

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

5:00 PM CST, 5/12/2021

RFP TITLE: QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF RAW SOYBEANS ARRIVING AT EUROPEAN PROCESSING PLANTS

RFP CONTACT:

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PROPOSAL DEADLINE: MAY 12, 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.

PURPOSE OF RFP:

USSEC seeks a contractor to collect samples and assess the quality of raw soybeans from different origins on arrival at European processing plants as well as the quality of the heat processed soybeans produced at those plants. The initial contract will be for data collection and preliminary analysis through December 31, 2021 with the possibility of extension for up to two additional years. Ultimately, the data collected will be used to inform a study on the effects of the quality of the raw beans at arrival to the European processing plants on the quality of the heat processed beans produced.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

Nutritionists and feed mill managers believe that the quality and the nutritional value of soybean meal (SBM) and heat processed beans (full fat soybeans - FFSB) depends primarily on the procedure and equipment used to process the beans. However, new information indicates that although the processing plant is important, it is not the only factor in the quality of the final product. In fact, the physicochemical characteristics of the original beans may have greater effects on the quality of the final product than commonly understood.

In this respect, the geographical area of bean production (latitude, altitude, day length, pluviometry, temperature, soil, etc.), weather conditions around harvesting (fermentation, sprouting, etc.), management of the beans at the farm level (i.e., moisture content of the bean, air drying conditions, bean storage) and transport through the ocean, might influence the

quality of the raw beans and thus, the nutritional value of the SBM and FFSB. USSEC intends to further study this topic beginning with a study of heat processed beans at European FFSB plants.

With this RFP, USSEC is seeking a contractor to initiate data collection for a study to further explore this topic. The contractor will provide analytical data for the damaged, high quality beans, and processed FFSB for further evaluation. The purpose is to determine the effects of the quality of the raw beans at arrival to the European processing plants on the quality of the heat processed beans produced. The data will give information on the following issues: a) quality of the damaged vs. the high-quality beans, b) influence of the origin of the beans on the nutritional value of the FFSB, and c) importance of the equipment and processing conditions of the beans (plant effect). Ultimately, after several years of data collection, USSEC seeks to use the information to will allow to evaluate the economic advantage (€/ton) of raw beans of U.S. origin vs. other origins, based on the chemical composition of the percentage of the damaged beans compared with the HQ beans.

TARGET AUDIENCE: The direct audience is the USSEC team. USSEC may present results to additional audiences including plant crushers, full fat producers, purchasing managers, and nutritionists.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

- Identify four to six FFSB processing plants in Europe for participation in the study. Document information on the plant characteristics, equipment, and processing conditions of each location. The contractor should select plants which will enable the collection of the samples from different origins. The contractor is responsible for obtaining any approvals or agreements with the processing plants, if required.
- Develop a sampling protocol for collecting raw beans and FFSB from the plants. The contractor will collect samples of 5 kg to 8 kg of raw beans and 1 kg of FFSB from each plant. FFSB plants typically purchase beans three to four times per year, and the contractor will collect samples on the arrival of each purchase. This will result in 20 to 24 samples per year. All the samples will be identity preserved (i.e., date origin of the beans, supplier, vessel, ports of departure and arrival, and person in charge of the sampling). The contractor will collect samples of raw beans and FFSB on the same day.
- Assess the raw bean samples for physical quality attributes. Classify the beans of each “vessel cargo” into foreign materials, damaged beans (1.5 to 8 % expected, depending on the cargo) and high-quality beans.
- Complete chemical analyses of the damaged raw beans, high-quality raw beans, and processed FFSB for major constituents using the same lab for all samples. The parameters studied will include all those with greater influence on quality and nutritive value of the beans (i.e., free fatty acids profile, and peroxide index of the lipid fraction, simple sugars, starch, oligosaccharides, and sucrose of the carbohydrate fraction, amino

acid profile, urease activity, PDI, KOH, trypsin inhibitors, and reactive lysine of the protein fraction), and macro-minerals and trace-minerals of the ash fraction.

- Compare chemical analyses of subsamples of damaged beans, high quality beans and processed beans.
- Create matrices of the composition and nutritional value of the resulting FFSB.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:

This initial data collection will contribute to a larger study. After several years of data collection, the intention is to study the interaction between country of origin, processing plant, and processing procedures, and the impact of these variables on the quality of the final product. Data should be collected and reported with a view to facilitating this research.

DELIVERABLES:

Completion Date	Description of Deliverables
Within 10 business days of contract signing	Finalize study design with USSEC input
November 30, 2021	Submit draft report
December 31, 2021	Submit final report with USSEC comments addressed

PROJECT TIMELINE:

USSEC anticipates the contract will begin May 24, 2021 and end December 31, 2021.

RFP TIMELINE:

- **RFP Distribution:** April 26, 2021
- **Last Day to Submit Questions:** May 5, 2021 by 5:00PM Central Time
- **Project Proposals Due:** May 12, 2021 by 5:00PM Central Time
- **Selections Made By:** May 17, 2021
- **Prospective Contractors Notified By:** May 17, 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 May 12, 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, 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.