

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

### SUBMISSION DEADLINE

5:00 PM CST, 7/23/2021

#### RFP TITLE: U.S. SOY-BASED FEED UTILIZATION IN BLUEFIN TUNA

#### RFP CONTACT:

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**PROPOSAL DEADLINE: July 23, 2021**

#### INTRODUCTION:

Through a global network of international offices and strong support in the U.S., USSEC helps build a preference for U.S. soybeans and soybean products, advocates for the use of soy in livestock and aquaculture feed and human consumption, promotes the benefits of soy use through education and connects industry leaders through a robust membership program.

The aquaculture sector has been growing in response to increased demand for fish and seafood, and this presents an opportunity for U.S. soybeans as an important ingredient in aquafeeds. Bluefin tuna (BFT) is a particularly high-value species, but the limited availability of baitfish poses a challenge to increasing sustainable production. There is strong potential for U.S. soybeans to serve as an alternative to baitfish as the source of protein in aquafeeds for BFT.

#### PURPOSE OF RFP:

USSEC seeks a contractor to conduct a feed demonstration trial with BFT to demonstrate and collect data on the production impact and economic value of U.S. soy-optimized aquafeeds for BFT.

#### BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

As demand for aquaculture-produced BFT and similar marine carnivorous fish species increases, USSEC is working to optimize inclusion of U.S. soy in aquafeeds. As a consistent, high quality, sustainable source of nutrition, U.S. soybeans are a viable alternative to baitfish from both a production and economic standpoint. Through the feed demonstration trial, USSEC seeks to gather market intelligence on soy inclusion rates and performance of soy-optimized feeds relative to baitfish. USSEC will use this information to improve marketing of U.S. soybeans for inclusion in aquafeeds for BFT and other marine carnivorous fish species in multiple producing regions globally.

**TARGET AUDIENCE:**

The target audience for the on-farm feed demonstration trial is BFT producers and aquafeed companies. The USSEC team will incorporate information from the results into communications with aquaculture producers and feed manufacturers.

**SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:**

- Produce or acquire aquafeed for bluefin tuna that utilizes U.S. soy.
- Conduct a feed demonstration trial(s) in a bluefin tuna producing region. The contractor is responsible for identifying and finalizing arrangements with applicable BFT producers.
- Collect and analyze data on the performance of U.S. soy-optimized feed relative to baitfish, including the following:
  - feed conversion efficiency
  - flesh quality and fat content
  - impact on production costs and profitability
- Produce a comprehensive report on the demonstration trial and data analysis for the USSEC team.
- Develop communications materials (such as a brochure or presentation) summarizing results which USSEC can use to communicate results to a wider audience in the aquaculture production and feed manufacturing sectors.

**ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

USSEC may visit the demonstration site with farmers and/or customers in the aquaculture industry. Upon USSEC’s request, the contractor must facilitate such visits and accompany visitors to describe the trial and present results. Additionally, USSEC may invite the contractor to present the results of the trial at select USSEC events.

**DELIVERABLES:**

The deliverable schedule listed below is illustrative, and applicants may propose an alternative schedule in their proposals. All work must be completed by December 31, 2021.

<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Description of Deliverables</b>
Within 10 business days of contract signing	Finalize feed demonstration trial design with USSEC team.
November 30, 2021	Submit draft comprehensive report on the trial and data analysis for USSEC review
December 15, 2021	Submit draft communications materials summarizing results for USSEC review
December 31, 2021	Submit final report and communications materials with USSEC comments addressed.

## PROJECT TIMELINE:

The contract will last from approximately July 26 to December 31, 2021.

## RFP TIMELINE:

- **RFP Distribution:** July 7, 2021
- **Last Day to Submit Questions:** July 14, 2021 by 5:00PM Central Time
- **Project Proposals Due:** July 23, 2021 by 5:00PM Central Time
- **Selections Made By:** July 30, 2021
- **Prospective Contractors Notified By:** July 30, 2021

## INSTRUCTIONS:

Proposals must contain at a minimum the specific criteria listed below:

1. Please email the proposal to [RFP@USSEC.ORG](mailto:RFP@USSEC.ORG) by **5:00PM Central Time on July 23, 2021**.
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.
3. Resumes for each of the Prospective Contractor's personnel assigned to work directly on the implementation of the contract.
4. Provide a minimum of two names and contact information for other similarly sized clients for reference purposes.
5. Detailed Budget
  - 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.
6. 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 learns 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](mailto: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.