



## World Pulses Day 2026: Pulses for Sustainable Agriculture and Economic Resilience

\*Dr. Mohamad Awais, Ms. Madeeha Zafar and Ms. Amber Ashaq

Centre of Agricultural Education, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh-202002 (UP)

\*Corresponding Author's email: [drmohdawais@gmail.com](mailto:drmohdawais@gmail.com)

It is a United Nations designated global event that brings attention to a group of foods often overlooked in everyday life. Every year on 10<sup>th</sup> February, the world comes together to observe World Pulses Day, a day dedicated to recognising the importance of pulses in our food systems, agriculture, economy and overall human wellbeing. They form the backbone of daily meals for millions of people across cultures. Pulses play a meaningful role in achieving the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those focused on ending hunger, improving public health, supporting sustainable farming, and addressing climate change. In a time when food systems are under strain, pulses offer a practical and sustainable way forward.

In 2026, the theme Pulses of the World: From Modesty to Excellence beautifully reflects the journey of pulses: from being considered a humble, ordinary food to becoming a powerful symbol of nutritional security, sustainable agriculture and economic resilience. The theme from modesty to excellence encourages people to re-evaluate traditional foods and recognize how simple choices can lead to excellent outcomes for health, environment and society. As long as farmers continue to nurture the soil with hope and hard work, the pulse of the world will never fade away: in fact, it will only grow stronger day by day.

Pulses may look modest in appearance, but their contribution to human life is extraordinary. Pulses give us essential proteins in addition to dietary fibres along with significant amounts of complex carbohydrates & minerals such as iron, zinc, magnesium and potassium, which is as vital to the human body as it comes in natural form. This day, reminds us that greatness often grows quietly, just like pulses that enrich the soil while nourishing millions across the globe.

### History of world pulses day

The story of pulses is deeply rooted in human history. Archaeological evidence shows that legumes were cultivated as early as 10,000 years ago in regions such as the Fertile Crescent. The United Nations officially designated world pulses day after the success of the International year of pulses in 2016. Over centuries, pulses became staple foods across Asia, Africa, the Mediterranean, and the Americas. Long before modern agriculture and nutrition science, communities understood their value and relied on them for everyday sustenance. Recognizing the need to maintain global awareness about the benefits of pulses, the UN declared 10<sup>th</sup> February as world pulses day to encourage sustainable production and consumption worldwide. Historically, pulses have been cultivated for thousands of years. Despite their long history, pulses were often underestimated and overshadowed by cereals. This day was created to give pulses the recognition they truly deserve and promote a key solution to modern challenges such as malnutrition, climate change and food insecurity.

## Objectives of Celebrating World Pulses Day

1. To spread Awareness about the nutritional value of pulses and their role in balanced diet.
2. To promote sustainable agriculture by encouraging the cultivation of pulses which improves soil health naturally.
3. To support farmers, especially small and marginal farmers, by increasing demand and fair value for pulse crops.
4. To highlight the economic importance of pulses in national and global markets.

## Importance of pulses in human diet

Pulses play a vital role in human nutrition. They are often called the poor man's protein, but this phrase fails to capture their true excellence. Pulses are rich in plant based protein, dietary fibre, iron, potassium, foliate, and essential vitamins. Those people who do not eat meat or are vegetarians, for them Pulses are the best choice of food as it contains high amount of proteins or we can say that pulses are one of the most reliable sources of protein. They help in muscle development, tissue repair, and overall body growth. The high fibre content in pulses improves digestion; controls blood sugar levels and reduces the risk of heart diseases.

## Role of pulses in sustainable agriculture

One of the greatest strengths of pulses lies beneath the soil. Pulses have the unique ability to fix atmospheric nitrogen enriching soil fertility naturally. This reduces the need for chemical fertilisers, making agriculture more eco-friendly and cost effective. In the era of climate change, pulses are climate smart crops. They help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote sustainable farming practices. In our opinion, what appears modest in size plays an excellent role in protecting the environment. So for sure, in agricultural terms, pulses play one of the most important roles as far as Indian diet is concerned.

## Economic importance of pulses

Pulses significantly contribute to the agricultural economy, especially in countries like India. They provide stable income opportunities for farmers, particularly small holders, due to their low input costs and strong market demand. The global trade of pulses has grown steadily, supporting rural employment, food-processing industries etc. From local markets to international trade, pulses strengthen economic systems as well.

## Pulses and per capita nutritional security

Per capita availability of nutritious food is a key indicator of a nation's health. Pulses play a crucial role in improving per capita protein intake, especially in countries with large populations. By improving per capita nutrition, pulses contribute to a healthier workforce, reduce healthcare costs and long term national development.

## Theme Reflection: From Modesty to Excellence

The theme of world pulses day 2026, From Modesty to Excellence, carries a powerful message. As World Pulses Day 2026 approaches, it serves as a gentle yet powerful reminder that meaningful change does not always require complex solutions. Pulses teach us that value is not always loud or glamorous. Something simple, traditional, and often ignored can hold the key to excellence when understood deeply. From a small seed to a global solution, pulses symbolize resilience, sustainability and silent strength.

## Why world's pulses day matters

World pulses day is observed to recognize the collective efforts that keep society moving forward. It reminds us the true strength the pulses hold as the world lies not in visible achievements alone, but in the quiet dedication of those, whose work sustains life itself. Among them, farmers stand as one of the strongest symbols of resilience, responsibility, and commitment. It should be appreciated that their labour does not seek attention, yet it feeds millions of people across the globe.

Farmers represent the rhythm of consistency; preparing the whole field by taking measurements, removing weeds, pulverize the soil, level the field, then sowing, caring and harvesting season after season and importantly monitoring which is a big task there after also. Their work reflects the essence of modesty and excellence in their discipline and dedication. In our opinion for a younger generation, the life of a farmer offers a powerful lesson. It teaches the value of patience, hard work, and commitment without immediate rewards. World pulse day matters because it reconnects us with these foundational truths. When we honour the farmers, we honour the steady heartbeat of the world. Their hard work sustains communities, nourishes future generations and keeps the pulse of humanity alive. In this context by observing world pulse day, we acknowledge that progress begins at the root level and those roots are cultivated daily by farmers whose dedication deserves recognition, respect, and lots of appreciation.

## Conclusion

World Pulses Day is not just a celebration of a crop; it is a celebration of balance between Nature, Nutrition and Economy. As the world faces challenges like climate change, food insecurity, and rising health issues, pulses offer a simple yet excellent solution. Lastly, when we honour the hands that feed us, we honour the true pulse of humanity. The world moves forward not just through progress, but through the silent dedication of farmers who keeps its pulse alive.