

BRAD KARLEN

Interview conducted in 2014 by Pulse USA Sales & Product Development Director, Emily Paul

BACKGROUND OF OPERATION

Brad Karlen is an active producer near Reliance, SD. The family farm is in its third generation. Their farm diversification includes: pasture land, soybeans and corn for commodity production, and seed production of lentils, field peas, spring wheat and winter wheat

What were some factors that drove you into utilizing pulse crops in your rotation?

My good friend Dwayne Beck who runs the Dakota Lakes No-till Research Farm was the main reason I got involved in growing pulse crops. Dwayne and I had one of those many long phone conversations about the pros and cons of using different crops in rotation in my area. The crop we chose that day to include in our rotation was field peas because of the following factors:

- 1) The change in crop species will allow the use of different groups of herbicides on our operation.
- 2) The addition of a broad leaf will help break the disease cycle for corn and wheat.
- 3) Field peas will help spread out the planting and harvesting window on our operation.
- 4) Field peas are a mycorrhizal friendly crop.
- 5) Field peas are a low water usage crop.
- 6) Field peas work great as an animal feed as well as human food.

How has the production of pulse crops helped you achieve goals on your operation?

The utilization of field peas has greatly helped us meet our goal of reaching and surpassing the 100 bushel/acre mark in our wheat production.

Do you utilize livestock with your pulse crops? If so, what benefits/hindrances have you seen?

At present we are not raising any livestock, but in the past we have used pulse crops quite extensively in cattle feeding. We have used them as the protein source in the back grounding ration and also finishing diets from start to finish. We have

seen noticeable increase in the dry matter intakes per day when peas were included in the finishing diets. We have also used peas in the formulation of range cake, which is used for protein supplementation when winter grazing range land or corn stocks with the cow herd.

What are some tips you would offer to those interested in joining the production of pulse crops?

- 1) Always pay close attention to past weed history and how those weeds can or can't be managed in the pea production year.
- 2) Review herbicides used in previous years and check rotation intervals to peas.
- 3) Doing a good job of inoculating your field peas each year is an absolute must.
- 4) I have also seen big differences some years using seed treatment on the seed vs. non treated seed. I always treat our field pea seed to enhance our yields and reduce disease pressure.
- 5) Research how to set your combine before harvest day. We slow the rotor speed, slow the feed accelerator, open the concave clearance some, and use wide wire concaves for peas. While combining, we don't fill hopper extensions on the combine especially when the peas are wet, and we don't use grain carts. You won't have to cut the stubble clear to the ground if the peas have some height and are standing well.
- 6) If you are in a soil and wind erosion area, pay attention to previous year's crop and how well its residue will last and possibly assist in holding the soil structure.

Describe some guidance/precautions pulse crop producers need to remember?

It's very important to remember that peas go directly into specialty human and pet food markets. Please keep your equipment clean and free of other crops that may be GMO or contain gluten.