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the PULSE

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The Northern Pulse Growers Association

Strengthening Connections and Expanding Opportunities in Colombia

Liz Edmundson, MPCC Executive Director

HOLA Montana initiative was launched in 2019 by Weston Merrill, the International Trade Specialist at the Montana Department of Agriculture. Initially an online project, HOLA

MT aimed to link Latin American Importers with Montana's Agricultural Commodities. Weston recognized the significance of the free trade agreement with Colombia, one of Montana's top export markets, and the positive relationships with other Latin American markets that made them reliable trading partners. After three years of groundwork to establish an

online platform for suppliers and buyers, the Montana Department of Agriculture participated in the Alimentec International Food Show in June 2022 to showcase the Montana Pulse Industry. During this event, Weston and his team connected with Jose Barrios, the founder of the Merkato Agency, a marketing agency based in Colombia, but part of Busy Minds Holding Group out of Miami, FL. Collaborating with Merkato, the department worked to bring Colombia's major pulse importers to Montana. By August 2022, a group of prominent pulse buyers from Colombia were engaging with local producers, sharing experiences and enjoying lentil soup.

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Empowering the Pulse Industry: Grower Education, Agronomic Research and Regional Marketing

Greetings from the Northern Pulse Growers Association! As we face an ever changing agricultural industry, it is essential to focus on the areas that sustain and promote growth. The NPGA Board of Directors met in early June to approve our budget and work plan for FY24-25. Three critical priority areas to our producer's success are: research, education (including decision makers) and regional marketing. These three areas drive our success and ensure a vibrant future for pulse crops.

Collaborative learning is a key component of our educational initiatives. Our commitment to collaboration ensures that we continue to innovate, share knowledge, and work towards collective goals. Whether hosting meetings with our fellow commodities or supporting our talented research team's initiatives, every collaboration opportunity plays a pivotal role in sharing knowledge and expertise with pulse producers.

Our participation in trade shows and events provide a platform to connect directly with farmers, ranchers, industry and consumers. These interactions are invaluable for promotion, building relationships, and identifying new opportunities for growth.

At the heart of every advancement in the pulse industry is research. Our research efforts are geared toward solving real-world challenges that growers face and exploring innovations for sustainable growth. In recent years, breakthroughs in breeding and genetics have demonstrated the tangible results of producer investments. Our achievements so far would not have been possible without the cooperative efforts of our stakeholders. From knowledgeable researchers to dedicated growers, supportive policymakers, and enthusiastic market partners – each plays a significant role in advancing the pulse industry.

We invite all members of the pulse industry to engage with our programs, support our research initiatives, and participate in marketing efforts. Together, we can ensure a thriving future for pulse crops and the continued prosperity of our industry.

Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication. Cheers to another year of growth, collaboration, and success!

Shannon Berndt, Executive Director



WATCH NOW!

Pulse Potential Webinar Series

Check out our collaboration with Northern Crops Institute's Pulse Potential webinar series. It covers all aspects of pulses from harvesting to processing. With the right knowledge, pulse growers can boost productivity and sustainability. This year, we've doubled our efforts to provide cutting-edge educational programs, including workshops, webinars, podcasts, and publications, to ensure growers have the latest information.

The Importance of District Representatives

Jim Collins Jr. Administrator, North Dakota Dry Pea & Lentil Council

The effort to create the North Dakota Dry Pea & Lentil Council (NDDPLC) and establish the dry pea and lentil checkoff was a grassroots effort. Today that grassroots connection still exists with the county representative.

The NDDPLC Act defines who may be a county representative and the election process. Simply, if you plant and harvest a dry pea and/or lentil “pulse” crop, you are eligible to be elected. Also, the act specifies the election process. Elections are conducted by extension agents in each county by March 1. Notices are posted in the official county newspaper as to the date, time and location where producers will meet to elect their county representative. If pulse crops were grown in every county, potentially, there could be 53 county representatives. Currently, there are 22 counties with representatives, leaving approximately 12 counties where pulse crops are grown with no representation.

Why is serving as county representative so important?

Primarily, because they are the connection between the growers and the council. The NDDPLC directs how checkoff funds are spent to assist pulse crop growers in an expanding industry. That is why input from pulse crop growers regarding crop varieties, diseases and marketing is critical.

The most important question: How much time does it take?

The answer, approximately 24 hours over a three-year term. The work includes responding to an occasional email, asking other growers for their input and passing that along to the council and attending the annual NDDPLC meeting held in conjunction with the Northern Pulse Growers Convention.

The following counties will hold elections in 2025:

Adams, Billings, Bowman, Dunn, Golden Valley, Grant, Hettinger, Mercer, Morton Oliver, Sioux, Slope, Stark

If you are a pulse crop producer and don't know if you have a county representative, don't know who they are, or are interested in becoming one, please call the NDDPLC office at **(701) 355-4458** for more information.



**SCAN FOR
THE RECIPE!**

Beef and Lentil Enchiladas

Elevate your enchilada game with this savory recipe that blends ground beef and lentils for a hearty twist. Awarded 2nd place in the 2007 NPGA Pulse Cook-Off, this dish features seasoned beef mixed with tender lentils, all enveloped in flour tortillas.



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Kevin Wolsky District V
Carrington, ND

Jim Collins Administrator
Bismarck, ND

Strengthening Connections and Expanding Opportunities in Colombia *cont.*

Fast forward to today, the HOLA MT team is once again at Alimentec to promote Montana's Pulse Industry. For more information about HOLA Montana's efforts visit holamontana.com



Alimentec, International Food Show

On June 19th, I landed in Bogota, Colombia to participate in the Alimentec International Food Show alongside the HOLA Montana Team. Spearheaded by Weston Merrill, an International Trade Specialist from the Department of Agriculture, the food show team included three Montana industry members - Adroit Overseas, Commercial Lynks, and Timeless Seeds.

Funding for this trade journey was supported by the Montana Pulse Crop Committee checkoff fund, solely backed by Montana pulse producers. I, along with Montana Pulse Crop Committee Member Brian Aklestad, had a firsthand look at how producer checkoff funds were being utilized. Brett Mcrae with Northern Ag Network also joined to capture and help record our time the work being done in Colombia. Alimentec International Food Show is renowned as a premier platform for the food, beverage, and hospitality industry in the Andean Region, the Caribbean, and Latin America. This event provides an excellent setting to showcase a variety of products and services related to food and culture. The fair hosted 325 companies from 30 different countries, attracting over 25,000 professional visitors in search of solutions, market updates, and industry insights. Colombia, the third-largest economy in Latin America with a population of 48.5 million, boasts a growing middle class and a youthful population, making it a promising market.

With over a third of private household consumption in Colombia dedicated to food and beverages, thanks to rising demand and increased disposable income, the opportunities are abundant. Throughout the 4-day event, all industry partners successfully secured deals to export Montana Pulse crops. Visit feriaalimentec.com for more information.

Corabastos, A city within a city

In the vibrant city of Bogota, Colombia, amidst the daily hustle and bustle lies a place that transcends being just a market—it is a cultural cornerstone, an economic powerhouse, and the heartbeat of Colombia's culinary scene. This place is Corabastos, not just the largest market in Colombia but also one of the most significant in all of South America. Spread across an immense 42 hectares, approximately 104 acres, Corabastos is a city within a city, situated in the southwest part of Bogota, the nation's capital. It serves as a crucial hub for the distribution of fresh produce, meat, seafood, and an array of other goods. Every day, this lively market witnesses a flurry of activity as tons of products flow through its gates. As we navigated through the food storage buildings, resembling storage units where each company sells directly from its designated unit, we discovered that over 9,000 vehicles and 200,000 individuals enter daily. With \$25 million and 10,000 tons of food exchanged, we realized that the organized chaos we witnessed at 10 am was just the beginning. The peak hours are actually between 3 and 4 AM, before Bogota's 11.5 million residents wake up and need to be supplied. We tried fruit we had never tasted, talked to food distributors about how prices are set, and even found U.S. pulses, being repackaged to sell to consumers.



Tom Allen Joins NPGA as Montana Field Representative

Tom Allen has joined NPGA as the new Montana Field Representative. Raised on a family farm in the Big Sandy area, Allen grew up raising wheat and barley alongside 200 head of Red Angus cattle. He holds a BS in Ag Education-Extension and a Master's in Plant Science, both from Montana State University in Bozeman. After nearly 30 years of service, Allen retired from MSU about three years ago, where he served as the Agricultural County Extension Agent in Liberty, Chouteau, and Hill counties. He also worked at the Northern Ag Research Center in Havre twice, first as the Agronomy Research Technician for 11 years and later as the Farm Foreman. Throughout his career, Allen has observed the pulse industry evolve from being primarily used as a green manure crop to its current status.

Since starting with NPGA in June, Allen has been traveling extensively. He has attended six Field Days at the MSU research centers, spanning from Kalispell to Sidney. He even traveled to Bismarck to meet with Shannon. Reconnecting with many of his colleagues from MSU Extension, the

Research Centers, and people on campus in Bozeman has been a highlight for him. Allen also attended the Board meeting of the Montana Pulse Growers Committee, where he plans to work closely with the Committee's Director, Liz Edmundson, to support Montana pulse producers. Their collaboration is made easier by both being based in Great Falls.

Allen has been impressed by the amount of research on pulse crops happening in Montana, from Dr. McPhee's breeding program to the work of graduate students in Sidney. He looks forward to meeting more producers across the state during upcoming meetings and conventions this winter and encourages anyone who needs assistance to reach out to him or Shannon.



Field Tours Held Across The Region

Field tour season is wrapping up in Montana and North Dakota. We hope you were able to participate in these important educational events. This is a great opportunity to see first-hand the research being conducted at extension centers across Montana and North Dakota on behalf of producers. Tom Allen, NPGA field representative, hit the ground running by attending tours across Montana. He had an opportunity to survey producers in attendance on challenges facing them with growing pulses. This information will be utilized in defining priorities in the areas of research, marketing and education.



NPGE Requests ND Crown Chickpea Designation Change

North Dakota Crown Chickpea holds a significant opportunity for the Northern Tier, particularly North Dakota, to get back into the chickpea game. Released in 2020 by the NDSU breeding program, the chickpea shows characteristics that include above average protein, moderate resistance to Ascochyta blight and mildew resistance.

Unfortunately, producers planting the chickpea in 2024 were informed that the crop insurance designation was that of a small type rather than large type. While the needed research and paperwork was submitted supporting ND Crown as a large, this information was not shared with USDA RMA. After being notified by growers, NPGE submitted a request for an immediate change to the USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council on behalf of our producers.

A letter of request was submitted on July 14 by the USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council to RMA requesting the change for North Dakota & Montana. However, the change will likely not be made until the 2026 growing season.

ndsuresearchfoundation.org/nd_crown

ND State Fair Crop Plot

NPGE has been a proud sponsor of the North Dakota commodity crop plot for the past several years. This is a great opportunity to showcase pulse crops with fellow commodities. The plot was planted by NDSU and was open for all fairgoers to walk through all day, every day of the fair. Other commodity sponsors included: ND Corn Council, ND Soybean Council, North Dakota Wheat Commission, and Northern Canola Growers. This is a great way for fairgoers to explore North Dakota's crop diversity.



NPGE Board Finalizing Plan for FY 24-25

The NPGE Board of Directors met in June to finalize the budget and plan of activities for fiscal year 2024-25. Funding for these activities comes from producer checkoff dollars collected and awarded by Montana and North Dakota agencies. NPGE presented proposals to both the Montana Pulse Crop Committee and ND Dry Pea and Lentil Council through a competitive process to accomplish activities on behalf of producers for the next fiscal year.

After reviewing proposals from the NPGE and others, the Montana Pulse Crop Committee allocated \$411,000 and the North Dakota Dry Pea and Lentil Council allocated \$837,000. This past year's pulse production coupled with high prices, provided an opportunity for both organizations to invest additional funds in the areas of research, marketing and education at both the national and regional level.

NPGE's budget breakout for FY 24-25 is a total of \$1.34 Million with 44% going to research/development, 5% international marketing, 5% government education, 25% producer education, 20% regional marketing and 1% association expenses. We are looking forward to continuing our work on behalf of Northern Tier producers this next year!

Do you want to know more about upcoming projects/activities? Be sure to follow us on social media!

NPGE Advocates for Improved EPA Pesticide Risk Assessment Methods

As many of you may know, the current methods employed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) often rely on overly conservative assumptions and unrefined models, which can result in exaggerated assessments of risk. The Northern Pulse Growers Association signed onto a letter addressed to Mr. Jake Li, Deputy Assistant Administrator, to express concerns about these practices. We believe that the use of more refined models and incorporation of real-world data will lead to more accurate assessments, preventing unnecessary restrictions on pesticide use that could burden our growers. By participating in this communication, we aim to advocate for a balanced approach that protects endangered species while also supporting the agricultural community's needs.

What We've Been Up To

Below is a brief highlight of the NPGA programs, activities and representation around the region:

- ND Dry Pea & Lentil Council Meeting
- Montana Pulse Crop Committee Meeting
- Participated in USA Pulses Committee Meetings
- WDAY Radio—Shannon Berndt, Exec. Director
- Twitter Noon(er) with Bridgette Riedel—Shannon Berndt, Exec. Director
- Northern Crops Institute Council Meeting
- North Dakota Research Tour with USA Pulses
- North Dakota and Montana Pulse Tours

Arnson's Introduce A New Sprout to the Crop Year

Congratulations to Desi & Sam Arnson on the birth of their baby boy! Sidney Roland Arnson made his appearance on 6/6/2024. We think that he is definitely a sweet pea! Sam currently serves on the NPGA Board of Directors and most recently served as President. He, Desi and Sidney make their home in Williston, ND.



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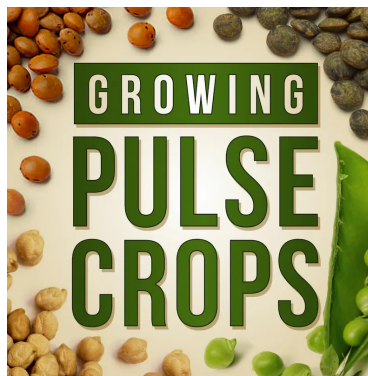
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Save the Date: Jan. 28, 2025

Join us for the Northern Pulse Growers Annual Convention on January 28, 2025, at the Sleep Inn & Suites in Minot, ND. A Research Poster Session and Social will be held the evening before, on January 27. *Mark your calendars for this exciting event!*

Listen to the Growing Pulse Crops Podcast



Connect with us:



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Working for the Producer. Join Today!

1

ADVOCACY: NPGA advocates for the regions pulse producers and industry representatives through our Congressional representatives, agency officials and Government entities.

2

RESEARCH: NPGA strives to work with NDSU, MSU, NCI, and other entities who provide cutting edge research on breeding/genetics, weed/disease issues, pest management, and value-added opportunities.

3

PRODUCER EDUCATION: Providing producers with resources to manage agronomic issues, technology tools, and updates on markets are just a few of the strategies NPGA employs for the continued success of the region's pulse industry.

4

PROMOTION: NPGA continues to work closely with youth programs, nutrition/health advocates, and food industry stakeholders to distribute information on the use and health benefits of pulses!

5

COLLABORATION: NPGA invests in collaborations with many of our neighbors in the ag industry and works to promote positive messaging. As an ag industry, it is more important than ever that we work together together to ensure success for future generations.