

BRIAN FLADSTOL

Interview conducted in 2018 by former Pulse USA Western Sales Representative, Luke Dukart



BACKGROUND OF OPERATION

Fourth generation farmer on the land that was homesteaded back in 1912. The farm has made many transitions in that time from raising cows and sheep to wheat and barley to pulses and hay. The current farming family is made up of Ruth and Dennis Fladstol, my parents, and myself and my wife, Brandee. Brandee and I, with our kids, moved back to the farm in 2007 after living in Oregon for 9 years. We currently raise wheat, barley, peas and garbanzo beans. We will be adding lentils and canola to the mix soon. We also have a herd of pygmy goats to control some plants around the homesteads.

Have you seen any benefits to your subsequent crop after raising a pulse crop?

We have been growing pulses for less than 10 years, so we are still getting data on how the pulses improve the soil and nutrients in the long term. We have seen that if we replace a fallow year with a pulse and then go into wheat directly after, the yield of the wheat is not hit near as hard as if you recropped wheat on wheat. I feel it is a benefit to the soil and to us financially to do that rather than the land sit dormant. It also helps in the fight against chemical resistance that weeds have been building.

What is the biggest obstacle that you have had to overcome with growing pulse crops?

Just the lack of knowledge. I am always learning. Especially in that aspect of fungus, bugs, and chemicals that go along with those issues. We have been lucky in the past that we have not dealt with that too much on wheat and barley.

Pulse crops are relatively new to your area. What were your deciding factor(s) to include them in your crop rotation?

Numerous reasons. I attended a lot of growers meetings and saw data on lots of things, not only pulses, but fertilizer use, chemical resistance, and market outlook. They showed that pulses help in all these aspects. I also saw more and more issues with disease in wheat due to the repetitive nature of current crop rotations. The market for the green peas that I started with was very appealing. As was the market for garbanzo beans when that opportunity arose. The necessity of getting away from a fallow system to improve soil condition.

As we're heading into 2019, what are a few things that have you excited?

A very good outlook on the idea that pulse crops are here to stay and will not become a dying fad in agriculture. Crop rotation is always a good conversation, what rotation has been working best for you. I have tried to base my crop rotations on water use. Dryland farming here, with less than 12 inches of moisture each season, makes water my number one concern. Following a pulse with a wheat/barley crop has turned out very well. I am still trying to find that key element to follow up the wheat with. Cover crops have been used as well. I am still experimenting with everything to find a continuous crop rotation that works well.

What advice could you give someone that wants to start growing pulse crops?

Do not be afraid of it. Do your research. Ask a lot of questions of anyone. Be diligent in your scouting. It is an exciting and eventful time to be involved in a new aspect of agriculture in our area.