

FY26 RFP – PROMOTION 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.
- Collaborator must maintain records and make them available for audit and inspection by MSR&PC, MDA, the United Soybean Board, and/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.

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 sub-contractors; 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 Promotion Action Team (on behalf of the Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council) is accepting proposals in the following areas:

Whole Soybeans:

- Market expansion of commodity soybeans and soybean meal into foreign markets. We are particularly interested in: Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Taiwan, Uzbekistan and Georgia.
- In December 2017, the U.S. and China governments consummated an agreement to have <1% FM in soybean shipments arriving in China after 1/1/18. We seek proposals to assist Minnesota soybean producers and grain-handling facilities in consistently achieving that.
- Soybean market development via the continued hosting of visiting trade delegations in Minnesota.
- Minnesota's growing identity preserved soybean sector is vital to diversify our soybean production. Develop market expansion of food type soybeans into target countries including but not limited to China, Japan, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, Taiwan and Korea via efforts focused in Minnesota or (via joint effort) Minnesota plus North Dakota, Wisconsin, South Dakota and other relevant QSSB states.
- What else do we need to know about relevant markets that would increase our impact?

Soybean Oil:

Human:

- We would like to leverage the national effort on promoting high oleic soybean oil as a healthy choice oil for food use. Minnesota grows more different types of high oleic soybeans than any other state.

Industrial:

- We would like to leverage efforts to manufacture food-grade lubricants from High Oleic soybean oil, to facilitate food/feed manufacturing industries compliance with the recently implemented Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA).

Soybean Meal (protein package):

Swine/Pork:

- In Minnesota, the swine industry is one of our largest customers. We believe that northern states' origin (especially Minnesota) soybeans possess an essential amino acid profile that delivers better performance and results in monogastric animals.
- Pork exports add value to Minnesota soybean farmers, which has driven a need to raise more and export more swine.

Poultry:

- Broilers and layers have room to grow in Minnesota. With the amount of installed Minnesota soybean processing, the capacity is here for expansion in feed consumption. What can be done to expand our poultry production in Minnesota?
- Turkeys continue to be our second largest customer in Minnesota. Propose to us what can be done to increase this sector.

Aquaculture

- Minnesota has a sizeable soybean processing and feed milling industry. We believe that soybean protein can be exported via the feeds or feed ingredients (e.g., soy concentrates/isolates) specifically manufactured for the aquaculture sector. Means to assist the feed industry in Minnesota to reach this market are therefore sought.

Dairy/Beef:

- Minnesota dairy is a large consumer of soybean meal; we would like to see that market grow. How can we help build the demand of soybean meal through dairy?
- The beef production in Minnesota is sizable. In what ways could we increase the usage of soybean meal in this sector?

Relationships:

- We all know relationships are important to maintaining, building and expanding our markets. All of the markets listed above are a key focus, and we need proposals to better connect the farmers with the true customers in order to strengthen the relationship.

Soybean Competitiveness:

Ports:

- Minnesota and Mississippi River ports are part of an important waterway logistic network to maintain competition in the soy transportation system and reach customers around the world. How can we play a role in improving the efficiency and reliability of this complex network?

Rail:

- Without affordable and reliable bulk rail cars, we will not be able to reach the world's growing population. We need to help drive the conversation on improved future U.S. transportation infrastructure. Also, to be competitive in the identity preserved soybean sector, we must have cargo container access. Currently, it is very expensive and challenging to access empty containers to export Minnesota soybeans. We seek proposals to help us be a strong voice for improved service to help grow our IP soybean export sector.

Roads:

- To continue to be more sustainable and efficient, we will need to have increased truck weight limits on our state and federal highway systems. To compete in a global economy, we need to be able to lower our road transport costs per bushel.

If a proposal is selected for funding. The participant should follow the Code of Conduct which states the following: During the course of the agreement, The Cooperator will maintain business ethics standards aimed at avoiding real or apparent impropriety or conflicts of interest. MSR&PC expects the Cooperator to act with the utmost dignity and care to enhance and maintain the respect and reputation of MSR&PC and its directors, staff and volunteers. The Cooperator shall not engage in activities that make derogatory, false, misleading or damaging comments about MSR&PC, its directors, staff, volunteers or associated organizations and their directors, staff or volunteers (including but not limited to United Soybean Board, United States Soy Export Council, Soy Transportation Coalition, Northern Soy Marketing, Specialty Soya and Grains Alliance, World Initiative for Soy in Human Health, and other Qualified State Soybean Boards). Sending communications that call into question the actions of the Soy Checkoff and the decisions of the farmer leaders of the checkoff and affiliates will be viewed as a violation of this clause and contract and will be grounds for termination of this agreement. The MSR&PC executive committee will review all pertinent information regarding violations of this clause and will decide if in their opinion communications are derogatory, false, misleading or damaging.

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 PIs for an oral presentation. Recommendations for funding approval will be presented to the MSR&PC Board of Directors during the August 2025 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 Promotion 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 & Budget located here:
<https://mnsoybean.org/msrpc/request-for-proposal/>
- g.** FY26 Full proposal - Submission of complete, fully detailed proposal with cover sheet and budget must be submitted to: **Projects@MNSoybean.com.**