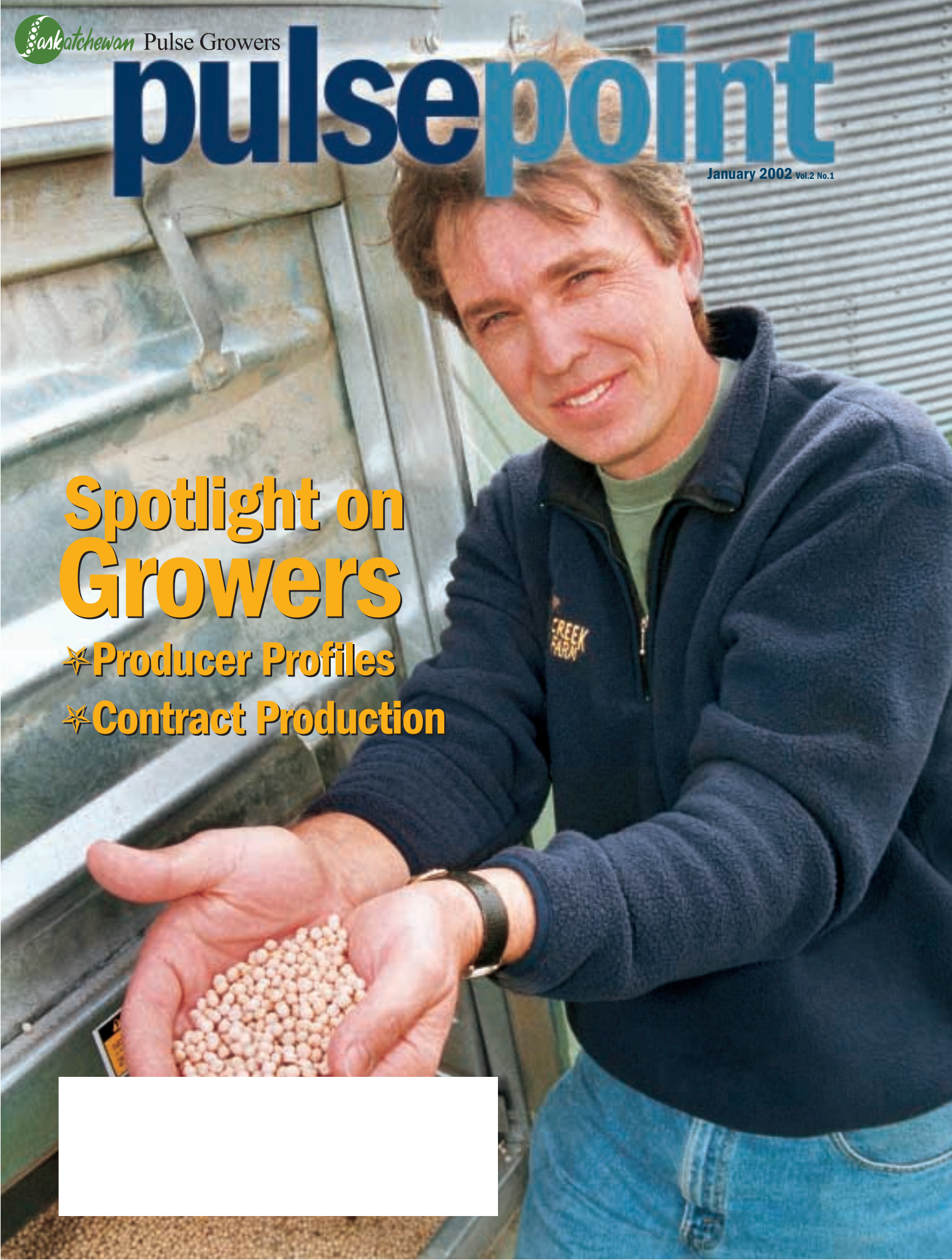
Saskatchewan Pulse Growers

pulsepoint

January 2002 Vol.2 No.1



Spotlight on Growers

- Producer Profiles
- Contract Production

WINTER PULSE WORKSHOPS2002

The 2002 Winter Pulse Workshops are your opportunity to meet Western Canada's top pulse researchers, farmers, and industry representatives.

Brought to you by Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food in cooperation with the Saskatchewan Pulse Growers, this year's Winter Pulse Workshops focus on the marketing of pulse crops as well as market outlook.

With 11 Workshop locations across the province, each session will feature topics that address local needs and issues, plus the following:

- Saskatchewan Pulse Growers
  Where Do Your Levy Dollars Go?
- Pulse Varieties
- Disease Management
- Who Buys Saskatchewan Pulse Crops?
- Market Update - How to Market Your Crop
- Fertility

Most workshops will have the following hours:

- 9:00 am - 10:00 am Registration and Trade Show
- 10:00 am - 3:00 pm Speaker Presentations

Location	Facility	SAF Agrologist		Date
Swift Current	Civic Centre	Pat Gerwing	778-8288	January 28, 2002
Shaunavon	Christ the King Hall	Jay Protz	297-5450	January 29, 2002
Assiniboia	St. George's RC Parish Centre	Garry Noble	642-7225	January 30, 2002
Moose Jaw	Heritage Inn	Dale Risula	694-3867	January 31, 2002
Lanigan	Community Hall	Nancy Gray	946-3232	February 5, 2002
Prince Albert	P.A. Exhibition Centre	Barry Swanson	953-2770	February 6, 2002
Meadow Lake	Catholic Church Hall	Jim Danyluk	236-7606	February 7, 2002
Eston	Legion Hall	John Ippolito	882-5454	February 12, 2002
Sedley	Sedley Gym Hall	Barry Rapp	787-2326	February 27, 2002
Melville	Prince William Motor Inn	Thom Weir	786-1500	February 28, 2002
Torquay	Lions Hall	Colin Beaulieu	637-4608	March 1, 2002

Registration fee is $5.00 and includes lunch.

For more information or to pre-register call your local SAF Extension Agrologist.

Saskatchewan Pulse Growers

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Lyle Minogue
Chairman of the Board

Growers in Good Hands

This is the last time that I will have the opportunity to address you as the Chairman of Saskatchewan Pulse Growers. My term ends on January 5. I would like to share with you some conclusions drawn from my seven years of experience on the Board.

First, there is a definite need for a strong grower organization. Pulse farmers face many problems, including production and marketing, that they cannot address as individuals. Firms that we buy our inputs from, and/or sell our products to, have their own organizations to represent their interests. These organizations are well-funded and well-staffed, and they are effective. Many of these groups will claim they represent our interests. They don't. They are there to protect their own interests, particularly their investments in concrete and steel. It works for them. There is nothing wrong with that. It just means that we have to look out for ourselves.

We can't rely on governments to solve all our problems. Your grower group has made governments aware of the pulse industry and our special needs. Progress has been made, support is on the way in the form of research dollars and market development funding, but we have to maintain this initiative.

Our competitors from other countries have strong industry organizations and in most cases have been in the pulse business longer than we have. Most give greater support to their industry than we do. Farmers in Australia and the United States contribute 1 per cent of sales, in some places 2 per cent, while we put in 0.5 per cent. Governments in other countries are often more supportive than the Government of Canada. This doesn't mean we can't compete. It just means we have to try harder.

Saskatchewan Pulse Growers is in good shape to represent you. Glenn Annand will make an excellent Chairman for the coming year and he has a highly committed, knowledgeable Board to work with. We have a good staff of young, enthusiastic, highly skilled people who are rapidly gaining respect in the industry. We have good co-operative arrangements with other grower groups, governments and the Canadian Special Crops Association to work together where we can. Our involvement in Pulse Canada will continue to pay off with better market access and market development. Pulse Canada Research will help us make better use of our scarce research funds. Even though we have staff and resources in place, we still need the support of individual growers. It is important that each and every one of you be aware of developments in the pulse industry, understand the issues, and support your Board fully whenever possible.

The Saskatchewan Pulse Growers has done much to put our province and industry on the map.

The pulse industry has been good to me over the years. I grew my first crop of lentils in 1970. Since then, pulses have greatly benefited my farm. Through my involvement in Saskatchewan Pulse Growers, I have met many interesting people in Canada and worldwide. I have learned a lot from the experience. I thank you for letting me be a part of all this.

Saskatchewan Pulse Growers

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Published for:
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Published by:
Issues Ink
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Winnipeg, MB R3M 0W7
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e-mail: issues@issuesink.com
web site: www.issuesink.com

Publication Dates:
October, January, March, June

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Canadian Mail Publications Sales Agreement #40030841
Postmaster please return form 29B and 67B to Publisher.
PRINTED IN CANADA

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On the cover: organic pea grower Ian Cushon

DEPARTMENTS

Brian Clancey
Senior Market Analyst and Publisher

Acreage Adjustments

The recent, sharp upward trend in Canadian pulse seedings appears to be losing some of its momentum, with increases expected in the year 2002 not matching those experienced in either of the previous two seasons. Even so, pulses stand a good chance of setting new records in all major categories. Forecast seedings for Canadian field peas are expected to approach four million acres. While markets are stronger than last year, feed pea exports are off to a slow start, with clearances through Thunder Bay during the opening quarter at their lowest level in nearly a decade.

Spreads between current and 2002 crop markets should also influence next spring's seeding decisions. If seeded area grows as expected and yields are at their recent five-year average, production would reach a record 3.4 million tonnes.

The next largest increase is expected to be recorded by chickpeas. Western Canadian seeded area is expected to reach 1.4 million acres of chickpeas in 2002. At 12.9 per cent, the rate of increase is well below this year's 70 per cent jump in seeded area, and last year's 107 per cent jump from 353,400 acres in 1999.

It would not be surprising to see 1.4 million acres of chickpeas result in a continued increase in stocks in Canada. Average yields would lift production from this year's estimated 479,000 tonnes to 638,000. It would not be surprising to see ending stocks climb to at least 75,000 tonnes by the end of the 2002-03 marketing campaign even as exports approach 375,000 tonnes.

Current market conditions suggest such optimism about next year's planted area is not misplaced, but some participants worry that if demand does not improve over the coming months, prices could come under more pressure than has already been the case, leading to a smaller expansion in seeded area. Among pulses, lentils and dry edible beans are expected to record the smallest percentage increases in seeded area next year. Lentil seedings are expected to inch up 0.2 per cent to 1.8 million acres while dry edible bean area advances at least 9.9 per cent to 434,000 acres.

Of the two commodities, dry edible beans stand the best chance of posting larger gains. Unfortunately, poor availability of varieties adapted to Canadian growing conditions continues to limit Canadian expansion of dry edible beans. This is changing and suggests the coming decade will see strong growth in planted area, especially in Saskatchewan, bringing some of North America's most aggressive growers and processors to the marketing table.

IN BRIEF

Increases are still expected in pulse acreages, but not at the same growth rate as before.

Although acres seeded to pulses in Canada are not as high as the past two years, pulses may still set new records this year.

In trying to assess the upward potential for dry edible bean seedings in Canada, it needs to be recalled that Ontario planted 230,000 acres of pea beans in 1988, suggesting Canadian dry edible bean seedings could reach 600,000 acres in 2002 without breaking any historic precedent. Such an event seems unlikely, but it helps define the upward potential for the Canadian industry as it is currently structured.

Interestingly, if yields are at their recent average, production would end just under the 1999 record of 264,750 tonnes of dry edible beans in Canada. Current market values suggest most of the expansion in Canadian seedings should be in coloured beans. Though all classes of beans are benefiting from current shortages, coloured beans are showing the greatest strength.

by Delaney M. Ross

IN BRIEF

When you put in the effort up front, marketing your crop becomes easier.

Get Out What You Put In

With a little planning, you can market your crop with minimized risk, and often maximized returns. The best results come from knowing your options, and exercising them. Whether choosing a contract, selecting a buyer, or working out a price based on your sample, you can proceed with confidence just by doing your homework first.

Contract Options

Choosing the right contract can be difficult. However, some contracts offer a little less risk than others. Merv Berscheid is a Grain Broker with CGF Brokerage in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and is familiar with the types of contracts available to pulse growers.

Aside from a spot purchase contract, which is simply drawn up at the point of sale, Berscheid says there are two main types of contracts available to growers. Production contracts, as a rule, contain an "Act of God" clause, allowing farmers to nullify the contract if the crop is decimated through uncontrollable circumstances. However, Berscheid adds that some companies require the farmer to have crop insurance, so the company can use inspectors to verify that the crop is indeed undeliverable.

The other type is a deferred delivery contract, where Berscheid says the farmer is obliged to supply the product, even if the crop doesn't yield. This contract may be a little more risky if farmers have a bad year, but Berscheid adds that farmers may command a premium as incentive because the buyer is guaranteed to receive the product.

Terms of Agreement

Once the type of contract is determined, it's up to the farmer and buyer to agree on the terms. Donna Welke, Assistant Commissioner with the Canadian Grain Commission, recommends farmers check a few points before agreeing to the contract. Firstly, she suggests getting the contract in writing. "While verbal agreements are legal in Saskatchewan," she says, "it's harder to understand what each party has agreed to."

Welke recommends checking whether a number of points are in the contract before it is signed, with particular emphasis on having a dispute settlement mechanism written into the contract. However, there are still occasions when a dispute arises, such as when a company fails to take delivery. Welke says that generally, it's up to the farmer and buyer to work it out – often in small claims court. "We can't force either party to comply with the terms of the contract, unless it's covered under the Grain Act," Welke says, "such as an issue that falls under licensing or grading."

Welke says that the best way to avoid contract disputes is open and ongoing communication between the buyer and grower. "I can't stress enough how important it is for the grower and company to keep in communication."

Achieving a relationship of open communication with a buyer starts with choosing

Are These In Your Contract?

There are a few important points that you should make sure are clarified in any contract production you sign on for.

- Act of God Clause: Make sure this clause is present, so that if your crop fails because of hail, flood, drought or otherwise, you don't have to buy from the neighbour to fulfill the contract.
- Price agreement: Agree to the price for various grades beforehand, or agree on how the price will be determined, to avoid price disputes if the crop is downgraded. Also, find out if the quoted price is at the yard or the plant, so you know up front who's responsible for transportation.
- Payment date: Know when you should expect to get paid, so you know when you haven't. Dealing with bonded companies is a good way to ensure you get that payment.
- Delivery date: Know when the company expects the shipment, and be sure to determine whether it's a delivery by you or pick-up by them.
- Net or gross weight: Find out if you're getting paid by net or gross weight. If it's net weight, determine up front whether the cleanings become the property of the company, garner a reduced price, or are available for you to take back to the farm.
- Other points: Some other important points include checking what the allowances are for weights and shrinkage; how the sampling and grading is done; and whether there is a dispute settlement mechanism written into the contract.

the right one. While choosing the right buyer is partly a matter of trust, or reputation, Welke recommends that farmers deal with licensed and bonded companies, particularly when seeking a new buyer. Delivering to a licensed and bonded company ensures that farmers will not stand in line behind the banks and other creditors looking for payment if the company gets into financial trouble – their payment is secured.

The CGC does offer insurance should the company fail to make the payment to farmers, but the rules of coverage are very specific. Farmers are covered for 90 days after delivery to a company, during which time farmers are allowed to make a claim against the bond if the company fails to pay them, providing they have a grain dealer receipt or other approved document. Scale tickets do not support claims. However, once the company issues a cheque, farmers must cash it within 30 days to be covered by insurance should the cheque bounce.

Poor Sample, Poor Sale

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, farmers can boost their own security by knowing their crop, and knowing how buyers intend to grade and price it. The importance of getting a proper sample cannot be overstated, because that sample will represent your entire crop. A grade or price is only as good as the sample, which means poor sample, poor sale.

Welke recommends taking very good samples from each bin, and sending those samples to the CGC for grade and dockage. For this submitted sample, CGC service centres provide a call grade or certificate, verifying that sample is of a specific grade and dockage. On the other side, a buyer can protect against purchasing inferior product by sending in its own Guaranteed Submitted Sample, which the company guarantees is a sample representative of the container it was drawn from. The CGC may also take Official Probed Samples from the container, monitoring what goes into the vessel, and guaranteeing the grade of the vessel from the samples.

Growers should be aware that there are some practices that buyers use which may affect the price their crop receives. Buyers may set the price using the average grade and dockage of a sample taken from a combination of loads during unloading. This average sample could downgrade or reduce the price for your sample if the other loads are of poorer quality. Buyers may also set price by "net off the cleaner", also known as "net off the plant". Darren Lemieux of Simpson Seeds in Saskatchewan describes "net off the plant" as the price set on the net weight of the entire bin of grain, which contains only one farmer's crop.

Another practice affecting price is the difference between metric and imperial sizing measurements, particularly for selling chickpeas. Lemieux says they often pay a higher premium for chickpeas graded in metric, as a few more percentage points of the total crop are lost through the metric screens versus the imperial ones. He says this goes for both the 9 mm and 8 mm sizes, compared to their respective imperial equivalents of 22/64 and 20/64. While Simpson Seeds chooses to grade in metric because they ship in metric, it may change with each buyer.

However, if the sample is well-taken, and the buyer's practices are known upfront, the grade and price growers expect should hold true. In the same way, a well-planned contract should hold true, reducing marketing risk the way it was intended to. Just as with a crop, though, the more you put into marketing your crop, the more you get out of it.

Take a Proper Sample

The Canadian Grain Commission offers five steps for achieving a proper sample of the crop, which are summarized here. Begin with a tin cup or scoop, and four identical pails at least 20 litres (four gallons) each in size. Label two of the pails A and B.

Step 1
As each truck load is emptied into the bin, take cupfuls every 30 to 60 seconds from the sides and centre of the grain stream. Empty the cupfuls into pail A, taking enough so that when the truck is empty, the pail is about three quarters full.

Step 2
Once the truck is empty, mix the contents of pail A thoroughly by hand. Sit two identical pails touching side-by-side on the floor, and pour the contents of pail A between them, filling each pail with about half the sample. Empty one pail back into the bin, and repeat the above process with the contents of the other pail until about two kilograms remain. Pour the two kilograms into pail B.

Step 3
Repeat the process for each truckload that is emptied into the bin.

Step 4
When the bin is full, mix the contents of pail B by hand, and retain as large a sample as is required for your needs (one kilogram for most purposes).

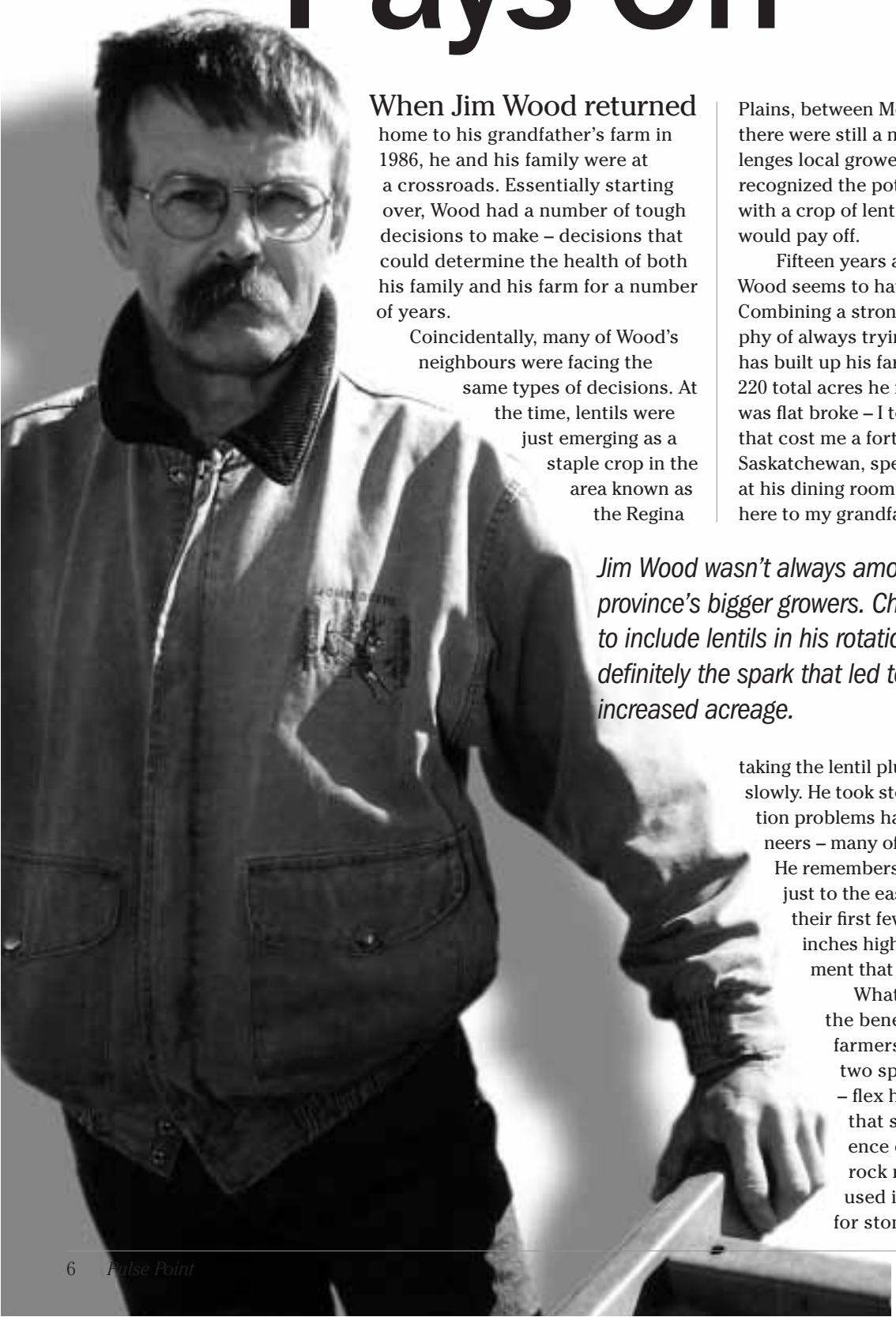
Step 5
Place the sample in a bag or sealed container, and label with the bin it represents.

by Hans Ongsansoy

IN BRIEF

Equipment options key to growth of lentil business.

Decision Pays Off



When Jim Wood returned home to his grandfather's farm in 1986, he and his family were at a crossroads. Essentially starting over, Wood had a number of tough decisions to make – decisions that could determine the health of both his family and his farm for a number of years.

Coincidentally, many of Wood's neighbours were facing the same types of decisions. At the time, lentils were just emerging as a staple crop in the area known as the Regina Plains, between Moose Jaw and Regina, but there were still a number of production challenges local growers needed to sort out. Wood recognized the potential of beginning anew with a crop of lentils, and hoped his planning would pay off.

Fifteen years and 3,000 acres of lentils later, Wood seems to have made some good choices. Combining a strong work ethic with a philosophy of always trying to minimize risk, Wood has built up his farm considerably from the 220 total acres he first inherited. "In 1986, I was flat broke – I took on a farming venture that cost me a fortune," recalls Wood, of Pense, Saskatchewan, speaking candidly over coffee at his dining room table. "So we came back here to my grandfather's farm. I owned it for years, but never put it at risk."

Jim Wood wasn't always among the province's bigger growers. Choosing to include lentils in his rotations was definitely the spark that led to his increased acreage.

Wood admits protecting the farm was one of the wisest things he's done. Another wise decision was taking the lentil plunge. At first, Wood moved slowly. He took stock of some of the production problems hampering the first lentil pioneers – many of whom were right in the area. He remembers the travails of some farmers just to the east of his own operation – their first few lentil crops were only three inches high, and they were using equipment that just wasn't suitable.

What happened soon after, to the benefit of all Saskatchewan lentil farmers, was the introduction of two specific pieces of equipment – flex headers and rock rollers – that seemed to make all the difference during harvest. At the time, rock rollers were already being used in Montana, says Wood, but for stones much bigger than those

typically found in Saskatchewan. "In comparison to other places, this is stone-free land. But when you're cutting an inch or half-inch off the ground, even a small stone can cause a big problem. Rock rollers were a sleeper in the industry," he says. Recalling just what an impact they made, Wood jokes that maybe the growers in Regina Plains, and other rock-free areas like Rosetown, should have "bought the first rock roller… and cut it up into little pieces" – thereby cornering the market on lentil production.

Cost Consideration Important

The remark is a perfect illustration of Wood's inherent competitiveness. That, along with his concentration on trying to reduce risk at all times, has allowed him to successfully manage such a large operation. "It's really important to know your costs," says Wood, citing one example of minimizing risk. "Just take your total costs in one year and divide it by the acres you grew. That's a real simple formula, but it gives you a general idea in the back of your mind of just how much revenue you have to produce."

As growers start dealing with larger and larger acreages of pulse crops, these cost vs. revenue decisions can become quite daunting, considering the figures that start to get thrown around. "I've never had zero crop. So it's not the volume of crop produced, it's the price, the cost of production, where the worry comes in," says Wood. "Last year, I spent $65 an acre on fungicides for chickpeas (for example). That's over $100,000 just on fungicides. Then, 10 days later you have to worry about the disease again, so you apply again. At that point, you're thinking 'man, this crop better work.' But it always does."

While lentils have specific disease issues, particularly ascochyta blight and anthracnose, a number of new resistant varieties are available to Saskatchewan growers, thanks to the Crop Development Centre at the University of Saskatchewan. Ascochyta-resistant varieties like CDC Milestone and CDC Glamis, along with the first anthracnose-resistant lentil, a small red called CDC Robin, give lentil growers options to manage disease while cutting down on fungicide costs.

When times are tough, cutting costs is tops on many growers' lists. However, some growers simply cut back on inputs without applying other management tools in their place, choosing to put a ceiling on the amount they will spend in a season. Wood advises against this. "It's the wrong thinking. If you're not going to spend what it takes to get it to the bin, why plant it?" he asks.

The agronomic benefits of pulses are certainly one reason why farmers seed them, and Wood says lentils are a close second to peas as the pulse crop which renders the most rotational benefits. After lentils, he'll usually grow flax, or durum wheat, which seems to love lentil ground. Wood adds weed control is not the greatest during a lentil year, so he feels he needs to follow lentils with a crop he can spray generously, in order to keep weed problems under control until he grows lentils again.

While getting lentils to germinate is a challenge, Wood repeats that the biggest challenge is still harvesting. He said once the trend turned to straight cutting, lentil acreage began to rise. "With straight cutting you could desiccate the crop, and Reglone became registered for desiccation," says Wood. "With a short-stem crop, straight combining is the answer."

In terms of lessons to pass on, Wood says he has a couple of them. Learning from your neighbours is the first one. "Every little area is a microcosm of climate and soil. You might get some real good insights from the guy right next door," says Wood.

The second is be prepared to put in some work and investment up front, but trust that lentils will almost always be worth it. "You're going to spend a lot of money on inputs, be prepared for that," Wood says. "The first day you're out there with a combine, you're going to feel you've got your butt stuck out a long ways, so you want to make sure you do your homework."

Good To Be Lucky

There's an expression that says you have to be good to be lucky, and lucky to be good. Wood's success in coming full circle with his business ventures could be an agricultural example of the same expression. He acknowledges the advantage he was given in inheriting a farm located halfway between Regina and Moose Jaw, and a couple of miles south of Highway 1.

"Luck plays a big part of it," Wood continues. "My grandfather got off the train, and really wanted to be near the creek for a cattle operation he was looking at starting. But then he realized the land up (from the creek) was pretty good too." It sounds strikingly familiar to how Wood chose to begin lentil production. Maybe making the right decision at a crossroads is something that runs in the family.

by Hans Ongsansoy

IN BRIEF

Groundwork laid by both the CDC and local producers should ensure the bean industry takes off like its other pulse cousins.

Poised for Growth

Larry Janzen definitely has beans around. After witnessing the effectiveness of a variety like CDC Pintium first-hand, the Rosthern grower is confident an increase in acreage is just around the corner.

Shifts in traditional bean growing areas, favourable prices, and new varieties developed specifically for Saskatchewan all have a role to play in bean production continuing to move west. This, according to Larry Janzen, represents an opportunity to further develop a provincial bean industry that has been relatively dormant compared to progress in other pulses.

Beans might be an especially good fit in Saskatchewan's Area 3, the region north of Saskatoon where Janzen farms. "Direct seeding does not favour lentils, only peas, and we're too cold to grow chickpeas, so we're looking for another crop," says Janzen, of Rosthern. "The world is not growing beans as much. Soybeans are pushing them out in the expensive row-cropping areas of the U.S."

That said, Janzen cautions that although bean prices have been higher than chickpeas this fall, any push for a provincial bean industry should be done with prudence. "There's a fine line between hope and hype," says Janzen, a Select seed grower. "High prices bring hype. Good knowledge brings hope. We have to be very careful we don't jump on the hype bandwagon because beans are hot."

Janzen himself has been multiplying seed of the pinto bean variety CDC Pintium for the last three years, trying to establish exactly what agronomic practices work best on his farm. He usually plants a quarter-section of beans a year. In preparation, he sprays the field with glyphosate in the fall and surface applies a granular herbicide. In the spring, he tempers the seeds by soaking them, and then either uses an auger or conveyor to handle them during planting. At this time, he also decides if he will direct seed or not.

"You can go row-crop, conventional, or direct seeding. A lot of years we'll direct seed, but use some conventional modification," says Janzen, outlining some options. "That's where I think we'll be going, but you have to read the year. Beans do not germinate fast in the high cold stubble in May or June."

Soil moisture is another factor affecting Janzen's choice of seeding methods. "If we don't have much moisture, we seed right into standing stubble. If we have a pretty good moisture reserve, I send a spike cultivator through the field just to blacken it, because I want to get my beans out quickly," he says. Upon emergence, he will spray with a herbicide offering a wide weed spectrum.

As for harvesting, minor modification of regular equipment is all that's needed to make the process quite manageable. Janzen says he's using a 972 MacDon head, "cutting at 5 mph and getting 98 per cent of the pods. No problems, no piles." He adds that it's a given to handle the crop gently. "If you're going to handle them, it's nice to have a conveyor. I wish I had a picture of the home-made bean ladder I once made out of 5-gallon pails. It really works slick."

The Right Varieties

Janzen says it's the promise of CDC Pintium which has made the bean production learning curve less steep. The first large quantities of certified CDC Pintium will be available next spring, and the consensus is the variety holds the most promise for producers. Bert Vandenberg, a plant breeder with the Crop Development Centre (CDC), describes CDC Pintium as very reliable and believes it will make an impact. "It's on the leading edge of a really big change in germplasm," says Vandenberg.

The CDC's bean breeding program is as big as its lentil program, continues Vandenberg. The program's main focus has been to adapt bean varieties to Saskatchewan's shorter

growing season. Vandenberg believes that most of the varieties he's been working on – primarily pinto, but also Great Northern, red, pink, black and navy – are now in the right range of maturity.

Janzen says the work Vandenberg and others are doing is crucial to further bean sector development. "His varieties stand, are all early, and don't compromise on yield very much," says Janzen of Vandenberg's bean research. "As a result, the licensing program will be hot and heavy over the next few years, I'll guarantee you that."

Vandenberg was less fervent, but also foresees a growth period. "I think we'll see a reasonable expansion next year, because of the availability of seed and the high price scenario in the bean complex," he says. "Farmers are looking for alternatives. Typically, what drives the pulse industry, is opportunity. So right now, people will perceive the current conditions as an opportunity."

"I really believe beans will be grown anywhere in Saskatchewan you can grow Argentine rapeseed well," Janzen continues. "Beans do not have a very deep root system. So if you don't have good moisture in your field in late July, early August, you're going to be disappointed."

Besides varieties, the other part of the industry growth equation is bean agronomy, which Janzen says is improving. Vandenberg agrees, saying that some growers in the southeast established an impressive production regimen in just two seasons.

An initiative Janzen is hoping to pursue in conjunction with the Saskatchewan Pulse Growers (SPG) is drafting an information sheet containing the top 10 tips for growing beans. He suggests the SPG could make the sheet available in conjunction with an information day for Select seed growers focused on bean agronomy and seed cleaning. Janzen says the pulse industry is dependent on the seed industry, and so more knowledge-sharing on both sides will lead to growth overall.

The excitable Janzen concludes that he will know exactly when the bean industry has hit its stride – it will be the day when he can make predictions on variety performance without any guesswork. "We want to be able to get to a model where I can look my customer in the eye and say four years out of five, you should be able to expect this level of yield," says Janzen. "I have no control over prices, but if I can give a guy a pretty good assurance like we can on peas now, then I'll be happy."

Janzen, right, says bean agronomy is improving.

by Hans Ongsansoy

IN BRIEF

Chickpeas pose a lot of challenges, especially for seeding and disease management, but these brothers say the rewards are worth the effort.

Processing Fits Into Family

If approaching from the east, trying to get to Smith Seeds is no Sunday drive. In fact, while giving directions to the operation the week prior, Ron Smith – one-half of the brother team that oversees the business – described the stretch of Highway 13 as "a bad road. It's paved but it may as well be gravel."

The bumpy ride ends abruptly at the Smith Seeds gate however. A dual growing/processing operation in Limerick, Saskatchewan, Smith Seeds is a family business that is more than 80 years strong, and has clearly drawn lines of responsibility. Wayne is the farmer, and looks after the roughly 6,000 acres of neighbouring fields – which include about 800 acres of chickpeas. Ron tends to the processing side, overseeing an operation that employs up to 13 staff members during busy times. While getting there may have been rough, it seems that with both brothers present and eager to contribute, learning about the business should be a cruise in comparison.

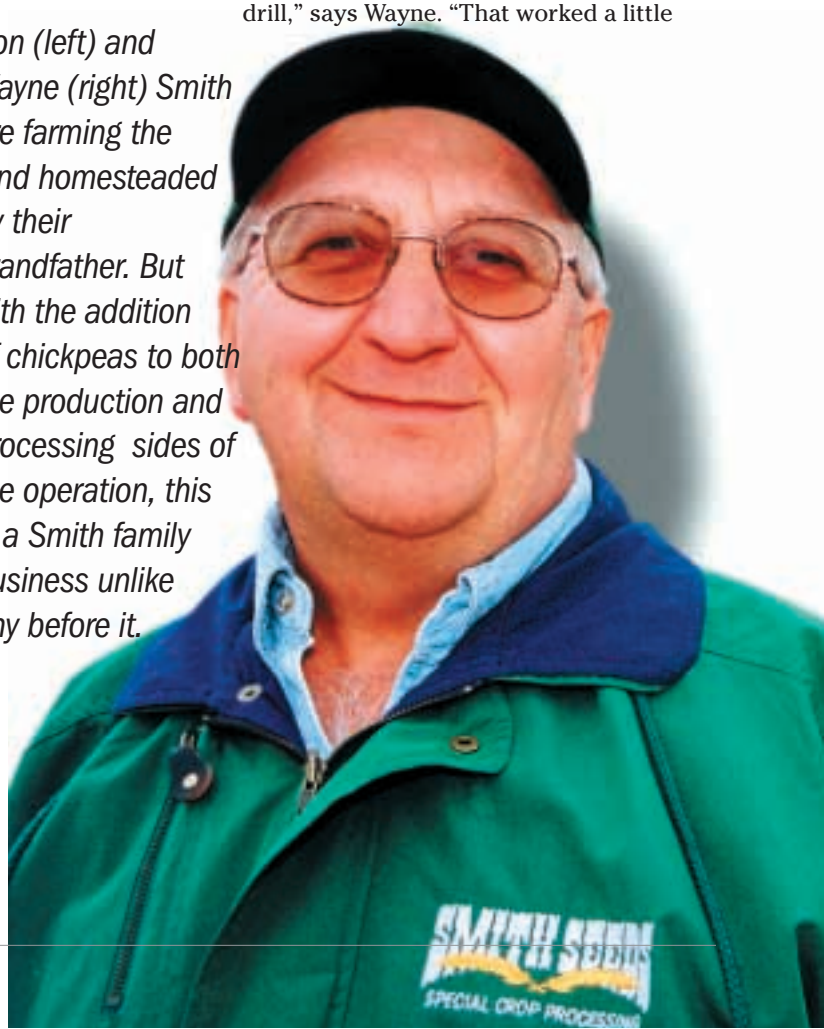
Growing pulses is relatively new to the farm, having only started in 1990. However, Wayne says the decision to get into pulses seemed like a good one, and agrees with Ron that it was made because they were looking for an alternative. "We were probably one of the first in this area to try lentils and chickpeas. We were looking for a crop rotation, and something that might generate more income," says Ron.

Chickpeas a Challenge

Chickpeas, especially, present some unique growing challenges, but the Smiths stuck with them because "you could see the possibility of good returns was there," says Wayne. "There were some growing pains, but enough good returns to make them appetizing." He adds that it probably takes a minimum of five years before a producer can feel comfortable growing them.

Wayne still remembers the first chickpea crop they put in the ground. They grew a Select plot that first year, and used a disc drill – the same seeding tool they used for everything else – but it didn't work. "The seeds were plugging in the spouts – they were too big," recalls Ron. "That was an experience. We've moved on, but haven't forgotten about it."

"After that we strictly seeded with an air drill," says Wayne. "That worked a little



Ron (left) and Wayne (right) Smith are farming the land homesteaded by their grandfather. But with the addition of chickpeas to both the production and processing sides of the operation, this is a Smith family business unlike any before it.

better." "A lot better," interjects Ron.

Nowadays, Wayne says the biggest challenge about seeding is remembering to slow down. The same applies to harvesting. "The biggest thing is patience," says Wayne. "Chickpeas are an indeterminate plant. All of your other farming may be done, and they may still not be ready to combine. If the moisture is there, they'll stay green."

It's mid-season, however, when some of the toughest production decisions must be made, and some of the most stringent practices followed. That's because chickpeas are prone to disease. "Ascochyta is a big problem with chickpeas," says Wayne. "It's a real aggressive disease, and you have to be there (to spray) on time. A few days one way or the other makes the difference."

It's become even more important to be diligent with spraying because "the past few years, the disease is hitting the plants before flowering," Ron says. "Normally you wouldn't spray until they flowered, but the disease is on the stem before flowering. It'll eat right through, the stem will fall off, and you've lost that part of the plant."

Wayne advises to "keep notes on how long that chickpea is out of the ground, and when you get to 30 days, start looking for disease. At the very first sign of it, start spraying – don't wait. And your next spray operation… don't stretch it. If they say the chemical lasts seven days, spray seven days later. One year, I think I was three days late…" says Wayne, his voice trailing off, leaving what happened to that particular crop strictly to the imagination.

Luckily, chemical products have become better. Wayne endorses Quadris, a product that was under temporary registration this past year. Another grower tip is to use good, disease-free treated seed. Next year the Smiths plan to seed nothing but Canadian-developed varieties. Up to now, they've been using both Canadian and American varieties. "But I think the Canadian ones have a little better disease package," says Ron. "Their season may also be a little shorter."

Processing Purring

On the processing side of things, the brothers just completed a second expansion of the operation this past summer. They started it as a small grading plant in the mid-80s and began accepting specialty crops in '94. The first batch of chickpeas came through fours years later, which actually led the brothers to grow their own chickpea crop.

The last expansion increased capacity, and involved the addition of some new equipment – primarily to handle the larger seeds. "On chickpeas, we could be up to 500 bushels an hour now, which we think is okay," continues Ron. "What will limit the capacity on chickpeas is the sizer at the other end. If you push them too hard, you'll find other sizes in that sized lot you're going for, which is not acceptable." He adds the brothers work as agents for three big grain companies, and a couple of small ones. So they process, but don't export.

As for how the brothers decided who would be responsible for the processing side, and who would stick to growing, neither Ron or Wayne has any real theory. "It just kind of happened," says Ron, of why Wayne stayed with crop production and he moved over. "We didn't say you're doing this and I'm doing this, or vice versa." Wayne indicates he's fine with the arrangement as well. "No, we're not switching," he confirms.

The Smiths' lack of anything resembling sibling rivalry is evident again when asked about that old expression: the one that says you shouldn't do business with family. The Smiths don't subscribe to the theory. "I don't know if you could operate two businesses like this without being brothers," says Ron. "I'm not saying you can't, but it would be hard. That's the way I see it." Wayne sums it up even better. "It's nice when you can keep it in the family," he says.

by Hans Ongsansoy

IN BRIEF

A wife, a son, and peas. For this grower, it's the perfect recipe for a successful organic farm.

Future Intact

With his own family now, organic grower Ian Cushon is not just farming for the present – he's farming for the future. Peas are an essential part of Cushon's sustainable farming practices.

Two years ago, Moose Creek Organic Farm proprietor Ian Cushon was farming completely on his own. Now married and the father of a curious 18-month-old, Cushon couldn't be happier. One of organic farming's main tenets is to produce sustainably, both for present and future generations. Until the birth of his son, Liam, Cushon didn't have his own personal reminder of just what that meant. Now he does.

"It gives a lot more meaning to what I was doing here before," says Cushon, of starting a family. "To think about the possibility that Liam, or another child, might want to take over the farm, provides some continuity to that."

Cushon represents the third generation to farm and raise a family on this strip of land near Oxbow, in the southeast corner of the province. Sharing his parents' desire to reduce pesticide use for both health and economic reasons, Cushon switched over a portion of his farm to organic farming practices in 1985, and four years later was certified organic on that piece by the Organic Crop Improvement Association. By 1992, all of his 1,900 acres were certified organic.

Cushon describes the basis of organic farming as trying to work with natural processes to accomplish things like pest control and soil fertility, along with a number of other agronomic goals. "You try to eliminate inputs that could possibly have health risks or contaminate the environment, and are energy dependent – like nitrogen fertilizer, which takes a lot of natural gas to produce," Cushon says. "We do this both for consumers, as well as the producers who are directly exposed to these pesticides."

Cushon adds it is difficult to develop a farming system that is holistic in nature. "We can accomplish that in some crops, while other crops we struggle with," he says. "Peas and lentils are much shorter-statured crops and less competitive with weeds, so weeds tend to have more negative impact and the crops yield less. With wheat, our yields are, on average, very similar to what our conventional neighbours would get. Peas, depending on the year, are 50-75 per cent of our neighbours' yields."

However, because organic farming relies heavily on crop diversity, pulses like peas and lentils are critical to have in the mix. They can be very important because they help extend rotations by fixing nitrogen, fostering the growth of successful crops after them, while also being highly valuable in the organic farming marketplace.

Cushon began growing peas in the early '90s. He says investing in equipment like rock rollers, swathers or flex heads, and conveyors all make harvesting easier, but can also be one of the biggest limiting factors for organic farmers – many of whom are smaller farmers to begin with. "It is very prohibitive to invest in specialized equipment for a particular crop when you may have only have 100 acres of it," says Cushon. This year, he harvested 216 acres of yellow peas and 85 acres of green peas. He

also grew another 369 acres of peas that were used for a green manure ploughdown.

The biggest production challenge to growing peas organically is not equipment investment, however, but weed control without herbicides. Cushon has a number of strategies for tackling this primary production problem. One of the most important is variety selection. Organic growers need to choose varieties which have the best competitiveness, relatively speaking, with weeds.

Another strategy is always planting peas into cereal stubble, because that's where they seem to fit best in the rotation. Cushon usually follows up a wheat crop with a crop of peas. He also plants them fairly early, which is a gamble sometimes because of the possibility for wild oats to creep up. However, a lot depends on the wild oat history of the field.

Cushon also maximizes his seeding rates to increase plant density per square foot, because the more space that gets filled, the less openings there are for weeds. As well, he plants peas fairly deep in cool soil. "They take quite a few days to come up," he says. "Once the sprouts have happened, and there's another inch before they come through, you can go out with a rod weeder. You pull it like a cultivator and it controls weeds that have emerged before the peas."

Cushon is experimenting with another weed control technique – direct seeding pea into wheat stubble. "We find certain weed species, like wild mustard, are stimulated by tillage, so if you can use a direct seeding method you actually disturb the soil less. In 2000, we direct-seeded 25 acres of peas, which yielded well over 30 bushels an acre," he says.

Different Marketing Plan

With all the effort that goes into managing production in an organic way, the rewards are supposed to come in the form of premium prices. That's the case with Cushon, who says there are markets for organic peas, but getting to them requires a creative marketing plan. In the past, he's used area processors and exporters to ship to feed markets in the U.S. and Europe. As for human consumption peas, Cushon has just recently begun developing a way to market direct to European consumers, specifically Germany. He says the general attitude of Europeans towards pesticide use is negative, which presents an opportunity for organic products – many of which command a premium, both overseas as well as domestically.

Cushon says there are several reasons why organic peas are worth more. They're perceived to have higher quality due to their shielding from pesticide residue. As well, yields are generally lower in organic crops, so if a consumer wants the piece of mind that comes with pesticide free products, then they need to compensate the producer for that. What's more, smaller markets mean smaller shipments, which result in a higher per-unit cost for handling and transportation. "Organic consumers have been willing to pay, because it's what they want," says Cushon.

With a new family to consider, the premiums are an added bonus over and above the rewards Cushon receives by simply farming more responsibly. Cushon's wife, Jo-Anne Hochbaum, was herself a strong advocate of organic products even before she met Cushon, and describes herself as "lucky" for having been able to find organic products in the past. For his part, Cushon feels the same way to have found Hochbaum. "It's been a wonderful change," he says. "It's just so much more fun to farm with someone who shares your interest, who has enthusiasm about food and food production. It's really a much richer life than being a bachelor farmer."

by Hans Ongsansoy

IN BRIEF

There's always a way to grow better peas – it just takes some creativity.

Part of the Plan

As an agri-retailer, seed supplier, processor and exporter, Vince Walker has his hand in a lot of agricultural cookie jars. First and foremost, however, this Star City, Saskatchewan resident is a producer – and peas are his specialty. But although he has been growing the popular pulse crop since the late '70s, Walker admits there's still a lot to learn.

With pea agronomy in Saskatchewan pretty well established, it's up to an individual producer to find those extra few advantages that will keep him competitive. For Walker, this involves experimenting. "One thing that we have been doing the last few years is using a yield monitor on the combine," says Walker. "With yield data collection simplified, we've been running some strips without phosphate – to basically try to determine the level of response to phosphorous fertilizer. The jury's still out on that one."

Vince Walker is a multi-dimensional player in the provincial pulse industry. One constant is his belief in peas as a crop on which to build success.

That's because in some years he's had trouble getting a response at all. "Being in the ag inputs business I guess that's a funny thing to say," says Walker. However, as both a farmer and retailer, Walker *needs* to know personally what products work best for peas. So, besides phosphate fertilizer, Walker has also been doing tests with the phosphate inoculant, JumpStart.

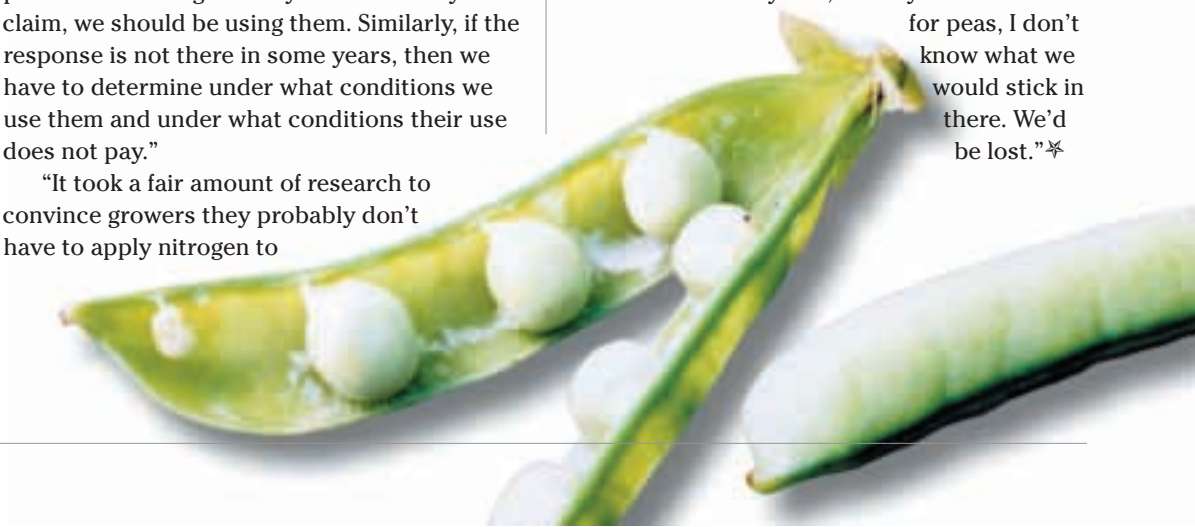
"It's all about growing a crop with the highest net return, which involves either increasing returns on the production side or else cutting costs on the inputs side," says Walker. "If phosphate inoculants give the yield boost they claim, we should be using them. Similarly, if the response is not there in some years, then we have to determine under what conditions we use them and under what conditions their use does not pay."

"It took a fair amount of research to convince growers they probably don't have to apply nitrogen to peas," adds Walker, stressing the importance of continual investigation. "In fact, in high-moisture years, it's been proven nitrogen actually reduces yield because you get higher dry matter, so you grow more of a forage crop instead of a grain crop."

As for Walker's other pre-planting practices, they are well-established – seeding rate and seeding depth are two things he recommends producers keep in mind. In some years, Walker says he's cut his number of plants per square foot from eight to four, and garnered similar yields. It depends on a lot of factors, including moisture, weed control and variety type. As for seeding depth, he says "a good rule of thumb is to always seed a minimum of 2 inches deep, or 1/2 to 3/4 of an inch below the moisture line. If seeded right at the moisture line, a pea's big seed will often fizzle out before it can germinate."

Post-germination, disease control becomes a pea producer's biggest concern. "That's the biggest single limiting factor to production at the moment – disease in peas," says Walker. Ascochyta can become a big problem in wet years, so more genetic resistance is at the top of Walker's wish list. "Realizing that goal is a ways away – more effective fungicides would help," he adds.

However, peas in the rotation help control disease in subsequent crops, which is just one of the reasons why Walker has stuck with them. He and his wife plant around 900 acres of peas – about a quarter of their land – every year. "They've provided excellent returns to our farm over the years," he says. "If it wasn't for peas, I don't know what we would stick in there. We'd be lost."



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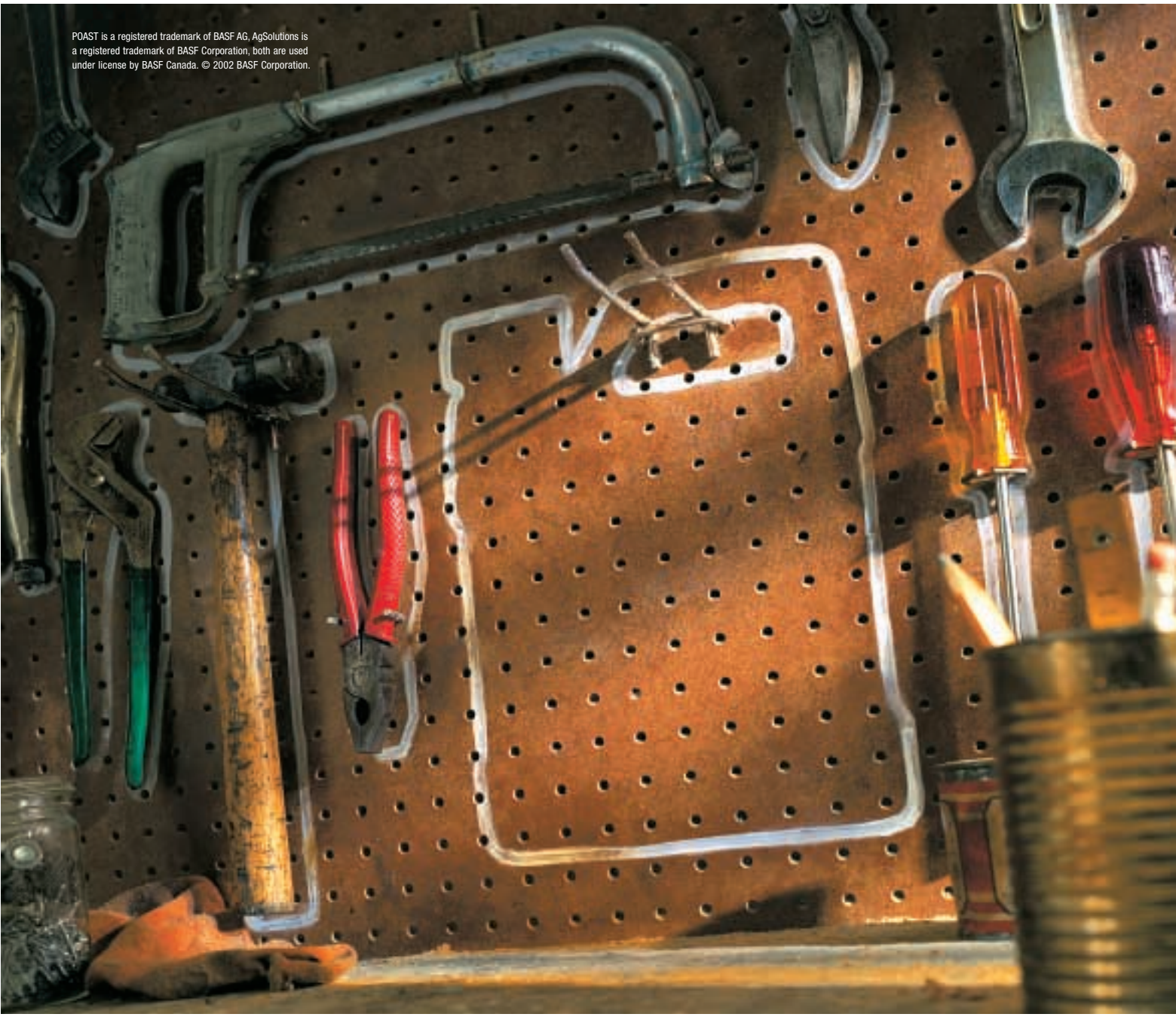

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Companies Registered to

Company/Agent	CGC Registered	Edible Peas	Feed Peas	Lentils	Beans	Chickpeas	Faba Beans	Phone	City/Town
Agricom International	N	◆		◆	◆	◆		604-983-6922	North Vancouver, BC
Agricore United Bean Business Unit	Y				◆			403-545-2227	Bow Island, AB
Agricore United Special Crops	Y	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	204-745-6711	Carman, MB
Agtech Processors	Y			◆				306-721-5171	Regina, SK
Allan Seeds	N	◆	◆		◆	◆		306-457-2629	Corning, SK
Argail Enterprises	N		◆	◆	◆	◆		306-858-2251	Beechy, SK
Bailey Brothers Seeds	N	◆		◆	◆	◆		306-935-4702	Milden, SK
Beeler Seeds	N	◆	◆	◆		◆		306-528-2128	Nokomis, SK
Belle Pulses	Y	◆	◆	◆		◆		306-423-5202	Bellevue, SK
Berdex Canada	Y	◆		◆	◆	◆		204-944-8924	Winnipeg, MB
Best Cooking Pulses	Y	◆	◆	◆				306-586-7111	Rowatt, SK
Birsay Pork Farm	N		◆					306-573-2074	Birsay, SK
Boersch Farms	N			◆				306-695-2693	Indian Head, SK
Bornhorst Seeds Ltd.	N		◆					306-366-2158	St. Gregor, SK
Brett-Young Seeds	N	◆	◆	◆				800-468-6509	Gilbert Plains, MB
Canadian Pulse & Milling	N	◆		◆		◆		306-644-4704	Elbow, SK
Canadian Select Grains	N			◆		◆		306-962-4227	Eston, SK
Canary Island Seed Associates	Y	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆		306-885-4444	Sedley, SK
Cancom Grain Company	Y	◆	◆	◆		◆		204-985-1400	Winnipeg, MB
Cargill Limited	Y		◆					204-947-6262	Winnipeg, MB
C. B. Constantini	Y		◆	◆				604-669-1212	Vancouver, BC
ConAgra Grain	Y		◆					204-942-5550	Winnipeg, MB
Conida Seed (div. of Trinidad Benham)	N				◆			208-829-5411	Hazelton, ID, USA
Copeland Seeds	N			◆				306-378-2286	Rosetown, SK
Crown Ag International	Y	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆		306-522-8111	Regina, SK
D & L Farms	N	◆	◆	◆		◆		306-773-9748	Swift Current, SK
Dandilee Spice Corp.	N	◆		◆		◆		306-745-2510	Gerald, SK
Export Packers Company	Y	◆		◆	◆	◆	◆	905-792-9700	Brampton, ON
Feed-Rite	N		◆					306-682-2668	Humboldt, SK
Fill-More Seeds	N	◆	◆	◆		◆		306-722-3353	Fillmore, SK
Finora Canada	Y	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆		604-597-5060	Surrey, BC
Garratt Seed Farms	N		◆	◆				306-333-4806	Abernethy, SK
GH Schweitzer Enterprises	N	◆		◆		◆		306-962-4751	Eston, SK
Great Sandhills Terminal Mkting.	Y	◆	◆	◆		◆		306-628-4452	Leader, SK
Great Western Grain Company	Y	◆	◆					306-825-4000	Lloydminster, SK
Horizon Agro	Y	◆	◆	◆				204-746-2026	Morris, MB
Horizon Seed Processors	N	◆	◆	◆				306-253-4233	Aberdeen, SK
International Grain Trade Canada	Y	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	604-685-5259	Vancouver, BC
Keyser Farms	N		◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	306-723-4949	Cupar, SK
Klempnauer Seeds	N	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆		403-655-2420	Grassy Lake, AB
Lakeside Machinery Co-op	N	◆	◆	◆		◆		306-554-2078	Wynyard, SK
Lakeside Pulse & Special Crops	N	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆		306-554-3266	Wynyard, SK
Larsen Seeds	N	◆	◆					306-862-7333	Aylsham, SK
Lashburn Ag Ventures	N	◆	◆					306-285-3511	Lashburn, SK
Linear Grain	Y		◆		◆		◆	204-745-6747	Carman, MB
Louis Dreyfus Canada	Y	◆	◆					800-667-7033	Tisdale, SK
Mainline Terminal	Y		◆					306-435-4336	Moosomin, SK
Maviga N A	Y	◆		◆	◆	◆	◆	306-721-8900	Regina, SK
Milestone Pulse Corporation	N	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	604-608-1613	Vancouver, BC
Naber Seed & Grain	Y	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	306-752-4115	Melfort, SK
Newfield Seeds Company	Y	◆	◆	◆	◆		◆	306-862-4678	Nipawin, SK
N.M. Paterson & Sons	Y		◆	◆	◆			204-956-2090	Winnipeg, MB
No-Bull Marketing	Y	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	403-643-2855	Carmangay, AB
Northfork Seeds	N			◆		◆		306-692-1616	Moose Jaw, SK
North West Terminal	Y		◆					306-228-3735	Unity, SK
Parent Seed Farms	Y	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	204-737-2625	St Joseph, MB
Parkland Pulse Grain Company	Y	◆	◆	◆		◆		306-445-4199	North Battleford, SK
Parrheim Foods (div. of P&H)	Y	◆	◆					306-931-1655	Saskatoon, SK
Parrish & Heimbecker	Y		◆					204-987-4318	Winnipeg, MB
Pioneer Grain (div. of James Richardson)	Y		◆	◆				204-934-5748	Winnipeg, MB

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Prairie Pulse	Y	◆	◆	◆		◆		306-249-9235	Vanscoy, SK
Prime Pro Seeds International	N	◆	◆	◆		◆		306-296-2055	Frontier, SK
Pro Can Seeds	N	◆	◆	◆		◆		306-882-4482	Zealandia, SK
Quadra Group	N	◆	◆	◆		◆		306-867-8916	Outlook, SK
Quantum Processing	N			◆		◆		306-796-4944	Central Butte, SK
Regina Seed Processors	N	◆		◆		◆		306-586-8955	Richardson, SK
RK Sunview Farms	N			◆				306-776-2468	Rouleau, SK
R. Young Seeds	N			◆		◆		306-355-2221	Mortlach, SK
Roy Legumex	Y	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	204-758-3597	St Jean, MB
Saskatchewan Wheat Pool	Y	◆	◆	◆		◆		306-569-5488	Regina, SK
Schumacher Seeds	N	◆	◆	◆		◆		306-493-8274	Delisle, SK
Sedley Seeds	N	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆		306-885-4444	Sedley, SK
Shamrock Seeds	N	◆		◆	◆	◆		306-249-4151	Saskatoon, SK
Simpson Seeds	Y	◆	◆	◆		◆		306-693-2132	Moose Jaw, SK
Smith Seeds	N	◆		◆		◆		306-263-4944	Limerick, SK
South West Terminal	Y		◆					306-672-4112	Gull Lake, SK
S.S. Johnson Seeds	Y	◆	◆	◆			◆	800-363-9442	Arborg, MB
Sunrise Foods International	N	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	306-931-4576	Saskatoon, SK
Terminal 22	Y		◆					306-334-2222	Balcarres, SK
Terramax Holdings	N	◆	◆			◆		306-522-7117	Qu'Appelle, SK
T.W. Commodities	N	◆	◆	◆		◆		306-773-9748	Swift Current, SK
United Grain Growers	Y	◆	◆					204-944-3661	Winnipeg, MB
Van Burck Seeds	N	◆	◆					306-863-4377	Star City, SK
Veikle Seeds	N	◆	◆	◆				306-398-4714	Cut Knife, SK
Vigro Seed & Supply	N			◆				306-885-2144	Sedley, SK
Walker Seeds	Y	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	306-873-3777	Tisdale, SK
Werner Agra	N			◆				306-721-6292	Regina, SK
Western Grain Cleaning/Processing	N	◆	◆	◆				306-445-4022	North Battleford, SK
XCAN Grain Pool	Y	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	204-954-1500	Winnipeg, MB

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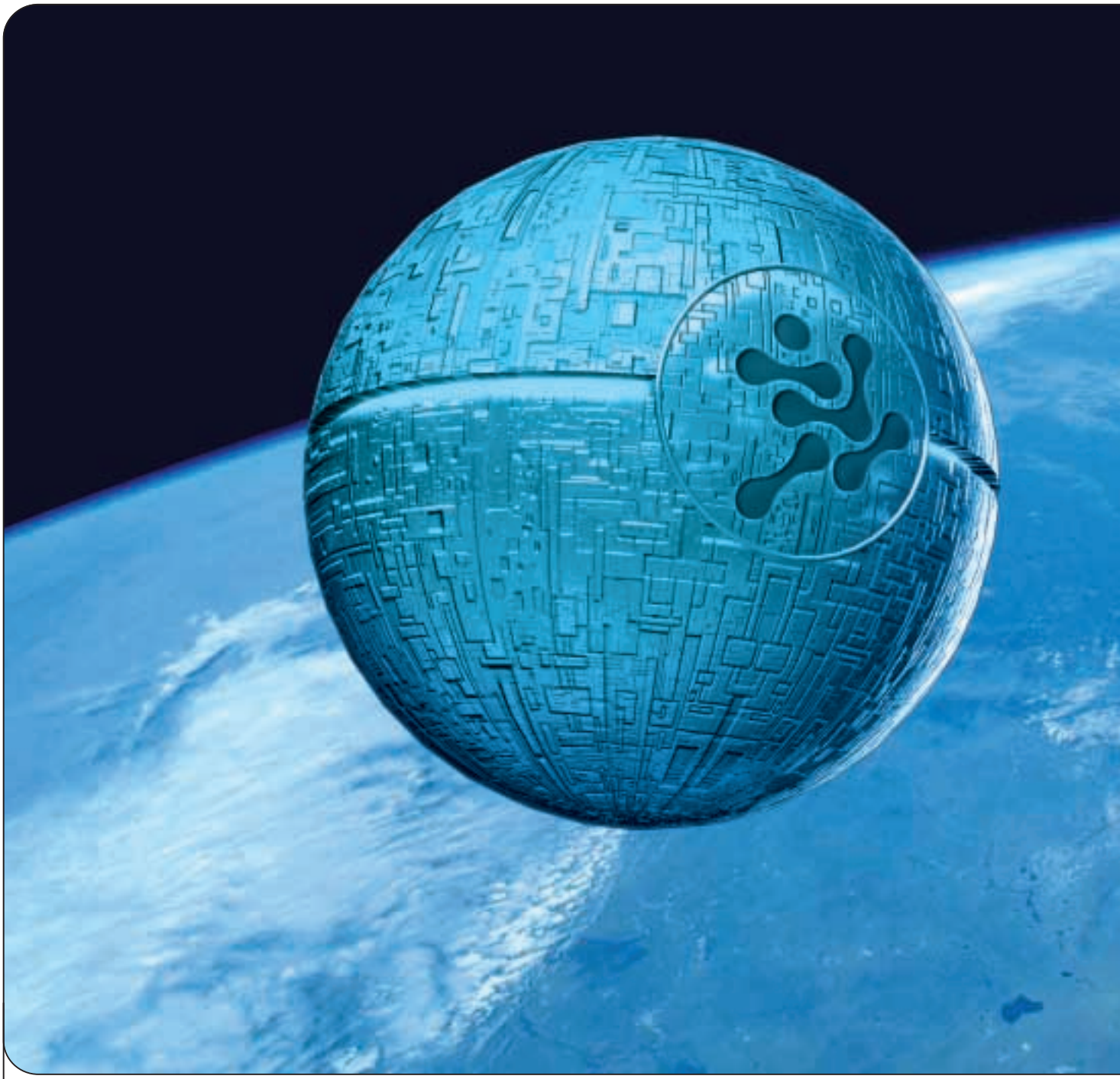

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CALENDAR

January 24–27
21st Annual Organic Conference and Eco-Products Trade Show
(519) 824-4120 ext. 2558
www.guelph2002.organicfarms.ca
Guelph, Ontario

January 24–February 13
Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership Pulse Mission to South Asia
Contact: Tim Marshall or Raegan Sobkow
(306) 787-9210

January 28–February 28
Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food & Saskatchewan Pulse Growers 2002 Winter Pulse Workshops
See inside front cover for locations and contacts

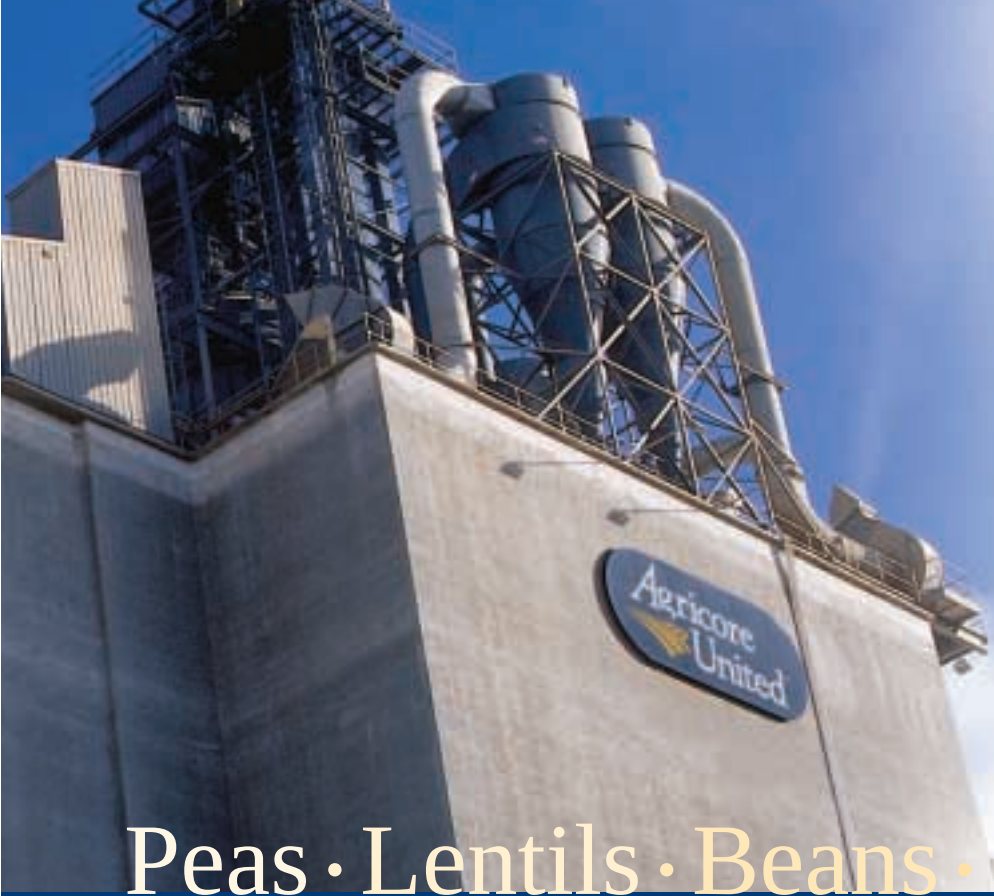
February 13–14
Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association Direct Seeding Conference
(800) 213-4287
http://ssca.usask.ca
Regina, Saskatchewan


SASKATCHEWAN PULSE GROWERS

February 21–22
University of Saskatchewan Soils and Crops Workshop
(306) 966-5586
www.extension.usask.ca
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

May 1–3
International Pulse Trade and Industry Confederation (CICILS/IPTIC) Annual Convention
www.clera.com.ar
Bariloche, Argentina

June 19–21
Western Canada Farm Progress Show
(888) 734-3975
www.wcfps.com
Regina, Saskatchewan



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Penny Pearse
Plant Disease Specialist, Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food

Guidelines for Safe Levels of Infected Pulse Seed for Planting

Many of the important diseases of pulse crops are seed-borne. Using good quality seed with low levels of infection is an important step in reducing disease risk. Other practices to manage disease risk include using good crop rotation, not planting adjacent to infected pulse residue from the previous year, field scouting for disease, and timely applications of foliar fungicides. The decision regarding what levels of infected seed are safe to plant is dependent on the type of disease and pulse crop in question, the availability and cost of seed treatments, and weather conditions.

IN BRIEF

Penny Pearse talks about managing disease risk.

CROP and DISEASE	SAFE LEVEL TO PLANT	SEED TREATMENTS AVAILABLE
CHICKPEA ASCOCHYTA *(Ascochyta rabiei)*	Use seed with as close to 0% ascochyta infection as possible. Reducing the initial amount of inoculum is very important in chickpea since seed-to-seedling transmission of ascochyta blight is high and ascochyta blight can spread very rapidly within a field. Saskatchewan Crop Insurance may deny coverage if the cause of loss is due to ascochyta, and seed planted had >0.3% infection. Contact your local insurance office for a copy of the 2002 "terms and conditions" for chickpea.	There are currently no seed treatments registered for the control of seed-borne ascochyta in chickpea. CROWN received temporary registration for the 2001 planting season. Consult your local extension agrologist or agri-retailer to find out if CROWN is registered on chickpea for the spring of 2002.
LENTIL ASCOCHYTA *(Ascochyta lentis)*	Up to 5% ascochyta infection may be safe to plant in the brown and dark brown soil climatic zones of SK. Seed treatment should be used if infection levels are close to or exceed 5%. Seed should not be planted if infection levels exceed 10%. High infection levels are usually indicative of other quality issues. Use 0% ascochyta infection if planting in the black soil climatic zone of SK.	CROWN is registered for the control of seed-borne ascochyta in lentil. CROWN is also effective against seedling blights and seed rots caused by botrytis, fusarium and rhizoctonia.
LENTIL ANTHRACNOSE *(Colletotrichum truncatum)*	Use seed with as close to 0% anthracnose as possible. Anthracnose is not highly seed-borne and seed infection levels are rarely over 1%. Seed-to-seedling transmission of anthracnose is probably very low.	None.
FIELD PEA ASCOCHYTA *(Mycosphaerella pinodes, Ascochyta pinodella, Ascochyta pisi)*	Up to 10% ascochyta infection should be safe to plant as long as seed has good germination. Seed-to-seedling transmission of ascochyta in pea is low. In areas where pea production is common, air-borne spores are the primary means of infection.	There are no seed treatments registered specifically for the control of ascochyta in pea although THIRAM 75 WP or VITAFLO 280 may assist in decreasing seed-to-seedling transmission.
ALL PULSES SCLEROTINIA *(Sclerotinia sclerotiorum)* **BOTRYTIS** *(Botrytis cinerea)*	Up to 10% infection level (botrytis and sclerotinia) may be safe to plant but can result in significant seedling blight. Levels >10% usually indicate other quality issues such as poor germination, and seed should not be used. These pathogens are also present in the soil and on crop residue in neighbouring fields, so late-season infections can also occur. The pathogens can attack many broadleaf crops or weeds and are usually present in regions of higher precipitation.	There are currently no seed treatments registered on chickpea for this purpose. VITAFLO 280 is registered on pea and lentil and is effective against seed rots and damping off caused by botrytis, fusarium and rhizoctonia. VITAFLO 280 will not sufficiently control ascochyta in lentil. THIRAM 75WP is only registered on pea and will help prevent seed rots and damping off caused by pathogens such as botrytis, fusarium and rhizoctonia.
ALL PULSES SEED ROTS DAMPING OFF *(Pythium spp.* and *Phytophthora spp.)*	No seed test. These pathogens are primarily soil-borne.	APRON FL is registered for the control of seed rots and seedling blights caused by Pythium and Phytophthora spp. The use of APRON FL is strongly recommended in Kabuli chickpea. APRON FL treatment in pea and desi chickpea may be beneficial when planting under cool, moist soil conditions.

by Delaney M. Ross

IN BRIEF

The Pulse Canada Research strategy is outlined and underway, building on Canada's top position as a pulse exporter.

Aiming to Excel

Pulse Canada Research has unveiled a strategic national research policy that will co-ordinate pulse research across the country, ensuring projects and funding address the most important needs of pulse development. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure Canada builds upon its top rank as a pulse exporter.

Over the past year, Pulse Canada Research commissioned 53 scientists from varied backgrounds and disciplines across Canada to develop ideas for this national strategy. Divided into four committees – quality and utilization, genetic improvement, agronomy, and sustainable environment – these scientists compiled their ideas and suggestions into a background document, and presented the document for discussion at a research strategy workshop in November 2001.

Holly Rask, Director of Research with Pulse Canada Research, says the event was a success. "It couldn't have gone any better," says Rask. "It was a great group of people." Rask says there were some good suggestions on where to take the strategy next, but they built upon the backbone of previous work.

The main points in the strategy identified several areas of priority. The first was the identification of a shortage of scientists, along with clear inadequacies in facilities and equipment. The committees estimate a single expenditure of $22 million will be required to enhance the infrastructure to the point where it can support future research programs. Following the upgrade an annual funding effort estimated at $25 million per year is recommended to carry out the suggested research. This annual research cost represents only two per cent of the value of the 2001 pulse crop, which is a small reinvestment for such a high-value crop.

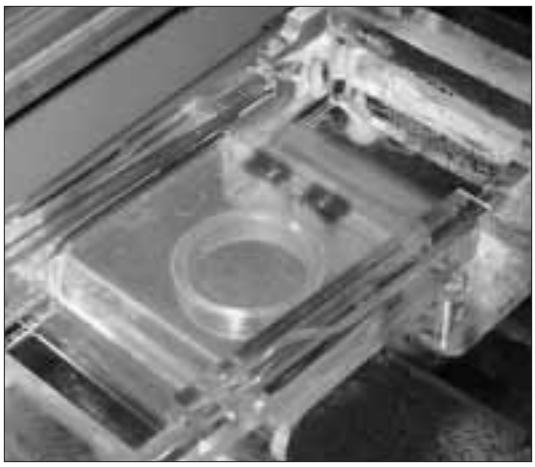
The committees' recommendations for the establishment of research positions and infrastructure to support them include:

- A lentil breeder and pathologist;
- A chickpea breeder and pathologist;
- A bean breeder and pathologist in Morden;
- A pea breeding program in Edmonton for the short season region;
- A new facility to house chickpea and lentil research programs;
- Several technicians to support the proposed network of quality and utilization, agronomy and sustainable environment research; and
- Capital investment to support the new positions listed above.

The committees also recommended that a network of Canadian research locations be established, with qualified staff, to research areas of interest. "Discussion at the workshop stressed

SASKATCHEWAN PULSE GROWERS

Pulse Canada's national research strategy will strengthen knowledge in areas like pulse quality and utilization, leading to increased use in processing and consumer markets.



With gaps identified in genetic improvement research, Canadian breeders can get resources to work on crop quality and agronomic features.

how important it is for researchers to network, and to work together as a team," Rask says.

The committee for quality and utilization found that some baseline research and database development is also required in that area. As a means of tracking pulse crop production in Canada, yearly reports breaking down the pulse crop market are recommended for marketing information, and as a support system for genetic improvement programs. This information would help outline the quality measurements buyers are seeking, which genetic improvement programs could then use as a guidance tool for future research.

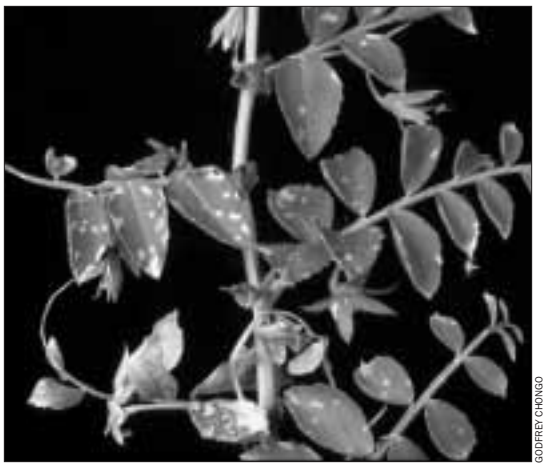
As for specific research topics, each committee outlined a number of areas that need to be addressed. Recommendations include:

1. **Quality and Utilization Committee:** pulse starch and flour utilization; whole seed processing; nutraceutical potential; feed value of pea; effect of processing on feed.
2. **Genetic Improvement Committee:** weaknesses in biotechnology priorities; new crop and market class genetic development plan; new germplasm pool source.
3. **Agronomy Committee:** pest management (diseases and weeds, integrated pest management, minor use registration, a research fund for sporadic pests); quality improvement through production systems; plant nutrition with inoculation and fertilization; risk reduction systems for producers.
4. **Sustainable Environment Committee:** impact of pulses on greenhouse gas and climate change; long-term environmental impact and management; long-term impact on cropping systems; enhancing economics through cropping system management.

Rask says the specifics of research topics were not discussed in detail, but all seemed to agree that the most important issues were addressed. She adds that the next step is to work on implementing the suggestions of the committees. "We will set up an implementation team that will polish up the strategy, pull together extra ideas, and go market it," says Rask. Like the research committees, the implementation team will draw on the experience and knowledge of many. "It's not set out who will be on the team, but it will be a combined effort – a whole-industry committee." Rask adds there are already some non-industry groups that have volunteered.

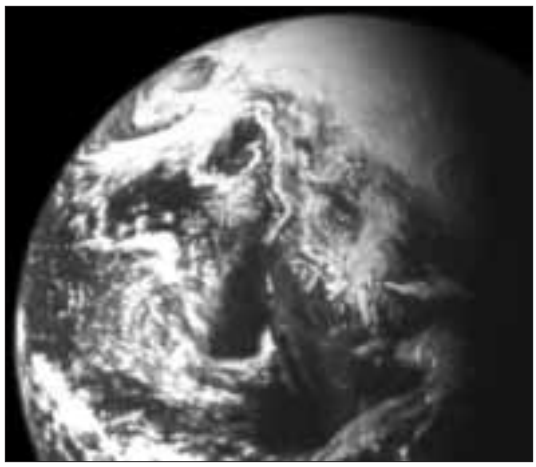
To help meet the networking objective stressed at the workshop, attendees suggested that researchers meet at least once a year. Rask says these meetings will build on existing meetings, and the first one would be held in conjunction with a Canadian pulse meeting slated for Edmonton in November 2002. She also says that communication tools like a newsletter and web site are being looked at to keep pulse researchers informed between meetings.

Rask says the workshop met its objectives, and gave Pulse Canada Research a map of the next steps to take. "The purpose of the meeting was to make sure we were matching the issues with what the whole industry felt was important." Now, it's a matter of taking the steps laid out in the national strategy to provide the research and breeding infrastructure to keep Canada at the forefront of production and quality in the international pulse industry. It could mean a world of difference to Canadian pulse farmers and their ability to compete in the long-run.



GODFREY CHONGO

Research into improved pest management will help pulse growers reduce pest problems like ascochyta.



The research strategy seeks to prove how pulses contribute to a sustainable environment and to sustainable and profitable production.

For more information about SPG activities please call: (306) 668-5556,
e-mail: pulse@saskpulse.com, or visit our web site: www.saskpulse.com.

IN BRIEF

News from and about Saskatchewan Pulse Growers (SPG).

Saskatchewan Pulse Growers

SPG Executive Director Garth Patterson recently joined American pulse growers in Moscow, Idaho for the U.S. Dry Pea, Lentil and Chickpea Council Annual Grower Meeting held on December 6. The Council has very effectively lobbied northern state Senators, resulting in a proposal that allows chickpeas, peas and lentils to be included in the U.S. Farm Bill currently under review. If the Council is successful, farmer subsidies are expected to average between US$30-40 per acre for each pulse crop. If the Bill is passed, big increases in production acreage in Washington, Idaho, North Dakota and Montana are to be expected.

Changes to the U.S. Farm Bill could result in subsidies for American pulse producers.

The Council has also increased its market development efforts in India, Philippines and Western Europe, as well as in key areas including food aid. A new complete meal – rice pea porridge – has been developed for lunch school programs in undernourished countries. Another topic discussed at the meeting included research in the area of new uses for peas, such as snack foods and pea sprouts.

The Northern Plains Producer Conference *On Common Ground* was held November 13-15 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. A follow-up to the event held in Fargo, North Dakota, in November 1999, the conference brought together farmers from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Issues discussed included GMOs, animal health regulations, pesticides and farm/trade policy. The canola industry has successfully developed a North American strategy in order to ensure access to crop protection products. This model will be of use to the pulse industry in its efforts to increase access to products. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada reported on the Whitehorse Agreement, a national vision for agriculture. The five key elements include farm income safety nets, on-farm food safety, protection of the environment, science and research, and sector renewal (training).

Science and research was one of the five key elements included in a national vision for agriculture presented by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

Pulse Canada advocacy efforts were in full swing in Ottawa from November 21-23. Following its Board meeting on November 21, Pulse Canada hosted a reception for MPs and government officials. Over the next two days approximately 20 meetings were held with key government and industry officials. Of particular concern was the status of the U.S. Farm Bill. Both the Canadian pulse industry and the federal government expressed their concern that the U.S. Senate proposal, which includes support for pulses, would distort production and not be in the interest of more liberalized trade. A strong case was made for increased federal investment in Canadian pulse research, culminating in the issue being discussed in Parliament. In meetings with Transport Canada and the Canadian Transportation Agency, efforts were made to raise awareness of the needs of the pulse industry. Pulse officials also attended meetings of the Grain Growers of Canada and the Canada Grains Council to discuss policy issues of common interest.

As part of the ongoing effort to keep the SPG web site useful, user friendly and current, new features have been added. Next time you log on to www.saskpulse.com, check out the latest updates on research, varieties and issues affecting pulse growers in Saskatchewan. To make it easier than ever to find the information you need, a web site search engine, document library and discussion forums have been added.

Check out www.saskpulse.com for important pulse industry issues, variety information and research news, all with the help of a new web site search engine.

The Special Crop Processing Industry is gathering speed. An important player in the economy of rural Saskatchewan, the industry is used as an indicator of the positive outcomes resulting from continued support for pulse and special crop research. Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food held a "Pulse Processors Update" on December 5 in Saskatoon, attracting over 100 people. This meeting focused on transportation, plant design/equipment, pulse grading and much more. If you are a special crop processor, expect to hear from Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food sometime in February, when it undertakes its 2002 survey. The results will be used to update the 1999 Special Crop Processors Survey findings and to gauge the growth and development of the sector in this province.

Once again student awards were presented at the North American Pulse Improvement Association (NAPIA) meetings. They were held in Fargo, North Dakota, on October 28-30. Tyler Hanlan, a Masters of Agriculture student in Plant Sciences at the University of Saskatchewan, won the Student Award for his poster contribution, "Lentil Canopy Modification Through Architecture and Stem Stiffness".

Parthiba Balasubramanian was in the spotlight at the Bean Improvement Cooperative meeting, also held in Fargo this fall. His presentation, "Physiology of Freezing Resistance in the Genus *Phaseolus*", garnered him the award for best oral presentation by a student. Balasubramanian, the current recipient of the SPG Don Jacques Memorial Scholarship, is working towards a Ph.D. in Agriculture in plant breeding.

Farmers of North America Inc. has just launched a new line of inoculant products. For more information contact Tim Rinus at (877) 362-3276 or log onto www.fna.ca.

Engage Agro, based in Guelph, Ontario, launched a line of powder and liquid inoculants in November 2001. For more information call (519) 826-7878 or visit www.engageagro.com.

Saskatchewan Agrivision Corp. launched a container pilot project on October 1 designed to better co-ordinate container placement in the province. Canadian Pacific Railway, the ports of Montreal and Vancouver, a freight forwarder, and three shipping lines have committed to working with the pilot project. For additional information see www.agrivision.sk.ca.

CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY

Canadian Pacific Railway is working with Saskatchewan Agrivision Corp. to improve container placement.

by Robynne M. Anderson

A Stronger Vision

IN BRIEF

Pulse Canada has undergone a reorganization to strengthen its mandate beyond market development.

The dramatic increase in Canadian pulse exports is one of the greatest success stories of Canadian agriculture in the past decade. Pulse Canada has played a critical role in building these markets, and will now be doing even more.

Over the years, Pulse Canada's track record has demonstrated the power of working on a national basis toward market development. Recent changes at Pulse Canada will allow the organization to take this strength and apply it to other key areas. Pulse Canada's broader vision now includes market access, policy and research.

With Gord Bacon at the helm, Pulse Canada is evolving to assist continued growth in the pulse business from research to policy to market access.

Gord Bacon, CEO of Pulse Canada.

Germain Dauk, Chairman of Pulse Canada and a Saskatchewan pulse farmer, explains that all three of these areas are integral to Canada's international success. Since its inception in 1997, Pulse Canada has worked on building markets, but travelling to new countries and talking about Canadian product is not enough. The ability to grow product for that market and have the infrastructure to ship it are just as vital to the growth of Canadian exports.

Acknowledging that fact, Pulse Canada saw the need to reconfigure itself to span the breadth of these matters. Along with that vision has come acknowledgement of the skilled traders that have grown alongside the industry. Market development issues that need to be addressed can be pinpointed by the business leaders that have come to specialize in trading pulses. Pulse Canada's role is increasingly focused on resolving market access issues that impede the ability of Canadians to enter into, or compete in, foreign markets. Utilizing the expertise of skilled pulse traders in this area would prove valuable.

Pulse Canada has been restructured to address the full range of issues which are influencing the long-term well-being of the pulse business. A multi-disciplinary team has been assembled to focus on the three key areas of market access, policy and research. Back at the helm is Gordon Bacon, the original President of Pulse Canada, who returns to assume the role of CEO.

For Bacon it is an exciting opportunity to work toward the common good on a wide range of issues. "I'm excited about the restructuring and new role because it is a new look at the pulse industry for me." He is focused on the opportunity to make a real difference to the overall national health of the industry.

Dauk is just as excited to have Bacon back on board. "Gord is a visionary with the ability to co-ordinate and navigate complex issues. He analyzes a situation so well, and presents the Board with the advantages and disadvantages."

Dauk and Bacon both recognize the value of the strong staff team that has been assembled at Pulse Canada. From Holly Rask's expertise on research, to Theresa Le's international connections, and Lisa Gruener's background in nutritional science, it is an intelligent, multi-skilled brain trust. Plus, the Board is working in great unison toward the larger goals.

"All the players are working really well together," says Dauk. "From producers to traders, we are focusing on the important issues and forging ahead where we have consensus." In the end, he believes the changes at Pulse Canada will make the entire industry more effective. "It matters when we can say we're a national association in Ottawa and abroad, and the strength of the word 'Canada' cannot be discounted." It is all about the continued growth and success of the hottest industry of the agriculture sector.

PEAs, Qs AND As

Do you have any ideas for this section? E-mail them to *Pulse Point*, c/o issues@issuesink.com, or fax them to (204) 475-5247. Let's get producers talking!

IN BRIEF

A forum for Saskatchewan's pulse producers to share their views.

Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food in co-ordination with Saskatchewan Pulse Growers (SPG) organize a number of Winter Pulse Workshops. This year they will take place between January 28 and February 28, at 11 locations across the province. For growers who have attended the meetings in the past, Peas, Qs and As wanted to know what they thought of them, and whether they have plans to attend again.

"It was positive and informative. There were presentations on diseases, new varieties, and something from Farms.com. It was mainly the expansion of provincial pulse acres that was the main draw (for my attending)."
Jeffry Meyers, Radville, SK

"I go if they're close by. There was one in Wynyard a few years ago, and one in Watson. Yeah, I'll probably go to the one in Lanigan (this year). There's good information and it's a chance for growers to do some networking."
Glen Laxdal, Wynyard, SK

"It was very interesting. I would recommend them. The speakers were the best part. I have an interest in going this year, but it depends on the weather and the location. This year's topic is of interest, because I'm doing more and more of my own marketing."
Garth Fradette, Radville, SK

"I would probably go (this year) because I enjoyed the last one. I'm new to pulse growing and any information I can pick up is helpful."
Gary Nicholas, Milestone, SK

QUOTABLES

"The biggest decision all of us will have to make, due to the drought, is what kinds of crops can we grow. If there is not enough snowfall and overall moisture, then we'll also have to see what other risk management tools, like crop insurance, we can use."
Gordon Cresswell, Tisdale, SK, narrowing down what he feels will be among his biggest planting decisions this spring.

"Chemical tolerance for weed control."
Chris Hale, Rouleau, SK, on the trait he would try hardest to incorporate into a new variety if he was a breeder. He did admit to some bias, however, as his daughter is currently completing her Masters thesis on the same topic.

Weed control is an ongoing battle.

"That's most farmers' main weakness. They're bulls and not bears."
Vince Walker, Star City, SK, describing the negotiating mindset that he feels most producers have when selling their commodities.

Farmers must be less like bulls and more like bears when negotiating.

"I think it will be more of the same. I don't think we'll see a big expansion in any one crop."
Glen Laxdal, Wynyard, SK, on what might be the biggest trends, or lack thereof, in planting this coming season.

Garth Patterson
Executive Director

"Value-Added" Pulses are Good for Saskatchewan

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Saskatchewan Pulse Growers

"Value-added" refers to increasing the value of a farm product through further processing, such as feeding peas to hogs or splitting lentils. I consider pulses to be a "value-added success" for 22,000 growers in Saskatchewan because diversification into pulses has increased farm cash receipts. Can pulses continue to "add value" in Saskatchewan? Yes! I believe that pulses can contribute $2 billion to the provincial economy by 2010. Here's how:

Process More Pulses in Saskatchewan

The more value we can add to our products here, the better for our economy. Understanding how our pulses are consumed is the first step in identifying opportunities for further processing. Our human consumption pulses are mostly sold out of bulk bags in open markets. It is economics (labour and transportation costs) that determine whether these pulses are bagged at the source or the destination.

The first step in identifying processing opportunities is understanding how pulses are consumed.

Companies in Quebec and Ontario are canning and dry packing Canadian pulses for domestic and export consumption. Economics and marketing will determine if we can do this better in Saskatchewan. Private industry is examining these opportunities and I expect that we will see more processing of pulses in Saskatchewan in the next few years. Historically, our feed peas are exported in whole form. Some companies are now adding value with dehulled split feed peas and pea-canola blends.

Create New Markets and New Uses

Varieties have been the key technology supporting our success in new markets. Fortunately we have been able to adopt pea, lentil and chickpea seed technology from other regions. Now the new "made in Saskatchewan" Crop Development Centre (CDC) varieties are taking us to new levels of competitiveness. This is a fantastic return on the research investments made by SPG and Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food at the CDC!

Bean production has been slower to develop in Saskatchewan because of our limited success with seed technology from other regions. The good news is that new varieties such as CDC Pintium are now available and will open up the industry in Saskatchewan. I expect $100 million of dry bean production in Saskatchewan within five years! This will be another great return on our research investments.

The development of new uses for our pulses will increase the value of our industry by creating more demand. Our best success has been the creation of 300,000 tonnes of demand for feed peas in Western Canadian hog rations through research and development efforts.

What other new demand can we create for our pulses? Are attributes such as fibre and folic acid valuable enough to increase demand in our aging North American population? Are there components that could be of value for food, nutraceutical or industrial purposes? Could more pulses be included in food aid shipments? Are there new pulse crops or new pulse market classes that we can develop to increase our value of production? These are exciting areas that merit investigation.

We need to attract more public and private investment to complement our growers' research investments. The total annual investment in pulse research on a national level is only about 10 per cent of that in the canola industry. Pulse Canada is leading the effort to attract new research investment. This is a critical turning point in our industry. If we are not successful in attracting new investment I fear that our industry will not reach its full potential. Two billion dollars by 2010 is achievable!

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