



For immediate release

Federal government supports efforts to increase pulse utilization in food products

April 15, 2010 (Beijing, China) – Two new projects announced this week will help develop innovative ways to increase the use of pulses – beans, peas, lentils and chickpeas – and ultimately increase demand for pulse products.

Pulse Canada has signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Chinese Cereals and Oils Association to pursue new product development using pulses. Canadian and Chinese scientists will work together to create and implement a research strategy to use pulses in food products such as Chinese staple foods (noodles, steamed breads and dumplings), snack foods (cakes, muffins, biscuits, fried dough twists and fillings) and meat products.

China is currently Canada's third largest market for pulses with 334,000 tonnes of exports worth \$107 million in 2009. There is a significant opportunity to increase the use of pulses and pulse products such as flours in China. According to industry sources, the total flour market is estimated at 70 million tonnes per year. Import demand for Canadian pulses could increase to 1.5 million tonnes worth an estimated \$500 million. Staple foods such as noodles, steamed breads and dumplings account for 70 per cent of current flour utilization in China.

"Even a small percentage of increased pulse utilization in these areas could result in significant incremental pulse exports to China," says Gordon Bacon, CEO of Pulse Canada. "This project brings together Canadian and Chinese scientists, food companies and research funders to identify commercial utilization opportunities and develop collaborative research projects."

The opportunity to increase the use of pulses as ingredients in Chinese foods is closely linked to another major initiative announced this week. While in China, Minister Ritz announced more than \$1 million for the Pulse Flour Milling and Utilization Project at the Canadian International Grains Institute (CIGI).

Under this initiative, CIGI will identify optimal milling techniques to produce pulse flours and develop new uses for these flours in a range of food product applications leading to new ingredient markets for Canadian pulses. By developing technical expertise in milling and flour utilization, CIGI will be able to help Canadian pulse processors enhance their capacity to produce high quality, value-added pulse ingredients for food manufacturers.

"With their inherent health and nutritional benefits, pulses make an ideal value-added ingredient for global food companies developing new food products to meet consumer needs," says Bacon. "Using pulse flours can increase the protein and fibre content of food products and we have seen strong interest in the contribution pulses can make to environmentally sustainable food production systems."

Following a joint scientific review, China has also agreed to change selenium limits that had restricted the import for Canadian pulses. The change is essential to achieve product utilization growth envisioned in the MOA.

“The Minister’s involvement raises the profile of the industry’s issues and opportunities and we know this is very important to achieving results in China,” says Bacon.

Pulse Canada is the national association representing growers, traders and processors of pulse crops – peas, beans, lentils and chickpeas. Canada is the world's largest pulse exporter and one of the largest pulse producers.

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