



February 3, 2025

Subject: Pulse Industry Federal Priorities for 2025

Dear Member of Congress:

Pulse crops are a special subgroup of the legume family that includes dry peas, lentils, chickpeas, and dry beans. Pulses are nutrient-dense, contribute to human health, and benefit the environment. They are a good source of protein and an excellent source of fiber. Along with their noteworthy health benefits, pulses have low carbon and water footprints; they are affordable, shelf-stable, and, most importantly, delicious. Because they fix nitrogen in the soil, pulse crops reduce the need for added fertilizer. Pulses are critical to improving the health of our people, the health of our soils, and the health of our planet.

United States pulse producers greatly appreciate the economic assistance enacted in 2024 for agricultural commodities, including dry peas, lentils, and chickpeas. Specialty crop producers, including pulse growers, appreciate the creation of the Marketing Assistance for Specialty Crops (MASC) program. We urge continued funding for MASC to support expanded access for Americans to nutritious and affordable US-produced foods such as pulses.

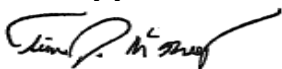
The health and environmental benefits of pulse crops are undeniable. **Pulses can transform our food system with versatile, nutrient-dense, and sustainable foods.** Pulses are necessary for improving the overall health of Americans, and we ask Congress to prioritize the following requests in 2025.

- 1) **Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA).** Heart disease and diabetes are two of the biggest killers in our country. Research has shown that pulse crops improve blood sugar control and reduce cholesterol and high blood pressure. The 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC) recognized the significant contribution of pulses toward improving nutrient intake, promoting health, and addressing chronic disease prevention by recommending that Americans increase their consumption of pulses from 1.5 to 2.5 cups each week. We urge members of Congress to write letters to HHS/USDA supporting the DGAC recommendation to increase pulse consumption to 2.5 cups per week.
- 2) **Trade and Tariffs.** We support existing free trade agreements and the establishment of new agreements to expand markets and ensure fair access for US pulses and pulse products. We urge the creation of sectoral and bilateral trade agreements, and in particular, the development and enactment of free trade agreements with India and other Asian countries to ensure the future growth of our industry. The retaliatory tariffs enacted by our major trading partners in 2017-2019 led to a 37% decline in pulse export sales over three years. The pulse industry went from over \$1.0 billion in export sales in 2016 to \$632 million in 2019. Our market share in some countries has never recovered. If trade agreements are not negotiated quickly after potential retaliatory tariffs are imposed, pulse farmers, processors, and exporters will need assistance.
- 3) **Transportation.** Delays in shipping pulse products to our domestic and international markets via rail and ocean carriers continue to be an issue for pulse shippers. The Ocean Shipping Reform Act was passed more than two years ago, but our exporters are still struggling with access to timely shipments to our customers. The Federal Maritime Commission must establish rules that require ocean carriers to prioritize the shipment of containerized specialty agricultural commodities to reduce shipping delays. In addition, the Surface Transportation Board needs similar authority to encourage the railroads to prioritize specialty crop shipments. Port labor issues and strikes disrupt shipping schedules and threaten the status of the US as a reliable worldwide supplier of agricultural commodities.
- 4) **Farm Bill.** USA Pulses supports the passage of a new Farm Bill and an increase in its budget baseline as an investment in food security at home and around the world.
 - a) **Food Aid.** Ongoing conflicts around the world continue to jeopardize food security. Providing food aid not only assists people in crisis; it creates the potential for future export markets. USA Pulses supports increased funding for the PL 480, McGovern-Dole, National School Lunch Programs, and Section 32 food aid programs. Short-term food aid disruptions hurt not only the people in need but also the farmers who are feeding them.
 - b) **Crop Insurance.** Expand federal support for crop insurance programs that provide essential risk management tools for farmers. We support efforts to increase participation and coverage levels by reducing the premium costs to farmers.
 - c) **Rural Processor Disaster/Risk Management Tools.** USA Pulses supports the expansion of disaster aid/crop insurance to rural processors to help them survive unforeseen natural disasters, supply chain disruptions, and trade barriers that are out of their control. Funding for disaster and risk management tools for US pulse processors would provide short-term assistance to prevent the loss of critical processing infrastructure in rural America.

- d) **ARC/PLC.** Continue current de-coupled Title I programs to allow planting flexibility. We urge an increase to pulse reference prices, as included in the Farm, Food, and National Security Act passed by the House Agriculture Committee in 2024. Increased reference prices for pulse crops are needed to address the dramatic increase in input costs facing pulse producers and to bring the ratio of pulse reference prices and market prices in line with other commodities. We support dual enrollment for ARC/PLC.
 - e) **Marketing Assistance Loans.** We support enhanced marketing assistance loan provisions to address increased borrowing costs.
 - f) **Base Acre Update.** Pulse acres have expanded significantly since the last base acre update in 2014. We support an increase in base acres to 100% of planted acres on the farm and a voluntary reallocation of those base acres based on recent planting history.
 - g) **Add “Fava Bean” and “Lupin” Exception to Base Acres.** We support the amendment of *Section 1114. Payment Acres, paragraph (e) Effect of Planting Fruits and Vegetables* to include Fava (also called Faba) Bean and Lupin as an exception to base acre reductions required by the planting of Fruits and Vegetables.
 - h) **Pulse Crop Health Initiative (PCHI).** We support the reauthorization at \$25 million per year for five years to provide solutions to the health, nutrition, and crop production challenges facing our country through pulse crop research.
 - i) **School Pulse Crops Products Program (SPCPP).** Increase authorization for the SPCPP to \$4 million per year for five years (\$20 million total) to support the introduction and adoption of pulse foods in school nutrition programs.
 - j) **Foreign Market Development.** Strong market promotion programs are critical to increasing the demand for our commodities worldwide. We support doubling MAP funding from \$200 million to \$400 million and the FMD Program from \$34.5 million to \$69 million in the new Farm Bill.
 - k) **Domestic Marketing.** We support continuation of the Marketing Assistance for Specialty Crops (MASC) program and the establishment of a Plant Protein Innovation Program to assist pulse producers and processors with efforts to educate consumers and promote the health and environmental benefits of pulse products.
- 5) **FY 2025 & FY 2026 Appropriations:**
- a) **Pulse Crop Health Initiative (PCHI) fully funded at \$25 million.** The PCHI is funded at \$5.5 million in FY 2024. Currently, the PCHI is funding 53 projects focusing on nutrition, functionality, new product development, and enhancements for food production systems using pulses and pulse products. We support the House recommendation of \$6 million for the PCHI in FY 2025, and we urge full funding of \$25 million for the PCHI in FY 2026 to provide additional scientific information about the nutrition, health benefits, and sustainability of pulse crops.
 - b) **USDA-Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Pulse Quality Network funding at \$6 million for FY 2025 & FY 2026.** The USDA-ARS network of research labs that comprise the Pulse Quality Network investigates the quality parameters of pulses and pulse products. Funded at \$2.8 million in FY 2024, the pulse industry appreciates support for the Pulse Quality Network and urges a further increase to \$6 million in FY 2025 and FY 2026.
 - c) **School Pulse Crops Products Program (SPCPP) funding at \$10 million for FY 2025 & FY 2026.** The SPCPP has not received any funding to date. The 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) clearly outline the need for including pulses across all age groups, from toddlers to older adults. The SPCPP will allow school systems to test, introduce, and assess new menu items made from pulses. Funding the SPCPP will enhance the DGA’s role in promoting healthy eating patterns that include pulses.

Pulses are an ancient solution to our present-day problems. With the help of Congress, the US can be a leader in producing and consuming more pulses.

Sincerely yours,



Tim McGreevy, CEO
American Pulse Association and USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council