REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

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

RFP TITLE: Study of Soybean and Soybean Product Quality by Country of Origin
RFP CONTACT:
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PROPOSAL DEADLINE: May 4, 2020, 5:00PM CST

INTRODUCTION:

Previous studies have provided limited evidence that soybeans and their corresponding products, like soybean meal (SBM) from US origin has a better nutritional profile than soybeans and soy products from other origins. To address this limit and generate more adequate information on the superior quality of US soybeans, buyers need access to improved data on nutritional values (available amino acids and energy) of soybeans and soy product (SBM) from other countries. It is anticipated that this data will provide solid information on the nutritional advantages of US soybeans over those of other origins and establish a direct link between soybean and soybean product quality and country of origin. In so doing, the study will seek to highlight the superiority of US soybeans, thereby providing a quantitative basis supporting an increase US soybean and soy product market value.

PURPOSE OF RFP:

The purpose of this RFP is to seek a firm or consultant to document and establish the differentiation of US soybeans and soybean products (i.e. SBM) from those of other origins, by collecting broad information on the quality and nutritional profile of the imported soybeans from major soybean marketing countries, and the quality and nutritional profile of soybean products (SBM) from the imported soybeans.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

- Limited research indicates that soybeans and soybean meals from the US offer a superior nutritional bundle over those of other origins. The advantage of US soybean products could be attributed in part due to the favorable agronomical, storage, and logistical conditions present in the US. However, SBMs are still commonly priced and contracted on crude protein contents, without accounting for “other” valuable nutritional and marketing factors. In addition, feeds are often formulated by nutritionists based on estimated energy and amino acid contents with no differentiation for “other” nutritional and marketing variances by origin. A contributing factor is that data on nutritional values (available amino acids and energy) of soybeans and soybean product (SBM) by country of origins is lacking and not readily available. Broad and solid data linking quality of soybeans to soybean products (SBM) broken down to the country and region of origin level will facilitate the promotion of US soy and increase its competitiveness against major South American players such as Brazil and Argentina. China, which accounts for 60% of the total volume of globally imported soybeans and soybean products from all major soybean markets, represents an ideal place for gathering quality and nutritional profile of soybeans and soybean products. This study
will select 2 major Chinese soybean crushing groups and contract with 2-3 crushing plants from each of the two groups, to monitor and collect soybean and soybean product data by country and region of origin, providing key market information for the differentiation and promotion of U.S. soybeans.

TARGET AUDIENCE: The targeting audiences are soybean traders and crushers, feed manufacturers, and livestock/poultry integrators, specifically partners involved from the Chinese market.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

- Study of the nutritional quality of soybeans and soybean products (SBM) by country and region of origin, and its effect on the quality of soybean products (SBM).
- Selection of 2 major Chinese soybean crushing groups, with whom you will contract for information from 2-3 crushing plants per group to conduct the study.
- Work with selected soybean crushers for collecting quality and nutritional profile of soybean by country and region of origin and establish the effect of soybean origin on the nutritional and marketing profile of soybean meal products.
- Conduct a full year sampling and analysis via NIR for incoming soybean products per country of origin, with clear identification of country and region of origin.
- Conduct a full year sampling and analysis via NIR for soybean meals produced with imported soybeans, if possible, with identification of country and region of origin.
- Selection criteria for crushing plants:
  - Selected plants should be equipped with a NIR machine (Foss or Bruker), and use Evonik’s online analytical service.

DELIVERABLES:

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<th>Completion Schedule Requirements</th>
<th>Description of Deliverables</th>
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<td>Weekly and Biweekly</td>
<td>- Submit an inception report within 1 week of contract award, outlining planned study understanding and strategy, and a proposed timeline of meetings, milestones and goals.</td>
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<td>- Submit biweekly progress reports.</td>
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<td>- Establish weekly coordination and collaboration with USSEC Technical teams.</td>
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| Specific Deadlines               | - Provide selected list of soybeans crushing groups and crushing plants from these groups by May 25, 2020. |
|                                  | - Provide a PowerPoint mid-study interim report by July 1, 2020, highlighting initial findings and study progress. |
|                                  | - Provide a draft final report and PPT presentation to USSEC on September 1, 2020 for review and comment, including collected data and preliminary sample analysis on quality and nutritional profile of soybean products and soybean meals by country of origin and region. |
|                                  | - Incorporate USSEC review comments and submit all finals fourteen days after reviews, and no later than September 30, 2020 at 5:00PMDST. |
RFP and PROJECT TIMELINE: April 21, 2020 - September 30, 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: July 1, 2020
Draft Final Project Report: September 1, 2020
Final Project Delivered: September 30, 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.