

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SUBMISSION DEADLINE
January 15, 2021, 5:00PM CST

RFP TITLE: DIFFERENTIATION OF U.S. FULL-FAT SOYBEANS – DIGESTIBILITY AND PERFORMANCE

RFP CONTACT:

Name: Kristen Basala
Email: kbasala@ussec.org

PROPOSAL DEADLINE: January 15, 2021, 5:00PM CST

INTRODUCTION:

USSEC consultants have predicted an increase in the use of full-fat soybeans (FFSB) in many geographical areas and countries, such as China, Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe, Central America, Middle East/North Africa, Spain and Romania. Likewise, it is anticipated that buyers will increasingly look at quality related variables beyond just cost. U.S. FFSB have superior digestibility of crude protein (CP), better essential amino acid (AA) profiles and oil quality than full-fat soybeans from other origins. However, the information available on these differences in value, compared with other suppliers, is limited. To support better access and understanding of U.S. FFSB differentiation, three priorities have been identified: 1) Increase customer awareness of USSEC specialists research and findings into FFSB; 2) Educate customers on the differentiating attributes of the U.S. FFSB; and 3) Increase the sales of FFSB.

PURPOSE OF RFP:

This request for proposal seeks a firm or consultant to generate quantitative data and produce a qualitative assessment to differentiate and position U.S. FFSB as the best source of essential amino acids and energy (CP and oil) among main FFSB producing countries based on the uniformity and nutrient content of the beans. This RFP is for the second of two related projects on FFSB and will include: a) chemical analysis to produce a standardized quality assurance protocol; b) in-vitro bioassay/digestibility study in poultry and pigs; and c) in-vivo digestibility study and performance trial in poultry and pigs. Interested applicants may also refer to the RFP for the first project entitled "Differentiation of U.S. Full Fat Soybeans – Characterization and Processing Techniques."

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

USSEC findings have indicated that properly processed U.S. FFSB from show higher nutrient content (both essential AA and energy) than FFSB from other origins. Historically, the price per ton for U.S. FFSB has been higher than from other origins, however, it has come under pressure in recent years. To reposition U.S. FFSB as a premium product, USSEC seeks a firm to quantify the benefits of U.S. FFSB and characterize its differentiating attributes. This project, along with a complementary project on characterization and processing techniques, will help educate soy buyers on the superior nutritional value and quality of U.S. FFSB in order to facilitate sales to target regions and strengthen U.S. FFSB's marketplace position. Ultimately, a strong analysis and marketing plan can help demonstrate the superiority of FFSB from beans

of U.S, origin, increase their seasonal marketing window, and impact the sales of FFSB niche production, currently estimated at close to 4-5 % of total soybean sales.

TARGET AUDIENCE: Soy crushers (utilizing FFSB), bean buyers, animal feed nutritionists and decision makers of companies purchasing FFSB from non-US origins.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

- Conduct chemical analysis and produce a standardized quality assurance protocol (based on in-vitro results) for U.S. soy FFSB including: proximate analysis values, quality control tests (urease, TIA/TIU, PDI, PS2%KOH), and sucrose level.
- Collect empirical data and lab analysis on FFSB species-specific benefits for: poultry and pigs. This includes in-vitro protein bioassay/digestibility assessment originated from the project for publication in scientific journals, magazines of value and other relevant channels. Develop nutrient matrices, based on the in-vitro study in poultry and pigs, to include Dig AA values and the energy equation for FFSB according to the technique used.
- Conduct an in-vivo study in poultry and pigs on digestibility and performance. Develop nutrient matrices, based on the study, to include information on Dig AA values and the energy equation for FFSB according to the technique used.
- Provide essential information, evidence and quantitative justification, supporting U.S. FFSBs position as a premium source of energy and essential amino acids.
- Provide essential information and quantitative justification, supporting U.S. FFSBs premium price position.
- Develop marketing recommendations on raising awareness about U.S. FFSB superiority.
- Identify and engage key journals, magazines and other relevant channels to publish the study results including quality assurance standards, nutrient specifications/matrices, and performance/economic advantages of U.S. FFSB.
- Collaborate and coordinate with USSEC Technical and Marketing teams.

DELIVERABLES:

Completion Schedule Requirements	Description of Deliverables
Weekly and Biweekly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -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. -Submit biweekly progress reports -Establish weekly coordination and collaboration with USSEC Technical and Marketing teams.
Specific Deadlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write a standardized Quality Assurance Protocol based on generated in-vitro results. - Provide booklet in hard and digital copy containing all the results generated/information from the whole project. - Identify key journals and magazines to publish the study results.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Prepare draft white paper on the findings and recommendations and submit to USSEC on September 1, 2021. - Prepare and draft scientific publication article and submit to USSEC on September 1, 2021. -Provide a go-to-market plan to USSEC Marketing Team on September 1, 2021. -Provide marketing selling tool with essential information and quantitative justification, supporting U.S. FFSBs premium price. -Provide a draft final report and PPT presentation to USSEC on September 1, 2021 for review and comment. Include findings related to the specific results benefits achieved through each processing methods. - Incorporate USSEC review comments and submit all finals fourteen days after reviews, and no later than September 30, 2021 at 5:00PM CST.
--	---

RFP and PROJECT TIMELINE: February 2021 - September 30, 2021

RFP Distribution: December 18, 2020

Q&A Timeframe: Last day to submit questions January 8, 2021 by 5:00PM CST

Project Proposals Due: January 15, 2021 by 5:00PM CST

Selections Made By: January 29, 2021

Prospective Contractors Notified: January 29, 2021

Final Project Delivered: September 30, 2021

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 January 15, 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.
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, audiotope, 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.