

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SUBMISSION DEADLINE
5:00 PM CDT, April 1, 2026

RFP TITLE: ASSESSMENT OF THE NUTRITIVE VALUE OF SOYBEAN MEALS OF DIFFERENT ORIGINS IN PACIFIC WHITE SHRIMP

RFP CONTACT:

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PROPOSAL DEADLINE: 5:00 PM CDT, April 1, 2026

INTRODUCTION:

The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) champions U.S. Soy worldwide. Through innovation, sustainability and partnerships, we connect farmers to global markets.

USSEC members represent the soy supply chain, including U.S. Soy farmers, processors, commodity shippers, merchandisers, allied agribusinesses and agricultural organizations.

USSEC is funded by the U.S. soybean checkoff, USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) matching funds, and industry.

The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) Global Aquaculture Program is dedicated to advancing sustainable aquafeed and aquaculture production worldwide through the promotion of U.S. Soy-based ingredients and technical support. The program aims to build preference for U.S. Soy by demonstrating its nutritional performance, supply reliability, and sustainability profile by working across all segments of the production chain from feed manufacturers and fish farmers to industry associations and researchers.

PURPOSE OF RFP AND BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

Soybean meal is one of the most used protein ingredients in aquaculture feeds globally. Its nutritional value varies due to differences in cultivars, environmental conditions in which raw material was grown, and processing methods. Prior research

indicates that soybean meal made from U.S. origin soybeans consistently demonstrates superior nutritional quality when compared to soybean meal from other sources, though there is limited data available on the impact that the described quality differences in shrimp production.

USSEC seeks to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of soybean meal from four origins (U.S., Brazil, Argentina, and India) to assess their chemical composition, digestibility, and bioavailability when included in Pacific white shrimp diets (*Litopenaeus vannamei*). This study will also evaluate the impact of feed processing methods (steam pelleting v. extrusion) on nutrient availability and shrimp performance and maximum recommended inclusion rate of soybean meal in shrimp diets.

Through conducting controlled trials, advanced chemical analyses, and bioeconomic simulations, the project should generate robust, industry relevant data demonstrating the value of U.S. Soy in shrimp aquaculture.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

The targeted audience for results from this project includes but is not limited to aquaculture feed manufacturers, shrimp producers and integrators, nutritionists and technical specialists, soybean processors and ingredient suppliers, and industry stakeholders around the world.

SCOPE (SERVICES) OF WORK:

The selected contractor will be required to source soybeans from the listed origins and produce soybean meal samples in a standardized fashion. Contractor will conduct chemical and nutritional analyses on raw materials and use results to formulate and produce nutritionally complete trial feeds. Contractor will then execute growth and digestibility trials for shrimp and perform necessary laboratory analyses. Contractor will then conduct statistical analyses and bioeconomic simulations. Results should be reported to USSEC in both a report and presentation format.

CONTRACTOR QUALIFICATIONS AND POSITION REQUIREMENTS

Selected contractor should have advanced degrees in aquaculture or animal nutrition, 10 or more years of relevant experience, expertise in aquaculture feed trials

and laboratory analyses, strong data analyses and modeling skills, and experience in international research collaboration.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION (if applicable)

n/a

DELIVERABLES:

Completion Date	Description of Deliverables
April 15, 2026	Present complete experimental design to USSEC
April 30, 2026	Source soy from various sources
May 30, 2026	Soybean meal production and analysis complete
June 30, 2026	Trial feeds formulated and produced
September 30, 2026	Complete shrimp growth trial
October 31, 2026	Complete digestibility trial
December 31, 2026	Complete laboratory analyses
January 31, 2027	Complete data analyses
February 28, 2027	Provide presentation of results to USSEC aquaculture team and identify relevant industry audiences for results
March 31, 2027	Submit final project report to USSEC

PROJECT TIMELINE:

*Our expectation is for the **ASSESSMENT OF THE NUTRITIVE VALUE OF SOYBEAN MEALS OF DIFFERENT ORIGINS IN PACIFIC WHITE SHRIMP** to be completed by April 1, 2027. We are asking that the Project Proposal include details about what the proposed timeline and scope would look like. Timeline provided in “Delvierables” is approximate.*

RFP TIMELINE:

- **RFP Distribution:** March 18, 2026
- **Last Day to Submit Questions: 5:00 PM, March 27, 2026** Central Time
- **Project Proposals Due: 5:00 PM, April 1, 2026** Central Time
- **Selections Made By: April 3, 2026**
- **Prospective Contractors Notified By: April 6, 2026**

INSTRUCTIONS:

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

1. Please email the proposal to RFP@USSEC.ORG and mcheatham@ussec.org and lvargas@ussec.org by **5:00PM Central Time on April 1, 2026**
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 selected contractor.
- 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 agree 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: <https://ussec.org/about-ussec/>

USB's Long Range Strategic Plan can be found here:
<https://www.unitedsoybean.org/strategic-plan/>

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 16-member board of directors is comprised of four members from the American Soybean Association (ASA), four members from the United Soybean Board (USB), and eight 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 77 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 primary contractors. U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), Inc. is contracted to manage projects for international marketing and global opportunities activities.

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.

MANDATORY CONTRACTUAL TERMS

Contracts: The ***following terms are required:***

1. USSEC, as well as the Secretary of Agriculture, may terminate the contract and be relieved of payment. USSEC will pay for all work performed under contract until the date of termination.
2. Any work a contractor undertakes prior to contract approval by AMS is at their own risk and USSEC is not financially liable if the contract is not approved.
3. Funds paid to the contractor may not be used for the purpose of influencing legislation or governmental policy or action. "Influencing legislation" is defined as any attempt to affect the opinions of the general public or any segment thereof concerning current or proposed legislation or any attempt to influence legislation through communication with any member or employee of a legislative body or with any government officials who may participate in the formulation of legislation. "Government officials" refers to federal employees outside of USDA, foreign, and State governments/officials, legislators, and legislative staffs. "Influencing of governmental policy or action" is defined as any action the principal purpose of which is to bring about a change in existing policy or regulation or affect the outcome of proposed policy or regulation, except those actions which are specifically provide for in the Soybean Act and Order.
4. The contractor must (a) keep accurate records, books and documents involving transactions relating to the contract; (b) retain the records, books and documents for 3 years; and (c) said records, books and documents may be subject to inspection and audit by a representative of USDA and/or USSEC.

5. EEO policy statement: contractor agrees that, during the performance of this Agreement, contractor will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, protected genetic information, or reprisal. 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, but not limited to, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, Genetic Information Act of 2008, and the Equal Pay Act of 1963. Nothing in this section shall require contractor to comply with or become liable under any law, ordinances, regulation or rule that does not otherwise apply to the contractor.

6. Subcontractors. Subject to USSEC's approval, the contractor may subcontract specific tasks to outside parties. Should the contractor elect to subcontract specific tasks, subcontractors will be subject to the same contractual terms as its contract agency in regard to:
 - (1) Reporting and record keeping;
 - (2) Travel expenses;
 - (3) Title of property;
 - (4) Confidential information
 - (5) Influencing legislation and/or influencing governmental policy or action;
 - (6) Federal civil rights policies.

The primary contractor agency who has a direct contract with USSEC will be fully responsible for the quality of all work product, including any approvals from AMS and providing proof of payment to the subcontractor for any work they have performed. If proof of payment cannot be provided, USSEC will be unable to reimburse the contractor. Any such authorization in the contract must state that entering into a subcontract does not relieve the contractor of primary responsibility to carry out the terms and conditions of the underlying contract in accordance with the Act, Order, Regulations and USDA policies.

7. Confidentiality

Financial or commercial information obtained under contract with USSEC that is privileged and confidential shall be kept confidential by all persons, including employees and former employees of USSEC, USDA and the contractor having access to such information.

Contracts: The **following terms are not allowed:**

1. Indemnification provisions, unless it is clear that the indemnification will in no way obligate the U.S. government to pay on a potential claim.
2. Liquidated Damages

Intellectual property. Rights will be governed by the Bayh Dole Act, 35 U.S.C. §200-212 for any entity that is a “contractor” as defined by the Act at §201(c).

Expenses. The following expenses are prohibited under the Act and Order:

1. University Principal Investigator salaries;
2. University overhead/indirect costs; non-Principal Investigator salaries are an exception
3. Entertainment expenses;
4. Spousal/family/companion expenses;
5. Personal expenses (except as specifically allowed in USSEC’s Travel policies;
6. Open bars;
7. Funding of capital equipment unless the equipment is purchased (a) in direct connection with a plan or project, and (b) necessary for the completion of the plan or project.

Request for Proposal Budget Development

Company Name:	
Contact Person:	
Proposal Name:	
Total Budget:	\$ -

This budget proposed contains information including all consulting fees, overhead, travel expenses or any other type of expenses incurred to effectively complete the services/deliverables agreed upon. The payment represents the sole and complete liability of USSEC for services rendered in relations to the agreement.

PROFESSIONAL FEES:

Total Fees	
\$	-

TRAVEL EXPENSES

Provide the anticipated travel expenses to successfully execute the project:

Domestic Travel	International Travel	Purpose
\$ -	\$ -	
\$ -	\$ -	
\$ -	\$ -	
\$ -	\$ -	
\$ -	\$ -	
\$ -	\$ -	
\$ -	\$ -	
\$ -	\$ -	
\$ -	\$ -	
\$ -	\$ -	

Other

Provide list of any other costs related to the project that are not included in Professional Fees or Travel Expenses

Type of Expenses	Cost	Purpose
	\$ -	
	\$ -	
	\$ -	
	\$ -	
	\$ -	
	\$ -	
	\$ -	

Budget Summary

Professional Fees	\$ -
Travel Expenses	\$ -
Other	\$ -
	\$ -