

VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS

ANNOUNCEMENT

Request for Proposals

Animal Feed Education Demonstration Project

The Vermont Department of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VDAFM) is pleased to announce a Request for Proposals for projects providing education regarding the benefits of reducing phosphorus imported into Lake Champlain through animal feeds. The project will support the goal of reducing phosphorus inputs to the Lake to promote a healthy and diverse ecosystem and provide for sustainable human use and enjoyment of the Lake, as outlined in the Basin Program's management plan, *Opportunities for Action: An Evolving Plan for the Future of the Lake Champlain Basin*. Funding for this project is provided by the Lake Champlain Basin Program, with additional support from USDA/NRCS and VDAFM.

Over the last five years, point and nonpoint source phosphorus controls have dramatically reduced the amount of phosphorus entering Lake Champlain. However, to achieve the phosphorus reductions necessary to reach the 20-year targets in *Opportunities for Action*, additional methods to reduce phosphorus must be explored.

Some feed consultants and veterinarians routinely recommend that farmers use feeds with excess phosphorus supplements to assure continued herd health, milk productivity, and reproductive efficiency. Although some supplemental phosphorus may be required to raise the phosphorus level in certain feeds up to the recommended minimum, research in this area suggests that large amounts of added phosphorus are not required to achieve the desired result. Animal feed is now commonly formulated for optimal health by balancing a suite of minerals and vitamins, rather than just adding phosphorus. VDAFM is seeking proposals for projects that will develop and demonstrate material to educate the agricultural industry about scientific data showing that reductions in phosphorus supplements in animal feeds will not have a negative economic impact on farming over the long term.

The RFP is available by mail or fax. To receive a copy, contact the VDAFM's Plant Industry office at (802) 828-2431.

DEADLINE NOTICE:

Hardcopy (3 copies) of proposals must be RECEIVED by the Vermont Department of Agriculture, Food and Markets office by close of business

FRIDAY, AUGUST 18, 2000

LATE OR INCOMPLETE PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED

Vermont Department of Agriculture, Food and Markets

Request for Proposals

Animal Feed Education Demonstration Project

I. Background

The Vermont Department of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VDAFM) is a partner in the Lake Champlain Basin Program. The Basin Program is a partnership between state, provincial, and federal government agencies, as well as many local groups, all working together to protect and enhance the environmental integrity and the social and economic benefits of the Lake Champlain basin. In 1996, the Basin Program completed *Opportunities for Action: An Evolving Plan for the Future of the Lake Champlain Basin*, a comprehensive management plan for Lake Champlain, addressing a range of issues from water quality to recreation. The highest priorities in the plan are reducing phosphorus pollution, reducing pollution from toxic substances, and developing a management program for nuisance non-native aquatic species.

Opportunities for Action calls for the reduction of phosphorus inputs to Lake Champlain to promote a healthy and diverse ecosystem and provide for sustainable human use and enjoyment of the Lake. Point and nonpoint source phosphorus controls have dramatically reduced the amount of phosphorus entering Lake Champlain. However, to achieve the phosphorus reductions necessary to reach the targets in *Opportunities for Action*, additional methods to reduce phosphorus must be explored.

Some feed consultants and veterinarians routinely recommend that farmers use feeds with excess phosphorus supplements to assure continued herd health, milk productivity, and reproductive efficiency. Although some supplemental phosphorus may be required to raise the phosphorus level in certain feeds up to the recommended minimum, research in this area suggests that large amounts of added phosphorus are not required to achieve the desired result. Animal feed is now commonly formulated for optimal health by balancing a suite of minerals and vitamins, rather than just adding phosphorus. Through education, the animal feed industry and the farming community can reduce the amount of phosphorus imported in feed materials, thereby reducing the amount of phosphorus that may eventually be transported to Lake Champlain.

II. Proposals for Demonstration Projects

VDAFM is seeking proposals for projects that will develop and demonstrate material to educate the agricultural industry about scientific data showing that reductions in phosphorus supplements in animal feeds will not have a negative economic impact on farming over the long term. A successful proposal will address the following points:

- The contractor will develop and administer an animal feed education demonstration project for both the Vermont and New York portions of the Lake Champlain basin.
- The project proposal should include a timeline of expected project activities and a list of deliverables.
- The project will be structured for integration with existing agricultural programs and activities, including meetings of farming, veterinary, feed consultant, and animal feed dealer associations. In particular, the contractor will be expected to participate in the Vermont Feed Dealers and the Vermont Dairy Association annual meetings (in September) at both the start and finish of the project.
- The project will also include a training session for staff from Extension, NRCS, State agricultural agencies, and Conservation Committee/District staff.
- The project will develop a suite of education and outreach activities, such as soliciting news articles, developing simple fact sheets, contributing to local organizations' newsletters, and, if appropriate, submitting to scientific publications.
- All products, such as literature describing issues with phosphorus in animal feed, will be developed so they can be used by other individuals and organizations, including appropriate electronic formats.
- The educational materials should cite appropriate scientific evidence showing that reducing the phosphorus supplements in feed will not have a negative economic impact on farmers over the long term.

III. Summary of Other Requirements for the Selected Proposal

- For the selected proposal, an approved workplan will be required before a contract can be completed and the work begun.
- Quarterly progress reports and a final report on the accomplishments of the project will be required.
- At the conclusion of the project, the contractor will evaluate the success of the educational efforts, identify any barriers encountered, and present recommendations for continuing the program.
- To the extent possible, the project will build on and integrate with similar work in the region, such as the "Whole Farm Nutrient Planning Project" sponsored by Ben & Jerry's and other partners, and the animal feed work being conducted in the New York City drinking water supply watershed.
- The contractor will be required to present the project results to the project review committee.

IV. Eligibility

All complete proposals will be considered for this project.

V. Available Funds and Match Requirements

A total of \$40,000 [\$28,500 from the Lake Champlain Basin Program and \$11,500 from the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)] is available to support a contracted project.

An additional \$3,500 from NRCS will be utilized to acquire and distribute training materials for both State and federal government.

VDAFM will provide the required in-kind match (25% of the total project cost) for the Basin Program's grant funds.

VI. Proposal Evaluation and Selection Criteria

Proposals incorporating additional funds from other sources will be viewed more favorably than proposals of similar merit without such funding.

VII. Period of Performance

The duration of the project will be up to 18 months, beginning in Summer 2000.

VIII. Schedule and Requirements for Proposal Submission

- Please follow the format outlined in the attached Technical Proposal Format Requirements.
- A brief letter of intent to submit a proposal, including a brief description of the proposed project, must be RECEIVED by the VDAFM office by close of business on **Friday, August 18, 2000**.
- Three (3) paper copies of each proposal must be RECEIVED by the VDAFM office by close of business on **Friday, August 18, 2000**.
- In addition, please submit an ELECTRONIC VERSION of your proposal, either on diskette or via e-mail. Electronic versions must also be RECEIVED by the VDAFM office by close of business on **Friday, August 18, 2000**.

Direct all inquiries, including letters of intent and proposal, to:

Philip Benedict, Director
Vermont Department of Agriculture, Food and Markets
Plant Industry Division
(802) 828-2431
phil@agr.state.vt.us

Via U.S. Postal Service:

Vermont Department of Agriculture, Food and Markets
Plant Industry Division
116 State Street
Drawer 20
Montpelier VT 05620-2901

Via Fax:

Philip Benedict, Director
Vermont Department of Agriculture, Food and Markets
Plant Industry Division
(802) 828-2361

Vermont Department of Agriculture, Food and Markets

Technical Proposal Format Requirements

Proposals should adhere to the following format and should not exceed a 10 page maximum length (font size 12), NOT including budget information, references cited and resumes.

TITLE: Concise and descriptive.

POINT OF CONTACT: Name, organization, address, and electronic mail address.

ABSTRACT: Brief description of proposed work.

INTRODUCTION: Overview of what the project is, how it relates to past projects (in the basin and elsewhere), and what it will accomplish in relation to the RFP.

OBJECTIVES AND TASKS: List the project's objectives and describe in detail the tasks that will be performed relative to each objective, including methods and approaches.

DELIVERABLES: Detailed description of the planned products from each task of the project. Quarterly progress reports and a final report are required deliverables.

SCHEDULE: Timeline showing anticipated dates for completion of the major tasks and deliverables. Quarterly progress reports are due on the last day of December, March, June, and September. Work is to be completed within 18 months.

DETAILED BUDGET JUSTIFICATION: Cost breakdown by major budget categories (i.e. personnel, equipment), linking costs to specific tasks/deliverables wherever possible. Breakdown should show costs to be covered by this project and other sources (if applicable). (1 page, not included in the 10 page maximum total for the proposal)

TECHNICAL REFERENCES CITED: List all references used for the proposal (not included in the 10 page maximum total for the proposal).

CURRICULUM VITAE/RESUME OF PRINCIPAL CONTRACTORS: Include up to 5 references for publications pertinent to proposed project. Please limit to one page per contractor, not included in the 10 page maximum total for the proposal.