2016 marks the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization’s International Year of Pulses – a celebration of the importance of these legumes.

Pulses are a valued agricultural crop due to their high seed protein and mineral content and their role in sustainable agricultural practices through a nitrogen-fixing symbiosis with soil bacteria called rhizobia.

Even though pulses are grown and consumed in most regions of the globe, they currently deliver less than 3% of global basic food supplies, which predominantly comes from wheat, maize, rice and soybean.

Since the 1960s, a 200-800% increase in cereal and oilseed yields has been achieved (FAO, 2014), while pulses have only achieved a 54% increase in production over the same period. This lack of growth is primarily due to limited commercial and industrial interest in pulses, in what is commonly considered a ‘specialty crop’ within the general agricultural sector. As continual cropping focuses attention towards sustainable production choices, pulses offer an opportunity to growers to meet this criteria as well as diversify and expand annual plantings.

Coming from a low base, pulses stand at the precipice of achieving rapid expansion in both productivity and quality through targeted research investment.

Australia produces around 3.5% of the global pulse crop (~$1.1 billion AUS), with the majority of commodities being
exported to India, North Africa and Europe. Expanding sustainable pulse production will help to meet the challenges of food production and environmental sustainability.

**On the Pulse** brings together domestic and international researchers to discuss strategies and advances that are future proofing pulse agriculture, focusing on three themes: pulse diversity, pulse benefits to agronomy and genetic pulse sustainability.

– **Associate Professor Brent N. Kaiser**, Chair, 2016 Research Symposium

Visiting symposium presenters include:

**Professor Douglas R. Cook**,  
University of California, Davis USA.  
Director, Feed the Future Innovation Lab - Climate Resilient Chickpea

**Professor Peter M. Gresshoff**,  
University of Queensland.  
Professor of Plant Molecular Genetics and Director, Centre for Integrative Legume Research

**Dr Kristy Hobson**,  
NSW Department of Primary Industries.  
Chickpea Breeder

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**Event details**

**On the Pulse:**  
Faculty of Agriculture and Environment Research Symposium 2016  
Tuesday 12 July 2016  
8.15am – 6.00pm  
Veterinary Science Conference Centre  
University of Sydney [Map](#)

[Register here](#)