



FY22 REQUEST FOR CONCEPTS

Direct Request for Concept (RFP) Submissions and Questions to:

RFP@unitedsoybean.org

Submission Deadline:

Noon CST, 01/22/2021 (see Figure A for full timeline)

Purpose of the Request for Concepts:

The United Soybean Board (USB) is seeking concepts for FY22 research and programs for the strategic themes identified in Attachment 2. Invitations for full proposals will be made from the pool of submitted concepts. Concepts that build on previous program work, as well as creativity and new concepts are also encouraged, including well-justified concepts that may not fit perfectly in priority themes. Inclusion on the strategic priority list does not guarantee that USB will fund a given theme.

Timeline:

Please see the flowchart depicting the full proposal timeline (Figure A). In addition, submit questions to RFP@unitedsoybean.org. USB will respond to questions received by January 6, 2021. Questions and responses will be posted on the USB website by January 11, 2021 under the Vendor Services tab.

Instructions:

Concepts should be submitted via e-mail to RFP@unitedsoybean.org in the following format. Lack of adherence to these guidelines may preclude concept review.

- Follow general guidelines in Attachment 1 to respond to strategic themes identified in Attachment 2
- 2-page maximum
- 11-pt Times New Roman (or equivalent) font
- 1-inch margins
- English language
- Submit as a single pdf to RFP@unitedsoybean.org using these naming conventions:
 - Submitting organization_RFP_USBFY22.pdf
 - Example: *ContractorName_HOSOCrudeoil_USBFY22.pdf*

Key Concept Evaluation Criteria:

- Potential for U.S. differentiation, value chain disruption or improved flow of information through the value chain
- Market-driven opportunity
- Audience-specific communication plan and measurement
- Potential and lasting impact
- Clear and concise
- Organization capabilities, expertise and relevant partnerships that can be leveraged

Figure A. United Soybean Board FY22 Funding Process

FY22 Program Development Timeline *	
12/16/2020	Request for Concepts posted on USB website and distributed through rfp@unitedsoybean.org e-mail
1/6/2021	Deadline for subcontractor questions to be submitted to rfp@unitedsoybean.org e-mail
1/22/2021	Concept submission deadline to rfp@unitedsoybean.org
2/26/2021	Selected concepts sent invitations to submit detailed proposals
4/2/2021	Full Proposal submission deadline to rfp@unitedsoybean.org
August 2021	Subcontractors are notified of funding decisions
10/1/2021	Program work begins

*Dates subject to change based on the needs and schedule of the Board of Directors.

Attachment 1: United Soybean Board Request for FY22 Concepts

Content requirements for submission:

Descriptive Stand-Alone Concept Title:

Contact Information: Organization, Project Lead Name, Address, Phone, Email

Proposed Duration with Start and End Date: (USB fiscal year is Oct 1 to Sept 30 – single-year proposals are preferred in this final investment year of USB’s current long-range strategic plan). New multi-year proposals will be considered with justification and clear milestones or gates to assess progress over time.

Budget Estimate:

Strategic Importance for U.S. Soy: Identify strategic theme targeted (from Attachment 2).

Concept Description: Provide a concise description of the proposed concept.

Background:

- Frame the problem or challenge your concept will address. Why is it an opportunity for the U.S. soybean industry?
- Why this is the right concept at the right time. Please justify and frame strategic fit with USB’s FY22 strategic themes (from Attachment 2).
- Provide summary of existing market research (benchmarks previously funded USB projects) or literature review framing the evolution of the opportunity and how it will benefit soybean farmers. Potential near-term (1-5 years) and longer-term (5-15 years) benefits to farmers and to the U.S. soybean industry should be briefly addressed.
- The potential value and volume size and impact of the opportunity must be addressed in justifying and framing the concept. Market-driven approaches are encouraged and should be explained along with potential economic impact. Include lasting impact (i.e., How will the project be sustained, scaled and/or commercialized over time?).
- For proposals that build on past USB funding, please explain evolution of project, milestones and measurements of success, and iterative process leading to continuation or logical next steps proposed.

Proposed Methods/Tactics: Please provide a brief explanation of the approach.

Audience-specific Communication Plan: Describe how marketing and communication approaches will enhance U.S. soy reputation in feed, food and fuel/industrial markets, further profitability of U.S. soybean farmers and increase value chain collaboration. How will results of the project or key messages/content be delivered to the target audience(s), and how will you measure your success in reaching and influencing those audiences?

Desired Project Outcomes: Identify and define the desired project SMART goal/s that will be used to measure progress. Upon invitation, full proposals will require a thorough explanation of the measurement and evaluation components of the project, including how project progress will be tracked, aggregated, and reported over the project period. Likewise, a clear description of the primary and secondary data sources will be required (including instruments developed for data collection)

Brief Description of Team Capabilities, Expertise and Network of Relevant Partners/Influencers/Collaborators:

Attachment 2.

List of United Soybean Board FY22 Strategic Themes by Target Areas (Meal, Oil, Sustainability)

Overall guidance

Target areas of meal, oil and sustainability include the following products: Whole soybeans, soybean meal, soy flour, soy hulls, soy protein concentrates, isolated soy protein, textured soy protein, conventional soybean oil, high oleic soybean oil and other processing byproducts. Sustainability is an attribute of meal and oil. Communications-specific projects may be submitted for any of the three target areas – meal, oil or sustainability. Strategic communication priorities (final page of RFP guidance) cross target areas to support the value proposition for U.S. soy. Concepts should target product differentiation, value chain disruption, and approaches with strong long-term potential to create value, maintain or increase market share, and enhance U.S. soy value proposition in key global markets. Priority will be given to proposals demonstrating value chain linkages, partnerships, and inclusion of marketing and communication approaches that enhance U.S. soy reputation and brand in feed and food markets and increase value chain coordination. Proposals that build long-term value chain resiliency to supply shocks (e.g., drought), and/or demand shocks (e.g., African swine fever, trade disruption, COVID-19) are encouraged. Proposals that intersect and interact across meal, oil and sustainability are also encouraged and should be explained in the concept narrative response.

Creativity and new concepts are encouraged, including well-justified concepts that may not fit perfectly in priority themes. Inclusion on the list below does not ensure funding of a given theme.

SUSTAINABILITY

SUPPLY (generally associated with soybean production)

- Develop new **digital and genomic technology, resources and tools** for the public soybean research community and on farm use
- Enhance **soy research communications, coordination, education, training and partnerships**
 - Mechanisms to communicate checkoff and soy research results and information
 - Strategic coordination with state and regional soybean boards, national research funding entities, soy researchers and industry
- Research focused on **biotic and abiotic stresses**, including identifying and deploying genetic solutions, understanding biology of resistance or tolerance mechanisms in soybean or pest, and developing best management practices (BMPs)
- Develop and test sustainable BMPs for **weed and pest management**
- Advance **sustainable and data driven soy-centric** BMPs for agronomic/agroecosystem sustainability
- Develop, test and deploy **biopesticides, biofertilizers and biostimulants**
- Enhance **soil health and nutrient use efficiency** through research and education that increases understanding, efficacy and adoption of best management practices (e.g., cover crops, reduced tillage), including economic viability of BMP adoption
- Research and education approaches that **generate revenue and lower risk of farmer investment in sustainable on-farm practices**

MARKETPLACE (generally associated with market development)

- Infrastructure – research and stakeholder coordination to **support physical and technological infrastructure** (ports, river, rail, roads, containerization, traceability, high-speed internet access)

- Increase **acceptance and understanding of biotechnology, gene editing and other plant breeding innovation** with influencers, end-users and consumers
- **Incorporate USDA Bio-preferred Program** into new and alternative uses for soy-based products
- Enhance the focus on sustainability, calling for programs that **promote U.S. Soy (HOSoy and conventional soy) through a sustainability lens** (including traceability, carbon sequestration and ecosystem services markets)
- Software systems that support the **aggregation of on-farm data leading to increased farmer revenue**
- Approaches that **catalyze public and private investment in rural connectivity and innovations** to enable technological advancement on farms, while improving market opportunities
- Advance **sustainable innovation and partnerships** through industrywide efforts to harmonize solutions and increase flow of sustainability data throughout the value chain

DEMAND (generally associated with soybean end use)

- Create **programs that support domestic and global end-users and brands with their sustainability program needs** including science-based targets and environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) commitments
- **Protect and enhance the reputation of U.S. Soy** thereby protecting brand partners
- **Enhance SSAP program to meet the varying needs of domestic and global end-users and customers** of U.S. Soy via creation of options and program offerings
- **Engage appropriate audiences to protect U.S. Soy's reputation** and enhance the social license
- Support **emerging soy technologies** in the industrial space

OIL

SUPPLY (generally associated with soybean production)¹

- **Breeding and germplasm development**
 - **Low or high oil content** beans that provide cultivar and germplasm development for enhanced nutritional value or functionality
 - Introduce key agronomic traits and disease resistance to high or low oil varieties
 - Introduce value added traits (i.e. high protein, low Raffinose family oligosaccharides (RFO))
 - Creation of varieties ready for licensing, partnerships with commercial entities.
 - **Late stage HOLL cultivar and germplasm development**
 - Introduce key agronomic traits and disease resistance to High Oleic, Low Linolenic (HOLL) varieties.
 - Introduce value added traits to HOLL varieties (i.e. high protein, low RFO)
 - Creation of varieties ready for licensing, partnerships with commercial entities
- **Genetic approaches for novel soy oil composition components in soy**
 - Increase tocopherols or other antioxidants
 - Other soy oil improvements, (include market analysis for desired trait or traits)
- **Trans-disciplinary research approaches** are encouraged, including the following examples:
 - Foundational research aimed at understanding biological mechanisms for new oil traits or determination of oil content

¹ Both conventional and high oleic, including non-GMO where applicable.

- Application of new technologies and cutting-edge research to develop research tools and/or greater understanding of soy oil composition (i.e. networks, plant modeling, predictive modeling, genome editing)
- Cultural and management practices that alter or improve oil composition and quality

MARKETPLACE (generally associated with market development)¹

- Assess **impact of higher oil content meal** (both conventional and high oleic) on enhanced stability feed ingredients and finished poultry/meat/fish products, including economic feasibility and export viability
- **Track end users along the path to active purchase** of high oleic soybean oil solutions
- Form **impactful strategic partnerships** with end users to drive demand for U.S. soy
- Advance the portfolio of **soy solutions** to end users
- Enhance the **“food defense/engagement platform”** by boosting soy’s reputation (HOSoy and conventional soybean oil and protein) amongst end user contacts, including health and nutrition professionals, as well as end users’ customers (consumers)
- Develop impactful **alliances with stakeholders**, including health professionals and health wellness, to defend and enhance soy’s reputation

DEMAND (generally associated with soybean end use)¹

- Increase **strategic focus** around conventional and high oleic soybean platforms
 - Determine CPG and major food service company motivations and the motivation of their customers
 - Define opportunity through segmentation and measurement
 - Create demand through prioritization of messaging
 - Define measurement and success criteria
- Create a **food defense/engagement platform** (products in both oil and meal)
 - Prioritize needs
 - Elevate support for the science and enhance targeted work with influencers (e.g., health professionals, health and wellness media and promotion of USB science)
 - Focus outputs to bolster reputation, drive demand, debunk myths and engage consumers
- Accelerate **industrial uses for conventional and high oleic soybean oil**
 - Plastics, motor oils, surfactants, lubricants, adhesives, rubber, elastomers, and coatings
 - Infrastructure uses
 - Zero waste, circular economy and bio-based economy opportunities
- Create **new use challenge** (e.g., packaging, biodegradability, composability)
- Develop **challenge platforms for new uses across the value chain** (may cross target areas)
- Analysis of the **potential for regional processing** built in rural areas for delivery to those same geographies

MEAL

SUPPLY (generally associated with soybean production)

- **Enhanced nutrition bundle:** Approaches should target higher value for end users. Multi-disciplinary approaches are encouraged (e.g. linking two or more disciplines such as economics, nutrition, agronomy, physiology, biochemistry, molecular biology, computational biology, or modeling). Application of new technologies and cutting-edge research that improves probability of success, reduces time to market, and/or supports on-farm decisions are encouraged.
 - **Cultural or management practices** and tools that improve nutritional profile (e.g., protein, amino acids, oil, carbohydrates)

- **Species-specific** nutrient targets
- Elevated **protein and improved essential amino acid composition** (focus on combinations of two or more of the following amino acids – H, I, L, K, M, F, T, W, V)
- **Improved energy and amino acid consistency and levels** from genetically-improved soybeans/soybean meal
- Improved **carbohydrate composition**
- Varieties requiring **low or no-processing** due to reduced anti-nutritional / allergenicity factors (e.g., 1. reduced protein / peptide antinutritional factors, 2. reduced macromolecule antinutritional factors, 3. reduced small molecule antinutritional factors)
- Soy **innovations for plant-based and/or cellular protein**, including flavor targets
- **Marketing, communication and education** approaches that inform seed development, seed selections and choices based on quality and value for different end uses. Approaches should enhance public-private partnerships and activate or enhance market signals for higher end use value to increase profit opportunities for U.S. soybean farmers

MARKETPLACE (generally associated with market development)

- Research and/or focused **technological advancements that increase transparency and traceability, especially from end users to upstream market actors**
- **Enhance product transformation** (processing, transport, storage) to increase value to end users
 - Further **refine in-line tools for use in determining nutritional value and associated economic value**
 - Processing parameters/issues that enable **better management of processor’s impact on soybean meal feeding value**
- **Focused aggregation of publicly-available value chain data** that establishes U.S. soy as the trusted source and enables or enhances partnerships. Approach must have a clearly-defined path to end use, customers, value, and value chain coordination
- **Global market research** enhancing market position and market access, while generating evidence for marketing initiatives
- **Promotion of factors that differentiate U.S. soy and effectively communicate** in global markets (e.g., nutritional, health, economic, sustainability, supply)

DEMAND (generally associated with soybean end use)

- **Strategic marketing efforts** that build demand and partnerships for feed and food end uses
- **Strategic and coordinated export promotion efforts** (e.g., soybeans, soybean meal, meat, poultry) in developed and emerging markets
- **High market potential industrial applications** (e.g., wood adhesives, biorefinery) or cutting-edge technologies that create high-value or high-volume new opportunities for U.S. soy
- Approaches that **develop markets and build demand for soy as a preferred protein source** in alternative food and feed markets (e.g., plant-based and cellular proteins, fermented products)
- **Animal and aquaculture research** that enhances the value proposition for U.S. soy and soy products and byproducts. Prioritize market-driven, commercially-viable solutions, including:
 - Improved **methods to measure and evaluate nutritional energy** in monogastric diets
 - Better understand **meal anti-nutritional factors (ANF) as well as reactive lysine effects on animal health and performance**. Development and adoption of improved ANF measurement and mitigation approaches may be required.
 - **Value of intact soybean protein** in animal diets versus synthetic alternatives
 - Evaluation and validation of **non-nutritive (including health) value of soybean meal in swine and poultry feeding applications**, including beneficial fibers and soy bioactive compounds

- **Processing impact on and enhancement of meal energy and amino acid characteristics**, e.g., evaluation of increasing oil content of soybean meal (expeller and solvent extracted) in poultry and growing-finishing pig diets (may consider metabolizable energy (ME) and net energy (NE) systems)

STRATEGIC PROMOTION, EDUCATION, COMMUNICATIONS²

- **Brand Strategy** – Identify opportunities that result in greater alignment using the unified U.S. Soy brand across all platforms, channels and tactics, ultimately increasing engagement with priority stakeholder and value chain audiences and enhancing the reputation of soy grown in the United States.
- **Messaging and Content Integration** – Use, optimize and monitor strategic content marketing and channel integration to ensure message consistency across all checkoff platforms. Surface and develop new messaging opportunities and build related content bundles to be deployed across existing platforms. Use farmer voices to connect the soy community as well as external audiences.
- **Issues Management and Crisis Preparedness** – Conduct comprehensive strategic communications research, domestically or globally, to inform USB’s issues management or crisis communications initiatives. These efforts should include the gathering of valuable insights on perceptions and preference regarding U.S. Soy and identify and increase understanding of priority audiences.
- **External Communications Engagement** – Expand alignment with the U.S. Soy community and key stakeholders by engaging nontraditional voices in support of U.S. Soy, and boost U.S. Soy visibility by placing the voices of U.S. soybean farmers and leaders in broadly recognized settings beyond typical agricultural settings.

² Must be integrated into one of the target areas – meal, oil or sustainability.