Canada’s $3 Billion Pulse Industry Celebrates Launch of the UN International Year of Pulses 2016

(WINNIPEG) November 10, 2015: Today, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) launched the International Year of Pulses 2016 (IYP) in Rome, Italy. Pulses—dry beans, dry peas, lentils and chickpeas—play an integral role in global food security, nutrition, human health and environmental sustainability.

Representing Canada was Gordon Bacon, CEO of Pulse Canada, who attended the ceremony held at the FAO headquarters in Rome with FAO Director-General, José Graziano da Silva. Pulse exports from Canada account for slightly more than one third of global pulse trade.

“Canadians can be proud of the contribution we’re making to global food security as a major supplier to countries around the world,” said Bacon, who is also a member of the Global Pulse Confederation’s Executive Committee.

Canada is the world’s largest producer and exporter of dry peas and lentils, shipping to more than 150 countries around the world each year. In 2014, Canadian pulse exports were valued at over $3 billion CDN. Canada’s biggest export markets are India, China and Turkey. Pulses are Canada’s fifth largest crop, after wheat, canola, corn and barley.

“Canadian pulses can make a significant contribution toward helping the UN implement its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which aims to eliminate global poverty and malnourishment,” said Lee Moats, a lentil grower from Riceton, Saskatchewan and Chair of Pulse Canada. “IYP highlights the role of pulses in addressing issues related to over and under nutrition in both developed and developing countries.”

IYP is a truly global event. Pulse Canada and its international counterpart, the Global Pulse Confederation, are working with partners including international governments, the UN and scientists to host over a hundred events around the globe in 2016. Canada’s pulse industry is also planning over twenty events and activities across the country that will educate Canadians about the health, nutrition and environmental benefits of eating pulses.

With over 800 million people suffering globally from acute or chronic undernourishment, and the occurrence diet-related diseases like diabetes and cardiovascular disease increasing in countries around the world, IYP 2016 aims to demonstrate the integral role these nutrient-dense foods have in global food security and nutrition.

More information about pulses can be found at www.pulses.org.

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Pulse Canada is the national association representing growers, traders and processors of Canadian pulse crops (peas, beans, lentils and chickpeas).

The Global Pulse Confederation (GPC) is the global not for profit trade organization for the global pulse industry value chain.

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Notes to editors

1. In addition to being delicious and easy to cook, pulses can help with:
   - Diabetes prevention and control\(^1\)
   - Reducing the risk of heart disease
   - Cholesterol reduction\(^2\)
   - Anemia prevention\(^3\)
   - Weight management

2. UN Assembly Resolution on the 2016 International Year of the Pulses:

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\(^2\) [http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=909096&fileId=S0007114502002519](http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=909096&fileId=S0007114502002519)
\(^3\) [http://ijcm.org.in/article.asp?issn=0970-0218;year=2007;volume=32;issue=1;spage=67;epage=68;aulast=Goel](http://ijcm.org.in/article.asp?issn=0970-0218;year=2007;volume=32;issue=1;spage=67;epage=68;aulast=Goel)
Canada’s Pulse Industry

What are pulses?
Pulses are the edible dried seeds of legume crops that include dry beans, dry peas, lentils and chickpeas.

What is the International Year of Pulses (IYP)?
The United Nations promotes international awareness and action on various topics related to global food security by creating international years such as IYP. By designating 2016 the International Year of Pulses, the United Nations is recognizing the role pulses can play in meeting future food requirements. Pulses contribute to global food security, nutrition, human health and environmental sustainability.

Why is the International Year of Pulses an important occasion for Canada?
Canadian consumers will benefit from a better understanding of pulse health, nutrition and sustainability attributes. Increased consumption of pulses is linked to improved nutrition and health outcomes. Increased production of pulses in Canada means a reduction in on-farm energy use, reduced greenhouse gas emissions and improved soil health.

Canada is a world leader in pulse production and exports. IYP is an opportunity to help increase domestic and global demand for pulses, which will help shape the direction of the pulse industry in Canada for the next decade.

What kinds of pulses are grown in Canada?
Canada grows a variety of dry beans, dry peas, lentils and chickpeas.

Where are pulses grown in Canada?
73% of Canada’s pulses are grown in Saskatchewan, and 24% are grown in Alberta. Manitoba and Ontario produce 2% and 1%, respectively. Saskatchewan is Canada’s largest producer of peas, lentils and chickpeas with a small bean and faba bean industry. Alberta produces faba beans, beans, peas, lentils and chickpeas. Ontario produces beans, and Manitoba also produces beans, as well as faba beans, peas and lentils.

Where else are pulses grown?
According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, pulse crops are grown in 173 countries around the world. India is the largest producer of chickpeas and beans. Canada is the world’s largest producer of peas and lentils. Other major pulse producers include Myanmar, China, Nigeria, Brazil, Australia and USA.
Pulses have been nourishing people around the world for thousands of years and continue to be an important part of traditional and modern diets around the globe. Along with the early cereal grains, pulses were among the first crops cultivated as far back as 11,000 years ago.

How significant is Canada’s pulse industry?
Canada is a world leader in pulse production and exports. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, pulse exports from Canada account for slightly more than 1/3 of all global pulse trade.

Agriculture and Agri-food Canada estimates that over five million tonnes of pulses were grown in Canada in 2014 — 2.92 million tonnes of dry peas, 2.1 million tonnes of lentils (the second largest Canadian lentil crop on record), 249 thousand tonnes of dry beans and 90 thousand tonnes of chickpeas. Canada is the world's largest producer of dry peas and lentils in the world. In terms of annual production, pulses are Canada’s fifth largest crop overall after wheat, canola, corn and barley.

Each year, Canadian pulses are exported to over 150 countries. Canadian pulse exports in 2014 were estimated at over $3 billion CDN—$1.3 billion in dry pea exports, $1.5 billion in lentil exports, $358 million in dry bean exports and $42 million in chickpea exports. This makes Canada the world's largest exporter of dry peas and lentils.

Who are Canada’s key pulse industry players?
Canada’s pulse industry is comprised of growers, processors, exporters and the industry associations that represent them. Approximately 25,000 farmers grow pulse crops in Canada each year and are represented by provincial grower associations that invest funding in research and market development initiatives for the betterment of the Canadian pulse sector. The Canadian grower associations are Alberta Pulse Growers (www.pulse.ab.ca), Saskatchewan Pulse Growers (www.saskpulse.com), Manitoba Pulse and Soy Growers (www.manitobapulse.ca) and Ontario Bean Growers (www.ontariobeans.on.ca).

Nearly sixty pulse processors and exporters are represented by the Canadian Special Crops Association (www.specialcrops.mb.ca). All five of these associations (growers, processors and exporters) form Pulse Canada. Pulse Canada’s primary role is to develop new market opportunities for the Canadian pulse sector while also working to ensure long term industry competitiveness.

What are the benefits of pulses to human nutrition?
Pulses are a low fat source of protein. They contain two to three times more protein than grains like rice, corn and wheat. They also contain almost twice the protein of quinoa.

Pulses are high in complex carbohydrates like fibre and healthy starches. Half a cup of cooked pulses provides more than one-third of the fibre needed for the entire day.

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Pulses also provide important vitamins and minerals like iron, potassium and folate, with only small amounts of sugar and fat.

What are the benefits of pulses to human health?
The protein and fibre in pulses can satisfy hunger and help with weight management.

The carbohydrates in pulses take longer to break down, contributing to stable blood sugar levels and longer lasting energy. Eating pulses does not cause blood sugar levels to rise as much as sugary or starchy foods that are low in fiber. Maintaining normal blood sugar levels helps people with diabetes avoid further health problems.

Pulses are low in saturated and trans-fats and high in soluble fibre. Regular pulse consumption has been shown to lower cholesterol and reduce blood pressure, which are risk factors for heart disease.

What are the environmental benefits of growing pulses?
Pulses are a low carbon footprint food. They are legumes that use bacteria in the soil to draw nitrogen from the air. This natural process reduces the need to add nitrogen fertilizer to pulse crops. As nitrogen fertilizer is a major contributor to agricultural greenhouse gasses, pulses have a significantly lower carbon footprint than other foods.

When pulses are grown, they use 1/2 to 1/10 the water of other sources of protein. In addition, many pulse crops are adapted to dry environments, making them well-suited to areas that are prone to drought.

Pulse crops produce a number of different compounds that feed soil microbes and benefit soil health. After pulse crops are harvested, they leave behind nitrogen-rich crop residues that provide extra nutrients for the next crop that is grown. Crops like wheat often grow better when they are planted after a pulse crop.