

APPALACHIAN sustainable DEVELOPMENT

BRAND & MARKETING CONSULTANT REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD) is inviting proposals for branding and marketing consulting services as detailed below. ASD will make a final selection based on the proposal which best meets the specifications, our needs, price and other factors. We are not limited, unless otherwise noted, to making our selection based only on the lowest-priced proposal. Please review these criteria carefully and include information in your proposal as appropriate. ASD reserves the right to ask for revised proposals from any or all companies submitting proposals if major revisions in the basic specifications become mandatory.

Services Description

ASD is seeking branding and marketing consulting services to help develop a brand marketing plan and label for silvopasture raised meat. This includes a landscape assessment of existing silvopasture branding and marketing efforts, listening sessions or focus group interviews to solicit input from industry stakeholders, a brand marketing plan, and a branded label.

Background

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and multiple partners throughout the United States, including ASD, are launching a 5-year project to catalyze significant private investments into the agroforestry¹ industry while increasing farmers' incomes and delivering environmental benefits. This *Expanding Agroforestry Production (EAP) & Markets for Producer Profitability and Climate Stabilization* project is funded through the USDA's [Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities](#) initiative. This project aims to create 30,000 acres of new agroforestry plantings over five years, including practices such as silvopasture². Project partners intend to accomplish this goal by:

- Offering regionalized technical assistance and outreach to farmers, including underserved producers
- Providing \$36 million in direct incentive payments to farmers for tree planting
- Creating a national network of demonstration farms for education and outreach activities
- Working with companies and retailers to expand markets for climate-smart agroforestry commodities (i.e. nuts, fruits, timber, and livestock products from silvopasture settings)

ASD operates one of the oldest food hubs in the country - [Appalachian Harvest](#) (AH). Founded in 2000, AH sells fresh produce, beef, and value added goods to wholesale grocery store markets along the East coast, with over \$3MM in annual sales. As a part of the EAP project, ASD's

¹ [Agroforestry](#) is the intentional mixing of trees and shrubs into crop and/or animal production systems to create environmental, economic and social benefits. There are five agroforestry practices, including silvopasture.

² [Silvopasture](#) is the intentional integration of trees and grazing livestock, which are intensively managed together on the same land. The trees can provide shade and fodder for livestock, as well as forest products for farm income.

Agroforestry Program will also provide technical support to farmers for agroforestry adoption, including silvopasture, to build the supply chain. Leveraging this expertise, ASD is the EAP partner leading the development of a silvopasture raised meat brand. AH will trial this new brand in test markets, and make it available for other farmers to use as well.

Business Consulting Needs

Deliverable: Silvopasture Branding & Marketing Plan

1) Phase 1 – Landscape Analysis + Needs Assessment – Silvopasture Branding & Marketing Planning Needs with Stakeholder Engagement Process: The Consultant will initiate the project by conducting a landscape assessment of existing silvopasture branding & marketing efforts. Next, the Consultant will initiate a stakeholder engagement process to identify and scope out the industry needs for silvopasture branding and marketing efforts. The Consultant will hold a series of listening sessions, or focus group interviews, to solicit input from industry stakeholders across the value chain – from farmers to buyers across multiple market channel types (e.g. direct and intermediated). If the Consultant has another similar process that has been successful in the past to collect the same type of information, ASD is open to those ideas as well.

- **Deliverable:** A minimum 5-page report that can be shared publicly with the findings from the stakeholder engagement process and landscape assessment of existing silvopasture branding and marketing efforts. This report will also include the outline of required elements for the silvopasture branding and marketing plan (e.g. identified potential market regions to target, supply chain, livestock products, or producer types to focus on, etc.). This report can serve as the basis for the Brand Marketing Plan.
- **Due Date:** December 30, 2025

2) Phase 2 - Silvopasture Brand and Marketing Plan Development: Based on the findings from the Needs Assessment, the Consultant will develop a Brand Marketing Plan focused on silvopasture in the United States. The components of this plan could include: brand strategy, competitive positioning, brand naming, brand identity development, product development and pricing, distribution outline, sales and retention plans, marketing channels and campaigns, etc. An outcome of this plan should also include a silvopasture label.

- **Deliverable:** Brand Marketing Plan and Silvopasture Label
- **Due Date:** June 30, 2026

The maximum budget for this project is \$48,454. As a funding requirement, ASD will be hiring through an open and free competitive negotiation process. It is ASD's intention to fully consider and evaluate each proposal submitted. Invoices can be submitted as each agreed upon phase is complete. The final invoice must be submitted on or before July 31, 2025.

Evaluation Criteria and Relative Importance

Value System 1 to 4: 1 = Most important

(No more than three criteria shall be rated 1; two or more criteria must be rated 2 or 3)

1. Price of services offered and materials needed: 1
2. Expertise and relevant experience in chosen field: 1
3. On-time completion dates: 2
4. References from previous clients: 2
5. Resumes of service providers: 3

Please review these criteria carefully and include information in your proposal, as appropriate. All proposals should also include:

- the phone number and email address of the primary contact person
- itemized price quote for costs associated with all consulting activities
- samples of prior work

Opportunity for this bid will be shared with a minimum of three brand and marketing consultants. ASD will accept bids **from July 30, 2024 until August 31, 2024**. Proposals must be submitted electronically via email to Katie Commender. A bidder will be selected and announcements made to all bidders by no later than **September 5, 2024**.

All consulting activities must be completed by the completion dates specified. If more time is needed, alternative completion dates can be offered for negotiation. A mutual non-disclosure agreement will be required.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to hearing from you. If you should have further questions, the contact person for this RFP is:

Katie Commender
Director of Agroforestry
Appalachian Sustainable Development
Email: kcommender@asdevelop.org