

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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2016 International Year of Pulses

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Agricultural Trade Office Activities

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Report Highlights:

To build upon the global efforts of the FAO, USDA's Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) in Mexico City, in coordination with the U.S. Dry Bean Council and the U.S. Dry Pea and Lentil Council and their representatives in Mexico developed a campaign to promote the benefits of U.S. dry beans, peas, and lentils within Mexico.

General Information:

As the world population grows, food security becomes a concern around the globe. Pulse crops are part of the solution as they are not only low cost but have many health benefits. Also they are a highly sustainable source of protein for example: only 43 gallons of water are required to produce 1 pound of pulse crops compared to 216 gallons for soybeans and 368 gallons for peanuts. Pulse production emits only 5 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions when compared to beef. In that light, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) designated 2016 as the International Year of Pulses (IYOP). The main objectives of the 2016 IYOP campaign were to:

- Raise awareness about the important role of pulses in sustainable food production and healthy diets and their contribution to food security and nutrition.
- Promote the value and utilization of pulses throughout the food system, their benefits for soil fertility, climate change and combating malnutrition.
- Encourage connections throughout the food chain to further global production of pulses, foster enhanced research, better utilize crop rotations and address the challenges in the trade of pulses.

Mexico has historically been a consumer of pulses but like in many other places, little is known about their nutritional value. Some of which are: zero cholesterol, high content of iron and zinc, gluten free, rich in minerals and B- vitamins, low glycemic index, low fat content, low in calories, high in fiber and a good source of protein.

To overcome the lack of awareness, this past June and as part of its Country Strategy Support Fund activities, ATO Mexico held a seminar to promote the consumption of American pulses in Mexico. With speakers from various sectors of the industry, the ATO conveyed the importance of Pulses in the Mexican diet and as a way to fight malnutrition and obesity; which Mexico ranks as number one in the world for child obesity. The event was attended by more than 90 representatives of the Mexican pulse industry. Guests included buyers, chefs, bloggers, printed media editors, cable TV, nutritionists, market representatives and government officials from Mexico and the United States.



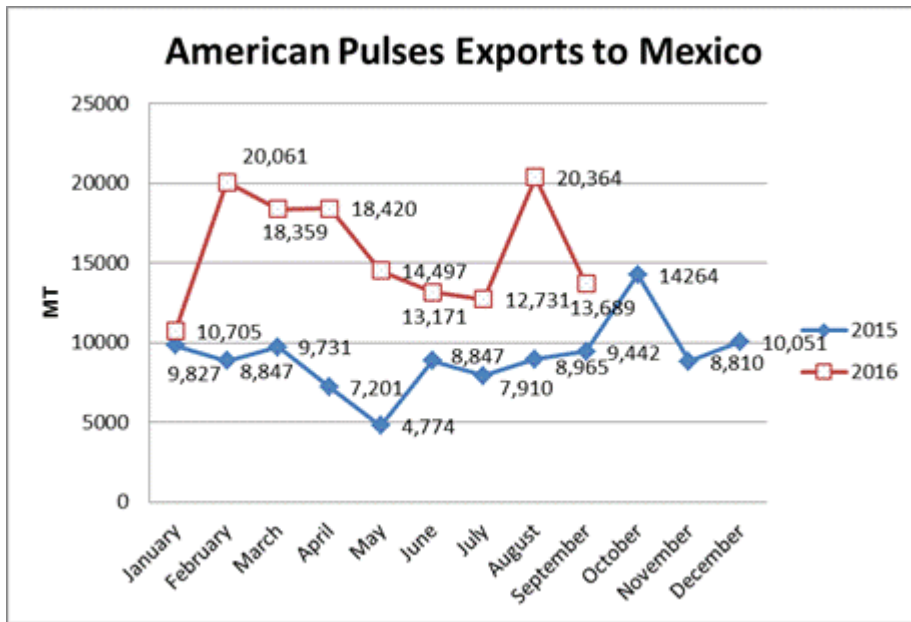
A view of the attendees of the U.S. Pulses event.

To further develop the market in Mexico for U.S. pulses, ATO Mexico envisioned a Cochran Fellowship Program (CFP) entitled “The Pulse of Mexico”. The purpose of the CFP in general is to provide short-term training opportunities to agricultural professionals from middle income countries, emerging markets and emerging democracies. In our specific Pulses CFP we cooperated with the U.S. Dry Bean and U.S. Dry Pea and Lentil Councils as well as their representative in Mexico, Mercalimentos Consultores. We put together a program that sent nine Mexican industry representatives from the food processing sector to learn about new uses for pulses as well as to learn the benefits of utilizing pulse derived products in new product formulation. The program was held from October 10th to October 14th 2016. The Cochran fellows had a chance to visit the Northern Crops Institute, North Dakota State University as well as a visit to several prominent manufacturers of pulse based ingredients, where they learned about new applications for pulse based products currently being used in the United States.



2016 Pulse of Mexico Cochran Team

Mexico was the largest export consumer of American pulses from 2007-2015, as more than \$1 billion dollars’ were imported during this time frame. The International Year of the Pulse, 2016, is also shaping up to be a very good year. From January to September 2016, U.S. pulse exports to Mexico have nearly doubled from 75,000 metric tons in the same period of 2015 to 141,000 metric tons in 2016, and that is despite the negative impact of the exchange rate making U.S. pulses relatively more expensive to Mexican buyers. With many of the companies that have participated in the events surrounding the International Year of the Pulse currently making arrangements to import samples and conduct trials for new products Post hopes to see the trend of increased U.S. pulse exports to Mexico continue.



Cochran Fellows learning about different uses for Pulses based ingredients.