



**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 CPSCTA 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. 