
World Pulses Day: Let's get back to basics for sustainable agriculture and nutrition

10 February 2024 (Canberra) – The key to sustainable eating lies within our pantries however, Australians consume less than a third of a serving of pulses per week on average. World Pulses Day is the perfect opportunity to highlight the ways pulses contribute to conservation agriculture and nutritious diets.

“We know that Australians are looking for ways to eat more sustainably and for more plant-based sources of protein, which the farming sector has been positively responding to. Fortunately, the solution is simpler than it seems,” said Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, the national peak industry organisation for the plant science sector, Mr Matthew Cossey.

“Pulses like lentils, chickpeas, beans and peas are one of the best examples of how the Australian Dietary Guidelines align with sustainable agriculture practices. While pulses are still relative newcomers in large-scale Australian cropping systems, they are having a resurgence as farming practices become increasingly tailored to local environmental conditions.

“With Australia’s shallow, dry and nutrient-poor soils, Australian farmers are excellent adopters of conservation agriculture techniques like cover cropping, crop rotation and chemical fallow. Pulses are a key crop that farmers are incorporating into these management techniques to prevent erosion, maintain soil moisture, improve soil carbon and prevent pesticide resistance.

“Although tailored approaches are necessary for different crops and environmental contexts, there is increasing evidence that incorporating pulses into crop rotation is an important tool in integrated pest management strategies. This prevents the same pest or disease from returning, hence reducing the need for pesticides and encourages the use of products with different modes of action which prevents resistance against these crucial tools.

“It’s a great to see more Australians becoming interested in food production systems and the impact of their food choices on their health and the environment, however no one has time to calculate environmental impact scores when trying to feed their family on a budget.

“Opting for a diet based on whole and fresh foods is not only more environmentally sustainable, but also offers significant cost savings for Australian families, amounting to up to \$78 per week, according to recent data released by The University of Wollongong.

“Pulses are not just for vegetarians. Pulses are a versatile, inexpensive and important source of protein, micronutrients and prebiotic fibre supporting healthy gut microbiome. Experiment with new recipes and add pulses into a broad range of other vegetables in your weekly meal planning.

“Australian farmers, supported by the plant science sector, 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, pulses should rightfully become a staple in Australian diets,” Mr Cossey concluded.

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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 \$31.6 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 a part of the plant science industry’s 91 country international federation.

