

Supply chain recovery and resiliency are critical to the competitiveness of the Canadian ag sector

February 28, 2020 (Winnipeg, MB) – Pulse Canada and the Canadian Special Crops Association (CSCA), which together represent producers and exporters of Canadian pulse and special crops, are urging the federal government, provincial governments and railways to work together to ensure a quick recovery for the rail transportation system after an unprecedented period of disruption.

“Canada accounts for more than one-third of the world’s pulse trade and we rely on the railways to move all of our products to port,” says Allison Ammeter, Chair of Pulse Canada. “The disruptions we’ve endured going back to November have created serious cash flow issues for farmers and, without question, they’re damaging our industry’s reputation as a reliable supplier on the world stage.”

As partners of the Ag Transport Coalition, Pulse Canada and the CSCA track performance of the railway network for grain movement. Since labour disruptions in November, several factors such as inclement weather, track outages and blockades, have exposed the significant vulnerability of Canadian rail supply chains. Since November, over 13,000 railcar orders have been cancelled by railways, which represents over 1.2 million tonnes of grain that has not moved or has been delayed by one or more weeks. Over 40 vessels are currently waiting to load in Vancouver.

"These disruptions have not only cost our sector tens of millions of dollars, they have badly damaged our international reputation," says Quinton Stewart, CSCA President. "Our supply chain is eroding the competitive advantage our sector has worked hard to build globally. It's going to take months to completely recover and years before we are seen as a reliable supplier by our international customers."

Pulse Canada and the CSCA will be closely monitoring and sharing information on the speed and effectiveness of recovery efforts through a daily Network Status Report and Weekly Railway Performance Report, which provide detailed metrics on rail network performance. Pulse Canada and the CSCA are also calling for an immediate national discussion to address increasing supply chain vulnerability and to ensure concrete measures are in place to create a transportation system that is truly a stable and resilient catalyst for growth.

Pulse Canada is the national association representing growers, processors and traders of Canadian pulse crops, which includes peas, beans, lentils and chickpeas. Canada is the world's largest supplier of pulses, with annual exports reaching more than 130 countries. The CSCA is a non-profit alliance of over 100 processors, exporters and service providers working together to advance Canada's pulse and special crops industry.

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