APG Directors, and the experience has been more rewarding than I imagined. Becoming an Advisor is a great way to get more involved in

the industry. Each of our five zones has available positions this year. Being elected as a zone Advisor is a good introduction to the organization, working on committees, and improving the future for Alberta pulse farmers."

A team of Advisors leads extension activities specific to each of APG's five zones. Directors on APG's provincial board often serve as Advisors first.

Available positions in each zone are: One each in Zone 1 and Zone 2; four in Zone 3; two each in Zone 4 and Zone 5.

Producers must have sold pulses and paid service charges since Aug. 1, 2024 in order to be eligible as an Advisor.

Anyone interested in letting their name stand for an Advisor position is asked to complete and submit a nomination form by Nov. 2, 2026. Each candidate must be endorsed by another pulse producer from their zone. The form is available under About Us at albertapulse.com.

Dates for the fall zone meetings are on the outside back cover of this issue of *Pulse Crop News*. 🌱

ZONE Reports



Zone chairs provided updates below on the challenge, highlight and a message to growers for their zone as of August. Provincial directors are recognized below with an asterisk.

Zone 1

Advisors:

- Jenny Rae Seward, Chair*
- Will Muller, Vice-Chair*
- John Kolk*
- Ryan Mercer
- David Pepneck
- Clayton Schmitt
- Greg Stamp
- Tjark Stikker

Zone highlight: Zone members attended the First Diagnostic Field Day hosted by Lethbridge Polytechnic and thoroughly enjoyed the diverse and informative interactive stations. We stopped at Farming Smarter afterwards for a tour of plots they are working on with pulse crops. This gave the zone hope for beneficial practises to come in the near future.

Challenge: Seeding began with little reserve soil moisture, but timely rainfalls in season stopped abruptly at the end of June. July was a month of hot temperatures, which decreased yield potential and quality/grading factors in crops.

Message to growers: *Aphanomyces* showed up in a large way in 2026.

Many farmers are planning to cut pulse acres in 2027 due to this, and depressed markets. A reminder to send soil samples in from *Aphanomyces*



APG Director and Zone 1 Chair Jenny Rae Seward, as well as Advisors Greg Stamp and Ryan Mercer attended the Farming Smarter crop walk and the Alberta Crop Diagnostic Day held in Lethbridge in July for the first time.

affected areas to quantify spore levels, and to use the rootrot.ca website to help plan acres and to reduce risk of severe infection. As a board member, I am relieved to see so many of our

levy dollars being spent on researching *Aphanomyces* and the root rot disease complex.

— JENNY RAE SEWARD | Zone 1 Chair



Presenter Keith Gabert spoke to growers at the Alberta Crop Diagnostic Day held at Western Crop Innovations in Lacombe at the end of July.

Zone 2

Advisors:

- Kelly Wheeler, Chair
- Joe Rowbottom, Vice-Chair*
- Allison Ammeter
- Kevin Auch*
- Gerry Good
- Peter Hoff
- Curtis Hoffmann
- Bill MacFarquhar
- Landon Sell

Zone highlight: A highlight was the Alberta Crop Diagnostic Day held at Western Crop Innovations in Lacombe. These events are a wonderful opportunity for farmers to see what's new and ask questions.

Challenge: A big challenge has been the crazy weather! We were so dry and hot in May, then so cold and wet with huge wind, hail and tornadoes! Then July goes by without any rain, while the north half of the province is at record wet.

Message to growers: We would like to remind growers of the Zone 2 AGM, which will be different this year as it will be held in conjunction with Alberta Grains and not at AgriTrade. More details can be found on the back cover of *Pulse Crop News*.

— KELLY WHEELER | Zone 2 Chair

Zone 3

Advisors:

- Brendin Serna, Chair
- Tateum Astasiewicz, Vice-Chair
- Chris Allam
- TK Mueller*
- Shane Strydhorst*
- Dan Visser
- Magnus von Rennenkampff
- 1 vacancy

Zone highlight: The zone highlight would be a joint crop tour with Gateway Research Organization (GRO) in the Westlock area. Attendees looked at pulses and how the wet conditions are setting up large amounts of disease and insects.

Challenge: The challenge has been the amount of rainfall within our zone and how it has been a challenge for spraying and will be a challenge heading into harvest!

Message to growers: We encourage growers to always ask questions on any problem or concern you have on your farm. We are looking ahead to a potential zone event in the winter

of 2026-27. Watch for more details to come!

— BRENDIN SERNA | Zone 3 Chair



APG Director TK Mueller was one of several members of Zone 3 who attended the Gateway Research Organization (GRO) pulse/canola tour in July that included a lupin processing plant tour, as well as research and agronomy updates for a variety of crops.

Zone 4

Advisors:

- Peter Konstapel, Chair*
- Samuel Meyer, Vice-Chair
- Jason Casselman
- Dwayne Krefting
- Amber Moskalyk
- Trenton Schoorlemmer
- Warren Sekulic
- Beverley Wieben*

Zone highlight: Zone highlight of the growing season so far is the 40th anniversary of SARDA ag research, which was celebrated at the start of August.

Challenge: The main challenge for our zone was the variable weather. Parts of the zone were drowning and others were praying for rain.

Message to growers: We would like to encourage all growers to attend the fall regional meetings. Come and see what APG is doing for farmers and, if interested, even become an advisor!

— PETER KONSTAPEL | Zone 4 Chair

Agronomist Kristina Polziehn presented on herbicide injury in front of plots of peas at the SARDA crop walk in Zone 4 last August.



Many members of APG's Zone 5 attended the late July crop walk at Konieczny Seeds in Mannville where APG Research Manager Dr. Jenn Walker spoke about faba beans.

Zone 5

Advisors:

- Matthew Micklich, Chair
- Ryan Yakemchuk, Vice-Chair
- Michael Bury*
- Scott Haugen
- Scott Keller*
- Dane Lindholm
- Robert Semeniuk*
- Don Shepert
- Zolton Yaremie

Zone highlight: Faba beans look great this year!

Challenges: Rainfall has been a challenge in the northern portion of zone.

Message to growers: This year has highlighted the need for changes to Alberta's drainage policy. APG along with other groups have made great progress working with the government on some changes.

— MATT MICKLICH | Zone 5 Chair



BY JODY WACOWICH
Executive Director, AgSafe



Helping Alberta producers navigate contractor safety

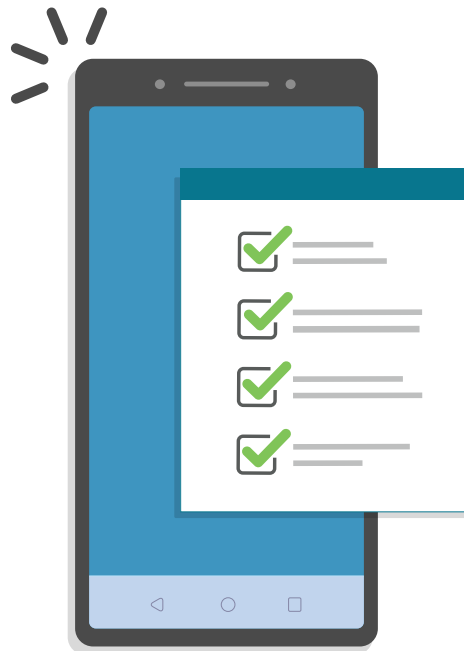
As farms and ranches continue to evolve, many operations are increasingly relying on contractors for specialized work ranging from construction and electrical services to custom field work and equipment maintenance.

While contractors can bring valuable expertise to a farm operation, they can also introduce new safety risks and responsibilities that producers may not always fully understand (including the OHS legislation applying to family farms).

To help address this need, AgSafe Alberta is preparing to launch a new *Managing Contractors on Alberta Farms: A Practical Guide*, along with a companion online course to test your knowledge that is designed specifically for agricultural producers. The resource will be launched this September and will provide practical, agriculture-focused guidance on working safely and effectively with contractors.

The guide will help producers understand their roles and responsibilities when hiring contractors, identify potential safety considerations before work begins, establish clear communication expectations, and create safer working environments for everyone on the farm.

This new resource reflects AgSafe Alberta's ongoing commitment to providing producers with tools that are relevant, easy to use, and grounded in real-world farming conditions. Our goal is not to add paperwork or complexity, but rather to help producers understand risks, prevent incidents, and protect the people who work on their operations.



AgSafe Alberta has continued to build practical resources that support safety culture development across Alberta agriculture. One example is the FARMERS CARE program, a free producer-focused initiative that helps farms identify hazards, improve communication, strengthen inspections, and prepare for emergencies.

The program provides a step-by-step approach to integrating safety into everyday farm operations and has become a valuable resource for producers across the province.

If you have questions, please feel free to reach out to us at 1-833-9-

AGSAFE (924-7233) we are happy to answer your questions about managing safety on your farm.

AgSafe Alberta also has advisors who can come out to your farm for free to help get you started or conduct a gap assessment and point you in the right direction. You can also check us out at events this fall to pick up some of these resources. Safety remains a priority for Alberta producers who understand that protecting people is essential to the long-term success and sustainability of their businesses.

As AgSafe Alberta looks ahead, the focus remains on creating practical solutions that help producers address real challenges. Whether through contractor management resources, FARMERS CARE, online training, or new educational tools, the goal is the same: helping Alberta farms and ranches become safer places to live, work, and grow up on. 

Protecting pulse crops: Tackling root rot

Over the past 30 years, pulse crops have become a cornerstone of Canadian agriculture. Pulse crops fix their own nitrogen and do not require nitrogen fertilizer, which saves growers money and reduces the impact of cropping on greenhouse gas emissions. However, root rot, primarily caused by the pathogens *Aphanomyces* and *Fusarium*, continues to be one of the most significant obstacles to growing pulses.

Effectively addressing root rot could protect pulse production and further reduce nitrogen fertilizer requirements across crop rotations, benefiting both growers and the environment. Recognizing the importance of this challenge, four Pulse Cluster research projects are addressing root rot as part of their objectives.

The Cluster is funded in part by the Government of Canada under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership. These projects are co-funded by Alberta Pulse Growers, Manitoba Pulse and Soybean Growers, Saskatchewan Pulse Growers, and Ontario Bean Growers.

Improving root rot resistance in peas

Dr. Tom Warkentin, Chair of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture Strategic Research Program (SRP) in Pulse Crop Breeding and Genetics at the University of Saskatchewan, is a recognized leader in pulse research, having received the Canadian Pulse and Special Crops Trade Association Industry Appreciation Award in 2025. Currently, Warkentin is the lead researcher on the Development of Improved Pea Cultivars to Enhance Canada's Leading Role in International Pea Markets research project.

As part of this initiative, a panel of 100 diverse field pea accessions—selected through cluster analysis from the Crop Development Centre (CDC) pea diversity panel—were cultivated at three locations with distinct soil types: Sutherland (Dark Brown Chernozem), Rosthern (Orthic Black Chernozem), and Lucky Lake (Orthic Dark Brown Chernozem). Phenotypic evaluations were conducted to assess disease resistance.

To measure root rot severity, experiments were conducted in three field-based root rot nurseries at the CDC in Saskatoon, SK, and at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) in Lethbridge, AB, and Morden, MB, in 2025. The Root Rot Disease Severity Indicator (DSI) varied widely across sites,



The central Alberta pea field pictured here showed signs of Aphanomyces root rot.

ranging from 40 to 70% in Saskatoon, 71 to 89% in Morden, and 79 to 100% in Lethbridge, with significant differences observed among the tested lines at all sites. These trials provided valuable insights into the resistance of various breeding lines and are already showing promising results.

“Of the 18 CDC co-op lines tested, we have already identified six pea breeding lines that exhibit the greatest resistance to root rot,” Warkentin said. He added that the pea varieties are being tested annually in root rot nurseries and those with lowest root rot scores will be sent for variety registration within the next decade.

Imaging techniques

AAFC Research Scientist Dr. Syama Chatterton, lead researcher for the Accelerating Solutions to Root Rot of Pea and Lentil Using a Multifaceted and Integrative Approach research project, is using technologies such as spectral and spatial imaging techniques and artificial intelligence models to detect pea root disease. Her research project aims to predict stress metrics in peas to identify early disease occurrence and genotypes with better root rot resistance.

"The developed machine learning models can be translated to field-level analysis and validation," Chatterton explained. "In the long term, this will benefit all industry stakeholders by facilitating rapid screening of pea lines in disease nurseries, with potential for early detection of root rot symptoms in the field."

Examining beneficial root systems

Some varieties of pea and lentil have much larger root systems than others. Characterizing root systems is difficult and time-consuming, so identifying genes associated with beneficial root systems could make selecting for them much easier. The University of Saskatchewan's Maryse Bourgault is leading the research project, Large Root Systems in Pulses for Drought Tolerance, Carbon Sequestration and Root Rot Resistance. Through a combination of controlled-environment and field studies, Bourgault and her team are working to characterize root system traits. In collaboration with Warkentin's research team, this phenotypic information is being combined with genetic data to identify genes or genetic markers associated with root characteristics that may confer greater resistance to root rots in pulses.

Another avenue the researchers are exploring is examining differences among pulse species.

"Interestingly, chickpea is not (as) susceptible to *Aphanomyces* and may exhibit characteristics in its root anatomy that may point to beneficial root traits," Bourgault stated, adding that this resistance could be used to reduce the length of crop rotations.

Preventing and detecting disease in dry beans

AAFC Research Scientist Dr. Owen Wally, the research lead for the Towards a Better Understanding of Dry Bean Root Rot and Soybean Cyst Nematode Management research project, is working to determine the impact of root diseases on dry bean health in association with nitrogen fertilization. He is also evaluating the use of selective breeding for root rot resistance. Root rot diseases are present to varying degrees in nearly all fields, and their management is complicated by interactions with soil fertility, especially nitrogen inputs, which can influence plant growth and mask the true extent of root damage. Early nitrogen trials showed variable yield responses across sites and market classes, with no apparent effect on root rot severity. Using hyperspectral imaging tools to detect disease symptoms non-destructively, he has identified dry bean cultivars exhibiting the greatest resistance to root rot.

Research projects

- Accelerating Solutions to Root Rot of Pea and Lentil Using a Multifaceted and Integrative Approach. Principal investigator: Dr. Syama Chatterton. **Cost: \$2,360,346**
- Development of Improved Pea Cultivars to Enhance Canada's Leading Role in International Pea Markets. Principal investigator: Dr. Tom Warkentin. **Cost: \$4,239,829**
- Large Root Systems in Pulses for Drought Tolerance, Carbon Sequestration and Root Rot Resistance. Principal investigator: Maryse Bourgault. **Cost: \$1,613,690**
- Towards a Better Understanding of Dry Bean Root Rot and Soybean Cyst Nematode Management. Principal investigator: Dr. Owen Wally. **Cost: \$592,496**

"Crosses using root rot-resistant germplasm have been completed, forming the basis for a recurrent selection program aimed at improving resistance within Canadian-adapted dry bean germplasm," Wally noted.

Conclusion

Continued, coordinated research is essential to maintaining Canada's leadership in global pulse production and innovation into the future.

Since 2023, the CDC pea breeding program at the University of Saskatchewan has released three new high-yielding pea cultivars, along with three specialty varieties—marrow-fat, maple, and forage types—tailored to emerging market and production needs, integrating cutting-edge research in plant pathology, plant physiology, and crop chemistry and utilization.

At AAFC, by determining the yield threat from root rot and the root structure of pulse crops it's helping them to develop more tolerant cultivars within the next decade. These Pulse Cluster research projects are driving the development of exceptional pulse crop varieties for the next decade, with improved resistance to root rot, thereby strengthening the productivity, sustainability, and competitiveness of Canadian agriculture. 

SAMPLE ANALYSIS

Sign up to support the grain sector and benefit from the Harvest Sample Program

Alberta pulse farmers are encouraged to sign up for the Canadian Grain Commission's Harvest Sample Program to experience the benefits to their farm and the industry.

"For samples that the producers submit to the program, they will receive a grade, protein and other analysis depending on commodity, which will help them market their grain when they go to sell," explained Kerri Pleskach, Manager for the Harvest Sample Program. "Producer samples are crucial to help with marketing Canadian grain, evaluating grain grading standards, and conducting research that benefits the entire Canadian grain sector."

This free, voluntary program has been benefiting Canadian grain producers and the entire grain value chain since 1927. The program receives around 10,000 samples annually, with about 10% of samples received each year being pulse samples.

The harvest samples that producers send to the program are essential to maintaining Canada's grain quality assurance system, as they:

- Provide quality data that helps marketers promote domestic and international sales of Canadian grain;
- Help to evaluate and improve grain grading standards;
- Support scientific research to mitigate grain quality and grain safety issues, and to help in the creation of new markets for Canadian crops; and
- Help to ensure Canada remains a trusted source of high-quality grain.



Pleskach said that there isn't a target number of responses each year, but program staff work to ensure they receive a sufficient number of samples to statistically make inferences with data.

"Harvest is a busy time for farmers, and there may be a variety of reasons why some do not participate in the program every year," she noted.

"We have also noticed that in years when the crop quality is good, farmers know what is coming off their field and may not need a breakdown of the downgrading factors affecting their crop."

Each year, the Harvest Sample Program receives around **10,000** crop samples. **10%** of those samples are pulses.



Pleskach wanted to thank the farmers who participate each year.

Her message to those who don't: "No matter the quality of your grain, send us a sample! We want your samples in good quality years and in challenging years, because your samples are crucial to help with marketing Canadian grain, evaluating grain grading standards, and conducting research that benefits the entire Canadian grain sector."

Producers can sign up at anytime throughout the year. Samples are accepted as soon as harvest starts until Dec. 31 each year. Sign up at grainscanada.gc.ca/hsp.

The Canadian Grain Commission also publishes reports on crop quality, based on scientific analyses of harvest samples. To receive the crop quality reports and other updates by email, sign up at grainscanada.gc.ca/subscription. 🌿



APG research tax credit info is always available

The Alberta Pulse Growers (APG) investments in research using service fees (levy or check-off) are eligible for the Scientific Research and Experimental Development (SR&ED) Tax Credit. Pulse growers who pay service fees to the organization and who do not request refunds are eligible to receive this credit.

Each year a percentage of the Alberta Pulse Growers investment into research is calculated for the percent eligible for that tax year for producers.

Alberta pulse farmers are eligible for a 30.3% net tax credit in 2024-25.

The SR&ED Tax Credit information is available at albertapulse.com/research-tax-credit/. 🌿

Investing in local culinary competition puts pulses in the hands of future chefs

BY DEBRA MCLENNAN, RD

APG Food & Nutrition Coordinator

What do you remember most about your favourite restaurant? The décor? The location? The occasion? Or, more likely, a delicious dish from the menu. While social media highlights food trends, if you want to try the trend at home, you need to get the ingredients, make the dish and then hope it's as good as the online photos. If you're like me, I like to experience food trends at a local restaurant prepared by a local chef and savour the experience. Odds are you are more likely to go home and make that delicious dish with that new ingredient (or two) once you've tried it. That's one of the reasons why working with future and seasoned chefs at a variety of events is vital to getting pulses on the plate in the restaurant and at home.

High School Culinary Challenge – future chefs compete

The High School Culinary Challenge (HSCC) is a key event for the Canadian Culinary Fund. HSCC introduces students to a team cooking competition, to experience cooking in a professional, state-of-the-art kitchen and to compete for scholarships for the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) cook apprentice program and other prizes.

This is APG's second year as an HSCC sponsor. Hosted in the culinary kitchens at NAIT on March 7, 2026, 17 teams of three students, plus a teacher coach, from 13 high schools in the Edmonton and surrounding area participated. Teams had three hours to prepare a four-course menu consisting of a pulse appetizer, pasta course, main course and dessert.

In the first course, teams showcased a variety of hot or cold appetizers featuring Alberta pulses. The appetizers ranged from a variety of flavours of hummus and dips, sushi, crepes, salad and cakes/patties, and as one of the judges for this course, I can confirm they were all delicious and it was a tough round of scoring! The second course featured spinach and ricotta filled pasta with tomato sauce. The main course included a pan-fried pork chop, mushroom pan gravy, duchess potato and green beans almondine. Dessert was a choux pastry with custard filling, fruit sauce and edible garnish.



Seth Botterill and Kerik Slinger from Dr. Anne Anderson High School plate their winning pulse appetizer at the HSCC on March 7. Photo courtesy Jeanette Sesay of JSP Photography



(Left to right) Debra McLennan, APG Food and Nutrition Coordinator, presented the prize to Jordan-Jayde Grunsell, Kerik Slinger and Seth Botterill from Dr. Anne Anderson High School for their winning pulse appetizer at the HSCC Awards Night March 23. Photo courtesy Jeanette Sesay of JSP Photography



Stunning dish of Dahi Vada, Mint Chutney, Sev and Sweet Yogurt from Chef Jiju Paul, Edmonton Expo Centre at Hot Chefs Cool bEATS April 23. Photo courtesy Jeanette Sesay of JSP Photography

Each course was judged blind by a team of three chefs from local area restaurants. Scores were tallied after the competition and kept secret until the awards night. It was a whirlwind day, but so much fun to see what the students created and how they handled the pressure of cooking within strict time limits.

High School Culinary Challenge awards night

The HSCC Awards Night took place on March 23 at NAIT and started with a short reception with appetizer food stations highlighting each sponsor commodity. Creativity was on full display with each station featuring an appetizer created and served by the culinary students that participated in HSCC. After enjoying these delicious appetizers, we adjourned to the auditorium for the awards.

Three culinary scholarships were awarded along with medals to the teams finishing in the top three of Division 1 and 2, plus the award for the best pulse appetizer. Team 2 from Dr. Anne Anderson High School came out on top with their pulse appetizer, Roasted Garlic Red Lentil Hummus served with Brussels Sprouts Hash topped with Zippy Pickled Red Onions. Each member of the team was awarded a Shizu Hamono Shikisai Miyako bunka knife with blade guard and Sharpie pen from Knifewear, and their teacher coach reported how excited they were with their prize. Check out their winning recipe on the next page.



Team APG at Hot Chefs Cool bEATS at the Royal Glenora Club on April 23. (Left to right) Debra McLennan, Gabby Semeniuk, Robert Semeniuk and Erin Walker.

Hot Chefs Cool bEATS

Held April 23 at Edmonton's Royal Glenora Club, Hot Chefs Cool bEATS is the primary fundraising event for the Canadian Culinary Fund and its High School Culinary Challenge scholarship and competition program. This unforgettable evening of culinary excellence and entertainment is a chef-driven food experience that brings together the best of Edmonton's culinary scene to support a great cause. As one of the sponsors, pulses were featured in food creations from Chef Jiju Paul, Edmonton Expo Centre; Chef Paul Shufelt, Hayloft Steak & Fish; Chef Allen Ashley, Royal Glenora Club; and Chef Jason Greene, Braven Restaurant.

The sold-out event raised over \$50,000 and a good time and good eats were had by all. Engaging with the chefs while tasting their dishes provides an opportunity to build connections and exchange ideas that is unique to events like this one.

The last word

Participating in events that put pulses in the hands of future and seasoned chefs is one avenue to achieve our goal of pulses on every plate. Not only are we building important connections in the food industry, but we are also supporting our future food visionaries. They inspire all of us to connect to our food and think outside the box with our everyday, sometimes humble ingredients, like pulses. The future is definitely bright for the food industry and our Alberta pulses. 🌱

Questions about pulse nutrition, recipes or APG programs? Contact APG's Food and Nutrition Coordinator Debra McLennan at (780) 986-9398 ext. 109.

FEATURE RECIPE

Roasted Garlic Red Lentil Hummus with Brussels Sprouts Hash and Pickled Red Onions

Ingredients

Pickled red onions

- 1 red onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic
- 2 cups (500 mL) apple cider vinegar
- 2/3 cup (165 mL) white wine vinegar
- 2 cups (500 mL) water
- 5 Tbsp (60 g) white sugar
- 2 Tbsp (40 g) salt
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) coriander seed
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) fennel seed

Red lentil hummus

- 1 cup (250 mL) dry **red lentils**, rinsed & drained
- 2 cups (500 mL) water
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) tahini
- 3 Tbsp (45 mL) fresh lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp (15 mL) olive oil
- 3 cloves roasted garlic
- 1 tsp (5 mL) cumin
- 1 tsp (5 mL) curry powder
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) ground ginger
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt
- 1/8 tsp (0.5 mL) white pepper
- 1/8 tsp (0.5 mL) cayenne pepper

Brussels sprouts hash

- 1 Tbsp (15 mL) olive oil
- 3 Tbsp (45 mL) minced red onion
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup (250 mL) diced tomato
- 680 g Brussels sprouts, trimmed, cut in half lengthwise and leaves peeled/separated
- salt & pepper, to taste
- red pepper flakes, to taste

Crostini

- 1 French baguette loaf
- olive oil, scant amount
- flaked kosher salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

Congratulations to Kerik Slinger, Jordan-Jayde Grunsell and Seth Botterill, the culinary team from Dr. Anne Anderson High School for their winning pulse appetizer at the 2026 High School Culinary Challenge!

Prep Time: 45 minutes (allow at least 3 hours for the onions to pickle)

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Makes: 10-12 appetizer servings

Directions

To make the pickled red onions: Place onions and garlic in a medium sized bowl or container. Bring vinegars, water, sugar, salt and spices to a boil in a medium sized pot. Once sugar and salt have dissolved, pour over onions and garlic cloves, let cool to room temperature, then cover and refrigerate for at least 3 hours.

Kitchen tip: These onions can be made earlier in the day or the day before and refrigerated until needed.

To make the red lentil hummus (makes 370 mL): Place lentils and water in a small pot. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 12-15 minutes, or until lentils are tender. Once tender, remove the lentils from the pot and spread loosely on a flat tray. Allow to cool for 10 minutes. Once cool, combine the lentils and all the other ingredients in the bowl of a food processor and blend just until smooth to avoid splitting. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Set aside.

Kitchen tip: You can make this hummus in the morning or the day before you need it! Cover and refrigerate until needed.

To make the Brussels sprouts hash: In a large pan, heat the olive oil and sauté onion and garlic until fragrant. Add diced tomato and cook until some of the acidity fades. Add Brussels sprouts and sauté until the leaves are crisp and a little brown. Season with salt, pepper and red pepper flakes to taste. It shouldn't be "spicy." Transfer to a plate and set aside for assembly.

Prepare the crostini: Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Slice baguette into roughly 1/2-inch (2.5 cm) thick slices on a slight bias. Brush the olive oil over the surface. Ensure edge to edge coverage. Place on baking sheet and bake for about 5-7 minutes, or until the bread is crispy and golden brown. Once done, remove and allow to cool on a wire rack to prevent soggy bottoms. Sprinkle with flaked salt and pepper to taste.

To assemble the appetizer: Spread red lentil hummus evenly over the toasted crostini slices. Top each crostino with the Brussels sprouts hash. Top with pickled red onions. Arrange on serving platter and watch them disappear!



Did you make this recipe?

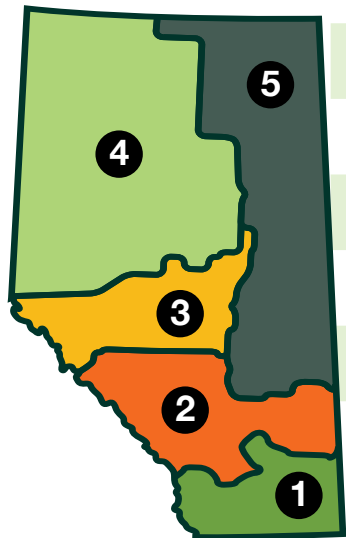
Share your photo and tag us on Instagram, Facebook and Pinterest

@albertapulsegrowers — and be sure to follow along for more delicious pulse recipes!



FALL ZONE MEETINGS

Be sure to attend the meeting happening soon in your zone!



ZONE 1	Dec. 8	Taber (Taber Auditorium)
ZONE 2	Nov. 4	Lacombe (Memorial Centre)
ZONE 3	Nov. 20	Fort Saskatchewan (Dow Centennial Centre)
ZONE 4	Nov. 17	Grande Prairie (Pomeroy Hotel, Poplar Room)
ZONE 5	Nov. 19	Vermilion (Regional Centre)

Visit www.albertapulse.com
or the APG app for more
information or to register.

DON'T MISS OUT!

APG's Provincial Annual General Meeting will be held **Jan. 26, 2027** in Edmonton.

*Please note that the 2025-26 annual report will only be available online except at the provincial AGM in January. Postcards showing where to find the annual report on the APG website will be mailed to members.