Producers gather to tout dry pea, lentil production

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Savvy pulse producers gave their best advice to more than 200 of their colleagues Monday afternoon to start the 2003 North Dakota Dry Pea & Lentil Association convention in Minot's Holiday Inn.

Kerry Swinller, Moli, said that despite three years of drought in southwestern North Dakota, he will continue to grow peas because of good cash returns and for the nitrogen benefits of small grains that follow.

H said 2004 was not a good year for statistics, but his pea acres turned out better than many of the other crops, despite drought and frost through the summer.

"It was a tough year, but this crop is on my farm to stay," Swinller said. "I consider pea ground better than black fallow because there's good savings on the nitrogen application and with the high cost of nitrogen, any pulse crop is a benefit."

Swinller, who first planted peas in 1998, said he quickly learned in a part of the state that receives less than 10 inches of annual moisture that if seeds can be planted in a wet zone of the soil, they will often do very well. He said peas take more water than other crops to germinate, but once that happens, they compete well in harsh conditions.

"I leave the stubble," Swinller said. "We need all the water we can get so I leave the stubble there. Stubble also protects the seeding."

Swinller, who uses two varieties, said there

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Bob Henson, research agronomist with the Carrington Research Extension Center, chats with a pulse grower at the beginning of the North Dakota Dry Pea & Lentil Association convention Monday afternoon in Minot.

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