

# Request for Proposal (RFP)

## Market Perspectives Report

### 1. Introduction and Project Overview

The U.S. Grains Council (the “Council”) is a non-profit organization that promotes the global use of U.S. barley, corn, sorghum and related products, including ethanol and distillers’ dried grains with solubles (DDGS). Based in Washington, D.C., the Council maintains a full-time presence in 28 locations and operates market development programs in more than 50 countries and the European Union.

The Council plays a key role in disseminating market information to international customers. To that end, it distributes *Market Perspectives*, a weekly email publication that offers readers up-to-date information about coarse grain markets, including price, weather, and freight data that international feed and food grains importers, processors, and end users consider in their purchasing decisions.

The Council is seeking proposals from qualified vendors to research and produce *Market Perspectives*, with the goal of providing timely and constructive market data to global stakeholders. As part of this approach, the Council aims to streamline the weekly report by focusing more on price reporting and reducing some of the detailed analyses from past editions. This change is intended to reduce the project scope and create a more concise product.

### 2. Scope of Work

The scope of work for this project consists of gathering relevant data, producing the weekly *Market Perspectives* report, and uploading it to the U.S. Grains Council website.

The Council will provide guidance on the process for uploading and distributing the final report. The vendor is not required to include or utilize their own platform for distribution, such as email marketing software.

Each report should include the following elements:

#### 2.1: CBOT Market Tables

- A table listing closing prices and daily price changes for the relevant CME corn contract (e.g., September contract). This information will be presented in a tabular format that includes trading dates for each week, price change from the previous day, and closing price at the end of each trading day.
- A futures price performance table that includes a review of this week’s and last week’s prices for corn, soybeans, and soybean meal, with net change analysis.
- Sample formats:

Week in Review: CME Corn September Contract					
Cents/Bu	Friday October 11, 2024	Monday October 14, 2024	Tuesday October 15, 2024	Wednesday October 16, 2024	Thursday October 17, 2024
Change	-2.75	-7.50	-7.00	3.50	2.00
Closing Price	415.75	408.25	401.25	404.75	406.75

Futures Price Performance: Week Ending October 17, 2024			
Commodity/Contract month	17-Oct-24	10-Oct-24	Net Change
<b>Corn</b>			
Dec 24	406.75	418.50	-11.75
Mar 25	421.25	436.25	-15.00
May 25	428.75	445.00	-16.25
Jul 25	433.25	451.00	-17.75
<b>Soybeans</b>			
Nov 24	988.75	1014.75	-26.00
Jan 25	998.00	1031.50	-33.50
Mar 25	1009.75	1046.50	-36.75
May 25	1024.00	1061.25	-37.25
<b>Soybean Meal</b>			
Dec 24	318.10	316.10	2.00
Jan 25	314.90	315.80	-0.90
Mar 25	315.10	317.10	-2.00
May 25	317.20	317.70	-0.50
<b>*Price Unit:</b>	Corn/Soybeans: Cents and quarter-cents/bu. (5,000 bu.); Meal: \$/ton (100 tons)		

## 2.2: FOB Price Tables

- *Yellow Corn*: Current FOB prices for the U.S. Gulf and Pacific Northwest.
- *Sorghum*: Current FOB prices for Texas Gulf.
- *Corn Gluten Feed*: Current FOB price for New Orleans.
- *Corn Gluten Meal*: Current FOB price for New Orleans.

Each table should include the current week's basis and flat prices. A sample format is below:

Yellow Corn (USD/MT FOB Vessel*)				
YC FOB Vessel Max. 15.0% Moisture	GULF		PNW	
	Basis (#2 YC)	Flat Price (#2 YC)	Basis (#2 YC)	Flat Price (#2 YC)
December	0.74+Z	\$213.18	1.30+Z	\$235.42
January	0.60+H	\$213.47	1.15+H	\$235.32
February	0.63+H	\$214.65	1.15+H	\$235.32
March	0.61+H	\$214.06	1.15+H	\$235.32
April	0.60+K	\$217.11	1.14+K	\$238.37
May	0.62+K	\$217.90	1.15+K	\$238.77

### 2.3: DDGS Market Tables

- A table of current DDGS prices for the following key export markets. The table should include columns for the current month and the next two months, allowing for easy comparison of price trends over this period.
- Current DDGS prices and price estimates (USD/metric ton) for the next two months for each of the following markets:
  - 1) Barge CIF New Orleans
  - 2) FOB Vessel Gulf
  - 3) Rail Delivered PNW
  - 4) Mid-Bridge, Laredo, TX
  - 5) FOB Lethbridge, Alberta
  - 6) Kansas City Rail Yard (delivered ramp)
  - 7) Elwood, IL Rail Yard (delivered ramp)
  - 8) 40 ft containers:
    - South Korea (Busan)
    - Taiwan (Kaohsiung)
    - Philippines (Manila)
    - Indonesia (Jakarta)
    - Malaysia (Port Kelang)
    - Vietnam (Ho Chi Minh City)
    - Japan (Yokohama)
    - Thailand (Laem Chabang)
    - China (Shanghai)
    - Myanmar (Yangon)

### 2.4: Ocean Freight Market Analysis

- A review of bulk ocean freight indices, including routes relevant to U.S. grain exports, for HSS (heavy grains, soybeans, sorghum) cargoes.
- The following routes and vessel sizes should be included, along with current weekly prices in USD/MT and price changes from the previous report:

- 1) Japan
  - 55,000 from U.S. Gulf
  - 55,000 from U.S. PNW
- 2) China
  - 66,000 from U.S. Gulf
  - 66,000 from U.S. PNW
  - 56-60,000 deep draft from Argentina
  - 60-66,000 from Brazil (Santos)
  - 55-60,000 from Northern Coast Brazil
- 3) Mexico (Veracruz)
  - 25,000 from U.S. Gulf
  - 30-36,000 from U.S. Gulf
- 4) Colombia (West Coast/Buenaventura)
  - 35,000 from U.S. Gulf
  - 35,000 from Argentina
- 5) Colombia (East Coast)
  - 35,000 from U.S. Gulf
- 6) Guatemala
  - 43-45,000 from U.S. Gulf
- 7) Morocco
  - 26-30,000 from U.S. Gulf
- 8) Egypt
  - 55-60,000 from U.S. Gulf
- 9) Europe-Rotterdam
  - 60-70,000 from U.S. Gulf

## 2. Project Budget and Timeline

Proposals must include a detailed budget breakdown, specifying costs associated with each component of report production.

The proposed contract would begin January 1, 2025, and continue through December 31, 2025. Fees to the contractor will be paid monthly for each week the report is produced.

Subject to the agreement of both parties, this contract could be extended for an additional two-year period.

## 3. Vendor Qualifications

The ideal vendor will possess the following qualifications:

- **Experience in Agricultural and Commodity Markets:** Demonstrated knowledge and experience in analyzing global grain markets, specifically corn, sorghum, barley, and related products like ethanol and DDGS. The vendor should have a solid understanding

of the key factors influencing these markets, including supply chain logistics, pricing trends, and international trade dynamics.

- **Data Collection and Verification Expertise:** The vendor must have proven experience in gathering accurate, timely, and reliable data on market prices, freight rates, and other critical metrics.
- **Familiarity with U.S. Export Markets and USDA Programs:** Understanding of U.S. grain export channels and familiarity with USDA programs, including USDA export statistics and reporting practices.
- **Strong Analytical and Reporting Capabilities:** The vendor should demonstrate a capacity for comprehensive market analysis, including the ability to communicate complex market movements clearly for an international audience.
- **Track Record of Success in Market Reporting:** The vendor should have a proven history of producing high-quality market reports, demonstrated through past work and client references.

#### 4. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- 1) **Experience and Expertise:** The vendor's background in international market analysis, including familiarity with agricultural markets and the international grain trade. Additionally, any experience with or knowledge of USDA/FAS cooperator programs is appreciated.
- 2) **Data Accuracy and Validation:** The vendor's ability to consistently provide accurate and up-to-date price data that aligns with real-time market conditions. This includes methods for cross-referencing and verifying price information with industry sources, traders, and on-the-ground insights to avoid discrepancies.
- 3) **Approach and Methodology:** The effectiveness of the vendor's data collection methodology and reporting. The proposal should clearly outline the approach to gathering and presenting market data and should include a sample report to demonstrate these capabilities.
- 4) **Track Record:** The vendor's history of successful project completion and client satisfaction, ascertained through reference checks.
- 5) **Economic Competitiveness:** The overall cost-effectiveness of the proposal, based on the budget breakdown provided by the vendor.

#### 5. Submission Requirements

To be considered, proposals must be submitted to Lucas Rudy ([lrudy@grains.org](mailto:lrudy@grains.org)) via email no later than Friday, November 15<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 PM ET. Oral, phone, and fax submissions will not be accepted.

Proposals should include the following information:

##### 6.1: Vendor Information

- Company name and contact information
- Overview of the company, including history, past projects, and areas of expertise

## **6.2: Project Approach and Methodology**

- Describe the sources the vendor will use to gather market data (e.g., CBOT data, USDA reports, industry insights, direct contact with traders, shipping data, etc.).
- Outline how the vendor will ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data, including methods for cross-verifying prices and trends through multiple sources.
- Outline the structure of the report, including CBOT Market Review, FOB price tables, DDGS market tables, and ocean freight market tables. Describe how visual elements like tables, charts, and graphs, will be used to enhance clarity and readability.

## **6.3: Sample Report**

- A complete sample of the report the contractor intends to produce.

## **6.4: Budget Breakdown**

- Detailed budget breakdown specifying costs associated with each component of report production.

## **6.5: References**

- A list of at least three (3) professional references that the Council can contact prior to contract signing.

## **6.6: Team Composition**

- Overview of the project team, including roles and responsibilities.
- Resumes or bios of key team members.

In addition, award of the contract is subject to the following conflict of interest rules:

1. No Council employee, officer, board member, or agent thereof will participate in the review, selection, award or administration of a contract if a real or apparent conflict would arise or when an individual or their partner or family or employer has financial or other interest in the firm selected for an award.
2. Council officers, employees, board members and agents thereof shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors or anything of monetary value from contractors or subcontractors.

3. Disciplinary actions for violations of such standards by Council officers, employees, board members or agents thereof may include reprimand, nullification of the contract, dismissal from Council employment or leadership position and legal action.

## 6. Contact Information

For any questions regarding the RFP, please contact:

Lucas Rudy  
Manager of Global Programs  
Email: [lrudy@grains.org](mailto:lrudy@grains.org)