



**FOOD QUALITY SPECIFICATIONS -
FOOD PURCHASED BY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENTS**

Legumes

The following specifications are used by federal government departments purchasing the items listed below for their departmental food requirements

FQS-23 – Legumes (Pulses)

Any items listed in all Food Quality Specification that are **bolded and in brown** are part of the current National Standard Cycle Menu (NSCM) Standing Offer. Other items that are not on the NSCM but are on the Standing Offer may not be listed in **brown**.

[FQS-23-01 – Canned Legumes](#)

FQS-23-01-01 – Canned Black Beans

FQS-23-01-02 – Canned Black Eyed Peas

[FQS-23-01-03 – Canned Butter Beans](#)

FQS-23-01-04 – Canned Chickpeas

FQS-23-01-05 – Canned Kidney Beans, Red and White

FQS-23-01-06 – Canned Pinto Beans

FQS-23-01-07 – Canned Red Beans

FQS-23-01-08 – Canned Navy or White Beans

FQS-23-01-09 – Canned Lima Beans

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[FQS-23-02 – Dried Legumes](#)

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FQS-23-02-02 – Dried Black Eyed Peas

[FQS-23-02-03 – Dried Kidney or Canellini Beans](#)

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FQS-23-04-01 – Hummus

[Applicable Regulations and Resources for Legumes \(Pulses\)](#)

Description

1. The term legume refers to the plants whose fruit is enclosed in a pod. Pulses are part of the legume family, but the term “pulse” refers only to the dried, edible seed. In legumes, the seeds or grains are found in a pod. Legume crops include dried beans, peas and lentils. Each of these pulse crops comes in a wide range of colours and sizes. The name pulse is derived from the Latin puls meaning thick soup or potage.

FQS-23-01-01 - Table 1: Type of Legume

Type of Legume	Characteristics
Chickpeas or Garbanzo Beans	Medium-sized, round, irregular-shaped beans. Chickpeas are slightly larger than the average pea. They are beige in colour with a creamy, firm texture and mild, nutlike flavour.
Red Kidney Beans	Medium-sized, kidney- shaped beans, dark red in colour with a soft texture.

Type of Legume	Characteristics
Black Beans	Medium-sized, oval beans with black skin and white flesh.
Black-eyed peas	Medium-sized, oval beans, cream coloured with a black dot.
Lentils	Small, thin, disk-shaped seeds that can be green, brown, red, orange or yellow in colour. Green and brown lentils hold their shape after cooking. Red, orange and yellow lentils tend to dissolve when cooked.
Lima or Butter Beans	Medium or small-sized flat kidney-shaped seeds generally creamy yellow or green in colour, although certain varieties feature colours such as white, red, purple, brown or black. The larger sized lima beans are sometimes called butter beans and are large and yellow while the smaller sized beans are known as baby lima beans and are small and green.
Navy beans or Canadian white beans	Small, white, oval beans.
Cannellini (White Kidney) beans	White, medium-sized kidney-shaped beans that hold their shape well.
Split peas	Small circular peas that have split into two halves. Split peas can be green, yellow or orange in colour. When cooked, they become very soft.
Mung beans	Small, green legumes popular in Chinese cuisine. Most often found sprouted and are commonly known as bean sprouts.
Adzuki (Red) beans	Small, round, reddish-brown legumes popular in Asian dishes.

FQS-23-01 – Canned Legumes

Description

- Many legumes are available canned in salt, water, and a variety of preservatives in standard can sizes. Canned legumes are pre-cooked so they are ready to use. They can be substituted in recipes requiring cooked legumes but may be softer and have a mushier texture than the dried, soaked, and then cooked legumes.
- Canned legumes shall have normal colour, flavour and odour corresponding to the type of legume and packing medium used and shall possess texture characteristic of the product. Canned legumes are available in low sodium or less salt and no salt added varieties.
- Whether or not it is specified on the can, all canned legumes should be rinsed before use.

FQS-23-01-01 – Canned Black Beans

Description

- Canned black beans are available in the regular format and also with reduced sodium levels. When specified as 50 per cent less salt, canned black beans shall have no more than 260 milligrams of sodium per 125 ml.
- If specified as no salt canned black beans, the content of the can shall be only black beans and water.

FQS-23-01-02 – Canned Black-eyed Peas

Description

- Canned black-eyed peas are available in the regular format and also with reduced sodium levels. When specified as 50 per cent less salt, canned black-eyed peas shall have no more than 260 milligrams of sodium per 125 ml.

8. If specified as no salt canned black-eyed peas, the content of the can shall be only black-eyed peas and water.

FQS-23-01-03 – Canned Butter Beans

Description

9. Canned butter beans (mature lima beans) are available in the regular format and also with reduced sodium levels. When specified as 50 per cent less salt, canned butter beans shall have no more than 260 milligrams of sodium per 125 ml.
10. If specified as no salt canned butter beans, the content of the can shall be only butter beans and water.

FQS-23-01-04 – Canned Chickpeas

Description

11. Canned chickpeas (garbanzo beans) are available in the regular format and also with reduced sodium levels. When specified as 50 per cent less salt, canned chickpeas shall have no more than 260 milligrams of sodium per 125 ml.
12. If specified as no salt canned chickpeas, the content of the can shall be only chickpeas and water.

FQS-23-01-05 – Canned Kidney Beans, Red and White

Description

13. Canned kidney beans are available in the regular format and also with reduced sodium levels. Canned Kidney Beans can be either white (Cannellini) or red, depending on the variety used. When specified as 50 per cent less salt, canned kidney beans shall have no more than 260 milligrams of sodium per 125 ml.
14. If specified as no salt canned kidney beans, the content of the can shall be only kidney beans and water.

FQS-23-01-06 – Canned Pinto Beans

Description

15. Canned pinto beans are available in the regular format and also with reduced sodium levels. When specified as 50 per cent less salt, canned pinto beans shall have no more than 260 milligrams of sodium per 125 ml.
16. If specified as no salt canned pinto beans, the content of the can shall be only pinto beans and water.

FQS-23-01-07 – Canned Red Beans

Description

17. Canned red beans are available in the regular format and also with reduced sodium levels. When specified as 50 per cent less salt, canned red beans shall have no more than 260 milligrams of sodium per 125 ml.
18. If specified as no salt canned red beans, the content of the can shall be only red beans and water.

FQS-23-01-08 – Canned Navy or White Beans

Description

19. Canned Navy or white beans are available in the regular format and also with reduced sodium levels. When specified as 50 per cent less salt, canned Navy beans shall have no more than 260 milligrams of sodium per 125 ml.
20. If specified as no salt or unsalted canned Navy beans, the content of the can shall only be Navy beans and water.

FQS-23-01-09 – Canned Lima Beans

21. Canned lima beans are available in the regular format and also with reduced sodium levels. When specified as 50 per cent less salt, canned lima beans shall have no more than 260 milligrams of sodium per 125 ml.

22. If specified as no salt or unsalted canned lima beans, the content of the can shall only be lima beans and water.

FQS-23-01-10 – Canned Lentils

23. Canned lentils are available in several varieties of brown, red or green lentils, in the regular format and also the reduced sodium format. When specified as 50 per cent less salt, canned lentils shall have no more than 260 milligrams of sodium per 125 ml.

24. If specified as no salt or unsalted canned lentils, the content of the can shall only be lima beans and water. Regular canned lentils should be rinsed prior to use.

FQS-23-02 – Dried Legumes

Description

25. Legumes are available dried and should be supplied from the latest season's growth. They should have a good natural colour for the type. Dried legumes shall be clean, dry, firm smooth and free from dust and dirt. The moisture content of dried peas shall not exceed 15 per cent and dried beans of 15.5 per cent by mass.

26. All dried legumes should be rinsed and checked over for foreign matter (pebbles, etc.) prior to use.

FQS-23-02-01 – Dried Black Beans

Description

27. Dried black beans are normally dark black, oval and uniform in size. Dried black beans require soaking prior to use.

FQS-23-02-02 – Dried Black Eyed Peas

Description

28. Dried black-eyed peas (also known as cow peas or field peas) are medium sized creamy coloured peas with a black dot and uniform in size. Dried black-eyed peas require soaking prior to use.

FQS-23-02-03 – Dried Kidney or Cannellini Beans

Description

29. Dried kidney beans can be either white (Cannellini) or red, depending on the variety. Dried kidney beans require soaking prior to use.

FQS-23-02-04 – Dried Lentils

Description

30. Lentils come in a variety of sizes ranging from small to extra large. The lentils most commonly available dried are whole green lentils (also known as Laird-type lentils) and split red lentils. The word "split" is used to describe when the seed coat around the lentil has been removed and the inner part of the lentil (known as the cotyledon) has been split in half. Split lentils cook faster than whole lentils and are excellent for use in purees whereas whole lentils work better in salads.

31. Dried lentils are typically available in clear plastic packaging. Dried lentils should be rinsed before use but do not require soaking overnight like other legumes do.

32. Lentils should be stored tightly covered in a dark, dry, place and can be stored for up to a year after purchase.

33. Lentils supplied should be of the colour and size specified.

FQS-23-02-05 - Dried Lima or Butter Beans

Description

34. Dried Lima or butter beans are flat kidney-shaped seeds generally creamy yellow or green in colour and uniform in size. Dried lima beans require soaking prior to use.

FQS-23-02-06 - Dried Navy or White Beans

Description

35. Dried Navy or Canadian white beans are small, white, oval beans. Dried navy beans require soaking prior to use.

FQS-23-02-07 – Dried Split Peas

Description

36. Dried split peas are small circular peas that have split into two halves. Split peas can be green, yellow or orange in colour.

37. Split peas should be supplied in the colour specified.

38. Dried Legumes are unacceptable if they:

- a. are discoloured or unevenly coloured;
- b. dirty and/or show signs of moisture damage; and
- c. are of visibly varying sizes.

FQS-23-02-08 - Dried Pinto Beans

Description

39. Dried pinto beans are flat kidney-shaped seeds generally creamy yellow to reddish in colour with brown markings and uniform in size. Dried pinto beans require soaking prior to use.

FQS-23-03 – Frozen Legumes

Description

40. Legumes are available frozen. Legumes should be of the same or the equivalent quality of fresh legumes and frozen using IQF (Individual Quick frozen) technology.

41. Unless otherwise specified, Canada Grade A (or equivalent) is to be provided.

FQS-23-03-01 - Lima Beans Frozen

Description

42. Lima beans are frozen either as the mature Fordhook Lima beans or as Baby lima beans. Baby lima beans should be of relatively uniform size and green colour.

43. Lima beans must be supplied in the type specified and Canada Grade A or equivalent.

FQS-23-04 – Further Processed Legumes

FQS-23-04-01 – Hummus

44. Hummus is composed of cooked, puréed or mashed chickpeas, tahini (a condiment made from toasted, ground, hulled sesame seeds), garlic, lemon juice, olive oil, cumin, and salt. Hummus is used as a popular Mid-Eastern condiment or as a protein substitute when eaten with pita bread. Hummus is available plain or in a variety of different flavours. Unless otherwise specified, hummus must be provided as plain hummus.

45. All pulses (grain legumes) procured in Canada must:

- a. comply with relevant sections of Acts and Regulations listed under the [Food and Drugs Act \(R.S.C., 1985, c. F-27\)](#), the [Food and Drug Regulations \(C.R.C., c. 870\)](#), [Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada \(AAFC\) – Acts and Regulations](#), the [Canadian Food Inspection Agency Act \(S.C. 1997, c. 6\)](#), the [Canada Grain Act \(R.S.C., 1985, c. G-10\)](#), and the [Canada Grain Regulations \(C.R.C., c. 889\)](#);
 - b. comply with all requirements listed under the [Canadian Grain Commission – Home Page](#);
 - c. be a minimum of Canada No. 1 according to [The Official Grain Grading Guide of the Canadian Grade Commission](#) or [Canada Grain Regulations \(C.R.C., c. 889\)](#) Schedule 3 Tables 24-26 and 30-37;
 - d. comply with fundamental principles related to Health and Safety listed under [The Official Grain Grading Guide of the Canadian Grade Commission](#);
 - e. comply with the relevant sections listed under the [Canadian Food Inspection Agency - Food Safety, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada \(AAFC\) - Acts and Regulations](#), and [Industry Canada – Office of Consumer Affairs \(OCA\)](#);
 - f. comply with Pesticide and Pesticide Management Program listed under [Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Pest Management Centre \(PMC\)](#) and [Health Canada Pest Management Regulatory Agency \(PMRA\)](#);
 - g. comply with food additive regulations listed under the [Food and Drug Regulations \(C.R.C., c. 870\), Division 16, Food Additives](#);
 - h. comply with all the requirements listed under the [Plant Protection Act \(S.C. 1990, c. 22\)](#) and the [Plant Protection Regulations \(SOR/95-212\)](#);
 - i. comply with food packaging and labelling requirements listed under the [Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act \(R.S.C., 1985, c. C-38\)](#), and the [Consumer Packaging and Labelling Regulations \(C.R.C., c. 417\)](#);
 - j. comply with the relevant sections listed under the [Industry Labelling Tool \(replaces the Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising\)](#);
 - k. be prepared and handled in accordance with essential principles of food hygiene applicable throughout the food chain (including primary production through to the final consumer), ensuring that food is safe and suitable for human consumption listed under the [Codex Alimentarius - General Principles of Food Hygiene](#), including the Annex on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system and guidelines;
 - l. comply with other relevant Codes of Hygienic Practice and Codes of Practice recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission relevant to pulses (grain legumes) [Codex Alimentarius - General Standard for Certain Pulses](#); and
 - m. comply with any microbiological criteria established in accordance with the [Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods \[CAC/GL 21-1997\]](#).
46. All pulses (grain legumes) procured outside Canada must:
- a. only be procured from countries that meet federal acts and regulations governing the importation of food under the [Canadian Food Inspection Agency - Guide to Importing Food Products Commercially](#);
 - b. comply with the [Principles for Food Import and Export Certification \[Codex Alimentarius\]](#);
 - c. comply with relevant sections of Acts and Regulations (or the equivalent in the country where procured) listed under the [Food and Drugs Act \(R.S.C., 1985, c. F-27\)](#), the [Food and Drug Regulations \(C.R.C., c. 870\)](#), [Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada \(AAFC\) – Acts and Regulations](#),

the [Canadian Food Inspection Agency Act \(S.C. 1997, c. 6\)](#), the [Canada Grain Act \(R.S.C., 1985, c. G-10\)](#), and the [Canada Grain Regulations \(C.R.C., c. 889\)](#);

- d. comply with fundamental principles related to Health and Safety listed under the [Processed Products Regulations \(C.R.C., c. 291\)](#);
- e. comply with the relevant sections listed under the [Canadian Food Inspection Agency - Food Safety, Agriculture and Agri- Food Canada \(AAFC\) – Acts and Regulations](#), and [Industry Canada – Office of Consumer Affairs \(OCA\)](#);
- f. comply with all the requirements listed under the [Codex Alimentarius - General Standard for Certain Pulses](#);
- g. comply with Pesticide and Pesticide Management Program listed under [Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Pest Management Centre \(PMC\)](#) and [Health Canada Pest Management Regulatory Agency \(PMRA\)](#);
- h. comply with food additive regulations listed in the [Food and Drug Regulations \(C.R.C., c. 870\), Division 16, Food Additives](#); and/or
- i. comply with food additive classes listed in the [Codex Alimentarius - General Standard for Food Additives](#);
- j. comply with all the requirements listed in the [Plant Protection Act \(S.C. 1990, c. 22\)](#) and [Plant Protection Regulations \(SOR/95-212\)](#) (or the equivalent in the country where procured);
- k. comply with food packaging and labelling requirements listed under the [Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act \(R.S.C., 1985, c. C-38\)](#) and the [Consumer Packaging and Labelling Regulations \(C.R.C., c. 417\)](#); and/or
- l. comply with all the requirements listed under the [Codex Alimentarius - General Standard for the Labelling of Packaged Foods](#);
- m. comply with the relevant sections listed under the [Industry Labelling Tool \(replaces the Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising\)](#);
- n. be prepared and handled in accordance with essential principles of food hygiene applicable throughout the food chain (including primary production through to the final consumer), ensuring that food is safe and suitable for human consumption listed under [Codex Alimentarius - General Principles of Food Hygiene](#), including the Annex on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system and guidelines;
- o. meet all requirements of applicable local food legislation whenever those requirements are stricter. All legumes shall be obtained by sources approved by the applicable local and international laws, regulations, procedures and requirements; must comply with other relevant Codes of Hygienic Practice and Codes of Practice recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission relevant to pulses (grain legumes [Codex Alimentarius - General Standard for Certain Pulses](#);
- p. comply with those maximum residue limits and maximum mycotoxin limits established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission relevant to pulses (grain legumes [Codex Alimentarius - General Standard for Certain Pulses](#); and
- q. must comply with any microbiological criteria established in accordance with the [Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods \[CAC/GL 21-1997\]](#).

Size

47. The usual retail and commercial standard size available in the market applicable to legumes, unless otherwise specified.

Packaging

48. Legumes shall be packaged in normal retail and commercial packaging, packing, labelling and marking. The packaging must safeguard the hygienic, nutritional, technological and organoleptic qualities of the food. The packaging material must be made of substances which are safe and suitable for their intended use and does not impart any toxic substance or undesirable odour or flavour to the product.

49. When bags are used for packaging, these must be clean, sturdy, and sealed, and when the product is packaged in sacks, these must be clean, sturdy and strongly sewn or sealed.

Applicable Regulations and Resources for Legumes (Pulses)

[Food and Drug Regulations \(C.R.C., c. 870\)](#)

[Food and Drug Regulations \(C.R.C., c. 870\), Division 16, Food Additives](#)

[Canadian Food Inspection Agency Act \(S.C. 1997, c. 6\)](#)

[Food and Drugs Act \(R.S.C., 1985, c. F-27\)](#)

[Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act \(R.S.C., 1985, c. C-38\)](#)

[Consumer Packaging and Labelling Regulations \(C.R.C., c. 417\)](#)

[Canada Grain Act \(R.S.C., 1985, c. G-10\)](#)

[Canada Grain Regulations \(C.R.C., c. 889\)](#)

[Codex Alimentarius - General Principles of Food Hygiene](#)

[Codex Alimentarius - General Standard for Certain Pulses](#)

[Codex Alimentarius - General Principles for Food Import and Export Certification and Inspection](#)

[Codex Alimentarius - General Standard for Food Additives](#)

[Codex Alimentarius - General Standard for the Labelling of Packaged Foods](#)

[Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods \[CAC/GL 21-1997\]](#)

[Plant Protection Act \(S.C. 1990, c. 22\)](#)

[Plant Protection Regulations \(SOR/95-212\)](#)

[Canadian Grain Commission – Home Page](#)

[Pulse Canada – Home Page](#)

[Processed Products Regulations \(C.R.C., c. 291\)](#)

[Official Grain Grading Guide](#)

[Canadian Food Inspection Agency \(CFIA\) - Food Safety](#)

[Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada \(AAFC\) – Acts and Regulations](#)

[Industry Canada – Office of Consumer Affairs \(OCA\)](#)

[Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Pest Management Centre \(PMC\)](#)

[Health Canada Pest Management Regulatory Agency \(PMRA\)](#)

[Industry Labelling Tool \(replaces the Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising\)](#)

[Canadian Food Inspection Agency \(CFIA\) - Guide to Importing Food Products Commercially](#)

[Principles for Food Import and Export Certification \[Codex Alimentarius\]](#)