



Request for Proposals

Vermont Agroforestry Species Research Project

Contact Information:

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Timeline:

Request for Proposals released April 10, 2023
Responses to RFP due by May 15, 2023
Contractor selected by June 15, 2023
Final deliverables (2) due by December 1, 2023

Project background:

Agroforestry is the intentional integration of trees and shrubs into crop and animal farming systems. Examples of practices used by farmers include alley cropping, silvopasture, forest farming and riparian buffers. In recent years, agroforestry has increasingly been seen as an important strategy for addressing climate change, expanding and diversifying farm production, and contributing to greater agricultural resiliency. Despite growing interest, there is a lack of resources available for both farmers hoping to incorporate agroforestry related practices and technical assistance providers (TA) alike. Of the resources that are available, many are regionally or even nationally focused and do not recognize both the benefits and limitations of Vermont's specific climate zone.

The Farm to Plate Agroforestry Priority Strategy Team (PST) is under the auspices of the [Vermont Farm to Plate Network](#), a statewide collaboration of food system entities guided by the [Vermont Agriculture and Food System Strategic Plan](#). The [Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund](#) (VSJF) is the backbone organization for the Farm to Plate Network, and will administer the contract.

Scope of Work:

The VSJF/F2P (Farm to Plate) seeks a contractor to create a "quick reference" list of commonly used species adaptable to the Vermont climate, and a working spreadsheet of geographically preferred agroforestry species. The contractor will gather information on species, varieties, and cultivars used for agroforestry related purposes specific to Vermont. Information will be gathered through reviewing existing resources (articles, websites, USDA data, past research studies, existing species lists, etc.), in-depth interviews with service providers and farmers, and also through data gathered by a broadly

distributed survey (survey will be created and distributed both by contractor and in collaboration with members of the PST). The research will seek to list and describe the species' potential for a wide variety of agroforestry uses and needs, considering factors such as emerging markets, function for conservation, lifespan, hardiness, management costs, feed and fodder, nutrition, and price. VSJF/F2P and the PST will provide support and information to the contractor as needed.

Required Deliverables:

- A “quick reference” list of commonly used species that have been proven to be adaptable to the Vermont climate. The target audience for this document will be both TAs and farmers interested in utilizing agroforestry related practices.
- A working spreadsheet of geographically preferred agroforestry species, varieties, and cultivars that will serve as a working document for the PST to refine and add to over time. Format of the working spreadsheet is open to suggestions by the contractor.

Payment:

- A maximum of \$4,000 is available under this RFP.

Qualifications:

VSJF/F2P is seeking a contractor(s) with the following qualifications:

- Demonstrated expertise performing, summarizing, and analyzing secondary research
- Demonstrated expertise conducting and summarizing primary research (interviews)
- Demonstrated familiarity with Vermont, with preference for contractors also familiar with the Vermont food system and for contractors who have directly worked with farmers
- Knowledge related to agroforestry related practices and species
- Respect for the dignity of individuals and demographic groups living in Vermont including farmers and the food system community, and the individuals and groups impacted by the failures of the food system

Eligible applicants include:

- 1099 eligible independent contractors
- Employees of a business/organization able to receive funding to support this work

Evaluation criteria

All proposals submitted will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Qualifications of consultant (see Qualifications section above).
- Ability to complete scope of work within required time frame.
- Expressed ability to collaborate with a Network-based group.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

We recommend that interested applicants familiarize themselves with the Farm to Plate Network and the VT Agriculture and Food System Strategic Plan in order to further understand the background and operating structure of this project. Please submit the following with your response to this bid:

- Professional resume
- Relevant project experience: Include a description of your experience with research, analysis, and interviews, and what makes you/your business the right fit for this project.
- Project approach and proposed work plan and report outline
- Project budget: Please submit a budget, not to exceed \$4,000. Proposals should include all relevant costs to complete the work as detailed in PERFORMANCE TIMELINE & DELIVERABLES
- Any samples of similar research projects (preferred format: web links or a PDF).

PERFORMANCE TIMELINE & DELIVERABLES

- Contractor will meet with project partners for initial kick-off within two weeks of selection notification.
- Contractor will launch survey by June 2023.
- Contractor will attend Farm to Plate Network PST meetings, as requested, to share their methodology, findings, and suggestions.
- Contractor will conduct all interviews by August 2023.
- Contractor will present initial spreadsheet and list document based on interview and survey results no later than October 2023.
- Contractor will submit the final deliverables (quick reference list and spreadsheet) by December 1, 2023.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging is a core value for the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund. All RFP applicants are welcome. Black, Indigenous, and people of color are strongly encouraged to apply. Farm to Plate and the Agriculture and Food System strategic Plan include the organization's commitment to racial equity, an essential part of creating a sustainable, resilient, just and equitable food system.