

# **FY26 RFP – PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT ACTION TEAM**

**Deadline for submission June 30, 2025**

## **1. Summary and Background**

On behalf of Minnesota's 25,000-plus soybean farmers, Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council (MSR&PC) directs the investment of soybean checkoff dollars in international and domestic marketing programs, research projects and education and technology transfer efforts designed to increase the profitability of soybean production. MSR&PC is made up of an elected board of 15 soybean producers from across the state.

## **2. Purpose**

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is not an offer to enter into an agreement, but rather a means to solicit proposals from various investigators and collaborators to help increase the profitability of Minnesota soybean producers. The Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council will conduct an open, fair, and complete evaluation of all proposals based on the criteria listed herein and select those investigations that best represent the needs MSR&PC desires to address.

MSR&PC reserves the right to reject all proposals, in whole or in part, and/or enter into negotiations with any party. MSR&PC shall not be obligated for the payment of any sums to any RFP respondent unless a written contract between the parties is executed.

Successful bids, as determined by the MSR&PC Action Teams, will:

- Increase profitability to Minnesota soybean farmers, while promoting, educating, and increasing awareness of Minnesota's soybean farmers and the importance of soybeans and soybean products to industry, influencers, and consumers.
- Collaborators must maintain records and make them available for audit and inspection by MSR&PC, the United Soybean Board, or USDA.
- MSR&PC must retain ownership of all materials and information generated by collaborators.
- Collaborators cannot assign their duties under the contract to anyone else without prior written authorization.
- Funds awarded must not be used for any lobbying or influencing legislation at any level of government.
- Contracts will only be valid for one year, if a term of more than one year is anticipated a clause allowing termination on a yearly basis must be included.

**General sponsorships, grants, gifts, or donations are prohibited from being funded by the USDA.** Funds distributed must be used towards a specific project with deliverables. If the project is generally called a sponsorship or partnership, it must include deliverables such as advertisements, speaking opportunities, admission to an event, booth space, etc.

Projects must have a strong tie to soybean growers and soy in general. General agricultural messages and projects can be funded; however, MSR&PC could not be the only funding source. Funding should be commensurate with the value back to soy growers and the soy industry in Minnesota.

**No project is final and approved and no expectations of payment based on an action team approval or MSR&PC approval is reasonable without a signed final contract.**

### **3. General Guidelines:**

This Request for Proposals represents an open and competitive process.

Proposals should be directed to the Minnesota Research and Promotion Council via email at [Projects@mnsoybean.com](mailto:Projects@mnsoybean.com).

The proposal must contain the signature(s) of a duly authorized representative of the organization submitting the proposal.

The Principal Investor (PI), also known as cooperator, contractor or partnering organization will be noted as PI from this point forward. If submitting a proposal with the intention to outsource or sub-contact any of the components, this must be clearly stated in the proposal and a list of sub-contractors to be used included along with associated fees/charges included in the budget breakdown. MSR&PC will not refuse a proposal based upon the use of subcontractors; however, we retain the right to refuse sub-contractors you have identified in your proposal.

A good proposal fits the goal of the Leadership Development/Executive Committee of identifying and developing additional soybean leaders and benefits Minnesota soybean producers as a component of that mission. It is important to identify what significant contribution your research/marketing/studies/promotion will contribute toward fulfilling that mission.

**Proposals should be written as to be completed in a 12-month or less contract period.**

Proposals will be reviewed by a broad range of farmers and experts. Avoid use of acronyms whenever possible. Include the reason and background for the marketing/research/studies and materials and methods for each proposal.

**Any potential political activity as a component of proposed project must be identified as part of the pre-proposal process.**

### **4. Investigation Purpose:**

**The Product Development Action Team's Mission is:**

**To increase profitability for Minnesota soybean farmers by providing marketing promotions and research that increases the demand for soybean meal and oil through processors and end users who add value to soybeans for domestic and international uses.**

- **Expand or develop new uses and markets for soybean protein:**
  - a) Animal feeds market.
    - Assess and identify ways to expand the soybean protein use in the animal feeds, pet foods and aquaculture markets. This assessment of the market needs must address the current market economics of soybean protein as compared to other feed protein sources and how that may change with lower soybean meal prices. This would include market research, feed trials or other forms of market assessment that can lead to more soybean meal demand.
    - Also, to research the attributes of high oleic soybeans, including TruSoya (a high oleic, high linolenic) soybean could bring to the finished livestock's meat profiles and feeding economics.
  - b) Use in human foods, such as food proteins to address the growing consumer demand for higher protein foods.
  - c) Industrial use of soybean proteins, such as paints and coatings, fertilizer, etc.
  - d) Specialty protein markets that use soy protein as the base (i.e., Soy Protein Concentrates [SPC], etc.) or new soybean varieties that have altered traits for certain applications.
  - e) Expand the use of soybean hulls in feed and other value-added or industrial applications.
- **Develop, expand, and continue current domestic markets for soybean oil:**
  - a. Industrial uses for soybean oil, includes biodiesel and any other products that can be made from further processed soybean oil.
    - i. For biodiesel, we are looking for projects that educate the public about the benefits of biodiesel, projects that can provide technical assistance to biodiesel users and fuel distributors on the current biodiesel blends as well as higher blends where needed, as well as promote the benefits of biodiesel, B20 blends and higher blends through trials, events, advertising, and communications programs.
    - ii. Develop, promote, and expand products or processes that utilize Soy Methyl Esters or other soybean oil components.
  - b. Human uses for soybean oil, such as high oleic soybean oil.
- **Expansion domestic and international markets for co-products from soybean and/or biodiesel processing:**
  - Primary emphasis on soybean oil soapstock, glycerin and bleaching clays
    - Industrial, Human or Animal uses for these co-products.

Note: For those proposals that intend to expand and/or develop a new use for soybean protein, soybean oil or co-products of soybean processing, please include in your proposal a plan as to how you would envision commercializing that product.

- **Soy-based products promotion and/or education.**

For this area we are seeking ways to grow the markets for all the soy-based products that have already been developed through projects funded by the MSR&PC, United Soybean Board, or other Qualified State Soybean Boards. There are a growing number of Minnesota industries, companies, State and County government entities that need to be sought out, prioritized and provided information about these products.

## **5. Funding Requested/Justification - Budget**

All proposals must include budgets of expected expenditures with as much detail as possible. Incomplete budgets may result in delayed consideration for funding. All anticipated costs and fees must be included in the proposal.

No depreciable capital equipment shall be purchased with funds provided without prior approval from MSR&PC.

## **6. Project Schedule/Timeline:**

All proposals in response to this Request for Proposal are due no later than 5:00 p.m. CST June 30, 2025. Late proposals will not be considered. Evaluation of proposals by MSR&PC Action Teams will begin after that date and initial decisions regarding funding will be based on the written bid. Should clarification on the proposal(s) be desired, the Action Team may invite individual PI's for an oral presentation. Recommendations for funding approval will be presented to the MSR&PC Board of Directors during the August 2024 board meeting.

## **7. Proposal Evaluation Criteria:**

The Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council will evaluate all proposals with equity. To ensure consideration, your proposal should match the goals of the MSR&PC Product Development Action Team.

The proposal must also be on time, complete, and include:

- a. Identification of the priority area the proposal addresses and suitability to provide Minnesota soybean growers with information to meet the action team goals.
- b. Adherence to the proposal requirements listed in this document
- d. Value and cost: Submissions will be evaluated on cost effectiveness of the proposal.
- e. A plan as to how you intend to communicate the results of your work to farmers, businesses, or consumers in 250 words or less.
- f. FY26 Proposal Cover Sheet and Proposed Budget are located on the here: <https://mnsoybean.org/msrpc/request-for-proposal/> .
- h. FY26 Full proposal - Submission of complete, fully detailed proposal with cover sheet and budget must be submitted to: [Projects@mnsoybean.com](mailto:Projects@mnsoybean.com).