

"International Year of Pulses" looking for increasing consumption and cultivation



In the past, legumes was the food of subsistence population. Linked to the consumption of people of mature and older, new generations do not include them in your favorite dishes. As culture is deficient in extension. Spain imports more than it produces. The objectives of the Association and the Government Legumbristas is recovering consumption being basic health and boost production of quality figures.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment (MAGRAMA) hosted the presentation of "International Year of 2016 Pulses" by FAO organized by the Association of Legumbristas of Spain (ALE) and that have drawn two clear conclusions: Legumes are basic to achieve a healthy diet and the need to increase consumption in Spain as it is every year further the recommendations of weekly intake of this staple food for health.

Secretary General of Agriculture and Food, Carlos Cabanas, was responsible for presenting the event, thanking the Association Legumbristas of Spain the initiative to present the "International

Year of 2016 Legumes" in the MAGRAMA itself, who has long been working to raise public awareness about the benefits of legumes, both from the food perspective of sustainable agriculture. Mr. Cabanas clearly had decided to increase production and consumption of these foods for their agronomic, environmental and nutritional importance.

Cabanas recalled that in Spain in 2015 consumed an average of 3.1 kilos of vegetables per person per year, mainly chickpeas, lentils and beans, a figure that would be desirable to increase as more and we are further from the vegetable intake recommendations .

Cabanas said the Ministry adds to the initiative of the International Year of Pulses and FAO, encouraging, within the framework of the CAP, the traditional production for human consumption, by a measurement of direct support to increase the 77,000 hectares of vegetables currently they planted in Spain and representing 38% of the total in the European Union. This surface gives a production around 66,000 tonnes, which is necessary to increase in the coming years.

Increase consumption

The president of the Association of Legumbristas of Spain (ALE), Guillermo Pedro García Luengo, was in charge of presenting the key objectives and messages marked by FAO for this International Year of Pulses which are summarized in the need to raise public awareness public about the valuable contribution of these foods to food security in the world and the importance of this crop in the fight against climate change.

García Luengo warned of the gradual decrease in consumption of legumes (10% in the last decade) and, what is worse, the replacement in the diet of the population under 40 years of this vital food for health and to maintain a Mediterranean diet by so-called "fast food", which is nutritionally very worrying in the medium and long term. To change this trend, from the Association of Legumbristas are clear that "The International Year of Pulses" should serve as a turning point and will come up a number of promotional activities both in traditional media and [online marketing](#),

which seek to younger audiences, dynamic, lover of sport and health-conscious, to pass on the many benefits of eating vegetables and how easy it can be to cook.

The objectives set by ALE medium and long term include recovering consumption of these legumes 3.1 kg per person per year to 4 kg; promote the cultivation of vegetables in Spain and increase the quality of production; improved through R & D + i, business presentations legumes for the consumer and offer new ways to make them easier to consume; and finally make progress with the Ministry of Education on the inclusion of legumes as one of the key so that schools receive the seal of "Healthy School" foods.

Also from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment are to develop a series of actions to promote legumes in this International Year, in order to increase consumption. Fernando Burgaz, director general of the Food Industry, highlighted the work lines that are following, with the axis of promoting [institutional web](#), where a banner of the "International Year of Pulses" appears on the cover, which will be available all year round, from where you can access a page with specific information about our vegetables and links to websites of interest related to this event.

Moreover, and within the #mediterraneamos campaign, about 40,000 schools nationwide receive content related legumes. In addition, the workshops in primary and secondary, is placing special emphasis on the importance of legumes in food and how are you form an essential part of the Mediterranean Diet Pyramid. Finally, legumes are very present this year in the activities planned in the stands of those themed food fairs in which the Ministry participates and activities aimed at consumers, media, experts, scheduled etc.

A food nutritionally key

This need to increase consumption was ratified by Gregorio Varela Moreiras, president of the Spanish Nutrition Foundation and Professor of Nutrition USP-CEU, which advanced some data from scientific report being prepared on legumes and to be presented within the framework of the Year International legumes. Gregorio Varela Moreiras was categorical in describing the importance of eating vegetables both within the Mediterranean diet, and the new Healthy Eating Pyramid.

The reasons are talking about a key food are many: legumes contain high in protein and fiber; They have very low sodium and sugar; They are high in iron, magnesium, potassium and phosphorus, besides being a source of zinc; about vitamins, they are high in folate and vitamin B1 besides being a source of niacin; and contribute very low percentage energy intake of the Spanish population.

According to the president of FEN, legumes respond in an exemplary manner if we analyze from

the new nutrition claims EFSA (European Food Safety Agency), both macronutrients, vitamins, minerals, etc. and it makes no sense that being the recommended 3-4 week in Spain portions not currently get or 1 serving half.

To end the presentation of this International Year of Pulses, Javier Alonso Ponga, Technical Direct the IGP Lentil Tierra de Campos, reviewed the panorama of quality brands vegetables in Spain, including two DO eight IGP and, now, it has a very low consumption due to lack of knowledge of the marks by consumers and by the need to increase production and improve marketing.

Source: ALE. MAGRAMA