



Request For Proposals

California Citrus Research Board Quality Assurance Program

The Citrus Research Board (CRB), headquartered in Visalia, CA, is organized as a marketing order under the California Marketing Act, referred to here as the "Act" (Chapter 1 of Part 2, Division 21 of the California Food and Agricultural Code). The CRB has been in existence since 1968. During the existence of the CRB, it has utilized assessments provided by California citrus growers to fund production research, variety development, clonal protection, pest & disease management and prevention, and public education.

In addition to the activities listed above, the CRB has established a quality assurance program. This program seeks to ensure that wholesome citrus fruit does not contain pesticide or other chemical residues in excess of legally permitted tolerances. This program serves as an important quality assurance link between California citrus producers, packers and shippers, and the California and U.S. governments and respective regulatory bodies, so that U.S. consumers are able to access quality-assured citrus.

Section 58654(d) of the Act states that organizations such as the CRB are authorized to provide methods and means for the prevention, modification or elimination of trade barriers. To this end, the citrus quality assurance program also focuses on international chemical residue compliance and legally permitted tolerances for several primary export markets, and the respective governments and regulatory bodies of those countries. While it is important that these issues do not present trade barriers to California growers and the fruit they market, the ultimate aim is to assure international consumers that the California citrus they consume is safe and wholesome. This work, and the national, bilateral and multilateral negotiations involved in the establishment of such tolerances are often highly technical, requiring a significant degree of knowledge, experience, specialization and dedicated resources.

The CRB seeks a vendor to comprehensively provide the above-described domestic and international quality assurance program services on a contract basis. While the contract may contain a multi-year term, each year's workplan, budget and funding would be reviewed by the CRB. The contract to be developed by the quality assurance program provider and the CRB will be subject to final approval by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA). The provider of these services would also be contractually bound to adherence to the "one voice" provision contained in CDFA Policies for Marketing Orders (M800.1). That provision serves to enable the California citrus industry and CDFA to adopt unified policy positions on citrus issues.

The CRB seeks a vendor with experience identifying important emerging markets critical to California citrus exporters, resolving export challenges and performing early quality assurance work in those markets.

The provider under this RFP will periodically report to the CRB board on its activities, progress and challenges in providing a comprehensive quality assurance program to the California citrus industry.

The work under this proposal is expected to commence October 1, 2018, the beginning of CRB's fiscal year. The proposal to the CRB will be considered and acted upon by the full board on Tuesday, September 25 at the University of California's Lindcove Research and Extension Center.

The successful bidder to this request for proposals will specifically include descriptions of the following in its submission to the CRB:

1. Brief history of work in providing comprehensive quality assurance programs for California commodities, with a focus on citrus. Please provide a relevant case study of recent work, including budgets, key personnel involved and results.
2. Professional and technical resources available in-house or on a sub-contract basis to conduct a quality assurance program for citrus. Please provide a brief description of the skills, education and experience of the personnel involved.
3. A detailed plan for how it would go about gathering sufficient direction and input from California citrus producers, packers and shippers to guide the provision of comprehensive quality assurance services, often on an urgent basis, in both domestic and foreign markets.
4. Proposed work plan for the twelve months, 10/1/18-9/30/19 with a proposed budget.

Please direct any inquiry regarding this proposal to Gary Schulz, President, Citrus Research Board at (559) 738-0246, or gary@citrusresearch.org

Proposals should be sent by email to gary@citrusresearch.org to be received no later than Sunday, September 16, 2018.