

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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## **Bulgaria**

**Post:** Sofia

### **Legumes Sector Update**

**Report Categories:**

Product Brief

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**Report Highlights:**

Market demand, consumption and trade in legumes in Bulgaria are increasing. The market is diversifying and demand for higher quality product grows. This opens good opportunities for U.S. exporters to explore the local market where the prospects for growth and development in the near future remain very good.

## **General Information:**

### **Local Market and Demand**

Dry beans and lentils are a traditional part of the local cuisine. Bulgarian consumers consider both products nutritional, healthy and a good choice for family dining. Beans and lentils are preferred for at home consumption versus out of home.

Locally produced dry beans are usually white in color, with variation in size but most consumers appreciate larger size beans. Locally produced lentils are brown and only in recent years consumers have been exposed to green and red lentils.

In recent years retailers and HRI sector development offered the market a good choice of products of various origin, in new recipes and in new combinations with other foods. Although Bulgarians are rather conservative in their culinary choices, they like trying new variations of familiar products and in new formulations, if not drastically different from traditional products. Thus Pinto beans found a good market niche, along with some new types of lentils.

Total market size is hard to estimate due to lack of official data. Dry beans consumption is estimated at 36,000 MT - 39,000 MT, based on household consumption at home and excluding out of home demand. Most industry estimates for total market size are 40,000 MT-45,000 MT including all market channels. Estimates for lentils are 22,000 MT for at home consumption, with a total 25,000 MT for the entire market.

Average per capita consumption of dry beans has been growing steadily (Table 2). For about 10 years prior to 2010, average per capita consumption was reported to be at 3.9-4.0 kg annually. Since 2010 it has been at 4.9 kg with some decline in 2012 and 2013 to 4.5 kg due to economic struggles. Similarly, per capita consumption of lentils has been at 1.8-1.9 kg before 2010 and climbed to 2.7-2.9 kg since 2010 to date. Unlike dry beans, lentils consumption in 2013 was 7% higher vs 2012.

Data about household purchases shows that the dry beans market is still price sensitive regarding at-home consumption (Table 3). Purchased quantities have declined along with sharper growth in prices since 2010. Slower growth in lentils' prices in 2010-2013 allowed for the building of more stable and higher annual per capita consumption of lentils from 5.2 kg to 5.5 kg in 2013.

In 2013, Bulgaria received 18 million Euro from the EC to provide food aid in packages with staple food to needy people. Funds were managed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Paying Agency through tenders for suppliers as per EC Regulation 1020/2012. Imported foods from non-EU countries were also eligible provided that they meet safety and quality criteria. The program's funds covered: product cost, transportation cost for the distribution of food packages locally; and local storage and handing cost. Approved suppliers (local producers or importers) had to deliver the products to the Red Cross which prepared food packages and distributed them to end-beneficiaries. Beneficiaries were identified as 332,000 people. In 2013 the program included 11 food items such as dry beans – 2.03 kg/person and lentils – 4.08 kg/person. Total volume distributed under the program was 672 MT of dry beans and 1,354 MT of lentils. The program was executed by 26 approved companies-suppliers.

## Local production and supply

Local production of legumes has declined sharply from much higher levels in the past to small production volumes over the last 5 years (Table 1). Farmers grow legumes mainly for improvement of crop rotation practices and have challenges supplying commercial lots and providing consistency in quality and quantity. In addition, local production genetics are outdated. In the period 2009-2013 local dry bean supplies were estimated to meet less than 5 percent of consumption and local lentil supply meets about 5-12 percent of consumption.

### Agricultural Policy

Bulgaria has no special policies to support legumes crops. It is widely believed that they are excellent crops for crop rotation and for soil fertility, with good market prospects and have the position to be a good source of income for farmers.

During the last 5 years legumes could not compete with grains and oilseeds crops which enjoyed much higher subsidies (EU single area payment scheme). For the future period 2014-2020, Bulgaria declared to the EC that it will allocate the maximum allowed funds for coupled support (2 percent of total domestic support package) to be provided for subsidies for protein crops. The notification was made by the Cabinet in the last week of July and did not contain any details. Reportedly, this support will be provided to all farmers nationwide and will cover crops such as dry beans, peas and lentils. However, specific amounts, rates per crop or area, and other details such as the full list of eligible crops, should be formulated later this year.

**Table 1. Production of dry beans, lentils, garden peas and chickpeas in 2009-2013**

<b>Bulgarian production of dry beans, lentils, garden peas and chickpeas in 2009-2013</b>						
	<b>2001</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
<b>Dry beans</b>						
HA	10,760	1,688	1,409	954	1,541	1,034
MT	10,816	1,680	2,075	985	1,622	1,125
<b>Lentils</b>						
HA	912	1,977	2,879	1,686	1,411	1,282
MT	959	1,607	2,672	1,866	1,730	1,302
<b>Garden Peas</b>						
HA	803	959	784	1,683	535	899
MT	2,179	4,973	5,632	10,231	1,508	3,886
<b>Chickpeas</b>						
HA	2,925	1,600	911	1,676	1,055	2,024
MT	3,972	2,752	1,035	1,717	1,802	3,090

*Source: Bulgarian Ministry of Agriculture, Statistical Bulletins*

**Table 2. Per capita consumption of dry beans and lentils, 1999-2013, Bulgaria, in kilograms per year**

Per capita consumption of dry beans and lentils, 1999-2013, Bulgaria, in kilograms per year		
Years	Dry Beans	Lentils
1999	3.9	1.4
2000	3.6	1.4
2001	3.7	1.6
2002	3.9	1.6
2003	4.0	1.6
2004	4.2	1.8
2005	4.1	1.8
2006	4.0	1.8
2007	3.9	1.9
2008	3.9	1.9
2009	3.9	1.9
2010	4.9	2.6
2011	4.9	2.7
2012	4.5	2.7
2013	4.5	2.9

Source: National Statistical Institute

**Table 3. Household purchases in kilograms and at an average price per a kilo in U.S. Dollars**

Household purchases in kilograms and at an average price per a kilo in US\$									
	2010			2011		2012		2013	
		kg	US\$/kg	kg	US\$/kg	kg	US\$/kg	kg	US\$/kg
Dry beans	Kg	9.9	1.8	9.9	1.9	8.9	2.0	8.5	2.4
Lentils	kg	5.2	1.6	5.3	1.7	5.2	1.7	5.5	1.8

Source: National Statistical Institute

**Table 4. Imports of Dry Beans 2008-2013 (WTA)**

Bulgaria Import Statistics						
Commodity: 0713, Leguminous Vegetables, Dried Shelled						
Annual Series: 2008 – 2013						
Partner Country	U. D. \$					
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
World	16,958,090	16,671,242	16,233,265	15,110,056	21,278,846	25,480,619
Kyrgyzstan	1,949,734	2,705,660	3,183,126	3,873,564	4,730,510	6,814,937
Canada	2,444,758	2,037,049	2,575,912	2,591,900	2,149,668	4,852,746
Ethiopia	971,325	517,535	761,752	661,453	3,469,224	4,304,481
China	4,990,984	5,730,241	2,275,429	4,773,862	3,542,835	3,807,490
Turkey	1,179,931	604,487	296,112	665,024	547,738	1,222,162
Argentina	2,215,227	1,722,905	3,997,457	905,549	2,314,699	982,431
Poland	9,843	94,457	98,932	250,487	447,487	665,571
Russia	0	229,913	0	267,296	753,870	656,552
Hungary	5,352	135,537	79,634	7,250	322,718	502,436

<b>Egypt</b>	1,837,077	2,319,697	1,514,146	260,169	1,614,829	475,243
<b>United States</b>	0	0	0	338,035	0	243,040
<b>Peru</b>	157,432	28,951	0	0	0	159,645
<b>Romania</b>	357	89,355	809,556	4,189	63,372	119,286
<b>Moldova</b>	0	0	0	12,331	8,572	119,098

**Table 5. Imports of Dry Beans January- May 2014 (WTA)**

<b>Bulgaria Import Statistics</b>							
<b>Commodity: 0713, Leguminous Vegetables, Dried Shelled</b>							
<b>Year To Date: January - May</b>							
<b>Partner Country</b>	<b>U.S.\$</b>			<b>% Share</b>			<b>% Change</b>
	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2014/2013</b>
<b>World</b>	7,392,970	10,233,158	13,262,832	100.0	100.0	100.0	29.6
<b>Canada</b>	1,254,781	1,887,332	4,272,576	17.0	18.4	32.2	126.4
<b>Ethiopia</b>	545,513	1,538,777	3,167,441	7.4	15.0	23.9	105.8
<b>United States</b>	0	0	1,483,405	0.0	0.0	11.2	0.0
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	1,836,227	1,596,478	1,035,323	24.8	15.6	7.8	- 35.1
<b>Egypt</b>	0	106,498	798,066	0.0	1.0	6.0	649.4
<b>Peru</b>	0	0	652,082	0.0	0.0	4.9	0.0
<b>China</b>	1,728,643	2,669,135	574,188	23.4	26.1	4.3	- 78.5
<b>Turkey</b>	277,373	687,319	415,497	3.7	6.7	3.1	- 39.5
<b>Hungary</b>	18,198	317,691	216,220	0.2	3.1	1.6	- 31.9
<b>Greece</b>	25,073	24,513	163,998	0.3	0.2	1.2	569.0

**Table 6. Imports of Lentils 2011-2013 (WTA)**

<b>Bulgaria Import Statistics</b>							
<b>Commodity: 071340, Lentils, Dried Shelled, Including Seed</b>							
<b>Calendar Year: 2011 - 2013</b>							
<b>Partner Country</b>	<b>U.S.\$</b>			<b>% Share</b>			<b>% Change</b>
	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2013/2012</b>
<b>World</b>	3,463,580	3,573,941	4,188,560	100.0	100.0	100.0	17.2
<b>Canada</b>	2,586,684	2,149,668	3,216,817	74.7	60.1	76.8	49.6
<b>Russia</b>	267,296	717,479	622,816	7.7	20.1	14.9	- 13.2
<b>Turkey</b>	111,388	193,104	326,364	3.2	5.40	7.8	69.0
<b>Poland</b>	0	0	6,140	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
<b>Spain</b>	0	0	5,874	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
<b>Germany</b>	5,585	4,209	3,926	0.2	0.1	0.1	- 6.7
<b>Netherlands</b>	1,747	703	3,552	0.1	0.0	0.1	405.5

Italy	3,926	1,040	1,469	0.1	0.0	0.0	41.3
Greece	6,909	168,320	821	0.2	4.7	0.0	- 99.5
Syria	996	859	782	0.0	0.0	0.0	- 9.0
Serbia	5,524	0	0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
United Kingdom	1,112	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
United States	338,035	0	0	9.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Egypt	1,330	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Kyrgyzstan	88,877	0	0	2.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Argentina	44,171	338,559	0	1.3	9.5	0.0	- 100.0

**Table 7. Imports of Lentils January - May 2014**

<b>Bulgaria Import Statistics</b>							
<b>Commodity: 071340, Lentils, Dried Shelled, Including Seed</b>							
<b>Year To Date: January - May</b>							
Partner Country	United States Dollars			% Share			% Change
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	2014/2013
World	1,611,756	1,990,669	1,725,294	100.0	100.0	100.0	- 13.3
Canada	1,254,781	1,534,985	1,438,154	77.8	77.1	83.4	- 6.3
Turkey	37,902	138,840	171,374	2.3	7.0	9.9	23.4
Greece	1,677	821	73,593	0.1	0.0	4.3	8868.5
United States	0	0	31,847	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.00
Italy	0	1,078	3,812	0.0	0.0	0.2	253.7
Romania	0	0	2,085	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
Spain	0	1,281	1,529	0.0	0.1	0.1	19.4
Czech Republic	0	0	1,443	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
Germany	1,512	859	1,152	0.1	0.0	0.1	34.2
Netherlands	0	638	304	0.0	0.0	0.0	- 52.3
Poland	0	6,140	0	0.0	0.3	0.0	- 100.0
Russia	283,770	305,246	0	17.6	15.3	0.0	- 100.0
Syria	675	782	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	- 100.0
Argentina	31,437	0	0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

**Table 8. Imports of Kidney Beans, 2011-2013, WTA**

<b>Bulgaria Import Statistics</b>							
<b>Commodity: 071333, Kidney Beans</b>							
<b>Calendar Year: 2011 - 2013</b>							
Partner Country	U.S.\$			% Share			% Change
	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013	2013/2012
World	10,787,778	16,398,482	18,391,701				12.1

				100.0	100.0	100.0	
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	3,627,399	4,640,093	6,814,937	33.6	28.3	37.0	46.9
<b>Ethiopia</b>	661,453	3,469,224	4,304,481	6.1	21.2	23.4	24.1
<b>China</b>	4,667,017	3,380,469	3,672,763	43.3	20.6	20.0	8.6
<b>Argentina</b>	836,299	1,933,920	942,585	7.7	11.8	5.1	- 51.3
<b>Turkey</b>	458,618	267,225	835,296	4.2	1.6	4.5	212.6
<b>Canada</b>	0	0	522,172	0.0	0.0	2.8	0.0
<b>Egypt</b>	258,839	1,614,829	452,090	2.4	9.8	2.5	- 72.0
<b>Poland</b>	146,973	218,837	418,612	1.4	1.3	2.3	91.3

**Table 9. Imports of Kidney Beans, January- May 2014 (WTA)**

<b>Bulgaria Import Statistics</b>							
<b>Commodity: 071333, Kidney Beans</b>							
<b>Year To Date: January - May</b>							
Partner Country	U.S.\$			% Share			% Change
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	2014/2013
<b>World</b>	5,229,916	7,698,152	9,499,162	100.0	100.0	100.0	23.4
<b>Ethiopia</b>	545,513	1,538,777	3,167,441	10.43	20.0	33.3	105.8
<b>Canada</b>	0	298,157	2,568,202	0.0	3.9	27.0	761.4
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	1,771,647	1,596,478	1,035,323	33.9	20.7	10.9	- 35.1
<b>Egypt</b>	0	106,498	798,066	0.0	1.4	8.4	649.4
<b>United States</b>	0	0	564,265	0.0	0.0	5.9	0.0
<b>China</b>	1,650,099	2,669,135	546,776	31.6	34.7	5.8	- 79.5
<b>Peru</b>	0	0	224,593	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.0
<b>Turkey</b>	166,091	534,978	186,931	3.2	7.0	2.0	- 65.1
<b>Netherlands</b>	384	3,232	145,330	0.0	0.0	1.5	4396.7
<b>Greece</b>	0	13,220	73,815	0.0	0.2	0.8	458.3
<b>Poland</b>	65,161	14,785	67,911	1.2	0.2	0.7	359.3

**Table 10. Imports of Peas, 2011-2013 (WTA)**

<b>Bulgaria Import Statistics</b>							
<b>Commodity: 071310, Peas (Pisum Sativum), Dried Shelled, Including Seed</b>							
<b>Calendar Year: 2011 - 2013</b>							
Partner Country	U.S.\$			% Share			% Change
	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013	2013/2012
<b>World</b>	205,277	416,171	654,711	100.0	100.0	100.0	57.3
<b>Hungary</b>	7,250	275,068	463,941	3.5	66.1	70.9	68.7
<b>Slovakia</b>	73,253	22,543	81,241	35.7	5.4	12.4	260.4
<b>Germany</b>	22,663	3,771	50,365	11.0	0.9	7.7	1235.4
<b>Moldova</b>	0	8,572	30,226	0.0	2.1	4.6	252.6

<b>Russia</b>	0	565	12,565	0.0	0.1	1.9	2124.6
<b>India</b>	0	0	10,168	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0
<b>Italy</b>	7,876	8,599	3,244	3.8	2.1	0.5	- 62.3
<b>Romania</b>	0	2,041	2,054	0.0	0.5	0.3	0.6
<b>Japan</b>	0	0	622	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
<b>Slovenia</b>	202	752	285	0.1	0.2	0.0	- 62.1
<b>Turkey</b>	8,440	0	0	4.1	0.00	0.0	0.0
<b>Ukraine</b>	10,670	10,457	0	5.2	2.5	0.0	- 100.0
<b>United Kingdom</b>	0	21,122	0	0.0	5.1	0.0	- 100.0
<b>Netherlands</b>	12,632	14,106	0	6.1	3.4	0.0	- 100.0
<b>Poland</b>	28,441	0	0	13.9	0.0	0.0	0.0