



## California Walnut Commission (CWC)

### Request for Proposal (RFP) - JAPAN

### Trade Representative/Marketing Services and Consumer Public Relations

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The California Walnut Commission (CWC) was established in 1987 to develop export markets for California walnut farmers and handlers (processors). The CWC is funded by grower assessments. Marketing activities are also funded the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Market Access Program (MAP) under the administration of the department's Foreign Agricultural Service. Programs and marketing activities under this program are subject to the regulations and review of the USDA. This Request for Proposal (RFP) contains all necessary information for a firm to formulate and submit a proposal for the Marketing Services/Public Relations Agency and/or Trade Representative portion of this account.

The CWC uses funds which are obtained through MAP and are subject to MAP regulations to conduct marketing activities in each market. The objective of these activities is to increase the consumption of California walnuts. The CWC has utilized marketing services agencies in international markets to coordinate and carryout activities on our behalf reaching both consumers and trade. The marketing services function encompasses consumer/trade advertising, direct mail, point of purchase materials, media buying and public relations. The public relations function conducts a broad reaching program that includes recipe development, media outreach, maintenance of the CWC's in-country website and social media channels, as well as coordination of events and contests.

The CWC is seeking an in-country agency with a proven track record and creative excellence for strategic program development and execution. The trade function may include, but is not limited to, promotions, tradeshows, and/or one-to-one meetings with Japanese importers, distributors, retailers and other trade segments in order to develop the channels of commerce and promote the utilization of California walnuts. Consumer outreach will be conducted through multichannel programs to raise consumer awareness and respective purchase of California walnuts. Core functions include but are not limited to: Media Relations, Social Media, Advertising, Consumer Marketing, Brand Building, Health Science and Nutrition Communications, Healthcare Professional Outreach, Opinion Leader Outreach and/or Events in addition to maintaining and updating the CWC's Japanese website. Companies and or individuals submitting proposals must have prior experience working with agriculture commodity groups to be considered.

The requested total budget for both the trade function and consumer outreach of the Japan program in the coming marketing year (2022) is approximately \$900,000; exclusive of retainer fees. Approximately one-half of the funds are obtained through the MAP program and all are subject MAP regulations.

**SCOPE OF THE PROJECT:**

This RFP is limited to Japan and to the marketing year beginning January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022. The initial contract can be extended for two marketing years beyond the first year based upon mutual agreement between all parties. After a total of three (3) years the project must be re-bid based upon the rules established by the USDA/FAS.

**SCOPE OF THE PROPOSAL:**

**All proposals must include the following:**

- Agency introduction and philosophy.
- Agency team proposed for the California Walnut Commission account.
- Market overview as it relates to California walnuts (relative strengths and weaknesses of the product, etc.) and how your agency can address this market.
- Trade respondents also provide an overview of the Japanese trade and the channels of commerce that are involved in the trade and/or utilization of walnuts, both consumer and commercial.
- Proposed activities to promote walnuts with the consumer and/or commercial and industrial trades for the marketing year 2022.
- Recommended strategy, both short and long-term.
- Budget recommendations, including estimated out-of-pocket expenses and fees.
- List of references with complete contact information.
- Primary agency contact person and contact information.
- **Successful Case Studies/Examples of Past Projects Agency has Completed** for consumer advertising, trade and/or public relations including benchmark(s)/measured successes (e.g., ROI)
- Additional information that would be of assistance (i.e., government relations, etc.)

**SELECTION CRITERIA: MARKETING SERVICES AGENCY/TRADE REPRESENTATION:**

All Trade proposals will be judged against the following selection criteria. Each criterion is weighted by the percentage indication to be used in developing an overall score for each proposal.

- a) Knowledge of the Japanese industrial and commercial markets including bakery, retail, foodservice and food and beverage manufacturing/processing industries (20%).
- b) In-depth knowledge of the Japanese food trade, including importers, wholesalers, distributors and retailers (20%).

- c) Strong associations with a wide variety of potential partners who would be helpful in the development and achievement of our objectives (15%).
- d) Expertise in developing, implementing and analyzing trade events and webinars that will result in heightened awareness and use of California walnuts (10%)
- e) Strong relationships with traditional and digital trade media that are appropriate to walnut market growth (10%).
- f) Suggested fee schedule - e.g., planning fees, monthly representation fees, etc. (5%).
- g) Language capabilities in Japanese and English (5%).
- h) Experience with an agricultural commodity group; preferably international and not branded goods. (5%)
- i) Experience with the U.S. Agricultural Trade Office, Market Access Program (MAP), and the American Embassy staff (5%).
- j) Completeness and thoroughness of proposal (5%).

**SELECTION CRITERIA: PUBLIC RELATIONS AND ADVERTISING AGENCY:**

All Consumer Outreach proposals will be judged against the following selection criteria. Each criterion is weighted by the percentage indication to be used in developing an overall score for each proposal.

- a) Expertise in creating and executing food based public relations for consumers, including ability to plan, develop and implement creative concepts, efficient and effective media selection, and timing of public relations, etc. (25%)
- b) Strong relationships with traditional and digital media that are appropriate to walnut market growth (15%).
- c) Ability to develop and execute social media and influencer programs along with website activities to develop interest in and purchase of California walnuts, as well as website maintenance. (15%)
- d) Creative and executable program ideas in line with CWC messaging, including case studies of past successful programs. (15%)
- e) Knowledge of health communications with ability to develop and execute communications strategy targeting healthcare professional community. Experience with health claim and nutritional value regulations and implications is preferred. (5%)

- f) Experience with an agricultural commodity group; preferably international and not branded goods. (5%)
- g) Experience with the U.S. Agricultural Trade Office, Market Access Program (MAP) and the American Embassy staff. (5%)
- h) Suggested fee schedule (e.g., planning fees, commission rates, etc.). (5%)
- i) Completeness and thoroughness of proposal. (5%)
- j) Language capabilities in Japanese and English (5%)

**TIMING AND SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS:**

An agency may submit for one or both parts of this RFP. If submitting for both the Marketing Services/Trade Representation and the Consumer Public Relations, make sure that the proposal is clear and covers all the required information in each selection criteria. If unable to provide all the required services in-house, agencies must disclose what portions would be handled with third-party partners/collaborators and provide their details and expertise. All proposals must be submitted in English. An electronic copy of the proposal AND two (2) hard copy submissions are required to be considered.

1. An electronic copy of the proposal must be sent via email or electronic file transfer to [rfp@walnuts.org](mailto:rfp@walnuts.org) on or before Friday, July 9, 2021.
2. Two hard copies of the proposal must be sent, to arrive one (1) week later on or before Friday, July 16, 2021 to the following address:  
Pamela Graviet, Senior Marketing Director, International  
California Walnut Commission  
101 Parkshore Drive, Suite #250  
Folsom, CA 95630  
Phone: 916-932-7070  
Fax: 916-932-7071  
Email: [rfp@walnuts.org](mailto:rfp@walnuts.org)

*Please note:* You should receive a submission confirmation within 3 days. If no confirmation has been received, please contact [CAwalnutsrfp@gmail.com](mailto:CAwalnutsrfp@gmail.com). However, do not use this email address to submit proposals as proposals sent to this email will not be considered.

## **REVIEW PROCESS:**

The review process may occur in two steps. All companies submitting proposals will be notified in writing of the final selection results no later than September 17, 2021.

*Step One:* Proposals received by the required deadlines will be reviewed and scored against the stated criteria. If it is determined that one firm clearly scores well above the rest, selection will occur, the second step will be eliminated, and the RFP will be awarded.

*Step Two:* If multiple firms have high overall scores, they each will be invited to formally present their concept of proposed activities for California walnuts via teleconference. All costs incurred for this presentation will be the agency's responsibility.

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL:**

A copy of the following is available, upon request, for your information. Please request this information through [rfp@walnuts.org](mailto:rfp@walnuts.org).

1. CWC Japan 2020 Unified Export Strategy (MAP Application – Marketing Plan)
2. Japan 2019 Country Progress Report
3. Japan 2019 Country Activity Program Evaluation Study

*Please note:* Due to highly effective spam filters, if you do not receive the requested documents within 3-days, please contact [CAwalnutsrfp@gmail.com](mailto:CAwalnutsrfp@gmail.com) This alternate email will not accept proposal submissions.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

Selected agency is required to send at least one representative from their firm to the CWC's Global Marketing Conference every year at their own expense. The 2022 Conference is tentatively scheduled for January 17-20, 2022 in San Diego, California. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this date may be rescheduled or the conference will be held virtually.