

Farm to School with Pulses

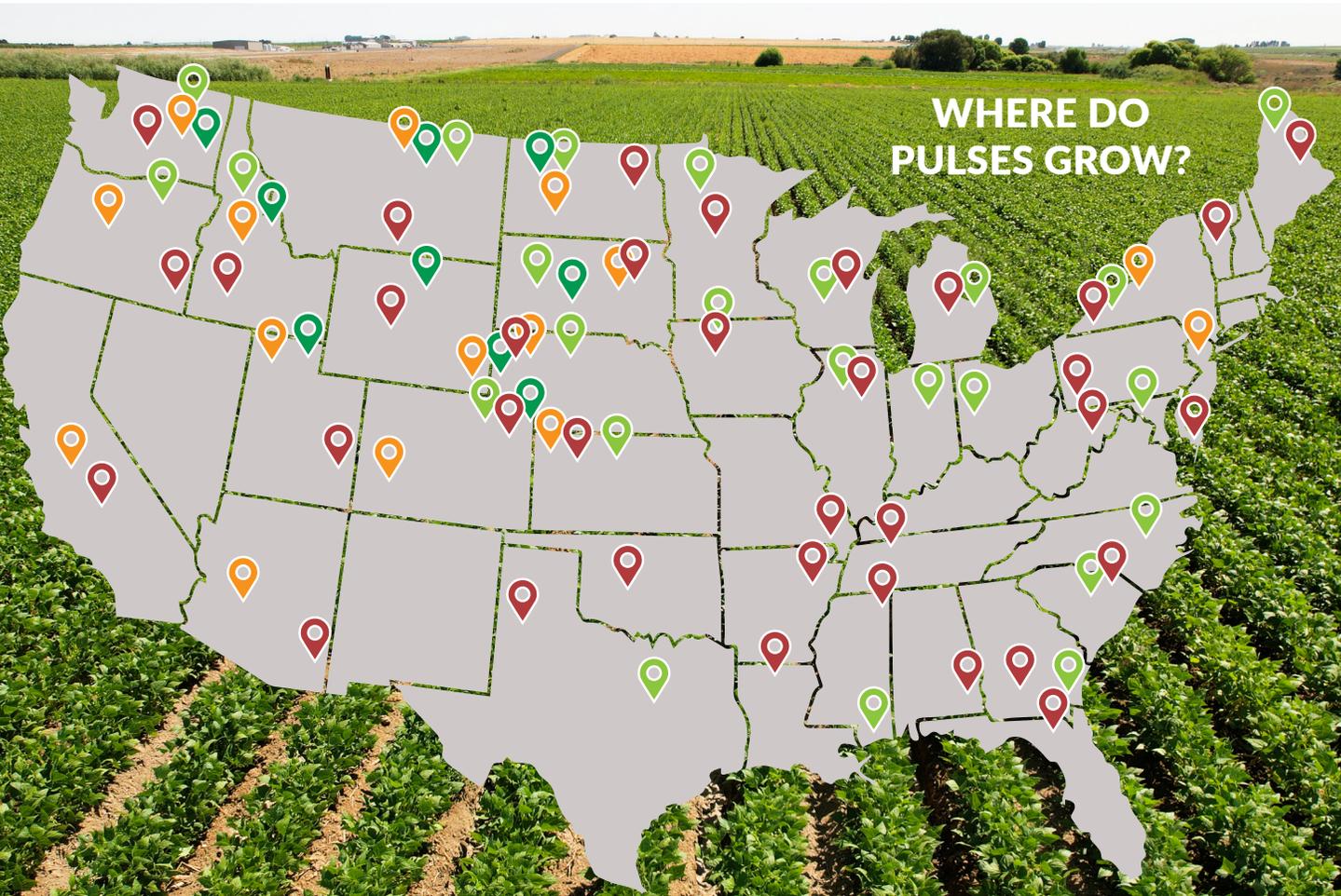
What is Farm to School?

Farm to School is a movement that connects all parts of the food system with all aspects of the school day. According to the National Farm to School Network, farm to school enriches the connection communities have with fresh, healthy food and local food producers while supporting local economies. Farm to School creates an educational opportunity for students to identify where their food comes from, learn why it's important, and apply knowledge from all subjects in an engaging way. Regionally grown pulses are a growing part of the Farm to School movement.



Growing Pulses

Pulses, which include dry peas, chickpeas, beans, and lentils, grow from seeds, and are predominantly planted in the northwest region (Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Washington, Idaho, Oregon) of the United States. However, it is becoming more common for growers across the U.S. to plant pulses in their crop rotations. They are a sustainable food option, one that both farmers and school districts can get excited about! Pulses are an optimum choice for supporting the health of students and the planet.



Beans



Chickpeas



Dry Peas



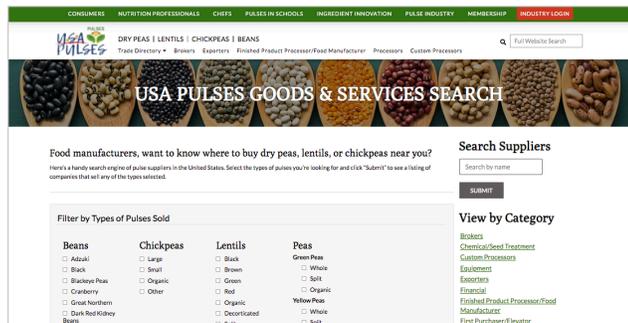
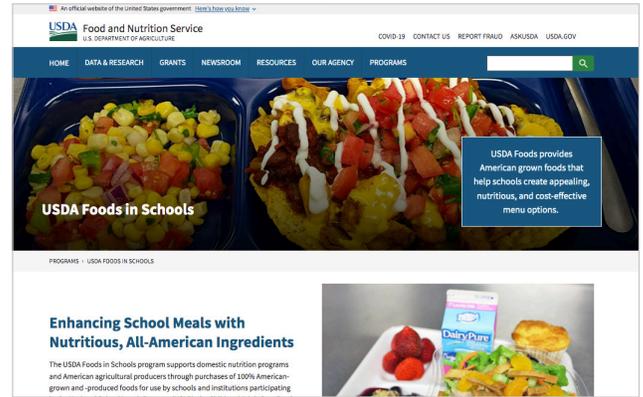
Lentils

PULSES



Procuring Pulses

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) helps schools supply healthy foods to students by providing cash reimbursement for meals served and allowing schools to order foods that USDA purchases (“USDA Foods” or Commodities) from producers in the U.S. By procuring pulses through USDA Foods, school districts can save cash reimbursement dollars for local purchases. Pulses are also available through foodservice distributors. For more information about USDA Foods, visit the [USDA Foods in Schools website](#).



How Can I Connect with Local Pulse Producers?

Start by using the USA Pulses [suppliers guide](#). This search engine tool allows you to find producers and manufacturers throughout the U.S. that provide the types of pulses you’re looking for. Make sure to also check out local farmers markets, especially in the northwest region of the U.S., for pulse options near you.

How Can I Promote Locally Grown Pulses in My School?

Help your students understand how pulses grow:

Farmers harvest pulses when the pods have dried out

Since pulses are dry, they can be stored for months and even years before using

Pulses grow predominantly in Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Washington, Idaho and Oregon, however, it is becoming more common for growers across the U.S. to plant pulses in their crop rotations

Pulses are typically harvested from August to September

Pulses are unique from other crops because they have nodules on their roots that pull nitrogen into the soil from the air – an essential nutrient for many plants

Engage students and staff on the importance of pulses:

- Feature pulses as a “Harvest of the Month” option
- Partner with educators, like family and consumer sciences teachers or agriculture teachers, to **include information about pulses in classroom lessons**
- Invite local pulse growers to the school to speak with students in a “Meet the Farmer” event



For more pulse-inspiration, including recipes, to help you serve more pulses in your programs visit us online at www.usapulses.org/schools and sign up for our school foodservice newsletter [here](#).