



**NDDPLC Biennial Report
House & Senate Agriculture Committees
Kim Saueressig
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My name is Kim Saueressig and I am the chairman of the North Dakota Dry Pea and Lentil Council (NDDPLC) which was created in 1997 by the North Dakota State Legislature. The Council oversees the assessment of a 1% net value check-off on dry peas, lentils, chickpeas, fava beans and lupins grown or sold in North Dakota. The primary goal of the Council is to support the pulse crop industry in the state by funding research, government, and education programs and facilitating market development efforts.

Since the creation of the Council, the North Dakota pulse industry has increased dramatically. Processing capacity since 1997 has increased from one processor/buyer to more than 10 processing facilities and over 100 first purchasers for pulse crops in North Dakota. Value added processing—including flours, protein, fibers, and starch has created additional opportunities as an ingredient in both human and pet food markets. Processing in North Dakota has ventured into these value-added markets with the addition of facilities specializing in utilizing pulse fractions in product development.

Pulse crops remain a largely exported commodity. Increased emphasis has been placed on more products being utilized domestically and as an ingredient in the value-added space. With an increased need for all types of protein around the world, it is expected that pulse acreage in the North Dakota and across the U.S. will again reach increased levels as they did in 2017 when they were at historic highs. Even with a significant drop in acres, North Dakota producers continue to play a significant role in the U.S. pulse industry. North Dakota is ranked number two in the United States in production of pulse crops. The northern tier region (which includes Montana & North Dakota) accounts for 80% percent of the total U.S. pulse production. Agronomic benefits such as reducing input costs through nitrogen fixation, improving soil health, and creating a break in disease cycles may also influence producers to plant more pulses in the future.

The Council consists of five producers from districts across the state. Each producer is elected to serve a three-year term. The five elected growers are elected in district elections by county representatives.

The Council has a partnership with the Northern Pulse Growers Association (NPGA) to carry out activities in the areas of market development and research coordination and to facilitate education and discussion opportunities with lawmakers and government agencies on behalf of pulse growers. Council members also serve on NPGA committees to ensure funds are awarded and distributed to benefit producers of North Dakota.

The Council is a member of a coalition of 8 grower and trade organizations that comprise the USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council (USADPLC, also called USA Pulses). The Council contracts with USA Pulses for work in the areas of domestic and international market development, government and industry education and national research coordination. The Council also represents the producers of North Dakota with three seats on the USA Pulses Board of Directors and representation on their marketing, research and information/government education committees.

In addition, the Council contracts with Clearwater Communications to provide staff to administer the collection of assessments, the processing of refunds and to perform the day-to-day duties of the Council. Clearwater Communications provides the North Dakota Dry Pea & Lentil Council with an account executive to carry out the policies as put forth by members of the Council.

The Council maintains consistent communication with elevators, processors, and growers regarding the pulse check-off program. Through its investment in NPGA and USA Pulses promotional efforts, the Council is able to educate pulse producers on the important role check off dollars play in the overall success of the industry. In addition, the Council works to expand the list of first purchasers and promote the establishment of new processors and value-added ventures.

The industry is extremely grateful for the significant support received from the state legislature. Because of that support, the NDSU breeding program was established as well as programs for pathology and quality. Through producer check-off funds, North Dakota pulse producers have made significant contributions to

these programs that will continue to be vital to the success of the entire industry. State producers have seen their investments come to fruition with the release of new varieties from the NDSU breeding program. In addition, the expertise and collaborations with the NDSU research and extension groups have been invaluable to the pulse industry. NDSU has provided important agronomic research that addresses challenges and helps producers mitigate economic losses and be profitable.

Each year, the Council invites proposals to be submitted to fund projects that benefit North Dakota's growing pulse industry. These projects can focus on research, education programs or market development efforts. All proposals are reviewed, and funding awards are determined by the Council. To qualify for consideration, proposals must have a practical, near-term application involving practices or organizational arrangements that will stimulate an expanded pulse industry. Proposals for funding are accepted from public and private agencies and organizations, business and industry representatives, educational institutions, and individuals.

Research is the cornerstone for producer profitability and industry success. As demands for acreage has increased, so have incidents of disease, pest and weed challenges for producers. Each year, the NPGA surveys pulse crop producers to determine the major needs for research and establish industry priorities. The results of the survey are reviewed by the NPGA research committee which is comprised of Council members and NPGA board members. The committee works extensively with researchers on developing research projects and identifying funding sources.

The Council has also committed a significant amount of its resources during the past several years to pulse crop research regionally and nationally. The Council has contracted with USA Pulses to coordinate and enter contracts with third parties to conduct dry pea, lentil, and chickpea research. USA Pulses coordinates national research in the areas of health/nutrition, breeding/genetics, crop management/sustainability and product development.

Each year, the NPGA hosts a one-day convention in Minot, ND at the end of January that focuses on producer education. Attendees come from North Dakota, neighboring states and Canada. For the 2025 convention, the agenda includes a talk about the H2A program, a trade and a research panel.

The Council contracts with USADPLC to perform work in the areas of national and international policy and regulations. USA Pulses promotes full equality for pulse crops as a commodity under the Federal Farm Policy and supports equitable crop insurance for all dry peas, lentils and chickpeas at an affordable price. In addition, USADPLC works diligently to protect Market Access Program and Foreign Market Development Program funding.

The Council contributes funding to assist in developing education programs, publications and events with the primary goal of producer success and profitability. There is an extensive library of webinars, videos, publications on the NPGA and USA Pulses websites that the Council has contributed to. The funds invested in producer education help to ensure producers have the resources to grow a safe, high-quality crop. The Council wants to help provide producers with the tools to increase acreage to meet global demands.

The Council has also provided funding to help develop recipes, publications, videos and other materials to promote the health benefits and versatility of the use of pulses in child and adult diets.

More than 75% of U.S. grown pulse crops are exported. The North Dakota pulse industry is provided international representation through the Council's membership with the USADPLC with trade offices located around the world. Check off assessments generated in North Dakota are utilized as a match to USA Pulses to obtain federal marketing dollars to promote and conduct market development activities throughout the world. The Council has also invested in numerous campaigns to educate consumers on the benefits and opportunities associated with pulse crops. USA Pulses has leveraged some of these funds to collaborate with influencers and bloggers on social media.

I would like to thank you again for your past support of the pulse crop industry in North Dakota and for giving me the opportunity to present to you today. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.