Introduction

The Agricultural Research Service is the main agency of the United States Department of Agriculture focused on the research towards solutions to food and agricultural issues. I worked specifically in Pullman at the Western Regional Plant Introduction Station (WRPIS). The WRPIS is part of a collective of introduction stations whose purpose is to maintain the genetic diversity of several plant species by storing the seeds of the numerous accessions of those plants. My focus was on cool season food legumes (CSFL) such as lentils, peas, chickpea, faba bean, and lupine.

Jobs and Responsibilities Performed

The left image shows me threshing lentils at Pullman farm. The right photo is of the near infrared spectrophotometer with the computer that generates the spectra image.

List of Tasks and Responsibilities:

- Collected data on the phenotype of peas and chickpeas for germplasm storage.
- Gathered phenotypic data on lentils for a study on resistance to root rot caused by *Fusarium* spp.
- Ran seed scans using a near infrared spectrophotometer to study protein content in peas.
- Worked in screenhouses filling pots, clipping buckets, and training peas.
- Threshed lentil pods for germplasm collection.
- Hoed weeds at Pullman farm and Central Ferry farm.
- Made labels for identification of plots in the field.
- Helped put together pollination cages around faba bean plants and lupine.
- Harvested peas in the screenhouses, greenhouse, and field at central ferry farm.
- Performed other basic miscellaneous tasks in the screenhouses, headhouse, and greenhouse.

Summary and Reflection

Photo of a plot of lentils at Central Ferry farm

**How This Experience Fostered My Growth:**

This experience helped me grow both educationally and professionally. It helped me refine my communication by challenging me to adapt to communicating during a pandemic, made me experience the professional responsibilities of working in agricultural science, and most importantly it gave me practical experience working in research.

Left photo shows a close-up on an accession of lentils. The right photo shows part of the lentil field down at Central Ferry.

**Reflection on What I Learned and Its Contribution to My Future Career:**

The main take away I learned from this experience is that it is extremely important to be a lifelong learner. This directly ties into my future career as I would like to become a scientist. In science you are constantly researching and learning new things, so acknowledging the importance of lifelong learning will help me become a well-rounded and better researcher.

Another important thing I learned is how to use a near infrared spectrophotometer and how to effectively take phenotypic data on lentils. This will also help me with my future career as a scientist as it gave me practical experience with research tools.