

CANADIAN GRADING STANDARDS FOR PULSES

Canadian pulse products have acquired a reputation worldwide for high quality, and consistently superior standards. The primary reason for the reputation, is based in the rigid grading specifications that dictate trade within the industry. These specifications are established and maintained by the Canadian Grain Commission.

The grading specifications for pulse products have been in force, basically for only 10 years. This is representative of the relative infancy of the pulse industry in many parts of Canada. The specifications for pulse products are altered occasionally, with fluctuations moving both up and down with respect to quality. In fact, pulse product specifications change fairly often when compared to the changes for other Canadian crops. The changes in pulse cultivars create the need for adoption of appropriate specifications. When pulse standards are either being introduced, or revised, the cooperation of the pulse industry is sought and obtained. The pulse industry has legitimate input, and is consulted before standard specifications are established. The standards that are approved for pulse crops, as with other crops, are determined by the Western Committee on Grain Standards. The Committee was created by the Canadian Grain Commission, and is comprised of exporters, processors, producers and scientific and technical specialists. Thus, a beneficial dialogue exists between the Canadian Grain Commission and the pulse industry with respect to the establishment of grading standards.

Consistent and high quality standards are seen as desirable by the pulse industry. Apart from establishing an excellent reputation for our pulses abroad, high quality standards act as a form of protection for the industry. Grading standards allow for trade to take place, without the conflicts that arise from quality discrepancies. The Canadian Grain Commission has a mandate to work in the interest of producers. Official inspection throughout the prairies is difficult to administer, due to the diverse location of the different pulse processors. Processors are responsible for the expenses incurred during the inspection process, and these expenses are eventually passed on to the grower through costs. The official inspection process is largely responsible for maintaining the high quality standards of Canadian pulse crops.

The precise standards for the different pulses appear on the following pages.