

Request for Proposal/Quotation for California Small Farm Conference Conference Coordination Services



May, 2012
California Small Farm Conference
PO Box 73614
Davis, CA 95617
www.californiafarmconference.com

Submission Deadlines

All submissions for responding to this request must be submitted electronically, as stated below, no later than:

June 15, 2012
No later than 5:00pm

Introduction/Executive Summary

The California Small Farm Conference is the state's premier conference for small-scale farmers and ranchers and those who support them. This annual three-day event combines field-based hands-on activities, speeches by industry leaders, technical workshops, and a variety of peer networking activities. It is organized by the volunteer members of the Board of Directors of the Farm Conference (dba California Small Farm Conference).

The California Small Farm Conference is seeking proposals from qualified individuals, businesses and organizations to provide conference coordination services and related project management support to the Farm Conference Board of Directors, including support for the volunteer members of the Board of Directors. For the remainder of this announcement, this person or organization is referred to a "Conference Coordinator;" it includes the lead contact person, and other key individuals who are identified in your proposal.

Submission Delivery Address

The delivery address to be used for all submissions is:

Search Committee, California Small Farm Conference
rfp@californiafarmconference.com

Submissions will be accepted by email only.

Any requests for clarification or additional information must come via email to the address above. No phone calls.

Overview/Background

The California Small Farm Conference is a not-for-profit; 501c3 organization founded in 1982 which conducts an annual educational conference on topics relevant to family farming, direct marketing and issues related to agricultural sustainability. The site of the conference differs each year to encourage participation by interested parties in various regions of the state.

The 2013 conference will be March 10-12, 2013 in Fresno, California.

The conference provides a venue for small-scale farmers and ranchers and their supporters to come together to network and learn. Attendance for each of the last three conferences is roughly 400, including approximately 90 scholarship recipients, most of whom are new or aspiring small-scale farmers or ranchers, or farmers' market managers. Please refer to the Farm Conference website (www.californiafarmconference.com) for information about the 2012 California Small Farm Conference.

The conference is governed by a Board of Directors who represent Federal and State agricultural agencies, farmers' markets, university programs, and nonprofit organizations that work with or support small-scale farmers and ranchers.

Detailed Specifications

In addition to a general statement of qualifications, please specifically address the following items in your response:

1. Who would be primary point of contact for the Farm Conference? Please include a statement of relevant experiences of this individual.
2. Who else from your firm or organization would likely be assigned to provide services to the Farm Conference? Please include brief bios or statements of relevant qualifications for these persons.
3. What experience does your firm or organization have in planning, organizing, and implementing educational conferences?
4. What experience does your firm or organization have in organizing sponsors, paid exhibitors or small trade shows?
5. What experience does your firm or organization have in the development and implementation of marketing plans, including the effective use of social media, that result in meeting attendance, sponsorship, and exhibitor goals?
6. What expertise does your firm or organization have in the effective use of technology tools to support the planning, organization, implementing and tracking progress of events?
7. What experience does your firm or organization have in California's farming or direct marketing industries, especially as it relates to the needs and interests of small-scale farmers and ranchers?
8. What is the capacity of your firm or organization to communicate in languages other than English?
9. Describe the experience that your firm or organization has in working with teams of multi-disciplinary experts and coordinating their input to planning a successful conference.
10. Describe any additional experience or skills and past accomplishments that reflect your firm's or organization's qualifications for this job.

Request for Proposal/Quotation

11. What would your firm or organization charge for the successful completion of the scope of work? Please include a detailed breakdown of your estimated hours and costs using the nine general categories listed under the scope of work.

In addition, please include at least three references – including contact name, firm, telephone and email – who can speak to your work as it relates to this Request for Proposals.

Applications, including responses to the questions listed above and bios of key staff members, should not exceed 10 pages. If more than 10 pages are submitted, only the first 10 pages will be reviewed. Letters of reference and relevant work samples may be submitted and will not count towards the 10-page limit.

Applications should be sent as a single PDF file to the email address listed above.

Assumptions & Constraints

- The mission of the California Small Farm Conference is to conduct an educational conference on topics relevant to family farming, direct marketing and issues related to agricultural sustainability. All those who work on behalf of the California Small Farm Conference are expected to be supportive of this mission.
- Funding for this contract is provided, in part, by grants from federal and state agencies including the US Department of Agriculture and the California Department of Food and Agriculture. Contractor may be required to affirm compliance with federal regulations such as the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988.
- The 2013 California Small Farm Conference will be held in Fresno, California, on March 10-12. Attendance at the conference site in Fresno from March 9-12 for key members of the project team is required.
- Meetings of the California Small Farm Conference Board of Directors have been tentatively set for the following dates: July 16, 2012; September 17, 2012; November 19, 2012; December 17, 2012; January 14, 2013; February 18, 2013 and April 8, 2013. These meetings will be held in Davis, California. In person participation by the Conference Coordinator is required.
- Meetings of the California Small Farm Conference Board of Directors and the Local Planning Committee have been set for the following dates: August 20, 2013; October 15, 2013; and March 9, 2013. These meetings will be held in Fresno, California. In person participation by the Conference Coordinator, is required.
- The maximum amount of the contract will not exceed \$45,000 for the successful completion of the scope of work.
- All travel in a personal vehicle for this project will be reimbursed at the prevailing IRS standard mileage rate. Any travel by air, train or other public transportation will be at the lowest prevailing fare. Any overnight hotel stays will be reimbursed at the federal per diem lodging rate or the actual rate whichever is less. All travel is subject to an overall cap of \$2,500.

Scope of Services to be Performed

- 1) Grant and Sponsorship Management
 - a. Develop a sponsorship development plan for approval by the Board.

Request for Proposal/Quotation

- b. Research sponsorship opportunities and secure sponsorship commitments.
 - c. Assist the Treasurer in grant and sponsorship management including tracking budgets, requests for funding, and reporting of activities to funders.
 - d. Participate in required trainings of funding organizations as schedule allows.
- 2) Exhibitor Recruitment and Management
 - a. Develop for approval by the Board a plan for recruiting and securing paid exhibitors.
 - b. Implement the plan.
 - c. Process requests for exhibition space, complete exhibitor agreements, secure payment for exhibitors and maintain communication with exhibitors to confirm needs and participation.
 - d. Arrange with hotel all logistical needs to accommodate exhibits.
 - e. Assign exhibit space for the optimal utilization of space during the conference.
- 3) Conference Planning and Implementation
 - a. Provide support for all meetings of the Board and Local Planning Committee.
 - i. Assist the President in the development and distribution of agendas and other pertinent meeting materials, as needed.
 - ii. Arrange meetings spaces and/or conference calls as needed.
 - iii. Attend meetings as required by the President.
 - iv. Provide status updates as required.
 - b. Provide input to the development of a conference planning timeline and track progress toward deadlines.
 - c. Assist President and Board in identifying and recommending tasks, and follow up with committees on progress toward task completion. Report any problems, opportunities or suggested changes to the Board.
 - d. Assume primary responsibility for completion of the following conference planning and implementation tasks:
 - i. Compile, design, prepare for printing, and facilitate production of a conference program which includes items required by the Board.
 - ii. During the conference, serve as the primary point of contact and be available to complete additional planning and implement tasks as required.
 - iii. In partnership with the Board, update and implement a conference evaluation system and compile evaluation results.
 - e. Assist the Board in the completion of the following conference tasks:
 - i. Identification of and participation of farmers, restaurants, wineries and other producers for the tasting reception and coordinate with the conference host hotel for their participation in the event.
 - ii. Coordinate with the conference host hotel for planning of meals, assignment of meeting space, and other logistical requirements.
 - f. Provide support for conference planning tasks undertaken by the Board, Planning Committee and Subcommittees.
- 4) Scholarship Program Support
 - a. Assist in the development and distribution of an electronic and online conference scholarship application.
 - b. Establish a component of the registration system that includes scholarship awardees and a way in which their registration information can be retrieved and modified as needed (i.e., to accommodate cancellations and substitutions).
 - c. Work closely with the Board to insure application and award process fits well within the overall conference planning timeline.

Request for Proposal/Quotation

- d. Coordinate distribution and tracking of award letters and acceptance letters. Compile and track meal requests, translation needs, and special accommodations of scholarship awardees.
 - e. Facilitate reservation of a block of rooms to accommodate all scholarship recipients needing lodging.
 - f. Prepare participation report upon completion of the conference, including total scholarship registrants and their additional participation in field courses, scholarship program costs (meals, lodging, and improvement process suggestions).
- 5) Contract Management
 - a. Solicit bids for contractors, such as audio-visual companies, web developers, bus companies, graphic designers, printers, translation services, and others as needed and recommend contractors to the Board.
 - b. Write contracts for services and prepare for signature by the President or Treasurer.
 - c. Act as main point of contact for those under contract.
 - d. Review the work accomplished and arrange for payments to contractors and report progress to the Board.
 - e. Coordinate work activities of contractors with Board, Planning Committee and Subcommittees.
- 6) Budget Management
 - a. Assist the Treasurer with tracking income and expenditures to ensure the conference remains within budget.
 - b. Establish payment schedules with Treasurer in coordination with timeline.
 - c. Alert Treasurer and Board of any additional unforeseen expenditures.
 - d. Assist the Treasurer in the management of receipts and other materials for grant reimbursements.
- 7) Conference Registration
 - a. Recommend an online system for tracking and processing of conference registrations, including online payments, selection of meals, tasting reception and field course options, printing of meal tickets and name tags, and flexible output of registration information.
 - b. Working under the direction of the Board, establish and implement a system for online conference registration through the conference website and electronic payment of conference registration fees.
 - i. Contractor will ensure information on conference speakers, exhibitors and sponsors is integrated into the online conference registration system.
 - ii. Client will bear responsibility for all charges related to the acquiring or leasing of software or other mechanisms for the completion of online conference registrations and the processing of credit cards.
 - c. Track registrations for space-limited or attendance-dependent conference activities, such as meals and field courses.
 - d. Develop and implement a system to check-in pre-registrants and register walk-in registrants.
 - e. Develop, distribute, and produce nametags, meal tickets, event tickets, tote bags, and other pertinent materials.
 - f. Oversee preparation of pre-conference materials including the stuffing of conference tote bags by recruiting volunteers and providing direction for their completion.

- 8) Data Collection and Record-Keeping
 - a. Compile a master database of potential and past conference registrants, combining source files of various organizations, and identify proprietary databases that can be used on behalf of the Client.
 - b. Develop and implement a system for tracking key information about conference participants including data collected through conference scholarships, conference registration and conference evaluations.
 - c. Maintain records of conference planning activities.
 - d. Provide a full report of conference registration, conference evaluation and conference activities to the Board within 25 days following the completion of the conference.
 - e. Turn over all files, databases, contracts and other information related to the implementation of this contract within 45 days following the completion of the conference.
- 9) Public Relations and Marketing
 - a. Under the direction of the Board develop and implement a marketing and public relations plan to promote all aspects of the conference.
 - i. Marketing tasks may include advertising and development, production and mailing of mailers/postcards, posters, flyers, etc.
 - ii. Public relations efforts, both pre- and post-conference, will include developing content and posting on social media sites, including Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, and sending pertinent information to industry blogs and all forms of traditional media outlets including print, TV and radio, locally, regionally, statewide and nationally.
 - b. With the input and assistance of the Board, develop an extensive media list.
 - c. Provide materials in a timely manner to ensure that the Farm Conference website is updated and accurately reflects all aspects of the conference.
 - d. Develop content and produce e-newsletter, at least monthly.
 - e. Compile an accurate file of clips from written and televised features, listings, news segments, and copies of advertising, etc.
 - f. Maintain conference photo and video library.
 - g. With the input and assistance of the Board, authorize approved media to attend the conference.

Timeline

- Applications are due by 5:00pm on Friday, June 15, 2012.
- Finalists will be notified by phone or email by Tuesday, June 26, 2012.
- Finalists will be asked to attend an in-person interview in Sacramento on Monday, July 2 or Tuesday, July 3, 2012. Finalists unable to participate in person may be able to participate via Skype or similar technology.
- The contract will be awarded by Tuesday, July 10, 2012 with work to begin on Monday, July 16, 2012 with participation by contracted Conference Coordinator at a meeting of the Farm Conference Board of Directors.

Terms and Conditions

The term of the Contract is upon signature by the parties, through April 30, 2013 – with option for renewal of one year.

Selection Criteria

All applications will be reviewed by the Search Committee appointed by the Board of Directors of the California Small Farm Conference. Applicants will be judged upon the completeness of their application and responses to the required items:

- Qualifications of the Project Leader
- Qualifications of other members of the project team
- Experience in planning, organizing and implementing educational conferences
- Experience in planning, organizing and implementing events
- Experience in the development and implementation of marketing plans, including social media
- Expertise in the strategic use of information technology
- Experience working on issues of importance to California's small-scale farmers and ranchers
- Overall quality of presentation and qualifications