

Canada's

Agriculture, Food and Beverage INDUSTRY

Canada's Pulse Industry

Pulses are dry seeds of legumes that are used as food or feed. They include peas, beans, lentils and chickpeas. Pulses are excellent sources of proteins, vitamins, minerals and other nutrients while being low in fat and high in fibre. Pulses were first cultivated in the Middle East and Central and South America, but their nutritious qualities and taste have led to their extensive use around the world. There is now a renewed interest in pulses in both developed and developing countries.



Canada is a large producer and exporter of agricultural commodities and products, with a comparative advantage over other pulse producing nations. It can grow high quality pulses at relatively low costs because the climate is favourable, farmland is reasonably priced and farmers alternate high scale production of pulses with that of cereals. In fact, Canadian farmers can grow more pulses relative to cereal yields than almost any country in the world. Canada's cool climate provides pulse crops with natural protection against insects and disease. In addition, there is a well established infrastructure to store and move grain and

pulses from the producing regions to the port terminals.

Pulse seeded area in Canada has increased 380 per cent between 1991 and 2005, with production peaking in 2005 at 4.8 million tonnes. Pulse production is expected to increase moderately over the next ten years, despite a forecasted decrease in lentil, dry pea and dry bean production in 2006 - 2007. The majority of the growth in this sector over the last 15 years can be attributed to international demand. The acceptance of these Canadian products is such that, during the last four years, pulses have been exported to nearly 170 countries and territories. In 2004, Canada was the world's largest exporter of lentils and peas, the fourth largest exporter of dry beans and the fifth largest chickpea exporting nation.

The dramatic increase in demand for pulses is driven by several factors:

- Some country populations are growing at a pace that cannot be matched by the expansion of their own agricultural sectors.
- Globalization is allowing local producers to stop the cultivation of pulses for the domestic market if they produce more profitable crops for exports.
- Weather patterns are changing and disturbing the expected agricultural output in some regions of the world.
- Health-conscious consumers in affluent markets are increasing their consumption of vegetal protein in their diet and pulses are the perfect fit for this purpose. Pulses are also an excellent source of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants.
- Feed peas are used extensively as feed ingredient in Canada and the EU. Since

feed ingredients formulated for cattle, swine, poultry and fish are under scrutiny because of their impact on the final meal product, feed peas are expected to take over a larger part of the international market.

Canada has taken a leadership role in innovative research and development in the pulse sector. Ongoing research and careful crop management have contributed to the high quality of Canadian crops. Importers have noted the willingness of the Canadian pulse industry to develop and produce new varieties in Canada in order to meet the taste of the international consumer.

In the absence of international standards, Canada has taken the lead in the development of terminology, protocols and standard evaluation methods for the worldwide pulse industry. Within Canada, the Canadian Grain Commission sets quality standards for pulse crops. Its programs result in shipments that consistently meet contract specifications for quality, safety and quantity.

Canada is also pursuing policies that will allow pulse producers to better meet their business needs while remaining market-oriented and globally competitive. These policies are integrating food safety, innovation and environmental responsibility.

Additional Information

Importers abroad can place their requests for Canadian pulses through the following web site: **www.pulsecanada.com**

By completing an electronic order form, a request is quickly distributed to all Canadian pulse exporter members of the Canadian Special Crops Association. The list of members can be accessed at: **www.specialcrops.mb.ca**

For general information on Canadian pulses, please look at the following web site: **www.agr.gc.ca/misb/spcrops**

For More Detailed Information

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Further information on products, suppliers and investment opportunities in the Canadian agri-food industry is available on the Agri-Food Trade Service web site at: www.ats.agr.gc.ca

Canada's food and agricultural products reflect our dedication to excellence, and our deep commitment to safety, quality, environmental responsibility, innovation and service.

In every facet of our industry, we seek to earn the trust of our customers by answering their needs and exceeding their expectations. Those values along with our belief in building strong relationships, have given Canadian agriculture and food products an international reputation for excellence. Customers around the world know that they can trust the goodness of Canada.

