



Request for Proposals INTERNATIONAL FREIGHT FORWARDER

Background

The Food Export Association of the Midwest USA (Food Export – Midwest) and Food Export USA – Northeast (Food Export – Northeast) are not-for-profit export associations and whose primary function is to develop export markets for midwestern and northeastern (respectively) producers and processors of value-added food and agricultural products. Our members include state agricultural promotion agencies from twelve midwestern and ten northeastern states.

Both groups are participants in the Market Access Program (MAP), a federal program handled by the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The MAP is intended to boost the export of value-added food and agricultural products from the U.S. through a partnership between FAS and approximately 75 other industry-based trade organizations. This includes primarily commodity-specific groups, as well as two other unaffiliated regional groups similar to Food Export - Midwest and Food Export - Northeast that handle the southern and western regions of the U.S.

The products covered for export promotion by Food Export – Midwest and Food Export – Northeast include a wide variety of processed and semi-processed products found throughout the retail, foodservice, and food processing sectors. These include products or derivations of meat, dairy, poultry, seafood, grains, fruits and vegetables, salty and savory snack foods, confections, beans, sauces and condiments, pet foods, beverages, canned foods, animal feeds, bakery products, pasta and many others. Marketing channels include mass market retail, specialty foods, convenience foods, private label, healthy/organic, food ingredients, frozen foods, and others.

Food Export - Midwest and Food Export- Northeast are independent organizations that have been engaged in a strategic alliance since April of 2000. Through this alliance, the strategy and tactics of the organizations have been aligned so that the activities and services of each group are very similar with differences based primarily on geographic focus. Food Export - Midwest focuses on midwestern exporters and a series of nine overseas target markets, including China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia, South America, Mexico, and India. Food Export -Northeast targets northeastern exporters and seven overseas markets, including France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Central America, Canada, the Middle East and the Caribbean. By collaborating, the activities and services of each organization are open to participation by companies from the other region. The net effect is that exporters in the Midwest and Northeast have access to a larger range of export promotion opportunities, while the limited staff at Food Export - Midwest and Food Export - Northeast can focus on specific market development opportunities.

The states that are members of Food Export- Midwest include: Illinois, Wisconsin, Kansas, Minnesota, Michigan, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Indiana, Ohio, and Missouri. Food Export – Northeast encompasses: New York, New Jersey, Vermont, Delaware, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island.

More information about Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast is available on the Internet at: www.foodexport.org.

Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast are seeking one or more companies to assist with the implementation and management of our freight forwarding needs for select trade mission activities abroad.

Caveat:

The vendor(s) will work closely with and be supervised by the appropriate International Marketing Program Manager. The vendor(s) will also be expected to liaise with our Activity Coordinators and In-Market Representatives (IMR), as appropriate. The selected vendor(s) will be responsible for the aforementioned activities during our 2015 Fiscal Year (January 1 – December 31, 2015).

In the Scope of Work sections below are more details on the activities for which Food Export - Midwest and Food Export- Northeast are seeking assistance. Most activities are coordinated in close partnership with our member state staff at various state agricultural promotion agencies. The specific duties and responsibilities assigned to vendor could vary by activity and by year. Such tasks will be assigned by a Food Export International Marketing Program Manager.

Requirements & Submitting a Proposal

The vendor must be able to cite previous experience in planning and conducting similar activities for food and agricultural products, and working effectively with people and by telephone, email and in person. Previous experience with not-for-profit groups, international marketing, food and/or agricultural groups will be considered favorably. The proposal should also include the names of the individuals who will be conducting the work and the qualifications of the proposed individual / vendor. The proposal should also include references. The contractor must also be financially and legally capable of entering into and executing a contract for the above stated projects. In addition, please provide the following information:

1. Name of Entity (as it would appear on contract/invoices)
2. Complete Mailing Address
4. EIN/TIN/SS number
(or if an overseas entity, the equivalent tax identification number in your country)
5. Type of Structure (choose one):
 Individual Corporation LLC Partnership Sole Proprietorship

Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast are not liable for any costs associated with any company’s response to this RFP. Food Export – Midwest and Food Export - Northeast reserve the right to not award this contract if, in the opinion of the evaluators, no suitable proposal is received. The awarded contract may be renewed for up to three (3) years.

The selected contractor must agree to abide by Food Export –Midwest and Food Export – Northeast Terms and Conditions:

Food Export - Midwest and Food Export - Northeast do not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, national origin or ancestry, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, political affiliation or military status. Persons with disabilities who require alternate means of communication of program information should contact us. Food Export - Midwest and Food Export – Northeast do not tolerate fraud in their programs or services, and expect all participants to comply with our code of ethics (www.foodexport.org/codeofethics).

If you suspect any instance of fraud, please contact our Ethics Reporting Line at: www.foodexport.ethicspoint.com or 1-855-727-6715 (domestic toll-free.)

We reserve the right to deny services to any firm or individual which, in the sole opinion of Food Export – Midwest or Food Export – Northeast does not comply with MAP; FAS; Food Export – Midwest or Food Export – Northeast regulations or policies, or otherwise reflect positively on them; their members states; FAS; or USDA, in pursuit of their mission of increasing food and agricultural exports, or for continued public support for their programs. For more information please see our Terms and Conditions located at www.foodexport.org/termsandconditions.

The selected vendor must agree to abide by the provisions contained in Section 202 of Executive Order 11246 (30 Federal Register 12319) with regard to employment and contracting practices. In addition, Food Export – Midwest and Food Export – Northeast acceptance of proposal is conditional upon contractor disclosing all existing relationship with another party that has the potential of impacting and/or influencing the contractor's ability to carry out the scope of work.

The contractor must agree to abide by Food Export – Midwest and Food Export – Northeast invoicing guidelines which include:

- Invoice must contain a unique invoice number
- Individual invoices per project or activity
- Each invoice must include the current hours being invoiced, the hours already invoiced on the project, and the total number of hours agreed upon for the vendor to carry out the project
- Invoices must be submitted no less-frequently than at the completion of each project phase
- Final invoices must be submitted within 30 days of completion of the project.
- The Scope of Work for a specific project as agreed to by the vendor, Food Export – Midwest and/or Food Export – Northeast must be included as a basis to track the actual work performed against the agreement.

The contents of this Request for Proposal and Scopes of Work are confidential and business proprietary. They may not be re-used for any purpose, in whole or part, including any text, or related concepts, strategies or tactics described, without written permission from Food Export – Midwest and/or Northeast.

The deadline for proposal is Friday, January 9, 2015, 12:00pm/Central time.

Mailed, faxed or e-mailed proposals will be accepted. **Please forward to:**

Laura Buske, International Marketing Program Coordinator
Food Export Association of the Midwest USA
309 West Washington, Suite 600
Chicago, Illinois 60606
Phone: (312) 334-9200
Fax: (312) 334-9230
E-mail: Lbuske@foodexport.org

Questions should be directed to the following:

Vanessa Simsick, International Marketing Program Coordinator, Food Export – Midwest at 312-334-9200 or vsimsick@foodexport.org.



Scope of Work: Freight Forwarder

Food Export plans and organizes Focused Trade Mission activities for its U.S. suppliers of value-added foods and agricultural products in various international countries. The purpose of these activities is to encourage and facilitate the purchase of suppliers' U.S. products by meeting with and showcasing product samples to international buyers and importers. Food Export will have approximately ten Focused Trade Mission activities in 2015 which require freight forwarding services in the following markets:

- Taipei, Taiwan – May 11-12
- San Salvador, El Salvador – July 9-10
- Hong Kong – July 13-14
- Shen Yang and Beijing, China – July 15-17
- Seoul, Korea – August 25-26
- Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic – October 6-7
- Singapore, Manila, Philippines and Phnom Penh, Cambodia – October 17-24
- San Paulo, Brazil – November 9-10
- Bogota, Colombia – November 11-12
- Kuwait City, Kuwait – November 18-19

As part of the service package offered to the U.S. food suppliers for their participation in the trade mission, Food Export works with a freight forwarder to send a consolidated shipment of samples from the participants to the mission locale. Participants are able to send up to 50 lbs. total of their product sample mix. The estimated averaged-sized Focused Trade Mission activity consists of approximately 6-10 U.S. suppliers, sending product of 45-50 lbs. each.

Products may be perishable (frozen, chilled) and/or non-perishable and the facility should therefore have suitable capability to store and ship frozen/chilled goods as appropriate. The mix of products varies with the participants who register for each mission, but it is very likely that on each mission there will be both ambient and perishable products. Products are typically confirmed ten weeks prior to the start of the event.

Vendors can submit proposals for select missions, geographical regions or for all activities. Proposal submissions should evidence past experience with and an understanding of the market(s) and their customs clearance processes.

Quotation(s) should be submitted as standard air rate per kilo (or lbs.) for both non-perishable and perishable goods. The total quote rate per kilo (or lbs.) should take into consideration costs such as freight expenses, port charges, consular fees, costs of special documentation, insurance costs, handling fees and all other services customary in international freight forwarding.

The vendor may also propose a flat administrative fee to cover time spent in planning calls with Food Export staff, providing additional logistical guidance to smaller, newer-to-export companies that participate in the mission, verifying of products' U.S. origin, and troubleshooting shipment challenges.

All will be defined on a case-by-case basis with pre-authorization by Food Export. As Food Export works with many different suppliers, the administrative fee is to also particularly encompass support of those suppliers needing the additional logistical assistance mentioned above, such as with documentation/importation requirements.

The responsibilities of the vendor(s) contracted under the RFP include:

- The implementation of overall sound freight forwarding logistics
- Designate a ground agent to facilitate customs clearing onsite. When applicable, Food Export may determine a specific ground agent such as the U.S. Embassy or the local Agricultural Trade Office.
- Intact safeguard mechanisms ensuring a backup strategy should product samples not be cleared in a timely manner.
- Establish with elected ground agent and Food Export representatives all documentations and certifications needed for each product sample(s) and provide ongoing coordination and communication with agent to ensure clear instructions on their submission
- Work with Food Export representatives to set clear timeline for product consolidation and shipment which ensures on-time delivery in market for the trade mission
- Review proposed required documentation received from Food Export In-Market Representative and Food Export Trade Mission activity coordinator regarding required documentation, certification, etc. requested from U.S. suppliers. The goal is to ensure smooth operations vis-a-vis deadlines and to comply with export documentation regulations.
- Provide any supplementary support and/or follow-up with documentation, packing lists, certifications, etc. to ensure consolidation departs on schedule
- Liaise intermittently with Food Export International Marketing Program Staff to provide updates and raise concerns that may affect the project such as deviation in timeline, personnel changes, consistent documentation submitted improperly, nature of products received, etc.
- Maintain overall communication and control until shipment is delivered and cleared in appropriate port(s)/locale(s).
- Inform Food Export and individual suppliers of any supplier's shipments that exceed weight limit. Invoice supplier directly for any overweight charges.
- Inform Food Export of any non-U.S. origin products to omit from shipment.
- Assign a uniform point of contact for entire project to maintain a consistent line of communication and efforts.