



## Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition • FSN Forum

### TOPIC NOTE

Discussion No. 133 • 14.10.2016 – 04.11.2016

➤ [www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/discussions/pulses2](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/discussions/pulses2)

## Pulses: Innovations from the field to the cooking pot



**2016**  
**INTERNATIONAL**  
**YEAR OF PULSES**

To promote the important role of pulses, the International Year of Pulses (IYP2016) has carried out activities on a national, regional and global scale to help raise awareness on the benefits of pulses for food security, nutrition, soils and sustainable agriculture, and their contribution to climate change mitigation.

FAO has recently published a series of fact sheets providing an overview of the positive features of pulses from a global perspective, which can be accessed on the International Year of Pulses website (available at [www.fao.org/pulses-2016/communications-toolkit/fact-sheets/en](http://www.fao.org/pulses-2016/communications-toolkit/fact-sheets/en)).

Although many benefits of pulses have been identified in different fields of research related to agriculture, health, nutrition, and environmental sciences, their full potential still remains untapped among producers and consumers.

Participants in the earlier online discussion (available at: [www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/discussions/pulses](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/discussions/pulses)) pointed out the decreasing consumption trends in some areas where pulses are part of traditional meals but carry a stigma of being a “poor person’s food”, and are then replaced by meat once people can afford it. In this context, innovation in both preparation methods (including cooking time) and in recipes and the way pulses are presented can play a role in reversing this trend.

On the production side, the earlier online discussion brought up the following issues: competition with cereals, which have traditionally received the most policy attention; low yields; low market value; lack of knowledge on the part of farmers on how to improve productivity; and limited access to quality inputs. Further, it was highlighted that often the production of pulses in developing countries is done in marginal areas and by marginalized groups.

With the conclusion of IPY2016 approaching, and building on the earlier FSN Forum discussion, we would like to invite you to look ahead and explore innovations that may help address some of the challenges still facing these important crops.

1. What can be done concretely to increase the consumption of pulses? How can we introduce them into the diets of countries where they aren't traditionally consumed, and also encourage their continued consumption in those countries where pulses are already part of the diet?
2. Cultivating pulses in multiple cropping systems enriches agrobiodiversity, increases resilience to climate change, and improves ecosystem services. Do modern varieties of legumes provide smallholder farmers with an attractive alternative to other crops? What are the roles that legumes can play in sustainable intensification of agriculture in Africa?
3. What is needed to strengthen pulse value chains, from input supply to consumption? What is the situation in your country?
4. Do you know any examples of countries mainstreaming pulses into national and regional food security policies? Do you think that a policy approach could be beneficial to increasing the role of this crop?

We also invite you to keep sharing your recipes of pulse dishes – we published a few in our summary – and to check out other recipes on the International Year of Pulses website.

The outcomes of this consultation are important for the legacy of the International Year of Pulses; they will help to gain a better understanding on how to move forward and identify possible next steps to take once IYP2016 is over.

We thank you very much for your time and look forward to your comments.

*Sieg Snapp and Karen Cichy*