



State of Wisconsin
Jim Doyle, Governor

Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
Rod Nilsestuen, Secretary

Producers First
Request for Application
DUE: July 1st, 2009

Project Timeline: January 1st 2010 - December 31st 2010

Project awards are contingent on receipt of anticipated federal funding.

The federal funding source that DATCP will be applying for requires the identification of producer/consultant projects prior to submitting the proposal. DATCP is requesting applications from producers to demonstrate to funding sources that there is an interest and need in Wisconsin for this program.

Contact:

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WI Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection

Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Economic Development Program

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608-224-5101 phone

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Attention: Wisconsin Local Food Producers producing for the local food market sector.

- Do you have a need for one-on-one technical assistance on your farm?
- Do you want to increase your sales and/or profitability?
- Do you know an expert consultant that can assist you with your needs?

Program Overview:

This pilot project will provide funding to Wisconsin local food producers producing for the local food market sector¹ to work with consultants who will provide one-on-one technical assistance with the goal of increasing the farm operation's capacity, efficiency, sales, and profitability. Collectively, this program will help strengthen and expand local food systems.

Applicants to the program will need to identify both a *technical assistance need* within their farm operation and a qualified, committed *consultant* to address that need.

The maximum award for any producer/consultant project is \$3000.

¹ See eligible applicants on page 2

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This project will establish a network of expert technical consultants specific to the needs of Wisconsin local food producers, producing for the local food market sector. The network will provide stability to existing farm operations by addressing and solving specific business needs in order to increase sales and/or profitability. The network will create new market opportunities for Wisconsin producers, and ultimately, will positively impact the local food market sector. Finally, Producers First will complement and expand upon other technical assistance programs that provide benefits to DATCP customers, including the non-profit: Dairy Business Innovation Center.

Examples of projects include but are not limited to:

- Market Development: Consultant will work with producers in accessing new markets.
- Packaging and Label Development: Consultant will work with producers on brand development, website design, logos, etc.
- Food Safety: Consultants will work with producers to create standard operating procedures, fact sheets for buyers, food safety assessments, etc.
- Business planning: Consultant will work with producers to create business plans, budgets, etc.
- Accounting systems: Consultant will work with producers to set up accounting programs, cost of production templates, invoicing systems, etc.
- Grant writing assistance: Consultants will work with producers on grant writing.
- Other types of consulting work including but not limited to: Production Systems, Fertility, Pest Control, Soil Building, Small and Mid-Sized Production Equipment, Post Harvest Handling.

Eligible Applicants:

All Wisconsin local food producers, producing for the local food market sector are eligible to apply, however, preference will be given to those that meet the following criteria: 75% of the entity's Wisconsin grown products are purchased and consumed within 300 miles of the farm and gross product sales are at least \$35,000. Applicants must identify the consultant they plan to work with.

Method of Award

DATCP will convene a panel of stakeholders to review and select projects. The reviewers on this panel are not eligible to submit an application. Awards are based on projects that illustrate measurable results, identify qualified expert consultants, have producers that illustrate their need for the technical assistance provided, and cost of the project.

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Minimum Requirements for Applicants and Submission Process:

Applicants must submit the following in this order via email or fax:

- Application Cover Sheet
- Appendix A - The Producers First Application
- Appendix B - A resume and Consultant Reference Form
- Appendix C - Producer & Consultant Information

SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION: Potential applicants must submit one original of all materials required for acceptance of their bid by July 1, 2009 to: e-mail: teresa.cuperus@wisconsin.gov or via fax to (608) 224-5110, ATTN: Teresa Cuperus

The application in its entirety must be received on the due date to be considered. Late applications will not be considered.

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| Appendix A - The Producers First Application |
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- Hourly rates may not exceed \$50/hour and may not include travel, supplies, and admin.
- Consultants must provide one-on-one technical assistance to producers in the amount of: a minimum of 30 hours/producer and a maximum of 60 hours/producer throughout the project term during the 2010 calendar year.
- The maximum award for any producer/consultant project is \$3000.
- The applicant must show that the project will increase sales and/or profitability of the producer by some measurable unit.
- The application must illustrate at least one distinct, quantifiable, and measureable outcome that directly and meaningfully supports the project's purpose and is of direct importance to the producer and to the local food market industry. The measureable outcome should include the following: Goal, Performance Measure, Benchmark, and Target. (See Appendix A)
- The applicant must show in the timeline and work plan on the Producers First application, (Appendix A) that work will be conducted with producers to implement the project, make necessary adjustments throughout the project, and evaluate the project during and upon completion.

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| Appendix B - A resume and Consultant Reference Form |
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Before the award of any Contract with selected producers, DATCP shall be satisfied that the identified consultant has sufficient qualifications for performing the work described in this application. It is the applicant's responsibility to acquaint DATCP with these qualifications by submitting appropriate documentation and a minimum of two references.

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To be eligible for an award, the applicant must show that the consultant is qualified and be able to provide the following as required or the application may not be considered.

- The applicant must show that the consultant has expertise in the type of technical assistance selected by:
 - Including in this application a completed Consultant Reference Form (Appendix B). Consultant must list at least 2 names of individuals or companies with whom the consultant has done business or relates to the type of technical assistance provided in this bid within the last 3 years. If contacted, information received from those references may be used to determine whether consultant meets qualifications.

Appendix C - Producer and Consultant Information

- The producer must meet all of the requirements outlined in this request for application.
- The consultant must also demonstrate expertise working with producers in the local food market sector in at least one of the following ways:
 - 1) Name at least one local food producer reference and how consultant has worked with them to advance the local foods market sector.
 - 2) Describe paid consulting work for at least one local food producer.
 - 3) Be a local food producer currently or in the past.
 - 4) If the consultant has not specifically worked with local food producers, a description must be provided as to how the technical expertise will benefit local food producers.

Minimum Requirements for Producer/Consultant Projects

- Awarded applicants will be required to submit two progress reports. One will be submitted half-way through the project and the other will be an evaluation tool at the end of the project. DATCP will develop report templates that may be submitted via email and will be no longer than three pages.

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The mid-way report will include the following:

- Briefly summarize work performed, targets and goals achieved, and results thus far.
- Note unexpected delays or impediments as well as favorable or unusual developments for each project.
- Outline work to be performed for the second half of the project.
- Discuss resources, tools, conferences that may or may not be useful to your project.

The final evaluation will include the following:

- A brief description of original intent of the project and perceived benefit of the project.
- How the goals of the project were achieved.
- Measurement of increased sales/profitability for each producer.
- Other results, conclusions, and lessons learned.

Invoicing

To receive payment, the applicant must clearly indicate the work that has been done for each hour invoiced, including who did it, where it was done, and the time & date of work. As work is completed, applicants may submit invoices by mail the first of each month and no more frequently. The final invoice must include the completed final evaluation. All invoices must reference the purchase order.