Cultivating an image of quality

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MINOT, N.D. — In today's society, image is everything.

For North Dakota dry pea and lentil growers, that right image will enhance marketability for their crop.

"In the lentil industry, we've created an image that we can grow high-quality lentils," says Mike Youngs, Rosengren, N.D., farmer and past president of the North Dakota Dry Pea and Lentil Association.

That image is yet to be established for the state's pea crop.

"We know we can produce a high-quality crop," Youngs says. "We need to promote that image domestically, abroad and to other growers."

Youngs was one of 150 dry pea and lentil farmers and industry representatives who attended the North Dakota Dry Pea and Lentil Association annual meeting Jan. 22 in Minot.

Growers were enthusiastic about their specialty crops, and they should be. North Dakota farmers planted about 25,000 pea acres last year, and some say that could vault to as high as 60,000 to 80,000 acres.

But for acres to keep spreading like wildfire, peas will have to create the "right image."

Don Driscoll with NW Pea and Bean Co. in Spokane, Wash., says the right image will be created if North Dakota growers stick with planting quality seed, continue good agronomic practices and abide by good handling practices. Although the state's production was good last, there are potential problems looming out there.

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