

# MONTANA PULSE CROPS

## A LEADER IN PRODUCTION, QUALITY AND INNOVATION



**A** whirlwind of travel, learning, and leadership defined my recent endeavors. Following my participation in the Northern Pulse Growers Association Convention in January, I embarked on a journey to Washington, DC.

During the initial week in the nation's capital, I engaged in the LAIB, Leadership At Its Best program.

This intensive five-day training regimen encompassed media literacy, leadership development, public speaking, interview readiness, and policy advocacy workshops. Subsequently, a day was dedicated to meetings with our state representatives on Capitol Hill. I enjoyed the opportunity to interact with 45 Agricultural Advocates hailing from various parts of the United States. Engaging in Washington, DC historical tours, and conversations with leaders in our industry were highlights. Notably, meeting our representatives on Capitol Hill and advocating for industry needs left a lasting impact. I express gratitude to Alison Vergeront of the Montana Grain Growers Association for nominating me for this enriching experience and to the National Association of Wheat Growers for endorsing my nomination.

Transitioning into the following week, the US Dry Pea & Lentil Council convened in Washington, DC. The week commenced with comprehensive training sessions guided by CEO Tim McGreevy, focusing on policy stances, industry updates, and appropriations in readiness for our advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill. Approximately 25 representatives from the pulse industry congregated to articulate our industry's asks. Montana was represented by Paul Kanning and Todd Hansen, growers from Flaxville and Gilford, respectively, alongside Jeff Winkler, our pulse industry liaison and the owner of Madoc Ag. Over five days, conversations were held with state representatives and their aides, a meeting was conducted with the House Ag Committee, and discussions took place with representatives affiliated with the World Feeding Program utilizing the PL-480 initiative. The USADPLC staff, did an excellent job organizing the 2024 DC Mission and connecting our industry representatives with as many Capitol Hill contacts as possible in a weeks' time. **USADPLC Letter to congress and highlighted policy positions on the next page..**



**Jeff Winkler, Todd Hansen, Senator Tester, Liz Edmundson and Paul Kanning**

**Liz Edmundson**  
**Montana Pulse Crops**  
**Executive Director**  
**406.438.7570**  
**pulse@mgga.org**



### Upcoming Shop Talks

#### **March 28th, 2024 Hingham MT**

*Addressing Lygus Bug in Central Montana & Pulse Market Outlook Hosted by Belle Pulses and Montana Pulse Crops. More information to come on [www.mtpulsecrops.org](http://www.mtpulsecrops.org) or call Liz 406.438.7570*

## **Subject: Policy Priorities for 2024**

### **Dear Member of Congress:**

*Pulse crops are a special subgroup of the legume family that includes dry peas, lentils, chickpeas, and dry beans. Pulses are nutrient dense, good for your health and good for the soil. They are a good source of protein and an excellent source of fiber. They have a low carbon footprint, a low water footprint, a low glycemic index, they are affordable and most important they are delicious. Twelve Thousand (12,000) years ago, when our hunter-gatherer ancestors started to farm, the first crops they grew were wild varieties of pulse crops. Pulses are an ancient solution to our present-day problems. Heart diseases and diabetes are two of the biggest killers in our country. Research has shown that pulse crops improve blood sugar control, reduce cholesterol and blood pressure. Because they fix their own nitrogen in the soil, pulse crops are critical to improving soil health and lowering greenhouse gas emissions in our food system.*

*The health and environmental benefits of pulse crops is undeniable. We ask Congress to invest in the following priorities so we can provide the nutrient dense foods that people need to improve their health and the health of the soils that feed us all:*

### **1) 2024 Farm Bill Priorities: We support the passage of a new Farm Bill and an increase in its budget baseline as an investment in food security at home and around the world.**

**Crop Insurance.** Expand federal support for crop insurance programs that provide essential risk management tools for farmers facing unforeseen natural disasters. The industry supports increasing the coverage levels available and reducing the premium costs

**ARC/PLC.** Continue current de-coupled Title I programs providing maximum choice and flexibility. We recommend an increase to pulse reference prices that reflect the dramatic increase in input costs facing all pulse producers.

**Base Acre Update.** Pulse acres have expanded significantly since the last base acre update in 2014. We support an increase in base acres to 100% of planted acres on the farm and a voluntary reallocation of those base acres based on recent planting history.

**Pulse Crop Health Initiative (PCHI).** We support the reauthorization of the PCHI research program at \$25 million per year for five years to find solutions to the critical health and sustainability challenges facing our society through research on pulse crops.

**School Pulse Crops Products Program (SPCPP).** Increase authorization for the SPCPP to \$4 million per year for five years (\$20 million total) to ensure the introduction and adoption of pulse foods in school nutrition programs.

**International Market Promotion Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development (FMD).** The US bean, pea, lentil, and chickpea industry consists primarily of small, family-owned businesses that provide value-added jobs in rural America. Strong market promotion programs are critical to increasing the demand for our commodities around the world. We support doubling MAP funding from \$200 million to \$400 million and the FMD Program from \$34.5 million to \$69 million in the new Farm Bill.

**Food Aid.** Ongoing conflicts around the world continue to jeopardize food security. Providing food aid not only assists people in crisis; it creates the potential for future export markets. USA Pulses supports increased funding for the PL 480, McGovern-Dole, and Section 32 food aid programs in the new Farm Bill.

**Rural Processor Disaster/Risk Management Tools.** USA Pulses supports the expansion of disaster aid/crop insurance to rural processors to help them survive unforeseen natural disasters, supply chain disruptions, and pop-up trade barriers. Funding for disaster and risk management tools for US pulse processors would provide short-term assistance to ensure critical processing infrastructure in rural America.