2016 INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PULSES
Final Report
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INTRODUCTION

The United Nations’ designation of 2016 as the International Year of Pulses (IYP) helped raise awareness of the important role for beans, peas, chickpeas and lentils in healthy and sustainable diets worldwide.

In 2015 the global pulse industry set a target of increasing pulse consumption and production by 10% by 2020. IYP provided a platform for the industry to work toward this goal through initiatives aimed at:

- Building consumer awareness of the health, nutrition and sustainability benefits of pulses;
- Engaging researchers and policymakers in addressing knowledge gaps related to pulse nutrition, ingredient functionality and sustainability;
- Promoting pulse ingredient utilization to the food industry; and
- Improving market access to facilitate local, national and international trade.

Initiatives in these areas were driven by the Global Pulse Confederation through four international committees composed of experts in the areas of food science, human health, global trade, agriculture and environmental science. The Canadian pulse industry played a key role in many of these international activities, and also leveraged IYP to generate domestic awareness of pulses and their benefits.

This report summarizes the outcomes of international and Canadian IYP projects funded or led by the Canadian pulse industry.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Canada’s IYP initiatives were led by a steering committee of pulse industry representatives set up through the Pulse Industry Roundtable. The committee was chaired by Allison Ammeter, past-Chair of the Alberta Pulse Growers. Special recognition is due to Allison and the members of this committee who volunteered their time to ensure IYP would have a lasting impact in Canada.

Canada’s role in IYP activities both nationally and globally was made possible through financial and in-kind support from the private sector as well as non-profit organizations and federal funding agencies. A full list of these stakeholders can be found at the end of this report.

CREATING AWARENESS AND BUILDING DEMAND

A key goal of IYP was to raise consumer awareness of the health, nutrition and sustainability benefits of pulses. The pulse industry’s target was to reach a global audience of 40 million by the end of 2016. Global and national industry-led marketing initiatives for IYP had a combined total reach1 of well over 4 billion.

Pulse Feast and Global Pulse Day

IYP celebrations kicked off in 36 countries with a Pulse Feast. Over 141 Pulse Feast events were held worldwide on January 6, 2016, generating 21 million social media impressions1. In Canada there were 33 Pulse Feast celebrations ranging from a corporate lunch in Vancouver to an event at a bookstore in Winnipeg held by Manitoba Pulse and Soybean Growers. More than 180 Canadian journalists, chefs, dietitians and bloggers joined Chef Michael Smith at a reception in Toronto that featured a pulse market, interactive displays and a spread of creative pulse dishes by local Chef Ivana Raca. Hosted by Saskatchewan Pulse Growers and Ontario Bean Growers, the event generated national coverage in online and print media including the Globe and Mail, CBC’s the National, Global News, the Toronto Star and Sun News Network.

In 2017, Pulse Feast expanded into Global Pulse Day, which was the first in what will hopefully become an annual day dedicated to recognizing the important benefits of pulse production and consumption. Global Pulse Day was celebrated on January 18, 2017 and resulted in 225 events in 63 countries, generating 62 million social media impressions. The global pulse industry hopes to make Global Pulse Day on January 18 an annual campaign, and one of the legacies of IYP.

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1 Total reach refers to the number of people exposed to marketing activities such as social media posts and advertisements, YouTube videos, earned news media stories, websites and events.

2 Impressions refer to the number of times social media content or online advertisements are displayed on a follower’s screen or social media feed.
News Media and #LovePulses Social Media Campaign

As part of the effort to raise consumer awareness about pulses, a global media campaign was launched. In total, the media campaign had a reach of 4.6 billion throughout IYP. The campaign focused heavily on social media engagement which resulted in 643 million impressions worldwide. IYP and pulses were also featured in more than 2,350 news and lifestyle media stories throughout the year.

Pulses.org

Pulses.org was launched November 2015 in conjunction with the UN’s official opening ceremony for IYP. Pulses.org is the main global consumer facing resource for information about pulses and their many benefits to human and environmental health. The website is also a hub of information for consumers around the world to introduce pulses into their diets through factsheets and videos, a global recipe database, tips on cooking with pulses, and a news feed of pulse-related social media posts.

Pulses.org is home to the searchable product database for consumers looking to find products that contain pulses and feature the Pulse Brand’s ‘Made with Pulses’ seal. Pulses.org is the primary tool to introduce the Pulse Brand to pulse and food industry. The site holds the online registration process for companies and organizations interested in becoming Pulse Brand Members.

Pulses.org was visited by over 305,000 unique consumers in 2016. In 2017 and beyond, the website will continue to be used as a key tool for communicating the benefits of pulses to consumers.
North American Consumer Campaign

Global efforts to promote pulses were complemented by a consumer promotion campaign in North America that launched in January 2016. The North American campaign uses a combination of platforms – including earned media, social media, online advertising, and partnerships with over 200 bloggers and influencers – to target millennial consumers in the US and Canada. A key element of the campaign was the launch of the Pulse Pledge, a call to action that encouraged consumers to add pulses to their diet once a week for 10 weeks. By December 31, more than 54,000 individuals from Canada, the US and beyond had taken the Pledge, and nearly 1 million consumers visited the Pulse Pledge website. Overall the North American consumer promotion campaign had a total reach of over 3.4 billion in 2016. Consumer promotion in the US and Canada continues in 2017 and is one of the legacies of IYP.

Partnerships with Canadian Influencers

In Canada, partnerships with prominent media personalities and social figures helped spread the reach of IYP to Canadians.

Chef Michael Smith of the Food Network Canada was the official IYP Ambassador for Canada. In addition to hosting Canada’s Pulse Feast, Chef Smith also hosted the #FamiliesLovePulses Twitter party on August 18. The party, which focused on tips and ideas for incorporating pulses into family-friendly meals, generated thousands of tweets and was trending on Twitter in Canada. The Tweets generated by the party reached 3.2 million unique individuals.

Chef Smith also hosted an event in Toronto on October 14 to celebrate World Food Day and explore the role for pulses in promoting human and planetary health. The event featured presentations by experts in the areas of pulse sustainability, nutrition and food science. The event generated coverage by CTV National News, Breakfast Television Toronto and CBC Radio-Canada in Charlottetown. These news stories reached a combined audience of over 1 million Canadians.

Reputable dietitians including Sue Mah and Laurie Barker Jackman drew attention to IYP and pulses on morning television programs across the country like CTV Morning Live, Breakfast Television and CTV’s Your Morning. Pulses were also promoted by dozens of well-known Canadian bloggers including Julie Van Rosendaal of Dinner with Julie, Abbey Sharp of Abbey’s Kitchen and Angela Liddon, blogger and author of Oh She Glows. Angela and 10 other Canadian bloggers also celebrated Global Pulse Day on January 18 by sharing collections of pulse recipes and key messages about the health, nutrition and sustainability benefits of pulses with their followers.
School Programs

A series of educational materials were developed by the global pulse industry to teach school-aged children about pulses. These materials were adapted by Agriculture in the Classroom Canada (AITC) for use in Canadian elementary, middle and high schools. The lesson plans reached over 39,000 students and 19,000 educators in Canada.

Additional educational activities for IYP occurred throughout the country:

• Roughly 400 schools in Alberta planted pulse seeds through AITC’s Little Green Thumbs gardening program;
• 6,000 students, teachers and parents in Saskatchewan learned about the importance of pulses in maintaining a healthy diet;
• Manitoba Pulse and Soybean Growers’ mascot Kid Bean visited 900 students during Canadian Ag Literacy Week. MPSG also hosted the Why Pulses? Challenge which encouraged Manitoba students to create events or projects celebrating pulses;
• Nova Scotia, PEI and Newfoundland reached a combined total of over 3,000 students with pulse-related programming, and;
• In Ontario, a live-stream lecture on pulses and climate change reached 50 schools and over 900 viewers.

The success of this initiative led to interest on behalf of AITC in continuing its partnership with the pulse industry. During 2016 AITC expanded its programming to reach 1 million teachers and students across 10 Canadian provinces.

Travelling Exhibit

The Canada Agriculture and Food Museum, located in Ottawa, created an interactive exhibit called Pulses: the Ideal Partner to highlight the benefits of pulse production and consumption, and to illustrate the history of Canada’s pulse industry. Developed with families in mind, the exhibit travelled across the country teaching Canadians why pulses are the ideal partner for their health, the environment and the Canadian economy.

During IYP, Pulses: the Ideal Partner visited 20 venues in 16 Canadian cities including Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal, Quebec City and Fredericton. The exhibit was on display at local libraries, museums, shopping malls and events like the Calgary Stampede and the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair. Overall, an estimated 600,000 Canadians took in the exhibit. Its tour finished at Port Metro Vancouver in January 2017.

The Canada Agriculture and Food Museum also developed four pulse recipes which were downloaded 4,142 times from the museum’s website in 2016. 3,104 consumers also experienced cooking with pulses through 170 workshops held at the museum during IYP.

Pulses: the Ideal Partner will continue travelling during 2017. A local museum in Ontario has expressed interest in providing a long-term home for the display after 2017.
Supporting Food Literacy Programs

The Canadian pulse industry leveraged IYP to partner with Community Food Centres Canada (CFCC), an organization that helps low-income Canadians grow, cook, share and advocate for healthy foods. CFCC provides resources and strategic direction to meal programs, food banks, community kitchens and after-school cooking programs across the country. These types of initiatives help thousands of Canadians access healthy food in a safe and dignified setting. They also enable Canadians to gain the skills needed to make healthier and more sustainable dietary choices.

As part of the IYP partnership, CFCC made pulses a bigger part of their programming by working with their participants to develop healthy and affordable recipes using pulses. These recipes are now used in FoodFit, a 12-week program that helps Canadians lead a healthier, more active lifestyle. CFCC also held a nation-wide recipe development contest called the Act on ImPULSE Challenge to demonstrate how pulses can easily be incorporated into any meal. Some of these recipes are featured in a co-branded cookbook developed by Pulse Canada and CFCC, which has been shared with CFCC’s 100+ partner organizations throughout Canada.

In 2016, CFCC’s FoodFit program received $1.2 million in funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada. CFCC will use this grant to expand the FoodFit program to help thousands more Canadians from coast to coast access healthy foods like pulses.

ENGAGING RESEARCHERS AND POLICYMAKERS

Another major objective of IYP was to encourage global researchers and policymakers to engage with and invest in research related to pulse nutrition, sustainability and food ingredient applications. Collaborations between the pulse industry and leading experts in these areas resulted in several events, research papers and online resources that will help address knowledge gaps with respect to pulses. Industry efforts also led to funding from the International Development Research Centre to produce a ten-year research strategy for pulse crops.

Little Beans, Big Opportunities

On November 19, 2015 the first UN-endorsed IYP Signature Event was held at the New York Academy of Sciences (NYAS). The scientific conference was titled Little Beans, Big Opportunities: Realizing the Potential of Pulses to Meet Today’s Global Health Challenges. Hosted by the Sackler Institute for Nutrition Science at the NYAS, the conference brought together representatives from UN agencies, health organizations, research foundations, academia and the private sector to discuss the potential for pulses to address global health, nutrition and sustainability challenges. Presentation slides and audio from the conference are available on the NYAS website.

Special Issue of the Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences

In March, 2017, the New York Academy of Sciences published a special issue of the Annals journal dedicated to pulses with papers authored by several presenters from the Little Beans, Big Opportunities scientific conference. Topics include the contribution pulses can play in meeting nutritional needs in the first 1,000 days3, the role of pulses in sustainable and healthy food systems, evidence for pulses and cardiometabolic health and positioning pulses in dietary guidelines.

3 The first 1,000 days refers to the period between a woman’s pregnancy and her child’s second birthday, during which time nutrition can have a profound impact on a child’s future health.
Launch of a Global Pulse Nutrition Database

A new database provides nutritional information for 16 types of pulses using data from 186 publications. Developed by the UN’s International Network of Food Data Systems (INFOODS) through funding from the pulse industry, the database is a valuable tool for estimating the contribution of pulses to nutrient intakes and food formulations. The first edition of the database was launched in January 2017 and is available online through the INFOODS website.

Sustainability Literature Review and Key Messages

The global pulse industry conducted a literature review of research on the environmental sustainability benefits of pulse crops. The literature review helps reinforce global marketing messages with scientifically sound evidence, and also provides a snapshot of the knowledge gaps that exist within this area. The literature review was used to support the development of a 10-year research strategy, as well as the development of a framework to evaluate the sustainability benefits of pulse crops. Pulse Canada is working toward publishing the literature review so that it can be accessed by the academic community.

Pulse Crops and Sustainability: A Framework to Evaluate Multiple Benefits

A report was developed by global experts in agriculture and sustainability to help the food industry, government policymakers and researchers understand the impact of pulses on human and environmental health. The report uses two geographic case studies of pulse production in Sub-Saharan Africa and Saskatchewan to develop a framework for evaluating the economic, social and environmental benefits of pulse production in different geographic, agro-ecological and economic contexts. The report highlights how pulses have contributed to the economic, social and environmental sustainability of Sub-Saharan Africa and Saskatchewan. The full report is available online at iyp2016.org.

Experimental Biology 2016

The North American pulse industry partnered with the World Food Center at UC Davis, one of the top-ranked universities in the world for food and agriculture, to host a lunch session at the 2016 Experimental Biology research conference on April 2. Experimental Biology is a major conference for scientists studying nutrition and physiology. More than 200 scientists attended the session, which focused on opportunities for pulse research. Speakers discussed a range of topics such as dietary guidelines, health claims, climate change and human health outcomes. The session generated interest among researchers in holding similar sessions and workshops focused on pulses in the future.

Food as Medicine Initiative

A collaboration between Diabetes Canada, St. Michael’s Hospital, the University of Toronto and the Canadian pulse industry resulted in the development of the Food as Medicine initiative. The initiative was launched in May and provides Canadian medical professionals with evidence-based information regarding the impact of food and dietary patterns on disease prevention. The initiative’s website, foodasmed.ca, contains research articles and other educational resources on the health effects of pulse consumption. The University of Toronto is investigating the potential to obtain continuing medical education accreditation for the project.
Sessions at Health Conferences

The Canadian pulse industry presented sessions on the role of pulses in sustainable nutrition and healthy diets at conferences hosted by the Canadian Nutrition Society, Dietitians of Canada, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Food Matters UK, and the Australian Grains and Legumes Nutrition Council. Dr. John Sievenpiper with St. Michael’s Hospital also presented on the role of pulses in traditional diets at the Indigenous Health Conference.

Pulse Day on the Hill

In March, Pulse Canada staff and directors travelled to Ottawa to meet with elected officials and departmental representatives about pulse industry priorities including transportation, market access, health, nutrition and sustainability. Meetings also introduced the concept of transforming Canada’s food system to take a multi-sectoral approach to collectively address the health of Canadians, the health of the environment and the health of Canada’s economy. The three days included 32 meetings with MPs and Senators, an appearance before the Senate Standing Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, an evening reception for MPs, Senators and parliamentary staff, and eight meetings with departmental staff from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

FOOD INDUSTRY OUTREACH

A third goal of IYP was to promote utilization of pulses in food products and on foodservice menus by communicating the nutrition, affordability and sustainability benefits of pulses. The global pulse industry aimed for a 10% increase in food products containing pulse ingredients by the end of 2016. Early results show that in Canada and the USA alone, launches of pulse-containing products grew by 31% between 2015 and 2016.

The Pulse Brand

The Pulse Brand was introduced to the pulse trade at the 2015 World Pulses Convention in Las Vegas. The remainder of 2015 focused on the development of a global management structure, administrative procedures, implementing a marketing strategy and facilitating outreach. Support materials were developed such as the Pulse Brand User Guide, Fact Sheet and Graphic Standards to promote the Pulse Brand Membership program.

2016 was a year of rapid growth for the Pulse Brand. To build recognition, companies and organizations were encouraged to use the Pulse Brand for IYP-related activities.

In 2016 the Pulse Brand’s ‘Made with Pulses’ seal became available for food companies and ingredient suppliers to use on product packaging. During 2016 the Pulse Brand was being used in almost all IYP activities, over 30 companies paid to use the Pulse Brand and 5 companies had the ‘Made with Pulses’ seal on product packaging. Princes Food and Drink in the UK featured the seal on over 82 million cans, while JM Grain included it on hundreds of thousands of wholesale bags. AGT also highlighted the seal in their wholesale of King Red Lentils and in late 2016 began including it on dried and canned Clic pulse products. In Canada, Weston Foods and Overwaitea both launched new pulse bread products that featured the seal on packaging and in promotional activities.

The Pulse Brand was a cornerstone of IYP and moving forward it will anchor a globally coordinated effort to promote pulses. The 2017 Pulse Brand Membership is available for $1,500 USD and companies can sign-up online through pulses.org.

Pulse Brand Promotion at the IFT Expo

The Pulse Brand was featured prominently at the Institute of Food Technologists Expo in July 2016. The Expo’s 20,000 attendees were exposed to the Pulse Brand through a booth on the trade show floor, promotion on the Expo’s website and an advertisement the Expo guide. A side event for food industry and trade media demonstrated the value of the Pulse Brand and ‘Made with Pulses’ seal as tools to generate consumer awareness of pulses, increase pulse consumption and help consumers identify food products containing pulse ingredients. The event generated media coverage in 12 trade publications including Canadian Grocer, Whole Foods Magazine, Food Business News and Food in Canada for a total reach of 1.1 million. Major food companies present at the event included General Mills, Hershey, ADM, AGT Food and Ingredients, Bush Brothers, Ingredient Alliance, and Mondelez.
LovePulses Product Showcase

To encourage the development of new and innovative food products featuring pulses, a global food development competition was hosted by the pulse industry. National competitions took place in seven countries including Ethiopia, India, Canada, Australia, USA, UK and Morocco. Individuals from other countries wishing to participate were able to do so through a virtual competition. Over 1,200 people participated in the LovePulses Product Showcase.

The top seven products developed were presented to food industry and food scientists at a live event held at the IFT Expo in Chicago on July 19. The event was hosted by Georgie Aley, CEO of the Australian Institute of Food Science and Technology. A video of the event is available on the IFT website, and the Showcase was covered by the Huffington Post, the Edmonton Journal, Al Jazeera, FoodNavigator USA and Food in Canada.

Canadian Pulse Ingredient Workshops

In 2016 a two-part workshop series held in Canada helped communicate the benefits of pulses as value-added ingredients to food industry professionals. Part one of the series, Practical Use of Pulse Ingredients in Healthy Foods, was hosted by the Canadian International Grains Institute (Cigi) in Winnipeg April 26-28. Cigi staff and guest speakers shared expertise in the areas of pulse flour milling, dry and wet fractionation, and innovations in pulse processing for Asian noodles and baked goods. The sequel, Processing Pulse Ingredients for Food Applications, was held in Saskatoon September 20-22, and included live demonstrations of extrusion technology at the Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre and fractionation technology at POS Bio-Sciences. Attendance at both workshop was at maximum capacity, and attendees included food companies, academia, government researchers and pulse ingredient suppliers.

The Alberta Government’s Food Processing Development Centre, together with the Alberta Pulse Growers, presented 11 newly developed innovative products using pulses at three Alberta Pulse showcase events in November 2016. The events were attended by processors as well as representatives from foodservice, retail, healthcare organizations and pulse ingredient suppliers. Industry partners are well on their way to commercializing pulse based products like gluten-free licorice and grain-free dog treats made with pulse ingredients!

Pulses at the Restaurants Canada Show and CAFP Conference

Pulses were featured at Canada’s largest foodservice event, the February 2016 Restaurants Canada Show. At the event, culinary demonstrations helped communicate the versatility of pulse ingredients to attendees. A pulse booth on the show floor enabled pulse industry representatives to connect with hundreds of foodservice representatives and gain insight into the opportunities to position pulses as affordable and healthy menu offerings.

A cooking demonstration also took place at the Canadian Association of Foodservice Professionals national conference in May 2016.
MARKET ACCESS AND STABILITY

Access to international markets is critical for continued profitability and growth of the global pulse industry. Creating greater efficiencies by ensuring open access to markets and predictability of trade is beneficial to all members of the value chain, from farmers to the end consumer. The industry leveraged IYP to work on improving market access to facilitate local, national and international trade.

The Canadian pulse industry helped facilitate the development of an IYP advocacy strategy for Codex Alimentarius to play an enabling role in the global trade of agricultural products, seeking Codex process improvements and reforms to ensure the continued production and trade of safe, high-quality and diverse food in an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable way. Advocacy and outreach activities took place in numerous Codex and other international forums, including the FAO Committee on Commodity Problems, a WTO Sanitary/Phytosanitary Workshop on Maximum Residue Limits, the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues, and the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

A key outcome of this work was to have succeeded in transitioning the initial IYP market access coalition into a global, multi-commodity and self-sustaining coalition that will continue Codex-related advocacy work into the future. Beyond 2016, the coalition will be housed under the International Agri-Food Network (IAFN), and will work jointly to influence long-term, large-scale Codex capacity and process improvements that lead to efficient, science-based and trade-enabling policies by coordinating all agricultural interests across livestock, field crops, horticulture and other interested parties. Currently, the coalition consists of 18 members and nine observers, including international grower and trade organizations for pulse crops, spices, tea, citrus, livestock vaccines and others.

CONCLUSION: Measuring Success and Shaping the Future

A key legacy of IYP was the unprecedented global attention given to pulses. Messages about pulses being a healthy, sustainable and affordable food option reached billions of people including consumers, researchers and political leaders.

As some of these activities continue, such as the North American marketing campaign, a performance measurement plan will ensure that marketing efforts are leading to increased pulse consumption. Through focus groups, omnibus surveys and market research data, Pulse Canada is monitoring changes in consumer awareness, consumption levels, and the availability of food products containing pulses. In a June 2016 survey, 36% of Canadian consumers and 49% of US consumers indicated that they had seen or heard about something related to pulses in the media or in advertising since January 2016. 28% of Canadian consumers and 36% of US consumers believe that what they saw or read about pulses has led to an increase in pulse consumption. In a survey of consumers who have taken the Pulse Pledge, 75% indicated that they are eating more pulses and 99% said they plan to continue eating pulses.

Consumer research is also helping the pulse industry develop a substantial base of knowledge on pulse marketing messages that resonate best with consumers. This knowledge will help support companies and organizations who are members of the Pulse Brand as they market their pulse-based food products.

Another important legacy of IYP both in Canada and globally was the collaboration it engendered within the pulse industry and with other stakeholders. The projects described in this report enabled the pulse industry to engage with food industry, researchers, media, healthcare organizations, NGOs, universities, governments and many other players that are integral components of the food value chain. As the global pulse industry continues toward a 10% increase in pulse consumption and production by 2020, these stakeholders will help keep pulses in focus.

In December 2016 Pulse Canada set a new goal for the Canadian pulse industry to create new demand in new use categories for 25% of its productive capacity by the year 2025. The new demand target is the cornerstone of the industry’s sustainable growth strategy which includes a focus on providing disruptive solutions to global challenges such as food security, incidence of obesity and diabetes, increasing healthcare costs and the environmental impact of food production.

The journey to 25 by 2025 will ensure pulses play a role in promoting healthy, sustainable and affordable diets for the world’s growing population.
APPENDIX:
Funders and Supporters of IYP

Canada’s involvement in IYP was the result of funding and in-kind support from the following stakeholders:

ADM
AGT Foods
Agricom
Agriculture in the Classroom Canada
Agrimonde Pulses Inc.
Agrocorp International
Agro-Haribec Inc.
Alberta Crop Industry Development Fund
Alberta Pulse Growers
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Best Cooking Pulses
Buhler Group
Canada Agriculture and Food Museum
Canadian Diabetes Association
Canadian International Grains Institute
Canadian Special Crops Association
Community Food Centres Canada
Farm Credit Canada
Gedco
Global Pulse Confederation
Health Canada
Hilary Druxman
Manitoba Food Development Centre
Manitoba Pulse and Soybean Growers
Novozymes
Ontario Bean Growers
Perten Instruments
POS Bio-Sciences
Pulse Canada
Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre
Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture
Saskatchewan Pulse Growers
Saskatoon Health Region
St. Michael’s Hospital
University of Toronto
USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council
Western Economic Diversification
World Food Centre

Thank you to all those who helped make IYP a success.