Pulses, in technical terms, are the dry, edible seeds of plants in the legume family. In understandable terms, they’re a category of superfoods that includes chickpeas, lentils, dry peas, and dry beans. They’re incredibly healthy, which is one reason the United Nations declared 2016 as the International Year of Pulses.

**Here’s how pulses pack such a nutritional punch that they’re considered both a protein and a vegetable:**

- **Protein-packed:** They contain up to 9 grams of protein per ½ cup cooked serving—twice the protein of quinoa. And unlike many protein-rich foods, pulses are low in fat.

- **Beneficial for disease prevention:** Pulses have been shown to improve blood sugar control and reduce blood cholesterol and blood pressure, thus reducing the risk factors for heart disease and diabetes.

- **Good for dietary restrictions:** Being gluten-free and vegetarian makes them a good option for people with special diets, allergies or sensitivities.

- **Nutrients galore:** Pulses deliver high levels of potassium, magnesium, zinc, B vitamins and iron. One serving of black beans has 1.5 times the amount of iron as flank steak, plus three times the folate (an essential B vitamin) of kale, and as much potassium as a banana. Even more, red kidney beans are loaded with more antioxidants than blueberries or pomegranate juice.

- **High in fiber:** Pulses are high in both soluble and insoluble fiber, helping with staying regular, losing weight, and feeling fuller longer.

- **Smart source of folate:** Pulses are excellent sources of folate, a B vitamin important during pregnancy to reduce the risk for neural tube birth defects. Folate is also essential to brain development and function.

**For more information:**
Visit [www.pulses.org](http://www.pulses.org) now and [www.pulsepledge.com](http://www.pulsepledge.com) beginning January 1, 2016, or contact Josie Curtis, Maxwell PR | [josie@maxwellpr.com](mailto:josie@maxwellpr.com) / 503.231.3086