USA Pulses
July 2025

Impact of Tariffs and Trade Barriers on U.S. Pulse & Ingredient Exports to India

Background and Strategic Context

USA Pulses is the leading voice for U.S. pulse growers, processors, exporters, ingredient suppliers, and food companies. Our mission is to promote the use of American-grown dry peas, lentils, chickpeas, and dry beans by advancing international trade, ingredient innovation, and consumer awareness. We aim to double global consumption and production of pulses through coordinated marketing, strategic partnerships, and evidence-based policy engagement.

The U.S. pulse industry plays a critical role in supplying nutrient-dense, resilient, and affordable foods to global markets. The top pulse-producing states—**North Dakota, Montana, Washington, and Idaho**—are global leaders in quality, with pulse exports accounting for a substantial share of U.S. production. For example, in the 2024–25 marketing year, 75% of lentil production, 45% of dry pea production, and 33% of chickpea production are projected to be exported.

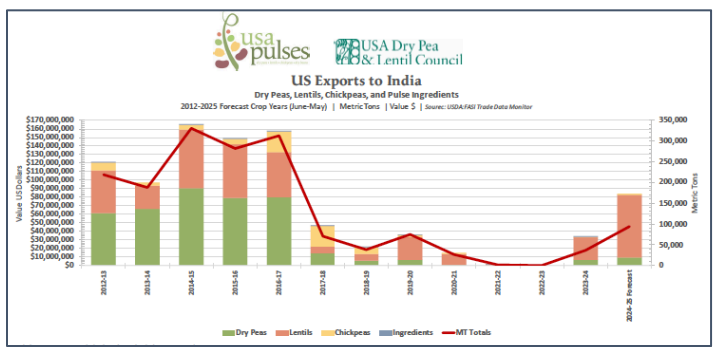
Exports of U.S. pulses reached $624.6 million in 2023–24 and are forecast to grow to $652.2 million in 2024–25, marking the sector's strongest performance in nearly a decade. This growth is fueled by improved logistics, rising demand for nutritious plant-based foods, and the partial resolution of key trade barriers. Despite volatility in ingredient exports, demand for whole pulses remains strong across Asia, Europe, Latin America, and Africa. Importantly, value-based tracking of pulse-derived ingredients (e.g., flours, proteins, fibers) continues to show commercial promise and is a priority for ongoing analysis.

Some Key Challenges Currently Facing the U.S. Pulse Industry

- Supply chain disruptions
- Trade barriers
- Global competition

Strategic Importance of the India Market

India is the single most important export destination for U.S. pulses. With a large, price-sensitive consumer base and deep cultural reliance on pulses as a dietary staple, India is essential to the economic health of the U.S. industry. The retaliatory tariffs imposed from 2018 to 2022 resulted in significant losses for U.S. growers and disrupted trade flows across multiple categories. Although exports to India have rebounded since the resolution of these tariffs, the market has not fully recovered—underscoring that its long-term viability depends on consistent, rules-based access. Any future escalation in tariffs would pose an immediate and disproportionate risk to the U.S. pulse sector. USA Pulses strongly urges the Administration to prioritize tariff stability with India and safeguard pulse trade as a strategic agricultural export.



This chart illustrates the sharp decline in U.S. pulse exports to India following the imposition of tariffs in 2017–18 and the gradual recovery since their resolution. The 2024–25 forecast reflects renewed momentum—highlighting the importance of stable tariff-free access to this critical market.

USA Pulses Specific Request for India Policy Negotiations India is the world's largest pulse consumer and importer, yet U.S. pulse exports remain restricted by tariffs and non-tariff barriers. To restore and expand market access, the U.S. pulse industry requests the following targeted actions in ongoing bilateral trade discussions.

Green Lentils – Eliminate 10% Tariff and Establish Separate HS Code

- **Request:** Remove the 10% import duty on U.S. green lentils and create a separate HS Code distinct from red lentils.
- **Rationale:** India has **no significant domestic production** of green lentils. These imports are a viable and affordable nutritional substitute for pigeon peas in southern India and do **not compete** with local crops.
- **Non-Tariff Barrier:** Without a separate HS code, green lentils are misclassified with red lentils, limiting transparency and hindering targeted trade access.
- **Policy precedent exists**—India split dried peas into yellow and green categories in 2019. The same treatment for lentils would allow for better trade facilitation and support U.S. export recovery.
- **Impact:** Tariff removal and code differentiation would enable targeted access and support India's food security and protein needs.

Yellow Peas – Remove 30% tariff, Secure Permanent Duty-Free Access and Eliminate Import Restrictions

- **Request:** Establish **permanent zero-duty access for U.S. yellow peas.**
- **Rationale:** New Global Tariff. India suspended duty-free imports of yellow peas implementing **a global 30% tariff** on all imports of yellow peas.
- **Absence of Long-Term Measures**: No established Tariff-Rate Quota (TRQ) or multiyear import commitment—existing relief is subject to sudden policy changes.
- **Non-Tariff Complexity:** Variable treatment around plant health inspections and HS codes adds unpredictability, affecting cost competitiveness.

Green Peas – Remove Import Restrictions and Open Market Access

- **Request:** Eliminate current restrictions on U.S. **dried green peas**, including licensing requirements, quota limits, and port-entry constraints, to allow **free import under HS Code 07131020**.
- **Rationale:** Although India created a separate HS Code for green peas in 2020, imports remain effectively blocked. Unlike yellow peas, which now enjoy duty-free access, green peas still face **non-tariff barriers** despite strong demand from Indian buyers.
- **Impact:** Opening the market for green peas would support a critical U.S. crop and help meet India's protein and food processing needs. Precedent exists from India's 2023 liberalization of yellow pea imports.

Kabuli Chickpeas – Eliminate 44% Tariff to Restore Market Access

- **Request**: Remove the 44% import duty on U.S. Kabuli chickpeas and restore free access to the Indian market.
- **Rationale:** Kabuli chickpeas are a niche, premium product in India and do not compete directly with Indian desi chickpea production. The high tariff functions as a de facto ban on U.S. exports.
- **Impact:** Tariff elimination would allow U.S. exporters to re-enter a high-value market segment, particularly in foodservice, health-focused, and value-added sectors.

Pulse Ingredients – Reduce Tariffs and Streamline Regulatory Barriers

- **Request:** Lower India's **prohibitively high tariffs** on U.S. pulse-based ingredients—including flours, protein isolates, concentrates, starches, and fibers—and **streamline FSSAI regulatory approvals**.
- **Rationale:** India's food manufacturing sector lacks sufficient supply of high-quality pulse ingredients. Tariffs up to **104%**, combined with **cumbersome FSSAI protocols**, block U.S. products that could meet growing demand for plant-based, clean-label, and protein-rich foods.
- **Impact:** Removing these barriers would support U.S. ingredient exports and help Indian manufacturers produce globally competitive products for domestic and export markets.