



## **Request for Proposals**

**Project Name: Rosebud Farm Company – Lakota Food Crops Farm Feasibility Study**

**Company Name:** Rosebud Economic Development Corporation (REDCO)

**Project Due Date: February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

**Contact: Koby Hagen**

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## **Introduction**

The Rosebud Farm Company (RFC) is a subsidiary of the Rosebud Economic Development Corporation (REDCO). Founded in 2013, RFC has managed 1,400 acres of irrigated farmland and 600 acres of non-irrigated farmland through local farm contracts. It has been steadily building its capacity to directly farm this acreage as well as develop a long-term strategic agricultural plan to support food sovereignty for the Sicangu Lakota Oyate (Rosebud Sioux Tribe).

While the Sicangu Lakota Oyate's food practices have not historically centered around large-scale agriculture, creating regional food and agricultural hubs and sub-hubs is an essential piece of economic development and food sovereignty for tribal communities across the United States. According to the Native American Agricultural Fund (NAAF), Native American farmers sold \$3.54 billion worth of agricultural products ("Reimagining Native Food Economies: A Vision for Native Food and Agriculture Infrastructure Rebuilding and Recovery"). This was only 8% of the food's total value, where the remaining revenue earned was generated in food processing, trade and food services by non-tribal entities.

The Rosebud Sioux Tribe is land rich yet infrastructurally deficient. Its land area span about 1,970.362 square miles, where 85% of the 34,947 enrolled tribal members reside. Within this landscape, there are only three grocery stores, eight convenience stores, and three stand-alone venues to purchase prepared foods on the reservation. Most of the products within these food sources are imported from afar, nutritionally deficient, and are not relevant to sustaining cultural food practices into the future. Moreover, many of these agricultural products sold are not organic and they are vulnerable to climate change weather extremes. If reliance on these imported agricultural products continues, food insecurity

will increase, and food system economic development will be hindered within tribal communities like the Sicangu Lakota Oyate.

To counteract food insecurity, build food sovereignty, and create a circular food and agricultural economy, RFC is planning to implement specialty crop production, investment in innovative farm practices and infrastructure that can withstand climate change, and build regional agricultural hub operations to foster local economic development.

## **Project Overview**

In the next five years, RFC aims to bolster food security through local and innovative production of regional food crops and products, including the production of traditional Lakota food crops. To see if the latter is possible, we need to create a feasibility study for this unique crop farm model. As our communities continue to revitalize traditional culinary pathways and as our farming landscape continues to build more efficient production plans for a changing climate, traditional plants may have a unique and expanding role to play.

While there are many reasons that traditional foods have been excluded from the mainstream food system, the increasing demand for nutritious, delicious, hearty, and resilient food crops will need to be incorporated on some level of farming of our traditional foods. We do not want to exploit the wild reserves we have of traditional foods; they should remain outside of the commodification streams. The main wild plants we are curious to cultivate include:

Blo / Wild potatoes

Chokecherry (*Prunus virginia*)

Common Serviceberry/Juneberry (*Amelanchier arborea*)

Downy Hawthorn

Potato Bean/American Groundnut (*Apios americana*)

Prairie Onion (*Allium stellatum*)

Rose Hip (*Rose rugosa*)

Wild Onion (*Allium canadense*)

Wild Plum

Wild Sunflowers

We would like to explore yield and potential market avenues for a traditional crop-based farm. Many of these crops will not be able to be mechanically planted, maintained nor harvested. This would be, at least within its first phase, a mostly human-powered endeavor. We need a clear view of how much time, how many people, and which tools and equipment will allow an efficient yet respectful way to farm traditional food crops.

## **Project Goal**

By 2025, RFC will design and install a traditional food crop-based farm that provides traditional fruits, roots, and shoots produce to local markets and businesses. This farm will:

- Grow nutrient dense traditional food crops in a regenerative way with an outstanding market brand
- Showcase traditional crop cultivation that is resilient through climate change
- Showcase how cultivated spaces with unique native crops can relieve our undomesticated plants and lands from market pressures
- Demonstrate a human-powered farm with a pathway for local farmers to continue refining their specialty crops skills and reconnect with traditional food crops

To do this, we are seeking a feasibility study to understand if this project is right for RFC at this time.

## **Scope of Work**

The scope of work will highlight the feasibility of implementing a traditional food crops-based farm on the Rosebud reservation. We need to know as much as we can about start-up costs, timeline for production yields, potential yields and markets, as well as risks involved.

## **Deliverables**

We aim to have a feasibility study that contains the following deliverables:

- Best size for an experimental perennial/specialty crop farm as proposed above
- Typical yields for each crop type; if there is limited data, then a 3-year farm development phase where the farm acquires yield data and expands yearly until a certain yield/size goal is met
- Unique and common equipment, processing and storage facilities needed for these uncommon agricultural species
- Staffing requirements to run the entire operation
- A detailed list of potential buyers and regional markets
- A list of financing and grant options to jump-start the farm design and implementation
- Overall assessment of the feasibility of this type of farm

### **Anticipated Selection Schedule**

The Request for Proposal timeline is as follows:

Request for RFP: October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Deadline for Questions: November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021

RFC Responds to Questions: November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Quotes from Service Providers Due: November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Selection of Service Provider: November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021

Project due: **February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

### **Time and Place of Submission of Proposals**

Respondents to this RFP must submit their proposal by November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Responses should be clearly marked “RFP - **Rosebud Farm Company – Lakota Food Crops Farm Feasibility Study**” and mailed or delivered to the contact person listed above. Responses may also be submitted via email: please email [koby@sicangucorp.com](mailto:koby@sicangucorp.com) with the subject line “**RFP: Rosebud Farm Company – Lakota Food Crops Farm Feasibility Study**” with the proposal attached as a pdf.

### **Timeline**

The project is to be completed by **February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022**.

### **Elements of Proposal**

A submission must include, at a minimum, the following elements:

1. Description of the firm or organization including a general overview and names and credentials of the team who will be completing the project.
2. A one-page narrative outlining the organizations strengths and distinguishing skills or capabilities as they relate to the project.
3. A proposed budget for the project, including a breakdown of the time and cost requirements for each deliverable outlined in the ‘Project Goals’, ‘Scope of Services’ and ‘Deliverables’ sections.
4. Testimonies from past clients.
5. May include previous examples of completed feasibility studies.

## **Evaluation Criteria**

The successful respondent will have been operating continuously and offering consulting services for a minimum of 24 months.

The education, experience, knowledge, skills, and qualifications of the firm and the individuals who will contribute to the project.

The competitive cost of services.

The expertise of the firm in completing similar studies or projects.

Tribal affiliation will also be considered. REDCO is a tribally chartered corporation under the Rosebud Sioux Tribe (RST), and as such follows the tribe's procurement policies. Indian preference therefore applies. However, all service providers are invited to apply, and evaluation of other criteria in addition to tribal affiliation will play a significant role in the selection process. The selected service provider will be required to have or obtain a Rosebud Sioux Tribe business license prior to commencement of the project.

## **Possible Roadblocks**

Given that these plant species are not typically farmed, there may be limited yield data to estimate production potential and market supply; 2) Market demand for native foods is growing yet still relatively small in comparison to other niche food products; finding comparable niche crop scale-ups will likely be necessary to build supply numbers; and 3) There are a limited number of perennial-annual farm models out there to learn from and draw understandings about this type of farm's staff needs, unique expenses, and obstacles.

## **Budget**

The ideal project budget is \$15,000, with the possibility of up to \$20,000 for the right proposal. The budget includes all costs incurred by the service provider in completion of the project, including any travel expenses that may be necessary for visits to Rosebud communities.