REGIONAL NEWS

**USADPLC: Saving the world one pea at a time**

There are a lot of changes happening in this world right now, and not the least of those is the global climate shift. As someone said to an old, skeptical farmer, “The ice caps are melting, man!”

Indeed they are, and so what can be done about it? The USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council (USADPLC), the national headquarters for the pulse industry, believes pulses are a part of the solution.

“The producers, processors, and importers of dry peas, lentils and chickpeas are seeking both public and private funds to launch the Pulse Nutrition and Climate Change Initiative,” stated Tim McGreevy, executive director of the USADPLC. “Our industry believes these legume crops offer a solution to improved nutrition for our nation’s citizens while at the same time reducing agriculture’s carbon footprint. To achieve the goals of the initiative, we need to fund critical research and promotional efforts that will increase consumption of these crops and their nitrogen-fixing ability in the soil.”

Pulse crops (dry peas, lentils and chickpeas) are grown in the Pacific Northwest and along the Northern Plains of the United States. As a crop, pulses put nitrogen back into the ground, effectively enriching the soil and reducing the need for commercial fertilizers. That reduction also equates a lower percentage of fuel used in fertilizer application.

As a product, pulses are an excellent source of nutrition in human and animal diets. They are high in protein, and research has suggested that pulses are linked to reducing risks for a variety of human disorders including cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

The continued focus on making healthy diet choices has caused pulses to emerge as a front-runner for numerous reasons. They are high in fiber, contain antioxidants and have the potential to lower cholesterol and stabilize blood sugar. Not to mention, pulse products are inexpensive, so they are great for consumers in the face of an unstable global economy.

The pulse industry is committed to doing its part to improve the global climate change one pulse plant at a time, according to McGreevy. Educating producers and consumers on all the benefits is just the first step.