REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SUBMISSION DEADLINE
May 4, 2020, 5:00PM CST

RFP TITLE: Soybean and Related Products PRE and POST Shipment Quality Assessment

RFP CONTACT:
Name: Mary Hannig
Phone #: 636-449-6005 or 314-791-0256
Email: mhannig@ussec.org

PROPOSAL DEADLINE: May 4, 2020, 5:00PM CST

INTRODUCTION:

A comparative study of US and Brazilian soybean quality differences at origin and destination, will help soybean buyers better understand the received quality of soybeans, transit degradation, and the corresponding oil and meal quality. The USDA Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) sets the standard contract grades and measuring methodologies by which U.S. soybeans are traded and shipped globally. Similarly, the National Oilseed Processors Association (NOPA) sets the quality, trading rules, and grading methodology for soybean meal and soybean oil. Other countries, like Brazil, set their own standards and methodologies. This study will provide a comparative analysis between US and Brazilian soybeans and their respective products (oil and meal) under the same methodology.

PURPOSE OF RFP:

This project seeks a firm or consultant to conduct a comparative study and analysis into pre and post shipment of US and Brazilian originated soybeans to assess quality at origin and destination, capturing shipping degradation and impact on quality of processed products (oil and meal).

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

The soybean supply chain lacks sufficient information to make transparent apples to apples comparison when deciding on purchasing US or Brazilian whole soybeans. Some buyers are mainly focused on price, oil content and protein to some extent. However, prior USB and USSEC surveys of animal nutritionists recognizes that crude protein alone does not provide an accurate measure of the quality of the soybean nor its end products. Outside the standard grade factors of US #2 Yellow Soybean, other factors that the industry may not be considering are: essential amino acids, energy, digestibility, oil quality (FFA & color), all of which contribute to quality perceptions and value of the soybeans.

To address the discrepancies in standards, this study will use the GIPSA whole soybean grading standards listed here: https://www.gipsa.usda.gov/fgis/standards/810soybean.pdf at the point of vessel loading and off-loading for both US and Brazilian samples. In the US, to ensure representative sampling, USDA / GIPSA methodology will be applied for proper sampling and grading procedures. For samples collected in Brazil and at destinations the contractor must replicate GIPSA’s methodology to achieve representative samples. The representative samples of whole soybeans will be sent from origin and destination for analyses by Federal Grain Inspection Services in U.S., using outlined sampling methodology and FGIS grading standards. A cut of the representative whole soybean samples will also be sent to RMG or Thionville. RMG or Thionville will process those soybeans in the lab.

**TARGET AUDIENCE:** Soybean traders and crushers.

**SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:**

- Propose a methodology for sampling and work plan replicating the GIPSA and NOPA methodology.
- Contract and provide sampling guidelines to independent survey companies and ensure proper sampling procedures are followed. All whole soybean samples from origin and destination will be sent to Federal Grain Inspection for analysis, and contractor will manage sampling and results.
- Conduct an origin and destination vessel loading and offloading analysis of U.S. soybeans and Brazilian soybeans replicating the GIPSA soybean grading standard and methodology, listed here: [https://www.gipsa.usda.gov/fgis/standards/810soybean.pdf](https://www.gipsa.usda.gov/fgis/standards/810soybean.pdf).
- Send all samples to Evonik in Germany for full amino acid profile analyses.
- Sampling expectations are that representative vessel samples are collected at origin and destination replicating GIPSA grading standards and methodology. The following vessel shipments should be taken:
  - Brazil -> China 5 vessels (Santos and Northern Ports) (Jun, July or Aug Shipments)
  - Brazil -> Europe 5 vessels (Santos and Northern Ports) (Jun, July or Aug Shipments)
  - US GULF -> China 5 vessels (Sep or Oct Shipments)
  - US GULF -> Europe 5 vessels (Sep or Oct Shipments)
  - PNW -> China 5 vessels (Sep or Oct Shipments)
- It is important that the contractor has close relationships with exporters, importers and crushers. This should be demonstrated in the RFP response.

**DELIVERABLES:**

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<th>Completion Schedule Requirements</th>
<th>Description of Deliverables</th>
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| Weekly and Biweekly              | - Submit an inception report within one week of contract award, outlining planned study understanding of issue and goal, and a proposed timeline of meetings, milestones and deliverables.  
- Submit biweekly progress reports  
- Establish weekly coordination and collaboration with USSEC Technical |
| Specific Deadlines               | - Provide vessel soybean loading and discharge samples, and meal and oil lab results from RMG or Thionville, as available.  
- Provide Brazil progress report by August 1, 2020.  
- Provide a PowerPoint mid-study interim report by August 15th, 2020 highlighting initial findings and study progress.
- Provide draft final survey results for USSEC review by Nov 25, 2020.
- Provide a draft final report and PPT presentation outlining the study conducted, containing summary of key qualitative and quantitative data collected for review by USSEC Technical team on December 1, 2020 for review and comment.
- Incorporate USSEC review comments and submit final reports and a publish-ready final draft within fourteen days after reviews, and no later than December 31, 2020 at 5:00PM CST.

RFP and PROJECT TIMELINE: April 21, 2020 – December 31, 2020
RFP Distribution: April 21, 2020
Q&A Timeframe: Last day to submit questions April 27, 2020 by 5:00PM CST
Project Proposals Due: May 4, 2020 by 5:00PM CST
Prospective Contractors Notified: May 18, 2020
Project Inception Report: May 25, 2020
Project Mid-term Presentation and Report: August 15, 2020
Draft Final Project Report: December 1, 2020
Final Project Delivered: December 31, 2020
INSTRUCTIONS:
Proposals must contain at a minimum the specific criteria listed below:
1. Please email the proposal to RFP@USSEC.ORG by 5:00PM Central Time on May 4, 2020
2. A description of Prospective Contractor’s capabilities, resources and experience. Emphasis should be placed on experience related to this RFP.
3. A thorough proposal outlining Prospective Contractors planned work, deliverables and timeline to complete the work.
4. Resumes for each of the Prospective Contractor’s personnel assigned to work directly on the implementation of the contract.
5. Provide a minimum of two names and contact information for other similarly sized clients for reference purposes.
6. Detailed Fee and Expense Breakdown
   a. All bids for services must provide a breakout of how the fee was derived including but not limited to a breakdown of hourly rate and the amount of effort they anticipate to do the work.
7. Proposals should be no longer than 10 pages (8 ½” x 11”).

NOTES:
- Prospective Contractors are hereby notified that proposals will be duplicated for internal review only. Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality of all information presented. The appropriate representatives from staff and legal counsel will review proposals. Proposals will not be returned.
- USSEC reserves the right to retain all proposals submitted. Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance by the submitter of the conditions contained in the request for proposal, unless clearly and specifically noted in the proposal submitted and confirmed in the contract between USSEC and the contractor selected.
- Confidentiality - Without USSEC’s prior written consent, Prospective Contractors and its officers, employees, agents, representatives, affiliates, and subcontractors shall not disclose to any third party any documents, materials or information that the Prospective Contractors learn from or is provided in relation to the RFP request.
- During the evaluation process, USSEC reserves the right to request additional information or clarifications from proposers, or to allow corrections of errors and omissions.
- USSEC reserves the right to reject any proposal that is in any way inconsistent or irregular. USSEC also reserves the right to waive proposal defects or deficiencies, to request additional information, and/or to negotiate with the Prospective Contractor regarding the proposal.
- Prospective Contractor agrees that Fees are in lieu of any and all other benefits, including, but not limited to, repayment of any and all taxes related to contractor service fees, health and life insurance, administrative costs and vacation.
- Prospective Contractor agrees that any income taxes, value added taxes or any other form of direct or indirect taxes on compensation paid under the contract shall be paid by Contractor and not by USSEC or Funding Sources. Prior to any payment to a Contractor, a contractor must provide a W-9, W-8, or W-8BEN upon agreement signature.
- Non-Competition. Contractor shall not act as agent or representative for any product or service directly or indirectly competitive with U.S. soybeans or soybean products for the length of the contract.
- USSEC and Prospective Contractor agrees to comply with the provisions of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO). USSEC provides EEO to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, amnesty, or status as a covered veteran in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws.
SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION AND BACKGROUND

BUILDING A PREFERENCE FOR U.S. SOY

USSEC’s strategy can be found here: http://ussec.org/about-ussec/vision-mission/

USB’s Long Range Strategic Plan can be found here: http://unitedsoybean.org/about-usb/strategic-planning/

We are a dynamic partnership of key stakeholders representing soybean producers, commodity shippers, merchandisers, allied agribusiness and agricultural organizations.

Through a global network of international offices and strong support in the U.S., we help build a preference for U.S. soybeans and soybean products, advocate for the use of soy in feed, aquaculture and human consumption, promote the benefits of soy use through education and connect industry leaders through a robust membership program.

Our 15-member board of directors is comprised of four members from the American Soybean Association (ASA), four members from the United Soybean Board (USB), and seven members representing trade, allied industry, and state organizations.

New board members are seated annually. We are receiving funding from a variety of sources including soy producer checkoff dollars invested by the USB and various state soybean councils; cooperating industry; and the American Soybean Association’s investment of cost-share funding provided by the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Foreign Agriculture Service.

The United Soybean Board, created by the 1990 Farm Bill to manage and direct the National Soybean Checkoff, is dedicated to marketing and research for the soybean industry. USB is comprised of 73 volunteer soybean farmers representing the interests of fellow growers nationwide. Each board member is nominated by Qualified State Soybean Boards (QSSBs) and appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.

Because of the limitations on administrative and salary costs established in the Act, USB outsources the majority of its program management responsibilities to USB’s three primary contractors:

- SmithBucklin-St. Louis for domestic marketing, new uses, production research and Board initiative activities;
- Osborn & Barr Communications for communications/public relations activities and;
- U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), Inc. for international marketing and global opportunities activities.

As one of these three primary contractors USSEC may also undertake initiative activities on behalf of USB. USB considers primary contractor staff (approximately 60 people) as core USB staff. These three primary contractors use a number of subcontractors and, together, these entities carry out approximately 450 projects each year for USB. USB also manages approximately 10 subcontractors.
Non-Discrimination Statement
In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.
Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.
Civil Rights Clause
Contractor agrees that during the performance of this Agreement it will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital or family status, parental status or protected genetic information. Contractor further agrees that it will fully comply with any and all applicable Federal, State and local equal employment opportunity statutes, ordinances and regulations, including, without limitation, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, and the Equal Pay Act of 1963. Nothing in this section shall require Contractor to comply with or become liable under any law, ordinance, regulation or rule that does not otherwise apply to Contractor.