

Credit where it's due: the not so humble pulse in global food systems

10 February 2023 (Canberra) – Despite having been a staple food in many cultures for centuries, pulses are having a global resurgence as part of sustainable food production, food security and nutrition. Pulses are relative new-comers in large scale Australian cropping systems, but increasing evidence about their role in sustainable agriculture and nutritious diets is highlighting the power of the pulse.

Consumption of pulses like lentils, chickpeas, beans and peas is particularly low amongst Australians at less than a third of a serve a week.

"We know that Australians are looking for ways to eat more sustainably and for more plant-based sources of protein, which the food industry is positively responding to. But the answer has been in our pantries the whole time", said Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, the national peak industry organisation for the plant science sector, Mr. Matthew Cossey.

"Pulses are not just for vegetarians. World Pulses Day encourages all Australians to aim for three serves of pulses a week as one of the most effective things we can do to eat more sustainably.

"Pulses are a delicious, inexpensive and important source of protein, micronutrients and prebiotic fibre which fosters beneficial gut microbiome. And with the world's population expected to reach nearly 10 billion by 2050, it is more important than ever to promote sustainable and balanced diets that are healthy for both people and the planet.

"It's one of the best examples of where Australian Dietary Guidelines reflects the benefits of sustainable agriculture practices. Choosing healthy, nutritious pulses supports Australian farmers and helps protect Australia's ancient soils from erosion, while increasing carbon and nitrogen storage in soils and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It's a win-win-win for consumers, farmers, and the environment.

"Australian farmers, supported by plant science, use the most advanced technology and equipment to produce pulses of the highest quality. Combined with our favourable growing environments, good crop management and care in handling, there's no reason pulses shouldn't be a staple food here too.

Mr Cossey concluded, "Australians are becoming more aware of the impact of their food choices on their health and the environment, but knowing how to eat more sustainably can seem complicated and overwhelming. World Pulses Day is a great opportunity to get Australians back to the basics. Experiment with new recipes, add pulses into a broad range of other vegetables in your weekly diet and support Aussie farmers who are the ultimate stewards of the land."

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About CropLife Australia

CropLife Australia is the national peak industry organisation representing the plant science sector in Australia. CropLife's members are the world-leading innovators, developers, manufacturers and formulators of crop protection and crop biotechnology products. The plant science industry, worth more than \$20 billion a year to Australian agricultural production, provides products to protect crops against pests, weeds and diseases, as well as developing crop biotechnologies key to the nation's agricultural productivity, profitability and sustainability. CropLife is part of the plant science industry's 91 country international federation.

