

PULSES

2016 – INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PULSES

The family of legumes is one of the largest families of flowering plants with over 19,000 species. It includes plants in which the seeds (1 to many) are contained in a pod and this is its main unifying feature. They may be small herbaceous plants, shrubs, vines or large trees. They are able to fix atmospheric nitrogen through root nodules. Their pods range from a few millimeters to over a meter in length. Clovers, peas, beans, lentils, soybeans and peanuts are part of this family. Many species of legumes are consumed by humans for millennia.



The 68th United Nations General Assembly declared 2016 the International Year of Pulses. Pulses (or grain legumes) are the edible dried legume seeds used for human consumption and include a group of 12 crops. "Pulse" comes from the Latin "puls" and means thick soup.

Pulses include beans, cowpeas, chickpeas and lentils, excluding crops primarily grown for oil production, like soybeans or peanuts. Pulses are particularly rich in protein and fiber and are very low in fat. They are also rich in minerals like iron, zinc, phosphorus and some of the B vitamins. They are widely used in countries in the developing world but they are increasingly recognized as an important part of a healthy diet all over the world.