

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
Why Buy U.S. Potatoes Research
April 4, 2025

Potatoes USA is seeking proposals from qualified organizations to conduct research on the competitiveness of U.S. potatoes and potato products compared to product from other areas of the world. . The research aims to compare the advantages and disadvantages of U.S. potatoes compared to potato products from the European Union (EU), China, India, and Australia/New Zealand. The chosen company will work closely with Potatoes USA staff to obtain the potato products, carry out the research, and provide a final report.

About Potatoes USA

Potatoes USA is the national marketing and research organization focused on strengthening demand for potatoes. Potatoes USA actively promotes potatoes in the U.S. and 22 countries and is exploring opportunities in Africa: Mexico, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, China, the Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, Thailand, Central America (Guatemala, Honduras, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Panama), and the Gulf Cooperation Council (Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, and Qatar).

The National Potato Promotion Board is a marketing and promotion board created by an act of Congress in 1971, currently doing business as Potatoes USA. The organization is considered an instrumentality of the Agricultural Department. As such, Potatoes USA is under USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) oversight. The organization is managed by an elected board of potato producers, importers, and a public member. These board members are nominated by their peers and appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture. Additional information about Potatoes USA is available on PotatoesUSA.com. The organization's marketing website is PotatoGoodness.com.

Scope of Work

The international potato market has become more competitive, with a greater number of products from China, India, Australia, and New Zealand competing with long-established potato products from Europe, Canada, and the U.S. These offerings, as well as changes in global supply dynamics, have threatened the U.S. leadership position in key export markets. The U.S. potato industry must better understand U.S. potatoes' key points of differentiation and advantages over competitor products to secure market share and grow volume for U.S. potato exports.

Firms submitting a proposal must include their abilities/qualifications for executing research that compares U.S. potatoes to competitor products. This research should include but not be limited to the following:

1. Comparison of U.S. fresh, frozen, and dehydrated potato products to potato products from the EU, China, and India specifically identifying the following factors. If available, product from Australia and New Zealand would also be valuable for this evaluation but not essential.

- a. Variety of product offerings, including frozen traditional cuts and formats such as standard shoestring fries and hashbrowns, frozen specialty cuts with batters or coatings, dehydrated potato products, and a range of fresh potato varieties.
 - b. Oil absorption/usage and holding times for frozen products.
 - c. Servings per case of the three top-selling frozen SKUs.
 - d. Analysis of solids vs. water content in frozen and fresh potato products.
 - e. Taste comparison, with live testimonials filmed and captured.
 - f. Consistency of quality across product offerings.
2. An overview of technological advantages for each origin, such as growing practices, sustainability measures, potato storage capabilities, cold chain practices, processing technologies, etc.
 3. An overview of food safety and quality/grading standards for potato products from each origin.

Project Deliverables

1. A comprehensive report detailing the findings of the research. Report should include a summary of the advantages and disadvantages of potato products from each origin
2. An executive summary highlighting key insights and recommendations, organized as follows to meet USDA Foreign Agricultural Services Requirements:
 - a. Name of the party conducting the evaluation.
 - b. The scope of the evaluation.
 - c. A description of the evaluation methodology.
 - d. A summary of the findings, including an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the program(s).
 - e. Recommendations for future programs.
 - f. Contact/interviewee list.
3. A presentation summarizing the main findings and recommendations.
4. Data sets and supporting documentation used in the analysis.
5. Presentations to Potatoes USA staff and potentially the Potatoes USA Board.

Budget

The proposed fee for this project will be an important determinant in the selection process. Potato product acquisition will be reimbursed separately, if needed, and does not need to be listed in the proposal.

Proposal Requirements

Respondents to this Request for Proposals (RFP) should provide the following information in their proposal:

- A comprehensive plan for completing the work, including a timeline.
- The capabilities and qualifications of the contracting organization for executing this project.
- Organization's background in research projects and prior experience with similar projects.
- A list of key project staff and their qualifications to be assigned to the project.
- Three (3) references, preferably from similar projects, include contact person, email, telephone, address, and a relationship description.

- Proposed fee and timeline for the full scope of the research project.
- The length and weight of the proposal will not be used in the selection process; however, the fee requested will be.

Submission Guidelines

Proposals must be submitted by May 12, 2025 to Kim Breshears, Chief Marketing Officer, at kim@potatoesusa.com, 3675 Wynkoop Street, Denver, CO 80216. Any questions regarding this RFP should be directed to Kim Breshears (kim@potatoesusa.com), Marisa Stein (marisa@potatoesusa.com) and Dinah Tobey (dinah@potatoesusa.com).

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Understanding of the project objectives and scope.
- Quality and feasibility of the proposed methodology.
- Demonstrated experience with relevant research projects and qualifications of key personnel.
- Cost-effectiveness of the proposal.
- Effectiveness of the proposed approach in delivering the scope of work.
- Ability to complete the research project in a timely manner.
- References and past performance.

Timeline

April 4, 2025	RFP issued
April 11, 2025	Submit intent to respond to RFP
April 18, 2025	Submit questions in writing regarding RFP
April 28, 2025	Potatoes USA to submit answers to all questions to all respondents
May 12, 2025	Proposal submission deadline
May 19, 2025	Finalists notified
May 19, 2025	Finalists to present proposals
May 26, 2025	Final selection
Week of June 2, 2025	Contracting & project kickoff

Project Commencement & Final Report Delivery: To be determined by Potatoes USA and selected company.

Potatoes USA reserves the right not to make the award if no suitable proposal is received.

Confidentiality

All information provided in response to this RFP will be treated as confidential and used solely for the purpose of vendor selection.

Affirmative Action Statement

Potatoes USA is an Equal Opportunity employer and conducts all business in compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended and the nondiscrimination regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture as now or hereinafter amended (7 CFR Part

15). Furthermore, Potatoes USA complies with the American with Disabilities Act of 1990, The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and the Federal Equal Opportunity Act. The Agent is required to comply with these acts and regulations.

Contact Information

For any inquiries or further information, please contact:

Kim Breshears
Chief Marketing Officer
Potatoes USA
(303) 873-2335
Kim@potatoesusa.com

We thank you for your interest and look forward to reviewing your proposal.

Sincerely,

Kim Breshears
Chief Marketing Officer
Potatoes USA