

USA Pulses Pulse Crops Products Program White Paper

Program Overview:

- The *Pulse Crop Products Program* (PCPP) was authorized in the 2014 Farm Bill at \$10 million to remain available until expended.
- Modeled after the successful *Whole Grains Pilot* funded in 2008, **the purpose of the *Pulse Crop Products Program* is to grow awareness and interest in the number and variety of pulse products and ingredients available and served to children in school.**

Background:

The House Report accompanying their FY2026 Ag Appropriations Bill, included: **Pulse Crops.**—The Committee encourages FNS to evaluate the acceptability and availability of pulse crops in the National School Lunch Program. Similarly, the Senate Report accompanying their FY2026 Ag Appropriations bill included: Pulse Crops.—The Committee recognizes the nutritional value of pulse crops for children and encourages FNS to support school food authorities in sourcing and serving pulse crops.

- Consider providing background on new DGA/MAHA According to FNS, schools struggle to meet the weekly pulses subgroup (“Beans, Peas, Lentils”) requirement. Approximately **only 80% of school district menus met the weekly requirement to offer 1/2 cup of pulses** per student.
- For Farm Bill language, see attached “*Agricultural Act of 2014 Title IV – Nutrition, Section 4213 Pulse Crop Products*”
 1. Requested Action: **The U.S. Pulse Industry supports appropriations of \$10 million in FY2027 for the PCPP as authorized under the Farm Bill.** Full funding of the PCPP will help evaluate the acceptability of pulses (dry peas, lentils, chickpeas, and dry beans – both whole and as ingredients), identify suitable products for school lunches, evaluate adoptions of pulses outside of school and evaluate the effects of the products on nutrition.

If funded, the PCPP will provide:

1. An evaluation of which eligible pulse crops and pulse-based products are most acceptable for use in the school lunch and breakfast programs.
2. An evaluation of any change in the nutrient composition in the school lunch and breakfast programs due to the activities.
3. An evaluation of whether children participating in the school lunch and breakfast programs increased overall consumption of eligible pulse crops as a result of the activities.

4. Provide any recommendations to the Secretary regarding the integration of the use of pulse crop products in carrying out the school lunch and breakfast programs.
5. An evaluation of any other outcomes determined to be appropriate by the Secretary.

If funded, the PCPP will identify:

1. Availability of pulse-based products offered for wholesale purchase by school meal programs.
2. Current purchasing and menu planning for pulse-based foods in school meal programs.
3. Institutional constraints in offering pulse-based foods.
4. Types of pulse-based foods that best fit into school menus.

Pulses are a Nutrient-Dense Solution:

- Pulse crops are unique and affordable foods that can fill nutrient gaps in U.S. diets while providing satiety between meals.
- The current *Dietary Guidelines* identifies “Beans, Peas, Lentils” as unique foods that are considered both a vegetable and a protein.
- One serving (1/2 cup) of cooked pulses offers:
 - An excellent source of dietary fiber
 - An excellent source of folate
 - A good source of protein
 - A good source of iron (most pulses)
 - A good source of potassium
 - Calcium, magnesium, choline, and zinc
- Pulses are low in fat/sodium and are free from the top 9 allergens.
- Pulse crops are low-carbon crops due to their ability to fix nitrogen and improve soil quality while requiring low water usage.

**AGRICULTURAL ACT OF
2014 TITLE IV--
NUTRITION**

SEC 4213 PULSE CROP PRODUCTS.

- a) Purpose.**--The purpose of this section is to encourage greater awareness and interest in the number and variety of pulse crop products available to schoolchildren, as recommended by the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans published under section 301 of the National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act of 1990(7 U.S.C. 5341).
- b) Definitions.**--In this section:
- 1) Eligible pulse crop.--The term "eligible pulse crop" means dry beans, dry peas, lentils, and chickpeas.
 - 2) Pulse crop product.--The term "pulse crop product" means a food product derived in whole or in part from an eligible pulse crop.
- c) Purchase of Pulse Crops and Pulse Crop Products.**--In addition to the commodities delivered under section 6 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1755), subject to the availability of appropriations, the Secretary shall purchase eligible pulse crops and pulse crop products for use in--
- 1) the school lunch program established under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.); and
 - 2) the school breakfast program established by section 4 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966(42 U.S.C. 1773).
- d) Evaluation.**--Not later than September 30, 2016, the Secretary shall conduct an evaluation of the activities conducted under subsection(c), including--
- 1) an evaluation of whether children participating in the school lunch and breakfast programs described in subsection(c) increased overall consumption of eligible pulse crops as a result of the activities;
 - 2) an evaluation of which eligible pulse crops and pulse crop products are most acceptable for use in the school lunch and breakfast programs;
 - 3) any recommendations of the Secretary regarding the integration of the use of pulse crop products in carrying out the school lunch and breakfast programs;
 - 4) an evaluation of any change in the nutrient composition in the school lunch and breakfast programs due to the activities; and
 - 5) an evaluation of any other outcomes determined to be appropriate by the Secretary.
- e) Report.**--As soon as practicable after the completion of the evaluation under subsection(d), the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate and the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representative a report describing the results of the evaluation.
- f) Authorization of Appropriations.**--There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$10,000,000, to remain available until expended.