

American Pecan Promotion Board

Request for Proposal: Social Media Content, Influencer & AEO/GEO Strategy

Overview

Pecans are America's only native nut, and one of the most nutrient-dense tree nuts on the market, yet for most consumers, they're a once-a-year, pie-adjacent afterthought. Surprisingly Snackable is our platform for changing that: positioning pecans as an everyday, better-for-you snack and everyday recipe ingredient, not just a holiday staple.

We're looking for an agency partner to take ownership of our organic social media presence, content development, influencer program, and optimizing our content strategy to align with an Answer Engine Optimization (AEO) and Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) strategy. This is a content and organic channel management RFP. Paid social media management and boosting is handled by a separate paid media agency and is not in scope here.

This program covers day-to-day channel management and community management, content development and production, influencer identification and management, and a strategy for how our content and presence get indexed, sourced, and surfaced across AI search and answer engines.

Background

The American Pecan Promotion Board (APPB) is an agricultural commodity organization overseen by the USDA. Founded in 2021, APPB is made up of pecan producers (growers) and importers, and is dedicated to driving consumer demand for pecans through research and promotion efforts. As a federally overseen checkoff program, APPB promotes American pecans as a category, not any single brand, grower, or product.

Because we operate under USDA oversight, all content is subject to a compliance review process before publishing. Agencies should expect tight constraints on the usage of pop culture references, trending audio, and any copyright material (licensed music, film and TV references, memes, and similar timely content generally require prior approval or cannot be used at all). We're looking for a partner who has genuine experience creating strong, engaging content within a regulated approval environment.

Our Audience

Our core audiences are:

- **Millennial women**, mostly mothers, who are health-centric and actively seeking natural, healthier snack options for themselves and their families, along with any recipes to try next
- **Gen X empty nester women** who lean health-centric and show a willingness to pay a premium for natural, healthier snacks
- **65+ women** that grew up eating pecans and seeking the nostalgia and/or nutritional value for their dietary needs

Our strongest geographic concentration aligns with the pecan-producing states of the Southern United States, but we don't want messaging to cater exclusively to that region. Agencies do not need to target strictly within these audience segments, but tone and messaging should generally lean toward these groups.

Tentpole Moments

While APPB's calendar is anchored around established core moments; including **Fall Harvest Season** (Sept & Oct), **Holiday Season** (Nov & Dec), **New Year / Fitness & Wellness** (Jan Feb), **Spring Snacking & National Pecan Month** (April & May), and **Summer Snacking Roadtrips & Outdoor / On-the-go Snacking (June - August)**, however we do not treat this calendar as rigid or exhaustive.

We are looking for an agency partner that brings their own strategic perspective. In your proposal, please outline your creative approach to executing our established beats, but **feel free to challenge, expand, or propose**

additional micro-tentpoles (e.g., Summer Snacking, Game Day, or cultural/culinary moments) where pecans can organically win and drive engagement.

Scope of Work

The selected agency will:

- Own and manage day to day operation of our organic social channels, including community management (comments, messages, monitoring)
- Develop content across formats (photo, video, graphics) working with our existing but limited raw content library (b-roll, imagery) and proposing how to build on it going forward
- Identify, negotiate, contract, and manage all influencer relationships and content
- Develop and execute an AEO/GEO strategy across our content and channel presence
- Recommend which of our channels are most valuable to prioritize for our audience and for AEO/GEO visibility, and what, if anything, should be deprioritized or added
- Partner with our team on tentpole moment planning and execution
- Navigate our USDA content approval process for all content produced
- Plan, develop and execute paid social media campaigns designed to drive awareness of pecans as a year-round snack with primary KPIs tied to improvement in social media performance, strength of content created, and social media sourced website traffic*

**This scope's focus is not inclusive of paid social media as an ecommerce channel, any paid social media performance handled within this scope will be tracked to social media sourced website traffic and organic social media performance metrics. Any ecommerce focused initiatives will be handled by a separate team..*

Channels

Our current channels are Instagram, Pinterest, Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn. We want your recommendation on which of these are most impactful for our audience and for AEO/GEO visibility specifically, and whether any should be prioritized, deprioritized, or supplemented.

On-Site Content Capture

Please include a distinct line item in your proposal for on-site shoots to capture original content (with growers, at events, at tentpole moments, etc.), including your recommended frequency and whether this is priced as part of your overall fee or as a one-off cost per shoot.

Key Performance Metrics

Program success will be measured against:

- Engagement rate
- Community growth
- Reach
- Social-driven traffic to our website
- AEO/GEO visibility metrics, where measurable

Content Usage Rights

APPB requires usage rights to all content produced under this engagement, whether created by the agency directly or through influencer partnerships, for a minimum of one year. Specific usage terms will be defined in the final contract with the selected agency.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Please disclose any active client relationships or representation of direct tree nut organizations, commodity boards, or major commercial nut brands (for example, almond, pistachio, walnut, or cashew brands or associations), and describe how your agency manages potential conflicts of interest or category exclusivity.

What We're Looking For in Your Proposal

We're looking for an agency rooted in data, with a clear point of view on content and channel strategy, strong AEO/GEO fluency, and testing rigor already in place across the accounts you manage today. This should be forward-looking, focused on what you will do and how you will approach our program.

A winning submission must demonstrate deep, authoritative expertise in channel-by-audience alignment and modern Answer Engine / Generative Engine Optimization (AEO/GEO) content architecture. The authors of your proposal should clearly understand, and explicitly map out, how content is strategically engineered for specific demographics (such as Millennial moms versus Gen X empty nesters) and how that same content is structured to be indexed, cited, and recommended by conversational AI engines like ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity and Google AI Overviews, as well as platform search algorithms. We expect a polished, highly strategic response that proves your team knows how to drive measurable category performance, beyond just surface-level engagement.

Please structure your proposal to address each of the following:

1. Content & Channel Strategy

- Your overall approach to social media and content strategy, cross-channel and channel-level, as it relates to speaking to our core audience segments and gen-pop
- Your recommendation on which of our five channels (Instagram, Pinterest, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn) are most impactful for our audience and for AEO/GEO, and why
- How your content approach and tone would flex across our audience segments and geography

2. AEO/GEO Strategy

- Your current best practices for AEO and GEO development, and how they apply to social and content specifically, not just owned website content
- How you approach getting content and brand mentions indexed, sourced, and surfaced in AI search and answer engines, and how that connects across our social channels and other digital properties
- Evidence of testing rigor you currently have in place across the accounts you manage for AEO/GEO performance
- How you measure AEO/GEO performance impact

3. Content Development Approach

- How you approach content development with some limitations to an existing raw content library, and your plan for building that library going forward
- Your experience working within a highly regulated content approval process, and how you structure your workflow and calendar around approval timelines
- Your general content best practices at the cross-channel and channel level, and what we should expect from you day-to-day

4. Influencer Strategy

- Your approach to identifying, vetting, negotiating, and contracting influencers on our behalf
- How you make our influencer budget go further and how you evaluate return on influencer spend
- How you incorporate influencer content into our broader content mix and owned channels
- The added value your agency brings in managing our influencer network on our behalf and how you've grown existing influencer programs through rigorous selection, testing, trials, and influencer direction
- What performance standards do you hold influencer programs to and how do each of those signed influencers play into your program design? What separates your influencer measurement from others to determine future best fits for growth and value?
- Detail how you secure organic usage rights and digital ad-whitelisting/partnership ad permissions from creators and how you might use in paid social media efforts to amplify high-performing creator assets
- Any out of the box ideas for how we could approach influencer partnerships

Note: *APPB currently manages influencer contracting and campaign execution through Aspire. The selected agency can choose to use our existing Aspire account or propose a different platform for influencer campaigns, whichever they prefer.*

5. Testing Methodology

We understand organic social performance can be more difficult to establish controlled testing environments compared to paid channels. That said, we still want to see a defined testing framework: how you test content formats, themes, and approaches, how you read signal in a noisy environment, what variables do you assign as impactful to test and measure against to drive algorithm perform (anything outside the box or nuanced practice), and how findings inform what you produce next.

6. Responsible Use of AI

We're a natural product, and we do not want AI-generated imagery or video depicting pecans or our products. We're comfortable with limited AI use in select formats, such as infographics, but prefer a conservative approach overall given the backlash AI-generated content has seen publicly and the greater impact that can have with a known naturally grown agricultural product. Tell us how your team incorporates AI into your process, where you believe it's appropriate for our brand specifically, where you draw the line, and how you manage and review AI produced content before it's delivered for client review.

7. Team, Management & Communication

- Client communication approach and team structure, who we'll work with day-to-day, and the experience/qualifications of the people actually assigned to our account
- We expect our agency partner to proactively own and lead our ongoing meetings, coming prepared with a structured agenda, clear narrative on recent trends, identified performance drivers, market/channel trends, and optimization recommendations
- Agency partner should provide full transparency on channel and content management, including a shared strategic roadmap identifying project timelines past, current, and upcoming
- Please provide a high-level 30-60-90 day onboarding roadmap outlining key technical, strategy, and platform migration steps to ensure a seamless, fully operational transition by October 12, 2026
- Your approach to community management, including how you handle negative comments or health related questions given our USDA claim restrictions
- Your escalation process for anything requiring a fast response before it can go through full USDA review

8. Reporting & Measurement

- Your reporting cadence and what your dashboards look like
- How you report on AEO/GEO visibility specifically, to the extent it's measurable

9. Agency Profile, Case Studies & Pricing

- Agency profile and overview of relevant experience
- Case studies or examples of similar content, influencer, or AEO/GEO programs you've run successfully
- Team members' qualifications and roles on this account
- Please provide two to three client references we can contact directly, including contact information and the nature of the engagement.
- Your expected total budget to run this program, including your fee structure, influencer spend and rates, supporting paid social media spend, and any other fees associated.
- Your proposed pricing for on-site content capture, whether folded into your overall fee or priced per shoot

Budget

Our set budget for this program is \$640,000, including our \$150K influencer budget and all other fees, media spend, and costs associated with this contract.

Engagement Term

All agency contracts are structured for one-year terms and will look to be renewed at the close of every fiscal year based on performance.

Proposal Submission Guidelines

Agencies should submit proposals by **September 11, 2026** to Serena Schaffner at sschaffner@eatpecans.com and Carl Sanders at csanders@eatpecans.com.

Questions & Clarifications

If you have questions about this RFP, scope, or anything else that would help you scope your proposal, please reach out to Serena and Carl at the emails above by **August 28, 2026**. We'll consolidate and distribute written answers to all participating agencies by **September 1, 2026** to keep the process fair and consistent across bidders.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Strength and specificity of content, channel, and audience strategy
- AEO/GEO fluency and evidence of current testing rigor
- Influencer strategy and approach to maximizing budget efficiency
- Experience operating within a regulated content approval environment
- Experience developing content with heavy USDA restrictions while still driving performance
- Approach to test and measurement to understand what is driving performance, including an overview of current known best practices and how those findings were identified
- Team qualifications and communication approach
- Cost effectiveness and transparency of proposed fee structure

Timeline

Timeline subject to change.

- RFP Issued: **August 24, 2026**
- Question Submission Deadline: **August 28, 2026**
- Written Answers Distributed to All Bidders: **September 1, 2026**
- Proposal Submission Deadline: **September 11, 2026**
- Finalist Presentations: **Week of September 14, 2026**
- Agency Selection: **September 25, 2026**
- Contracting & Onboarding: **September 30, 2026**
- Program Kick-off: **October 1, 2026**

Main Contacts

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