



## USA Pulses 2026 Policy Positions Research

*Research is the backbone of successful farm commodity production. USA Pulses supports the efforts of Congress and the Administration to help farmers and America's economy by increasing investment in agricultural research. The public is asking for help understanding the health benefits of their food and discovering the sustainability of their food system. USA Pulses is working to increase pulse crop research dollars for health information, functionality, and sustainability.*

**1. Pulse Crop Health Initiative (PCHI) in the Farm Bill (\$25.0 million per year, five years).** The purpose of the PCHI is to find solutions, through research on pulse crops, to the critical health and sustainability challenges facing the US and the world. The PCHI will focus on four major goals: 1) reducing obesity and related chronic diseases; 2) increasing food security; 3) improving sustainability; and 4) improving human and animal health. USA Pulses supports permanent funding of the PCHI at \$25.0 million per year for five years. This will require the establishment of policies and procedures to establish goals, provide guidance, and prioritize the research funded through the PCHI. USA Pulses will participate in the establishment and administration of this initiative to help prioritize research efforts and meet the needs of our nation. ***USA Pulses requests \$25.0 million per year for five years for the Pulse Crop Health Initiative in the Farm Bill to find solutions, through pulse crop research, to the health, nutrition, and sustainability issues facing our country.***

**2. Research Plant-Based Foods as Sources of Nutrients of Concern (\$25.0 million per year, five years).** The designation of “nutrients of concern” (dietary fiber, vitamin D, calcium, potassium), established by the USDA, provides an important tool to focus agriculture and food research. USA Pulses requests that the USDA devote a portion of the Agriculture and Food Research Institute (AFRI) competitive grants toward using plant-based foods as sources of nutrients of concern. Research should further investigate the nutrition provided by plant-based foods and the development of processing, functionality, and bioavailability of nutrients in plant-based foods and food products. Pulses, i.e., dry peas, lentils, chickpeas, and dry beans, are plant-based foods that provide major sources of nutrients of concern. ***USA Pulses requests \$25.0 million per year for five years in FY 2026-30 for research on plant-based foods as sources of nutrients of concern.***

**3. Sustainable and Regenerative Agriculture Research Funding (\$1.0 billion).** USA Pulses proposes \$1.0 billion focused on pulse crops to accomplish the following:

- Increase nitrogen fixation of pulse crops.
- Improve the productivity of low environmental impact crops like pulses.
- Increase functionality and processing technology to include pulses in more products.
- Increase nutrient density and nutrient availability for healthy, sustainably produced diets.
- Focus research efforts toward achieving net-zero carbon emissions from agriculture.

***USA Pulses supports establishing a Sustainable and Regenerative Agriculture Research Program of \$1.0 billion focused on finding sustainable production and processing solutions for agriculture.***

**4. Increase Base Level Funding for USDA-ARS (\$9.33 million).** The pulse industry has expanded significantly over the past two decades, growing from nearly 1.5 million acres in 2000 to over 3.2 million acres of dry peas, lentils, chickpeas, and dry beans in 2025. During this time, base level funding of USDA-ARS research programs focused on pulse crops has been reduced, and personnel hiring has been frozen or left vacant. ***USA Pulses requests an increase to base level funding of \$9.33 million to support the following research programs and positions:***



**Request for USDA-ARS Base Level Increase Focused on Pulse Crops**

	Current Base	Requested Increase	Projected Funding
<b>Base Level Increase-ARS Fargo, ND</b>			
Add Pulse Crop Quality Research Center to Wheat Quality Lab	\$ 2,800,000	\$ 3,200,000	\$ 6,000,000
<b>Total for ARS-Fargo, ND</b>	<b>\$ 2,800,000</b>	<b>\$ 3,200,000</b>	<b>\$ 6,000,000</b>
<b>Base Level Increase-ARS Pullman, WA</b>			
Grain Legume Genetics Physiology Research Unit			
Pullman Pathology, Pulse Breeding			
Prosser Pathology, Soil Health, Pulse Breeding	\$ 2,440,097	\$ 4,500,000	\$ 6,940,097
Increase for Winter Pulse Breeder	\$ 120,000	\$ 700,000	\$ 820,000
Plant Germplasm Introduction & Testing (Grasses, Pulses, Alfalfa)	\$ 2,794,588	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 3,794,588
<b>Total for ARS-Pullman, WA</b>	<b>\$ 5,354,685</b>	<b>\$ 6,200,000</b>	<b>\$ 11,554,685</b>
<b>Base Level Increase-ARS East Lansing, MI</b>			
ARS Pulse Breeding Program-Michigan	\$ 624,000	0	\$ 624,000
<b>Total for ARS-East Lansing, MI</b>	<b>\$ 624,000</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>\$ 624,000</b>
<b>Base level increase to Sclerotinia Initiative</b>			
National Sclerotinia Initiative Increase	\$ 2,500,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 3,000,000
<b>Total Request for USDA-ARS Base Level Funding Increase for National Pulse Research</b>	<b>\$ 11,278,685</b>	<b>\$ 9,900,000</b>	<b>\$ 21,178,685</b>

**5. USDA-ARS Pulse Crop Quality Network (\$3.2 million).** USA Pulses supports an immediate \$3.2 million increase to make a total of \$6.0 million in funding for the USDA-ARS program to develop new uses for pulse crops through the evaluation of end-use characteristics such as cooking time, canning quality, frying traits, milling characteristics, extrusion consistency, protein, starch, and other nutrient factors important to end-users. Nutritional and functional characteristics would be linked to genetic information to improve the breeding efforts and overall quality of the crop. The creation of the North Dakota State University and USDA-ARS Pulse Crop Quality Network at Fargo, ND; Pullman, WA; and East Lansing, MI, along with the allocation of funding to the USDA-ARS Pulse Breeding program at WSU, complements the efforts of state and USDA-ARS scientists focused on pulse quality across the country. With additional base level funding, the ability to determine the overall quality of pulse crops, the relationship between genetics and quality traits such as cooking time and taste, and the ability to establish new uses for pulses will be expanded. *USA Pulses requests a \$3.2 million increase in FY 26 appropriation to fund a new network of USDA-ARS scientists dedicated to developing new food and industry end uses for dry peas, lentils, chickpeas, and dry beans at USDA-ARS lab facilities.*

**6. USDA-ARS Winter Pulse Crop Plant Geneticist Position (\$700,000).** Dry pea, lentil, and chickpea growers need fall-seeded cool-season pulses in their crop rotations to advance their sustainability goals. The development of high-yielding fall-seeded pulse varieties will help US growers remain competitive with rapidly expanding pulse acreage in Canada and Australia. Research trials conducted from 2021 to the present show that fall-seeded winter pulses have the potential to provide increased productivity during a drought. The



proposed position would be established at the USDA-ARS Grain Legume Genetics Physiology Research (GLGPR) Unit at Washington State University, Pullman, WA. In FY 2006, Congress appropriated \$120,000 for this position. Since FY 2006, the partial funding of this critical position needs to be increased to support a full scientist devoted to developing fall-seeded varieties of pulse crops. ***USA Pulses requests a \$700,000 appropriation in FY 2026 to fully fund a new USDA-ARS Winter Pulse Crop Plant Geneticist located in Pullman, WA.***

**7. Sclerotinia Initiative (\$3.0 million).** Since 2004, USA Pulses has joined with soybeans, dry beans, canola, sunflowers, and the USDA-ARS to manage the Sclerotinia Initiative, currently funded at \$2.5 million, to combat Sclerotinia or “white mold”. Based on stakeholder input and good science, the alliance selects competitive, scientifically sound research projects, focused on providing results growers can use to better manage the effects of this disease. Outcomes include finding sources of Sclerotinia resistance, improving basic knowledge about the pathogen, and exploring the efficacy of management tools like fungicides and bio-pesticides. With the advent of emerging technologies and new knowledge about the disease pathogen, the Sclerotinia Initiative needs additional funding to develop stronger grower tools for management of this devastating disease. The National Sclerotinia Initiative has a strong record of productivity that warrants additional investment to expand the results. ***USA Pulses requests that an additional \$500,000 in funding be appropriated for the Sclerotinia Initiative for FY 2026. This funding would be included in the USDA-ARS base-level budget.***

**8. Grain Legume Genetics Physiology Research (GLGPR) Unit (\$4.5 million).** The USDA-ARS considers a scientific position fully sustainable at \$750,000. The GLGPR Unit includes three scientists focused on pulse crop breeding, two plant pathologists, and a soil microbiologist. Current funding for these six positions is \$2.4 million which amounts to only \$400,000 per scientist. This group of scientists provides the USDA-ARS with key pulse crop genetics research and scientific leadership. With pulse crop acreage expanding due to increasing demand for pulse crops, it is critical that USDA-ARS base level funding is increased to provide critical scientific research about pulse crops, including crop management, soil health, and regenerative cropping systems. ***USA Pulses requests increased funding of \$4.5 million for six scientific positions in the USDA-ARS Grain Legume Genetics Physiology Research Unit at Pullman, WA and Prosser, WA.***

**9. Plant Germplasm Introduction & Testing Research (\$1.0 million).** The USDA-ARS Plant Introduction unit at Pullman, WA houses the genetic resources (germplasm) for pulse crops in the US. The unit contains seeds for dry peas, lentils, chickpeas, lupin, fava beans, and dry beans, and is the primary source of genetic diversity of pulses in the US. This collection is a critical resource for plant breeders to develop disease resistance, improve nutritional traits such as protein content, and improve the quality of pulse crops in challenging environments. Current funding supports three full-time scientists, the support programming for these scientists, and support for the physical storage facility. The unit requires additional funding to properly maintain the germplasm, catalog traits, and genetic information on different genetic databases, fund additional collection missions, increase storage capacity, and increase the ability to answer requests for germplasm. ***USA Pulses requests an additional \$1.0 million to increase support for this critical facility.***

**10. Alternatives to Fumigation as Protection against Bruchids and Nematodes.** The US pulse industry has faced market uncertainty with trading partners like India each year due to a requirement to fumigate shipments of US pulse crops with methyl bromide (MeBr) before arrival at ports to prevent bruchids and nematodes from entering partner countries. India alone is the largest market for US dry peas and lentils, and in the top five markets for US chickpeas, with great potential for dry beans. Exporters must deal with US regulatory pressure to reduce MeBr use, labeled usage requiring indoor application and quarantine at 50 degrees F during winter shipping dates, and no effective alternatives to control the problem pests. ***USA Pulses requests USDA-ARS focus MeBr research towards finding effective alternatives for the fumigation of stored grains.***



**11. USDA-ARS National Predictive Modeling Tool Initiative (NPMTI, \$15 million).** The NPMTI develops research-based tools that help forecast incidences of diseases and mycotoxins affecting US crops, which currently cause losses between \$100-\$200 billion each year. Modeling of pulse crop root rot pathogens began in 2023, with the intent to inform producers of their risk for root rot based on soil sampling results and provide research-based management recommendations to mitigate disease impact on crop yields and quality. Funded by a 2020 Congressional appropriation, NPMTI is modeled after the US Wheat & Barley Scab Initiative and is expected to operate for an additional ten years or more. ***USA Pulses requests that \$15 million in annual funding be authorized for this important initiative in the Farm Bill's USDA-ARS base budget.***

**12. Pulses and Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM) in Canines.** The Food & Drug Administration in 2019 linked DCM in dogs to pulses in their diets, creating a significant negative impact on pulse markets. Current published research disputes this claim. ***USA Pulses strongly supports scientific research investigating the nutrition provided to companion animals in diets including higher concentrations of pulses. In addition, USA Pulses requests that all announcements about pet food nutrition be based on sound science and communicate the actions consumers need to take to keep their pets safe.***