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**A LITTLE BIT COUNTRY
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Soil Health Focus of Pulse Day Information

Growers of field peas, chickpeas and lentils may want to mark Wednesday, February 24 on their calendars as the day to be in Williston (Airport International Inn) for the 10th Annual Mondak Pulse Day. This has been a popular event. This year's line-up of topics and speakers will appeal to both the experienced and new growers as the event will focus on soil health. The agenda also includes the latest recommendations on production, marketing and utilization of pulse crops.

One of the noted speakers is Dr. Jill Clapperton who now resides in western Montana where she works as a free lance scientist and provides a consulting service for farmers, farm groups, agricultural and forestry businesses. Prior to this she was a soil scientist with Agri-Ford Canada at Lethbridge, Alberta. There primary research evolved around soil health and rhizosphere ecology. She studied how soils function biologically so that farmers could more effectively manage the long-term biological health of the soil. During Pulse Day Jill will talk about the impact pulse crops have on creating healthy productive soils.

Another key speaker will be Fran Walley who is Professor and Head of the Department of Soil Science at the University of Saskatchewan. She recently completed a project investigating field scale factors influencing the success of inoculation, particularly on long-term pulse land. She also is involved in projects examining pulse crops in organic farming systems and the impact of pulse residues on soil quality characteristics. Another aspect of Fran's

research looks at soil nitrogen availability and cycling, with the goal of improving nitrogen use efficiency.

Other speakers for the event include Jeremy Pederson, NDSU Area Extension Agronomist; Dan Waldstein, NDSU Area Crop Protection Specialist; Sam Markell, NDSU Extension Plant Pathologist; Perry Miller, Montana State University professor and Shannon Berndt, Executive Director of the Northern Pulse Growers Association.

Area pulse crop processors including J M Grain, Vitera, United Pulse Trading and Premier Pulses International will discuss the market outlook. Crop production budgets for lentils are very favorable compared to other dryland crops commonly grown in this area. It appears this potential for added profits is high enough to stimulate a substantial increase in lentil acreage in both the United States and Canada. I am hopeful information from these folks will guide us in making the best planting decisions.

A trade show will be held in conjunction with the program. A \$20.00 registration fee at the door will include the noon lunch and provide participants with a copy of the Pulse Day proceedings. Pre-registration is not required.