



Connecticut Grown Marketing Campaign RFQ
As of May 1, 2022
TO: Contractors on Contract 19PSX0009CS

SUMMARY

Over the past year the Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DoAg), in partnership with a state contracted marketing firm, conducted research on consumer awareness and response to the Connecticut Grown marketing program (originally established in the early 1980's) and Connecticut agriculture and aquaculture. The outcome was a rebrand to update the logo and tagline with a strategic twelve-month marketing campaign.

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DoAg) is seeking a full-service marketing firm to maintain and expand the Connecticut Grown marketing campaign that was implemented in 2021.

The term of the work shall be in effect from June 1, 2022 through December 31, 2023.

PROGRAM HISTORY

DoAg is the state agency responsible for regulating and marketing Connecticut's agricultural and aquaculture industry. The agency represents and promotes all aspects of Connecticut agriculture and farm products from fruits and vegetables to seafood and wine, maple syrup and honey, dairy and fiber; the agency has an obligation to support all eligible farm products. See Appendix A: Definition of Farm Products, Definition of Agriculture, and Connecticut Crop Availability Calendar for more information.

Historically, that support was done through the Connecticut Grown marketing program to inform consumers the product was grown in Connecticut.

2021 Accomplishments

During 2021, the following accomplishments were achieved on behalf of the Connecticut Grown rebranding and marketing campaign. Most notably, the campaign's goal was to reach 100 million impressions; that was exceeded with over 112,000,000 to date.

- **Conducted extensive research** including three different surveys and four hours of focus groups to develop a new tagline and rebranding of the logo;
- **Established buy-in from the industry** through targeted outreach and inclusion;
- **Updated both the consumer and agency logos;**
- **Launched the rebranded Connecticut Grown** program in March 2021;
- **Grew social media** with 2,191 new Facebook followers, and started Instagram page with 1,712 followers to date;

- Negotiated a unique **digital billboard** contract allowing state-wide exposure at a fraction of the cost by adopting cancelled/open spaces with visibility in Hartford, Meriden, New Haven, Fairfield, Waterbury, Farmington, and East Hartford;
- **Garnered diverse media coverage** from major broadcast television networks, print media, and radio;
- **Engaged with producers** by providing marketing workshops to assist with their brand development and incorporate CT Grown branding; and
- **Achieved well-rounded marketing exposure** by utilizing billboards, press releases, earned media, website, radio, broadcast TV, display advertising, search advertising, digital streaming, email marketing, and social media (paid and organic) as well as event promotion at the Big E.

The 2021 campaign also established a number of ‘firsts’ for the agency and consumer facing brand:

- Designed the **first consumer website**, www.CTGrown.org, with more than 47,000 pageviews since the March 2021 launch;
- Created the **first blog and events listing** on the consumer website;
- **Integrated CT Grown with CTVisit.com** to give agritourism a voice in state-wide visitor messaging;
- Developed the agency’s **first photo/video pantry** featuring multiple farms, restaurants, and farm stands throughout the state. These assets were shared with farms that hosted us to obtain these photos;
- Created the **first dashboard, integrating Google analytics and Mailchimp** to optimize performance;
- Designed and sent **first consumer emails** to more than 640,000 email addresses with 12,557 click-throughs, capturing our first retargeted IP capture process and developed a subscriber list of 3,728 Mailchimp subscribers averaging 34.47% open rate;
- Implemented **first search campaign using keywords** to establish retargeted display advertising to further messaging and branding impact with a total of 238,264 impressions and overall CTR of 3.34%;
- Leveraged **first digital display campaign** to generate more than 1.408 million impressions across devices and web; and
- Established **first creative pantry** including templates and standards for brand, social media posts, billboards, digital ads, videos, radio scripts, stationery, specialty items, outreach, blogs, e-newsletters, and more.

CURRENT KNOWLEDGE & RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Information is available from the previous efforts, providing background knowledge on the industry and rebranding of the Connecticut Grown logo. The hired firm will be provided with this information and is encouraged to review these resources for an in-depth understanding of work previously done and potential obstacles to success.

Some examples of available information include:

- a) The 2021 CT Grown Marketing and re branding campaign
- b) Materials from the UHart Farmers First Campaign
- c) Results from the 2021 CT Grown post-campaign survey

In addition, an extensive library of high-definition images is available for nearly every commodity grown in Connecticut, including (but not limited to):

- a) Fruit orchards
- b) Christmas trees
- c) Dairy and livestock
- d) Greenhouse and nursery
- e) Aerial drone imagery
- f) Seafood and aquaculture
- g) Vineyards
- h) Assorted staff photography including farmers' markets, wineries, and farm landscapes

GOAL

The overall goal is to develop a comprehensive multi-media campaign for the CT Grown brand, to raise awareness about CT farmers and local food availability and engage farmers in endorsing the CT Grown brand. The target audiences are consumers, those that have a desire to purchase CT Grown and the conflicted consumer who doesn't yet know they want to purchase CT Grown, wholesalers and retailers of CT Grown, and farmers of CT Grown produce.

Campaigns should implement a dynamic multi-media strategy engaging farmers, influencers, and consumers in key target markets that highlight and/or result in increased consumer awareness by:

1. **Increasing consumers' trust** in CT farmers.
2. Bolstering and **highlighting the local aspect** of CT farming.
3. **Building connections** between farmers and communities that result in an improved image of the CT farmer.
4. Showing farmers are **part of the climate change solution**.
5. **Engaging CT farmers as contributors** and influencers to tell the story of farming in a dynamic narrative demonstrating the impact of CT farms.
6. **Expanding the presence and usage of the CT Grown brand with grocers** and other wholesalers and retail outlets who are buying CT Grown farm products.

A successful campaign should address how to target and engage key audiences and emerging populations with a focus on multilingual/multicultural messaging.

CAMPAIGN DELIVERABLES FOR 2022 & 2023

The campaign's **objectives** include:

1. Continuing efforts to guide consumers to the CTGrown.org website
2. Develop multiple messaging strategies for continued awareness of Connecticut Grown agricultural products and producers
3. Inclusion of multicultural efforts to reach diverse populations
4. Engagement of CT farmers of all commodities through Farmers' First Campaign, developed by UHart.

The campaign's **outcomes** must include:

1. Measurable increase in agricultural and aquaculture product sales

2. Measurable increase in consumer awareness
3. Measurable increase in consumer interaction with social media channels and website
4. Measurable increase in the number of farmers engaged in the campaign through cobranding, social engagement, and general logo usage.
5. Development of any additional key performances indicated as needed or as they come up.

REQUIRED PROPOSAL ELEMENTS

Proposals should describe a comprehensive campaign to identify and target multiracial and multiethnic groups that incorporates different media to effectively reach consumers. Proposals should take the 2021 Connecticut Grown campaign and other information noted in the *Current Knowledge and Resources Available* section into consideration when drafting the proposals.

Proposals should identify how the following recommendations from the 2021 CT Grown campaign may be incorporated into the 2022 campaign.

Areas of known continuation:

- **Paid media:** Continue a paid media strategy that includes, as appropriate, the development and purchase of sponsored social media posts, display ads, digital video ads, traditional mass media (e.g., cable TV, radio, etc.), text ads, etc. How will you ensure our funds are used effectively and efficiently to reach the target audience in the most impactful way?
- **Social media:** Develop a social media campaign to educate consumers on Connecticut agriculture and aquaculture. A campaign that utilizes influencers and others whose networks benefit from and/or elevate Connecticut Grown as chefs and medical professionals. What is the approach to developing social media messaging and working with the agency to approve it? How will you ensure the presence on social media is reaching the target audience in the most impactful way?
- **Collateral materials:** Continue to build on photo and video library and other collateral. This should include additional CT Grown products such as tobacco, cigars, hops, prepared foods, meats, and seasonal photos not already represented in the current photo library. What additional collateral is needed and how will that be obtained?
- **Website:** Maintaining, updating, and upgrading the CTGrown.org website.
 - Continue to build CTGrown.org website to include CT Grown Recipe sections. How will recipes be procured that focus on CT Grown farm products?
 - Expand the events section of the CTGrown.org website to improve farmer usage and functionality. How will this be accomplished? Is there new technology that will make it easier for farmers to add their events to develop a comprehensive ag events website?
- **Relationship with DECD:** Continue to build on the current relationship with CT Visit and the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development. How will this be accomplished? Are there other state agencies that should be engaged to create a successful campaign?
- **Annual Evaluation:** At the end of each calendar year, conduct an evaluation of work conducted and how the campaign is accomplishing the outcomes previously identified. How will evaluation be accomplished?

New areas to incorporate:

- **On the ground outreach events:** Provide staffing for two, one-day events per year – Celebrating Agriculture in Woodstock, CT annually in September and another to-be-determined event each year.
- **Trainings for ag-community members about how to promote and engage with the campaign:** Conduct two trainings annually to educate farmers and other ag-community members on how to engage in the campaign.
- **Wholesale Engagement:** Expand the campaign reach to include wholesale markets and buyers. How will you go about understanding what they need and working with them to utilize those materials?
- **ConnecticutGrownStore.com Merchandise and Fulfillment:** Identify suppliers and design branded CT Grown merchandise for sale on ConnecticutGrownStore.com. Fulfillment of orders will be necessary. Maintenance of the website will not be required and done by agency staff. How will you determine what merchandise will be sold and how will you work with the agency to accomplish it?
- **DoAg Agency Apparel:** Identify suppliers, apparel needs and design. How will you determine what apparel should be purchased and how will you work with the agency to accomplish it?

Optional incorporation if the budget permits:

- Utilize a podcast to educate and engage consumers and producers

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Proposals should be limited to no more than 10 pages (8.5" x 11") including appendices.

RFQ submissions should be submitted by close of business on Monday, May 16, 2022 to Jaime.Smith@ct.gov

Please provide the following information in your response:

Agency Overview

- Briefly describe your agency/firm's capacity to complete our project on time and on budget.

Details of Current Proposal

- Detail how your firm would provide the **Required Proposal Elements** while addressing the project objectives and outcomes.
- Provide a proposed timeline for completion of the project.
- Provide an itemized budget and budget narrative for the specified time period.
- Identify any services that would be subcontracted, with the specific responsibilities and a brief background of the subcontractor.

Required appendices:

- Provide select examples of past marketing campaigns you have executed including any metrics that illustrate the effectiveness of the campaign.
- Include the names and bios of all individuals who would directly work on this project and outline each person's role.

Optional appendices:

- Examples of proposed creative work for this project as cited in the narrative section of the proposal.

Evaluation

- Address how your firm will measure the effectiveness of its efforts.

TIMELINE

Planning for this project can begin as soon as possible upon execution of a contract and purchase order by the State of Connecticut. The purchase order and campaign work must conclude by December 31, 2023.

A timeline for the marketing campaign itself will be developed in 2022 and 2023 respectively.

PROJECT BUDGET

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture has budgeted up to \$200,000 for all work associated with this proposal for a 2022 and 2023 campaign.

Provide an itemized budget and detailed budget narrative broken down by the *Required Proposal Elements* above and ensuring the information provided in the *Goals and Campaign Deliverables in 2022 and 2023* are addressed.

SELECTION PROCESS SCHEDULE

Task	Deadline
RFQ released	Tuesday, May 3, 2022
Proposals Due	Monday, May 16, 2022 by COB
Award Decision	Monday, May 23, 2022
Project Start Date	Upon PO issuance
Campaign Begins	Monday, June 1, 2022

Depending on the number of submissions received, top applicants may be asked to do a 20-minute presentation on their proposal.

Interim milestones will be determined after bid selection and award of contract.

Please direct questions related to this RFQ to Jaime Smith, Bureau Director, via email to: Jaime.Smith@ct.gov

Questions will be accepted until May 9, 2022, and shared to all bidding firms by close of business on May 12, 2022.