



Request for Proposal for American Pecan Council

Project I: International Marketing Representation in China

To ensure industry resources are being utilized in an efficient and effective manner, the American Pecan Council (APC) has established a policy to seek proposals from outside companies that will assist the industry in its research and market development projects. Specifically, the APC requests proposals from qualified companies to demonstrate their capabilities in conducting international marketing, research and promotion in China, with an emphasis on building importer and retailer relationships and in-store/e-commerce activations. Our mission is to grow the opportunity for American Pecan exports in China by establishing relationships with importers and retailers and increasing distribution in relevant consumer marketing channels.

Process for Request for Proposals (RFP)

Companies or individuals wishing to apply for the Council's programs must complete the Request for Proposals (RFP) application. Proposals will be evaluated in no more than two phases.

All applications should be emailed to Anne Warden, CEO at awarden@americanpecan.com and Serena Schaffner, Chief Marketing Officer at sschaffner@americanpecan.com, and are to be postmarked or emailed on or before December 23, 2024. Applications received after this deadline will not be accepted or considered. All written proposals will be evaluated by APC or its agents in a fair, open and competitive manner. APC will notify applicants that have been selected for further consideration for presentation to the International Committee.

Background of the American Pecan Council

The APC is a Federal marketing order established in November 2016. The purpose of the order is to assist the American pecan industry with the promotion, research, standardization and consumer education of American pecans. The order provides the pecan industry with a coordinated program designed to strengthen the American pecan industry's position in the market place. It supports existing markets, while pursuing potential new markets and uses for American pecans.

The Federal marketing order has oversight by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) making it a governmental program with the full protection and oversight of the USDA.



Proposal Requirements

Proposals should include the vision, strategic direction, execution and measurement of initial marketing and promotion campaigns in China. For this proposal, the APC would agree to a contract of up to \$350,000 USD. This contract is for the 2025 fiscal year, which began on October 1, 2024 and concludes on September 30, 2025. Funding for this project would be sourced directly from various government programs and industry funds. You will be working with an APC marketing partner to ensure policies and Council direction are followed.

The proposal should address how best to invest the available funds to establish and build key importer and retailer relationships as well as utilizing efficient marketing channels to educate, and ultimately convert Chinese consumers.

This project has the ability to establish a multi-year relationship with this new partner and an opportunity to provide a Chinese-focused strategy each year.

Funding for this engagement and potential future engagements may be provided as part of USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service grant programs such as the Market Access Program (MAP) and Regional Agricultural Promotion Program (RAPP), Quality Samples Program (QSP) and the Emerging Markets Program (EMP), among others. In addition to those funds, APC does provide industry funding to match those dollars provided by USDA.

Opportunity Overview

In the summer of 2024, APC engaged the consulting firm McKinsey & Company to conduct a market assessment of China. This assessment was designed to size the opportunity for American Pecans following several years of APC investment in growing consumer awareness, as well as increased trade barriers due to a high tariff and growing competition from non-U.S. pecans.

McKinsey provided APC with an evaluation of both supply side and demand side scenarios. Specifically, they estimated pecan consumption growth and Chinese consumer needs for particular pecan products, and they projected pecan production growth by U.S. competitors and how that interplayed with the business needs of pecan processors and retailers in China.

In summary, McKinsey found that regardless of the magnitude of consumption growth or competitive forces, U.S. Pecan is well positioned to capture China's demand for large premium pecans, such as those used in gifting occasions or sold alone in jars or bags by top nut brands.

With these insights and findings, APC seeks an in-market representative with the capabilities to:

- Develop a clear value proposition for American Pecans in China
- Manage additional in-market research as needed
- Isolate the most effective materials and channels for communicating the superior quality of American Pecans
- Build relationships with nut importers, processors, brands and retailers
- Identify partnership opportunities to co-market to consumers or develop new product offerings
- Provide pecan buyers with materials, sampling opportunities and occasions for meeting with U.S. pecan sellers



- Manage APC’s investments in trade shows and other events, marketing material, partnership activations and other campaign activities to positively position American Pecans
- Work with partners to co-develop new product format and flavors for pecans
- Advise the U.S. pecan industry on how to effectively meet China’s buying needs
- Continually evaluate changing market conditions to provide the U.S. pecan industry with perspective on its overall strategy for engaging with China
- Coordinate with APC’s legal representative in China to ensure proper compliance with laws and regulations related to trade engagements

Measurement and Reporting Guidance

Understanding marketing impact will be critical in every initiative. In order to measure the effectiveness of APC’s marketing efforts in China in the long-term, APC will need to show growth in the following goals:

Description	2024 Baseline	2025 Goal	2026 Goal
Goal: Percent of target audience aware of the great taste, health benefits and versatility of American Pecans	60%	68%	72%
Goal: Percent of target audience who are aware of the health benefits of American Pecans	50%	65%	67%
Goal: Increase in Pecan purchase intent among Chinese Consumers	75%	80%	83%

Additionally, it will be necessary to measure campaigns and activation efforts frequently and consistently to be reported quarterly and included in annual success stories. Example metrics may include:

- Increase in number of key importer/retailer relationships
- Quantity of retail partnerships/efforts
- Examples of adoption and advocacy among key stakeholders
- Engagement, reach and impressions (as appropriate)

APC will strongly favor applicants with experience working with U.S. commodities and/or with strong relationships with nut buyers.

Questions

For questions regarding the RFP Process or application, please do not hesitate to contact:

Serena Schaffner
 Chief Marketing Officer
Sschaffner@AmericanPecan.com
 1 808-281-2363



APPLICATION FOR REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FOR THE AMERICAN PECAN COUNCIL

(Use this application form or answer each of these questions within your presentation materials)

Name of Company:

Applicant Contact Information:

Title:

Phone:

Email:

Company Address:

Please provide an overview of your company, including how long your company has been in existence, special services and capabilities and what sets you apart from other similar organizations. *(Answer here or attach response as necessary)*

Please provide an overview your agency team structure and staff and/or subcontractors that may be working on this project.

(Answer here or attach response as necessary)

Please provide a list of clients or examples of recent work that would be relevant to this opportunity.

(Answer here or attach case studies or examples as necessary)

Please provide a percentage breakout of staff fees vs. actual project or partnership spend based on the proposed \$350,000 budget.

(Answer here or attach response as necessary)



PROPOSAL

Please describe your proposal in 1000 words or less. Answers should include the following criteria (not ranked in any order):

1. Evidence of developing marketing campaigns in China
2. Experience and ability to adapt to unique industry needs
3. Proven timely deliverables (on time, on budget)
4. Maintenance and troubleshooting track record
5. Measuring campaign results

Please describe how you would utilize the funding (Itemized Budget) to build on importer and retailer relationships and reach chinese consumers to increase exports and consumption of American Pecans. Answers should include proposed marketing channels and costs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that the American Pecan Council is an equal opportunity employer and that the proposal submitted to the American Pecan Council is to the best of my ability factual and accurate. I understand that I am the appropriate and authorized person for this company to submit a proposal to the American Pecan Council. Furthermore, I also understand that the proposal may be modified before final approval of the American Pecan Council. Lastly, I understand that if approved, I will submit the necessary reports and documentation needed and/or requested by USDA and/or the American Pecan Council to fulfill the reporting requirements.

Name of Authorized Applicant (Print)

Signature of Authorized Applicant Date

