



POPULAR DOG TREAT CREATED FOR 2016 PULSE SHOWCASE PREPARING TO RAMP UP DISTRIBUTION



Attendees at the 2016 Pulse Showcase were presented with samples of the delicious boar and lentil treats to take home to their dogs.

Charlene Cherniwchan, owner of Mut Hut Pet Emporium, is poised to start selling her popular dog treat made with Alberta lentils into major grocery chains pending commercial packaging requirements.

Made with lentils from the Medicine Hat area, the Mut Hut Wild Boar & Lentil Treat that was created for the Alberta Pulse Showcase in 2016 is already popular with dogs and their owners at her pet boutique.

“I’m pleasantly surprised that it’s one of the top sellers of our own product line of pet treats,” she said. “We also hand them out as a complimentary in-store treat – the dogs love them and the owners are happy to know that it is healthy. Many customers who feed gluten-free or pulse grains are looking at ingredient labels more closely as the majority of pets are now considered part of the family.”



Dough being formed for the dog treats at the Food Science and Technology Centre in Brooks.

Cherniwchan already markets two other dog treats at selected Save-On, Safeway and Sobeys stores in Calgary, Edmonton and other areas. Check out the Where to buy section at muthut.com for more details. Adding a third SKU (stock keeping unit), would allow Mut Hut to stock products in more stores, Cherniwchan said.

The wild boar and lentil treat is currently sold in a gift bag at the Mut Hut Pet Emporium in Canmore. Cherniwchan is sure it would be a hit elsewhere in the province and abroad, however, with the economic downturn in Alberta over the past few years it is more expensive to market and package.



Charlene Cherniwchan with two of her dogs.



Cookies are formed and ready for baking.

The product, which is also sold to Banff-area hotels for their canine guests, was developed for the Alberta Pulse Showcase during the International Year of Pulses in 2016 in collaboration with Dr. Xiangfeng Meng, Research Scientist at the Food Science and Technology Centre in Brooks. Meng also helped to develop Cherniwchan's two previous pet treats, so it was a natural choice to work together when the opportunity arose for Alberta Agriculture and Forestry researchers to form partnerships to develop pulse-based products.

Through experimentation, Meng found that pulses like lentils and yellow pea can be used to replace expensive, imported rice flour in baked pet treat products.

"Most baked pet treats are grain-based, low in protein and high in fast-digestion carbohydrates, which

may contribute to pet obesity and diabetes," Meng said. "With our past experience in using pulse ingredients in pet foods, they have good binding properties, impart nice natural colour to products, and more importantly, provide health benefits to the animals, for example low glycemic. These attributes would make pulses work well in baked pet treats and allow us to create a grain-free product."

Cherniwchan has three furry fans of the Mut Hut Wild Boar & Lentil Treat at home too.

"Howard is 16 and he loves them because they are a cookie you can still break up and eat with his few teeth," she said, noting the small senior dog was featured on packaging for her first pet treat. "My large Newfoundland Great Pyrenees – Josie and Eddie – they love them too."