

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

5:00 PM CST, 5/5/2021

RFP TITLE: SOYBEAN VALUE CALCULATOR DEVELOPMENT

RFP CONTACT:

Name: Kristen Basala

Email: kbasala@ussec.org

PROPOSAL DEADLINE: May 5, 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.

Soybean buyers often focus on price and a few quality standards when making purchasing decisions. While U.S. soy compares favorably using such measures, the advantages of U.S. soy are best highlighted when a broader range of quality variables are considered. However, conducting a more comprehensive analysis of whole bean value would be time consuming for buyers. Through this RFP, USSEC seeks to develop a soybean value calculator that will allow buyers to quickly and easily analyze and compare the value of whole beans using a broader set of measures.

PURPOSE OF RFP:

USSEC seeks a contractor to develop a comprehensive soybean value calculator that allows for comparative analysis of whole beans from different origins. The purpose of the calculator is to facilitate buyers' purchasing decisions by enabling them to easily compare data on soybeans from different origins. Ultimately, the calculator is intended to facilitate a paradigm shift in soybean purchasing in which buyers regularly consider a broader set of variables. The contractor must have demonstrated expertise in economics and analysis as well as a good understanding of the soybean value chain and grain flows.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

The comparative advantages of U.S. soy are best illustrated when buyers use comprehensive measures of quality and value. To inform customers' decision-making processes, USSEC offers two calculator tools – the Nutrition Value Calculator (for soybean meal) and the Oil Value

Calculator (for soybean oil) – and collects data from different origins and destination countries on a variety of quality attributes.

As the majority of U.S. soybean exports leave the country as whole beans, USSEC would like to develop a prediction tool to compare the total value of soybeans between the U.S., Argentina, and Brazil. The tool, the Soybean Value Calculator, will incorporate data from the two existing calculators, USSEC data sets, and other data that would quantify the nutritional value of U.S. soybeans. Ultimately, the Soybean Value Calculator will serve as a tool for buyers to quickly compare the total predicted value of soybeans from different origins and use that data to make informed purchasing decisions.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

The target audience for the Soybean Value Calculator will be decision makers in the soybean value chain.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

- Develop recommendations for variables that should be included in the Soybean Value Calculator. At a minimum, variables will include:
 - nutritional value (from the Nutrient Value Calculator)
 - oil value (from the Oil Value Calculator)
 - physical characteristics: moisture, oil content, foreign matter/trash, and damage
- Develop, test, and finalize the Soybean Value Calculator incorporating the variables and data as agreed to with USSEC. The calculator will include the capability to compare U.S., Argentinian, and Brazilian soybeans. The calculator will be user-friendly with minimal instructions needed to use the tool or interpret results. The calculator could be translated into multiple languages, so cross cultural ease of use, and ease of translation is a must. [Note: At this time, the contractor is expected to develop the calculator in English only. Any possible translation to other languages would be determined at a later date.]

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION

USSEC will provide the contractor with access to the Nutrient Value Calculator, Oil Value Calculator, and other USSEC reports and data. The contractor is responsible for obtaining data on physical characteristics; however, USSEC will provide the contractor with access to data collected in house.

USSEC will own the Soybean Value Calculator. At this stage, the final product could take a variety of forms from a simple as a pivot table in Excel to web-based application.

DELIVERABLES:

The deliverable schedule listed below is illustrative, and applicants may propose an alternative schedule in their proposals. However, all work must be completed by September 30, 2021. Preference will be given to applicants that demonstrate the ability to deliver quality work in a shorter timeframe.

Completion Date	Description of Deliverables
Within five business days of contract start date	Conduct kick-off meeting with USSEC to discuss the concept
Within ten business days of contract start date	Submit recommendations of variables to include in the calculator for USSEC review and comment
July 30, 2021	Share preliminary version of the calculator with USSEC for testing and comment
August 31, 2021	Launch final version of the calculator with USSEC comments addressed

PROJECT TIMELINE:

The contract will last from approximately May 19 to September 30, 2021.

RFP TIMELINE:

- **RFP Distribution:** April 21, 2021
- **Last Day to Submit Questions:** April 28, 2021 by 5:00PM Central Time
- **Project Proposals Due:** May 5, 2021 by 5:00PM Central Time
- **Selections Made By:** May 12, 2021
- **Prospective Contractors Notified By:** May 12, 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 5, 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.

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.