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Nitrogen-fixing nodules are visible along the roots of a dry bean plant. The pink coloration inside active nodules is associated with leghemoglobin and is an indicator that biological nitrogen fixation is occurring.



COULD NEW DRY BEAN VARIETIES LOSE NITROGEN FIXATION CAPABILITIES?

USDA STUDY EXPLORES BREEDING & NITROGEN FIXATION

One of the advantages of growing dry beans (and cool-season pulses) is their ability to obtain some of the nitrogen they need from the atmosphere. Through a symbiotic relationship with bacteria associated with their roots, bean plants can convert atmospheric nitrogen into a form the plant can use. This process, called nitrogen fixation, is one of the key attributes that make pulses an attractive addition to crop rotations. Well, until prices improve anyway.

But how much nitrogen beans obtain this way can vary considerably. New research from USDA Agricultural Research Service scientists in Prosser, Washington, examines how soil nitrogen levels and cultivar choice influence nitrogen fixation and yield.

USDA Agricultural Research Service scientists Svetlana Yurgel, Phil Miklas and Lyndon Porter, with the Grain Legume Genetics and Physiology Research Unit in Prosser, Washington, conducted the study. Together they evaluated 16 common dry bean cultivars released over a 77-year period in field trials conducted at Prosser in 2023 and 2024. Most of the cultivars were pinto beans, with release dates ranging from 1945 to 2022.

The researchers measured both crop yield and the percentage of nitrogen in the plants derived from atmospheric nitrogen fixation, referred to as %Ndfa.

Soil Nitrogen Makes a Difference

The two years provided researchers with substantially different soil nitrogen conditions.

Pre-plant soil nitrogen measured 70.75 pounds per acre in the 2023 field, compared with just 28.75 pounds per acre in 2024. That difference provided an opportunity to see how bean plants and their associated nitrogen-fixing bacteria responded under relatively high- and low-nitrogen conditions.

The results were intriguing. Under the higher soil nitrogen conditions in 2023, nitrogen derived from atmospheric fixation ranged from just 6.33% to 27.13% among the cultivars. In the lower-nitrogen 2024 field, that increased to between 20.4% and 40.3%.

That finding is consistent with existing fertilizer recommendations cited by the researchers. North Dakota State University Extension guidance indicates that adding rhizobium inoculant is generally not considered beneficial for increasing yield when soil nitrogen is 40 pounds per acre (lbs/ac) or greater. The same guidance indicates that nitrogen applications above approximately

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BEAN RESEARCH CONT.

70 lbs/ac provide little additional economic benefit.

In other words, when plenty of nitrogen is already available in the soil, the bean plant relies less heavily on its relationship with nitrogen-fixing bacteria.

A Trend Across 77 Years of Breeding

The study also looked at what has happened to nitrogen fixation as bean breeding has advanced.

Newer cultivars generally had lower nitrogen-fixing capacity under both high- and low-nitrogen conditions compared with older cultivars. However, those newer cultivars still generally produced higher yields, particularly under the higher soil nitrogen conditions.

For example, Common Pinto recorded 40.3% NDFa under the lower-nitrogen conditions in 2024. By comparison, four cultivars released since 2021 recorded lower levels: USDA Rattler at 27.8%, USDA Cody at 23.6%, USDA Diamondback at 21.6% and Wildcat at 25.1%.

The researchers note that decades of breeding have successfully increased bean productivity and other important characteristics. However, their results suggest nitrogen-fixing ability may not have advanced alongside yield. They say breeding for greater productivity may also have selected cultivars with reduced nitrogen-fixation capacity.

Dr. Yukiko Naruoka, USA Pulses Director of Research, reviewed the study, indicating the findings could provide useful information for growers as they consider soil nitrogen management, while also raising interesting questions for pulse researchers.

What Does It Mean for Growers?

The results don't necessarily mean growers should reduce nitrogen applications. When soil nitrogen is below 40 pounds per acre, nitrogen fixation increases, but the researchers question whether current bean cultivars and their associated nitrogen-fixing bacteria can supply enough additional nitrogen to achieve maximum yields. The researchers estimate that under

those conditions, roughly another 30 pounds of nitrogen per acre may be needed to reach the level associated with maximum bean yields.

The researchers see opportunities for future breeding and research, including developing bean cultivars that combine high yields and disease resistance with greater nitrogen-fixing capacity, as well as identifying nitrogen-fixing bacterial strains that work particularly well with those cultivars under low-nitrogen conditions. They further suggest stronger nitrogen fixation could potentially provide nitrogen credits for crops that follow beans in the rotation.

Overall, the researchers' findings show that soil nitrogen levels, nitrogen-fixing bacteria and cultivar choice all play a role in how effectively a bean crop meets its nitrogen needs.

Read the full peer-reviewed research here: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11104-025-08257-x>



USDA LAUNCHES NEW SCHOOL NUTRITION INITIATIVE HARVEST TO HALLWAYS BRINGS U.S.-GROWN FOODS TO SCHOOLS

USDA has launched a new "Harvest to Hallways" initiative aimed at improving school meals while expanding opportunities for schools to purchase more locally produced foods.

The initiative includes up to \$70 million in school cafeteria infrastructure investments, including equipment such as cold storage and stoves that can help schools prepare more meals from scratch. USDA also announced up to \$25 million in additional Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grants for fiscal year 2026.

USDA is also expanding outreach around its existing Local Option School Procurement Program, which can allow schools to be reimbursed for purchases

of locally produced foods. The Department plans to provide additional education and webinars to help schools better understand and use the procurement option.

The effort comes as USDA moves closer to proposing changes to school meal standards aligned with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Administration officials said the proposed standards will place greater emphasis on whole foods, healthy cooking methods, whole grains, fruit and high-quality protein while reducing reliance on highly processed foods.

The potential reach is significant. USDA says the National School Lunch Program serves

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PULSE MARKET NEWS

Today's Exchange Rate:
1 Canadian dollar = 0.72 U.S. \$ (Bank of Canada)

PULSE PRICE CHART (Grower Prices in U.S. \$/cwt. on #1 Grade)				
Pacific Northwest	September 4, 2026	August 28, 2026	AVG	LAST YR
Green Peas (whole)	\$ 12.00	\$ 12.00	\$ 12.00	\$ 14.50
Yellow Peas (whole)	\$ NA	\$ NA	\$ NA	\$ NA
Lentils (Brewer)	\$ 22.00	\$ 22.00	\$ 22.00	\$ 27.00
Lentils (Pardina)	\$ 22.00	\$ 22.00	\$ 22.00	\$ 27.00
Chickpeas (Large Kabuli)	\$ 22.00	\$ 22.00	\$ 22.00	\$ 30.00
Northern Plains				
Green Peas	\$ 10.42-12.50	\$ 10.42-12.50	\$ 11.46	\$ 14.38
Yellow Peas	\$ 7.92-10.42	\$ 7.92-10.42	\$ 8.63	\$ 9.72
Lentils (Richlea)	\$ 14.00	\$ 14.00	\$ 14.00	\$ 21.00
Chickpeas (Large Kabuli)	\$ 19.00	\$ 19.00	\$ 19.00	\$ 21.88
Canada	U.S. \$/cwt. Revised August 19, 2026			
Green Peas	\$ 10.00	\$ 10.00		
Yellow Peas	\$ 9.07	\$ 9.07		
Feed Peas	\$ 9.60	\$ 9.62		
Lentils (Laird)	\$ 16.42	\$ 16.06		
Lentils (Red)	\$ 15.91	\$ 15.91		
Lentils (Richlea)	\$ 14.13	\$ 13.98		
Chickpeas (Desi)	\$ 14.16	\$ 9.54		
Chickpeas (Kabuli 9mm)	\$ 17.24	\$ 18.29		



Compared to last week, trade remained light. According to the August 23, 2026, NASS Crop Progress report, lentil harvest was 81% complete in Montana and 24% complete in North Dakota. Dry pea harvest was 84% complete in Montana and 75% complete in North Dakota, while Montana's dry bean harvest was 54% complete (Bean Market News).

▪ Market prices contained in this newsletter may or may not reflect actual market conditions at the time of sale.

▪ U.S. prices are gathered from [USDA Bean Market News](#) which uses averages based on U.S. #1 production from the date surveyed and are for thresher run, clean basis.

▪ Canadian prices are gathered from the [Saskatchewan government](#).

Northern Tier: Prices reported on a cwt basis, Del warehouse, thresher run and U.S. No. 2 or better.

PNW: Prices reported on a cwt basis, Del warehouse, thresher run and U.S. No. 1.

BEAN PRICE TRACKER

Prices published on Aug. 31, 2026

BEAN PRICE CHART (Dealer Prices in U.S. Bag / 100lb #1 grade)				
COMMODITY	PRICE RANGE	AVG PRICE	PRIOR WEEK	YR AGO
BLACK BEANS				
North Dakota / Minnesota	\$ 35.00-40.00	\$ 36.67	\$ 32.00-35.00	\$ NA
Michigan	\$ 42.00	\$ 42.00	\$ NA	\$ NA
DARK RED KIDNEYS				
Min-Dak Region	\$ NR	\$ NR	\$ NR	\$ NA
LIGHT RED KIDNEYS				
Min-Dak Region	\$ NR	\$ NR	\$ NR	\$ NA
NAVY BEANS				
Min-Dak Region	\$ 35.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 30.00	\$ NA
Michigan	\$ 40.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 31.00	\$ NA
PINTO				
Min-Dak Region	\$ 40.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 35.00	\$ NA

Prices reported FOB warehouse in truck and rail car lots, basis U.S. No. 1's and cleaned in cwt bags.



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MONTANA PULSE RESEARCH NEEDS YOUR INPUT!

PRODUCERS, INDUSTRY AND RESEARCHERS COME TOGETHER TO COLLABORATE

The Montana Pulse Crop Committee will host its 3rd Annual Montana Research Roundup on Monday, November 30, in Great Falls, in partnership with Montana State University pulse researchers and the Pulse Crop Working Group.

The event will run from 1:00–5:00 p.m. at the Hilton Garden Inn in Great Falls, followed by a meet-and-greet with researchers, growers and pulse industry members.

This year's Roundup is being expanded to be more collaborative and producer-focused, with researchers from across the United States invited to share their work and connect directly with Montana growers and industry members.

Research discussions are expected to cover a broad range of topics, including agronomy, genetics, variety trials, soil health, disease, nutrition, gut health, processing, economics and livestock feed.

Organizers want producers and industry members at the table to help identify the challenges, questions and research needs that should shape future work. Producers are encouraged to share the challenges they face, while industry members are invited to provide feedback and market input.

Researchers interested in presenting will also have an opportunity to participate in a short Zoom meeting before the Roundup covering presentation format, producer engagement, expectations, awards and event details.

For more information, contact the Montana Pulse Crop Committee at pulse@mtpulsecrops.org.

Hosted by the
MONTANA
PULSE CROP COMMITTEE

JOIN US FOR THE
**3RD ANNUAL
MONTANA
RESEARCH ROUNDUP**

Uniting Montana and U.S. Pulse Researchers
to Foster Opportunities in Research

PRODUCERS,
INDUSTRY MEMBERS
AND RESEARCHERS
ALL WELCOME!

For a
Stronger
Pulse Future

**Monday,
November 30, 2026**
1:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Hilton Garden Inn
Great Falls, Montana

**Meet-and-greet
to follow**
with drinks and appetizers.



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PROTEIN BOOM PUTS PULSES IN THE SPOTLIGHT!

USA PULSES FEATURED IN SUCCESSFUL FARMING

America's growing appetite for protein is creating new opportunities for farmers, and pulses have an important role to play, according to a recent *Successful Farming* article examining how protein demand is reaching all the way back to the farm.

The article, "America's Protein Boom Is Paying Off for Farmers," looks at both animal and plant protein, with USA Pulses CEO Tim McGreevy providing the pulse industry perspective.

McGreevy points to the combination of protein, fiber and affordability as an important advantage for pulses, while highlighting continued innovation in pulse-based foods. The article also explores the value of pulses in crop rotations and the opportunity for plant and animal proteins to grow alongside one another rather than compete for a single market.



Tim McGreevy surveys his chickpea field before harvest in fall 2024. He raises pulse and other crops in eastern Washington state.

Credit: Provided by Martin T. McGreevy

"This isn't an 'us vs. them' thing," McGreevy told *Successful Farming*. "It's basically a market segmentation."

The article also highlights USA Pulses' goal of doubling U.S. pulse consumption and production by 2030.

READ THE FULL STORY:

[America's Protein Boom Is Paying Off for Farmers | Successful Farming](#)



Pulses continued to earn national attention for their protein, fiber and overall nutritional value, including a prominent mention in *The Washington Post*.

The Washington Post, with an estimated 21.9 million monthly visitors, featured pulses in its recent interactive quiz, "[Are You Making These Common Protein Mistakes?](#)" One question specifically recommends adding more pulses to the diet, highlighting their combination of protein, fiber and other nutrients. The article incorrectly includes edamame among pulses, and USA Pulses is requesting a correction. Nobody puts baby in the corner.

Other national outlets also put pulses in the nutritional spotlight. *Good Housekeeping*,

with an estimated 18.1 million monthly visitors, included beans among [12 foods that may help lower cholesterol naturally](#), while *EatingWell*, with an estimated 13.2 million monthly visitors, featured beans and lentils among its best budget-friendly [Mediterranean diet foods](#), praising their nutrition, affordability and versatility.

Men's Journal, reaching an estimated 11.5 million monthly visitors, also highlighted beans and legumes for their fiber and protein content in an article examining foods associated with [lower colon cancer risk](#), while *Food & Wine*, with an estimated 8.9 million monthly visitors, [featured beans, lentils and chickpeas](#) throughout a collection of fresh main-course salads.



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HARVEST TO HALLWAYS CONT.

approximately 30 million students, while the School Breakfast Program serves about 15 million students, with the programs operating across roughly 94,000 schools.

While USDA did not specifically identify pulses in the Harvest to Hallways announcement, the initiative bears watching for the U.S. pulse industry. Dry peas, lentils, chickpeas and dry beans offer protein, fiber and other nutrients in shelf-stable, versatile foods that can work in both traditional school meals and scratch-cooked recipes. Expanded local procurement and Farm to School funding could provide additional opportunities to introduce U.S.-grown pulses into school food programs.

Friday Funny!

If you know, you know.
Boy do you know.



I attack when my owner orders me to



I attack when my owner is in danger



I attack my owner.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- Sept. 7 Labor Day (Office Closed)
- Sept. 9 Research Comm. Mtg.
- Sept. 14-18 America's Food & Bev Show, Miami
- Sept. 30-Oct. 1 Food Tech Summit Mex. City

PulsePipeline

Your Pulse Connection
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USA PULSES IS AN EQUAL
OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER AND PROVIDER.



Table Update: USDA's 2026 crop year loan rates took effect May 1. The summary table now displays 2026 and 2025 loan rates and National Posted Prices side by side for comparison. Current National Posted Prices remain above loan rates for all pulse categories, resulting in no Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs) being available.

PULSE CROP LOAN DEFICIENCY PAYMENTS (LDP) RATES

USDA 2025-26 National Posted Price and Loan Rate Summary												
New Loan Rates Eff. May 1		Dry Peas				Lentils				Large Chickpeas		Small Chickpeas
		West		Midwest		West		Midwest		All		All
		2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026
Pulse Loan Rate: #2 Grade		\$7.18	\$6.10	\$6.85	\$6.15	\$14.30	\$13.00	\$14.30	\$13.00	\$15.40	\$14.00	\$11.00
August 28, 2026	NPP	\$11.09	\$13.89	\$10.76	\$13.94	\$20.71	\$37.44	\$20.71	\$37.44	\$17.46	\$36.11	\$12.69
	LDP											\$28.89
August 21, 2026	NPP	\$10.95	\$13.89	\$10.62	\$13.94	\$20.81	\$37.44	\$20.81	\$37.44	\$17.25	\$36.11	\$12.49
	LDP											\$28.89

Midwest region: all counties in Montana and North Dakota, plus all counties in all other states not in the West Region.

Source: USDA Farm Service Agency



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