



## **Request for Proposal- Representation in China January 11, 2021**

### **I. Purpose**

The U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council (USHBC), representing the U.S. highbush blueberry industry, requests proposals from marketing agencies to represent USHBC and manage its market development activities in China. The chosen agency will enter into a contract with USHBC from March 1 through December 31, 2021.

**All proposals are due by February 5, 2021, at 5 pm Pacific Time.**

### **II. Background Information**

The U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council (USHBC) is a federal research and promotion program located in Folsom, California. USHBC, established in 2000, is directed by a 20-member Council which includes elected grower representatives from each of four U.S. regions (West, Midwest, East, and South), eight elected state grower representatives from the top eight highbush blueberry production states (Michigan, New Jersey, Oregon, California, Washington, Florida, North Carolina, and Georgia) as well as eight additional Council members (one handler representative, four importer representatives, two exporter representatives, and one public member). Information on the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council (USHBC) can be accessed at our web site: <http://www.blueberry.org>

The U.S. blueberry industry was granted fresh market access in China in 2020. As such, China is a new target market for development work. As a first step, USHBC will be initiating the process of registering an office to comply with China's laws governing Foreign Non-Governmental Organizations (FNGO).

Along with USHBC's FNGO registration with the Chinese government, the 2021 marketing year will include the launch of a USHBC generic market development program in China. USHBC currently does not conduct any promotional activities in China. This RFP seeks to identify an in-market

representative to initiate a generic promotional program that includes consumer public relations (PR) and trade relations during the 2021 program year and assist with the completion of the FNGO registration process.

Blueberries are available for purchase both for direct consumer consumption and industrial food applications. Blueberries are available in numerous forms, including fresh, frozen, dried, and further processed (i.e., juice concentrate, powder, and puree). Besides fresh applications, blueberries can also be used as an ingredient in baked goods, dairy products, beverages, and more.

Applicants should suggest their strategic approach to how USHBC should promote U.S. blueberries in China, both amongst consumers and trade audiences. Anticipated activities include but are not limited to consumer public relations, trade relations and promotions.

### **III. Agency Responsibilities**

The selected agency will be responsible for developing and executing an approved marketing program in China for the 2021 marketing year. This representation will include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- Assisting in USHBC's FNGO registration process with the Chinese government, including drafting and translation of some required documents, communicating with USHBC's FNGO legal consultant, Partner Supervisory Unit, and the Public Security Bureau;
- Developing and implementing USHBC's China strategic marketing strategy and activity plan;
- Submitting monthly market reports detailing activities undertaken on USHBC's behalf, including public, trade, and media relations;
- Coordinating market visits by USHBC staff and industry members, including meetings with key trade members and U.S. Embassy and ATO staff;
- Serving as the first point of communication in-country with trade and media sources;
- Assistance with the completion of the Country Progress Report and development of Unified Export Strategy, both requirements of the USDA's Market Access Program.

#### **IV. Marketing/Proposal Objectives**

With this request for proposal, USHBC seeks to understand the proposed agency's creative vision for the U.S. blueberry industry in China, including how USHBC should approach its first year of market development, key communication points about U.S. blueberries to be highlighted, sectors and product forms of focus, etc. Agencies should also identify what they view as the most significant challenges impeding sales of U.S. blueberries and blueberry products in China and outline how they would address those challenges through generic promotional activity. **Please provide specific strategies and tactics along with a detailed proposed budget of \$75,000, laying out retainer fees and activity expenses.** Please note that USHBC has a separate budget designated for the out-of-pocket expenses associated with the FNGO registration process.

#### **V. Required Information**

In addition to the retainer fee and activity proposal outlined in section IV, please provide the following information in your submission:

- History of your work with agricultural organizations and the fresh produce and industrial ingredients sectors
- Experience, knowledge, and contacts in the Chinese fresh produce trade and industrial ingredients manufacturing sectors
- Experience conducting consumer public relations activities such as in-person media events, press releases, and online campaigns
- Knowledge of USDA's Market Access Program regulations

**This proposal should be limited to 10 pages.**

#### **VI. Authority**

The agency will work under the direct supervision and with the prior approval of USHBC and Bryant Christie Inc. for all program activities. All expenditures must fall within the program budget and must be pre-approved by USHBC.

#### **VII. Non-Discrimination Clause**

USHBC does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or familial status.

#### **VIII. Instructions for Submitting Proposals**

Proposals should be submitted electronically to:

Shelby Sackett  
Bryant Christie Inc.  
[Shelby.sackett@bryantchristie.com](mailto:Shelby.sackett@bryantchristie.com)

**All proposals are due February 5, 2021, at 5 pm Pacific Time.** USHBC anticipates making a final decision on a contractor by February 26, 2021 but reserves the right to reach a decision and/or notify applicants of the USHBC's selection at a later date.

Questions regarding this RFP or USHBC's activities in China should be directed to Shelby Sackett by email.

Thank you very much for your interest in working with the U.S. blueberry industry.