

STEPS TO SUCCESS

AdvancingAg mentorship program enters year two

Having a mentor is an invaluable asset for young professionals in the agricultural sector, especially when it comes to networking. To facilitate the relationship building that is key to success, the Alberta Wheat Commission and Alberta Barley have created a crop-industry mentorship program.

The AdvancingAg: Future Leaders Program pairs mentees aged 18 to 35 with established professionals in their chosen field. The program was launched in June of 2017, and in its first year, eight mentees were matched with mentors in areas including research, crop advising and primary cropping.

“The first year of AdvancingAg has been a success, and we’re eager to build on that momentum,” said Shannon Sereda, Alberta Barley market development and policy manager and selection committee member.

Through introductory events, mentors and mentees created a roadmap with the help of a program co-ordinator and laid out their goals and objectives for the upcoming 10 to 12 months. Over the course of that time, mentors had at least five hours of contact with their mentees each month, either in person or over the phone.

In addition to co-ordinating mentorship pairings, program co-ordinators host events for mentees and mentors. These include leadership conferences and networking events. Mentees also receive a stipend to cover the cost of program-related trips, agricultural shows and other industry events.

To graduate from the program, mentees are required to complete a number of tasks such as writing blog posts and speaking at an agricultural event. These activities are largely designed to share the AdvancingAg experience while giving mentees the opportunity to improve their communication skills.

Applications for the 2018/19 program are now open. To be considered, please submit a completed application form and updated resumé on or before Feb. 28, 2018. Application forms are now available at advancingag.ca.



AdvancingAg mentee meet-and-greet participants include: (L-R) Hua Chen, Jason Lenz, Jolien Witte, Tom Steve, Megan Hall, Dave Bishop, Ellen Cottee and Laura Anderson.



Tom Steve speaks to mentors and mentees at the Advancing Ag kickoff event in Red Deer.

MARKETING WHEAT TO THE WORLD

New crop missions connect international buyers with Canadian value chain

Connecting with buyers is important, no matter the industry. Customers want to know as much as they possibly can about the product they are purchasing and understand the value chain connecting their end-use product to its origin.

Agriculture is no exception, and as one of the country's top agri-food exports, Canadian wheat is especially prone to the scrutiny of international markets. Providing information is an integral part of maintaining these market relationships.

Ensuring such accurate, unbiased information reaches buyers is key. Misinformation can result in a lack of trust and even the loss of key markets. To communicate the story of Canadian wheat accurately and honestly, new crop missions led by Cereals Canada and the Canadian International Grains Institute (Cigi), with support from the Canadian Grain Commission, contribute to ensuring the continued marketability of Canadian wheat and maintaining Canada's international reputation for being a safe and consistent source of grain.

New crop mission delegations comprise representatives of the entire value chain. Grain marketers and Prairie wheat growers join with Cereals Canada, Cigi and CGC to engage directly with international buyers.

Through this collaborative effort, a consistent Canadian message was delivered to customers in 18 countries during missions that took place in Asia, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, North America and South America



Alberta Wheat Commission business development manager Geoff Backman inspects the product of a flour mill in South America, where Canadian wheat is prized for its consistent high quality.

during November and December of 2017. Cigi and CGC representatives provided unbiased technical information on grading factors, grade breakdown, protein and milling traits, and baking and pasta and noodle-making qualities of this year's wheat crop. During the new crop missions to South America, the Middle East, Africa and Indonesia, Alberta Wheat Commission representatives promoted the high quality of Prairie wheat

and the best management practices of western Canadian farmers.

Because the entire value chain is represented, buyers also have the opportunity to ask questions of those directly involved in the production of wheat for international purchase. These annual missions ensure up-to-date information is passed on to customers and creates the extra value and trust necessary to maintain ever-changing markets.



New crop missions work to ensure importers continue to purchase Canadian products for use in their agri-food operations. Seen here, South American milling equipment produces flour.

During the South America new crop mission, AWC chair Kevin Auch highlighted his sustainable and progressive farming practices. “It was an honour to be able to tell the good news story of our quality and our sustainability practices,” he said.

The mission team in South America met with end users and buyers in Chile, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador and Mexico. The use of Canadian wheat products, primarily flour, is prominent in much of South America due to Canada’s high quality and dependable supply. Even Chile, which imports much of its wheat from neighbouring Argentina, looks to Canada as its second-largest supplier. Cost and quality are the two biggest concerns for importers. Colombia, with its limited infrastructure, is more cognizant of wheat prices than Peru, a country highly interested in quality.

There was great interest in each South American country visited, with 60 to 90 per cent of importers, millers and end users attending the meetings.

In addition to building export markets, new crop missions directly impact the profitability of Canadian wheat growers. Ensuring importers are interested in continuing to purchase Canadian products creates growing demand and the potential for farmers to receive higher return for their crops.

“These trade missions are a great opportunity to demonstrate to the vast majority of the wheat buying market in these countries that we have a great desire to help improve the foods they’re producing with our quality Canadian wheat,” Auch said.

For many importers, Canadian agri-food exports represent stability, sustainability and consistent quality. The 2017 mission to South America proved Canadian wheat is in high demand throughout the region, thanks to our ongoing commitments to quality and dependable supply—good news for producers, marketers and buyers alike.

MEET THE STAFF



Geoff Backman
Business Development and Markets Manager

Geoff Backman joined the Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC) in September of 2017 as business development and markets manager. Growing up on Vancouver Island, his immediate family has pursued aquaculture since the 1980s and his extended family farms wheat in Saskatchewan.

While studying economics at the University of Victoria, Geoff connected with agricultural course material. After completing a bachelor of arts degree, he attended the University of Saskatchewan. There, he researched changes in marketing behaviour by western Canadian farmers due to the removal of the Canadian Wheat Board monopoly. His thesis on the subject earned him a master of science in agricultural economics.

Geoff then worked as a grain marketing adviser with Cargill where he valued helping farmers improve their economic success. At AWC, he is involved in initiatives that will provide opportunities to all Alberta farmers.

Outside of the office, Geoff is an avid skier and working to improve his golf game. For fun, he visits the family farm in Saskatchewan where he enjoys hands-on work.



Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, January 31, 2018

10:15 am - 11:15 am

Edmonton Expo Centre at Northlands - Hall F

Hear about AWC's year in review and
celebrate our fifth anniversary

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albertawheat.com

CHAIR'S MESSAGE

*2018: A year full of
potential*



With 2017 coming to an end, we welcome in 2018, a year full of potential. I am looking forward to serving as Alberta Barley chair for another year, which gives me a great opportunity to be involved in the exciting developments and projects we will be working on.

As we look forward to our 2018 endeavours, I would be remiss if I did not recognize our board members and delegates for all their hard work throughout the year. By participating in board meetings and on our various committees, these producers drive the direction of Alberta Barley's work.

Of course, none of our work would be possible without our hard-working, dedicated staff, from our communications team to our policy and market development teams who attend meetings with key government and trade contacts.

2018 will be an exciting year for

Alberta Barley. The results of our market study will be complete, informing the direction of our market development team and ensuring we are focusing on the most valuable markets.

Research remains a priority for Alberta Barley. Investment in projects with tangible, beneficial results for farmers is one of the most important tasks we take on. As well, connecting with producers is a very important part of the organization's work. We will continue to maintain our outreach efforts, promoting Alberta Barley at farm shows and events across the province.

Working with external stakeholders will also be a major focus. Through our Combine to Craft initiative, we hope to continue building our relationships with maltsters and brewers in order to promote the unique story of our world-class barley.

Perhaps most exciting will be the completion of a pilot project in which the management teams of Alberta Barley and the Alberta Wheat Commission have been merged. Under the guidance of general manager Tom Steve, staff from the two commissions are experimenting with working as a single team. When this trial project is complete in February of 2018, a go-forward plan will be put in place.

All this is to say, Alberta Barley is going to do great things this year with your support. We are excited to continue working for you, increasing profitability and bringing value to your farm operation. Here's to a productive and prosperous 2018.





COMBINE TO CRAFT

2017 in review and next steps for this grassroots initiative

In March 2017, Alberta Barley launched Combine to Craft, an initiative developed in response to the growing Alberta craft beverage sector that includes beer and spirits. The initiative recognizes that Alberta’s malting barley value chain is unique, with world-class maltsters, distillers and brewers working together and utilizing premium, Alberta-grown barley.

The objective of Combine to Craft is to connect consumers to the beer value chain, from farmer to maltster to brewer, including large brewers such as Labatt and Big Rock. Alberta Barley tells the story of our high-quality ingredient, from harvest to glass, while highlighting modern agricultural operations and the sustainable practices of our stakeholders.

In 2017, the program’s official kick-off took place at the inaugural conference of the Alberta Small Brewers Association and continues to gain momentum. Since then, Alberta Barley has been building and furthering partnerships between brewers, farmers and maltsters to bring together the story of our barley and highlight its unique value proposition: Alberta grows the best barley in the world.

For close to 30 years, the only beer available on the Calgary Stampede grounds has been those of long-time sponsor Labatt and its related brands. However, due to the popularity of Alberta craft beer and its growing connection to the agricultural com-



Alberta Barley farmers Joe and John Hammill display a Combine to Craft sign at their Penhold farm.



Board director Brian Sewell discusses Combine to Craft at the Alberta Small Brewers Association conference.

munity in the province, the Stampede decided to make craft beer selections available. In July 2017, Combine to Craft partnered with the Alberta Small Brewers Association to offer beverage sampling at the Big Four Station for the duration of the 10-day rodeo and exhibition, building on the connection between farmers, brewers and consumers at this world-class event.

To connect further with consumers, particularly consumers in Alberta, Combine to Craft is working with brewers to have the Alberta Barley logo placed on their cans and bottles. This will serve as a mark of Alberta pride and a statement that our home-grown barley is a key ingredient in

consumers’ favourite beer or spirit.

The next stage of the project will see Alberta Barley continue working on corporate partnerships and building the Combine to Craft brand in the province by participating in beer events. These will include the Edmonton Craft Beer Festival, Alberta Beer Week in Calgary and the Alberta Craft Brewing Convention. The long-term goal is to eventually share this story beyond Alberta’s borders with Canadian consumers from coast to coast.

In short, 2017 was filled with opportunities for Alberta Barley to promote and share the story of our premium malting barley—the best barley in the world, from Combine to Craft.



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Alberta Barley

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NEW TOOLS AND THE LATEST IN BARLEY RESEARCH

Helping our producers navigate the latest in barley research and disease management

Alberta Barley has always made research and extension a priority, with about 25 per cent of our annual funding going to research to improve the quality and quantity of barley produced by Alberta farmers. With a new brochure on our latest research projects and a barley disease guide, Alberta Barley is making it easier for farmers to implement the benefits of this investment.



The Spotlight on Research brochure focuses on a selection of research projects Alberta Barley has invested in through *Growing Forward 2*. Providing farmers with a snapshot view of how their check-off dollars are spent, this brochure features information on the development of two-row feed and malting varieties as well as scald resistance and gene-mapping projects.



The Spotlight on Barley Diseases guide is an in-the-field handbook that farmers can refer to when crop scouting. The guide provides images and descriptions of diseases such as Fusarium head blight and scald, and features strategies to mitigate their severity.

MEET THE STAFF



David Simbo
Research Manager

David Simbo joined the Alberta Barley team as research manager in May 2017. He holds a doctorate in bio-science engineering from the University of Belgium in Antwerp and was formerly an agronomist with the Lakeland Agricultural Research Association.

Growing up in Cameroon in Central Africa, David developed a keen interest in agriculture. His scientific curiosity and intellectual prowess led him to attend universities in Belgium and Germany as well as Cameroon, where he has worked on high-level research projects in the plant-science spectrum.

“The great thing about working with Alberta Barley is I get to review high-level applied research and understand how those projects can be applied to increasing farmer profitability,” he said. “I enjoy learning from other researchers by reviewing their project funding applications. It makes me appreciate the innovation in Canadian universities, government agencies and other research institutes.”

Outside of work, David enjoys neighbourhood walks with his wife and two young sons and playing soccer in the backyard of his family’s Calgary home.