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Probably only a few Hungarian families would fail to meet “the pulse challenge” – eating at least one dish based on dried lentils, beans or peas every week.

Yet, while robust lentil or bean soups are staples of the national cuisine, those dried seeds of leguminous plants struggle with an image problem. They are seldom treated as a healthy ingredient with almost endless potential.

This week the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture has convened an expert conference dedicated to unleashing some of that potential. The event – organized in collaboration with relevant institutions, research centres, academia, the private sector, and FAO – is a contribution to the International Year of Pulses, a global effort to highlight the nutritional benefits of pulses as part of sustainable food production and nutrition.

“The International Year of Pulses 2016 is currently in full swing,” said FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative Vladimir Rakhmanin in his opening remarks. “Pulses are not only healthful and delicious. They preserve soil fertility and help us move forward with the global sustainable development agenda.”

Sándor Fazekas, Minister of Agriculture in Hungary, emphasized the role of pulses in both human nutrition and as livestock fodder, and shared data on the production of leguminous crops in Hungary.

Challenges in pulse production, protecting genetic resources, international trade in pulses, and pulses from the consumer perspective are some of the other topics addressed in the conference’s programme. A photo exhibition, food tasting and display of pulses are also included.

The year 2016 was designated International Year of Pulses by the United Nations General Assembly, with FAO named as lead agency for the year-long awareness-raising effort.

Read the full story on the [webpage of the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia](#).

This news item is part of a Partner Spotlight on [Food and Agriculture Organization](#) of the UN (26-30 September). FAO is a [Partner in GFAR](#) and a [GFAR Facilitating Agency](#).

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GFAR supports the [International Year of Pulses 2016](#) which aims to heighten public awareness of the nutritional benefits of pulses as part of sustainable food production aimed towards food security and nutrition.

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