



USA Pulses 2026 Policy Positions Market Promotion

The US dry pea, lentil, chickpea, and dry bean industry consists primarily of small, family-owned businesses that provide value-added jobs in rural and export communities. A majority of these pulse crops are exported overseas. To keep our rural economies strong, the Federal Government must join our industry to aggressively promote our products. Increased funding authorized by Congress and the Administration is needed for market promotion of US farm commodities. Last year, the dry pea, lentil, chickpea, and dry bean industry contributed over \$475,000 to the Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development (FMD) market promotion activities.

1. Market Access Program (MAP; \$400 million). Strong market promotion programs are critical to increasing the demand for pulses around the world. The MAP has been a highly effective program for the US dry pea, lentil, and chickpea industry, resulting in increased sales to India, Latin America, Asia, and Europe. Effective market promotion programs are critical to the long-term financial health of US farmers, and USA Pulses fully supports continuation of the MAP. ***USA Pulses requests funding of \$400 million for the Market Access Program in FY 2027 appropriations.***

2. Foreign Market Development (FMD) Program (\$69.0 million). USA Pulses has been a USDA-Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Cooperator since the late 1960s. This market development program is jointly funded by the pulse industry and the Federal Government to provide technical and trade service assistance to our overseas customers. FMD funds have been used effectively to develop new markets for dry peas, lentils, and chickpeas in the Asia Pacific, Europe, the Indian sub-continent, and Latin America. ***USA Pulses requests funding of \$69.0 million in FY 2027 appropriations for the Foreign Market Development program.***

3. Food Aid Funding (\$1.9 billion). PL 480 is a food aid program designed to assist those in need around the world. The American people have a long history of sharing their wealth with those facing natural disasters and economic hardship. The program builds goodwill and strengthens the relationship between the US and developing countries. Dry peas, lentils, and chickpeas provide an inexpensive source of protein, vitamins, and minerals to those PL 480 recipients facing food shortages. USA Pulses strongly supports the PL 480 program for humanitarian purposes and as a tool for developing future markets for US commodities. Current high-volume customers like India, Pakistan, Colombia, and the Philippines were once important PL 480 customers. ***USA Pulses requests funding of \$1.9 billion in FY 2026 appropriations to fund PL 480 Title II and McGovern-Dole food aid programs.***

4. Free Trade Agreements. USA Pulses supports free and fair trade between countries. Over 60% of the pulses produced in the US are exported overseas. Reducing trade barriers is vital to the continuing growth of our industry. ***USA Pulses supports the enforcement of current free trade agreements.***

5. Trade Barriers. USA Pulses will continue to work toward its goal of reducing and/or eliminating unfair trade barriers. The top priority for the industry is the elimination of phytosanitary issues for trade with India, China, Canada, and Brazil. A second priority is the normalization of trade with Cuba, including the creation of financial mechanisms to facilitate payments to US suppliers.

6. Export-Import (EXIM) Bank Funding. The service provided by the EXIM Bank helps the industry to trade with many less developed countries and opens important markets for pulse products. ***USA Pulses supports full funding of the EXIM Bank.***



7. Sustainable and Regenerative Agriculture Marketing Promotion Program (\$1.0 billion). USA Pulses proposes the creation of a new domestic marketing and promotion program patterned after the USDA-FAS Market Access Program. Grants would be provided to US farmers and their commodity organizations to educate consumers about the benefits of eating sustainably/regeneratively produced foods that are nutritious and good for the planet. We propose a minimum of \$1.0 billion for this program with the distribution of funds directed to commodities that will help US agriculture achieve a 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by 2030 or improvement to soil health. This program should allow organizations to pay for administrative overhead to execute their programming in compliance with federal law and guidelines. The US pulse industry suggests allocating these funds as follows:

- a) **USDA Sustainable/Regenerative Food Label.** To assist in the marketing and promotion of sustainably produced food products, USA Pulses proposes that USDA establish a labeling program for products that meet established scientific criteria for improving soil health, lowering water use, reducing food waste, and providing balanced, affordable nutrition for human health.
 - i. **Market Promotion-** Provide funding for organizations representing sustainably produced commodities to educate consumers on their health and environmental benefits.
 - ii. **Foodservice Industry & Influencers-** Allow organizations that represent sustainably produced crops to educate and work with foodservice operators, chefs, and social media influencers on developing food choices that taste great and improve cropland productivity.
 - iii. **School Food Programs-** Allow commodity organizations to work directly with school feeding programs to test sustainably produced foods prepared and served in ways that appeal to kids. Provide school districts with additional credit to purchase sustainably/regeneratively produced foods.
- b) **Sustainable Agriculture Processing Program.** USA Pulses proposes the creation of a Sustainable Agriculture Processing Program (or tailoring existing USDA programs to increase utilization) to provide grants to processors and food manufacturers to upgrade food processing facilities for improved efficiency. Just as NRCS provides technical assistance to farmers to improve conservation practices and outcomes, such assistance should help processors and food manufacturers identify and implement upgrades and systems changes that improve efficiency at their facilities. These programs should also support the establishment of processing facilities where they do not currently exist. As the acreage of pulse crops expands across the country, an increased number of storage, delivery, and processing facilities will be required.
- c) **Sustainable Food Innovation Program.** USA Pulses proposes programs to support food innovators in developing sustainably produced food choices. For example, the pulse industry works with the pork industry on a campaign called “Powerful Pairings”. USA Pulses proposes that the USDA facilitate and support such partnerships to develop new products that consider consumer preferences while also reducing the carbon footprint of food products.

8. Processor Insurance Program. Markets are dependent on the rural processor to link growers to the outside markets, domestic or international. Currently, processors are in many cases the single largest employer in their rural communities. Economic “shocks” caused by weather or outside forces like tariffs can significantly impact these small businesses. Producers are provided crop insurance and other risk management tools, but processors do not have similar tools. USA Pulses supports investigating possible options such as income insurance, tax incentives, or other financial support in the event of shocks.