

California Walnut Board

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Request for Proposals (RFP) for Website Redesign and Rebuild

The California Walnut Board & Commission represent the more than 3,700 family farmers that produce over 99% of walnuts grown in the US. Our growers have a long history of caring deeply for the land, sharing a commitment to public health, and supporting the communities they serve. Our industry's vision is for consumers around the globe to crave California walnuts.

Scope of the Project:

California Walnuts is seeking proposals for the redesign and rebuild of www.walnuts.org to bring a fresh and energized look and feel to the site in line with its strategic plan, brand positioning and recently updated brand guidelines. The website should portray California Walnuts as an organization passionate about food and how it can help consumers include walnuts into their daily life, as well as about California walnuts, which are a whole, natural food grown from the earth by growers that many of which are multi-generational family farms, creating an emotional connection with the visitor.

In 2025, California Walnuts launched new brand positioning in the US which currently utilizes 1/3 of the annual crop and introduced new marketing efforts designed to modernize the image of California walnuts and reposition them as a must-have ingredient and snack for younger shoppers. At the heart of the campaign is the message, "California Walnuts. Feel Good." brought to life through a fresh, energetic visual identity that will be communicated across all US consumer touchpoints. This new vibrant identity should be incorporated into the look and feel of the new site.

The goal of this project is to rebuild the site to improve the overall user experience for all our audience groups, including trade channels, and consumers. The website will be leveraged as a key resource for audience groups including Retail, Foodservice, Food Manufacturing, Health Professionals, and Health Research.

The site should also support consumer audiences, providing recipes (the number #1 visited section today), nutrition information, news, and walnut resources. To bring the new "Feel Good" marketing efforts to life online, www.feelgood.walnuts.org microsite was created earlier this year highlighting new content created for this new, younger audience. We look to leverage elements of this in the redesign, however taking into consideration that the audiences for walnuts.org expands beyond our younger consumer target audience.

To better serve our own industry, we'd like to separate that content from the core website, by creating a subdomain or microsite within the main website. Additionally, we would like to explore the ability to password protect sections of the industry pages, to allow us to provide robust resources to our industry members without giving up our competitive advantage.

California Walnuts also has websites in key international markets, to support marketing efforts conducted by the California Walnut Commission. These websites are designed, housed and maintained

in each respective country and contain some of same content as the US website. As part of this project, we would like to have the US walnuts.org website designed so that we can leverage parts of the structure to update/redesign our ten (10) international websites. Implementation to international websites is not part of this RFP but would be issued as a separate project at a later date.

For the primary US website, California Walnuts will partner with an external agency on this project. We expect the agency to provide the following:

- Full redesign and rebuild of site to enhance the user experience with a fresh yet focused design.
- Robust search functionality.
- Evaluation and suggestions related to CMS functionality or other hosting platforms.
 - To include recommendations on back-end technology and platform to support new design/user experience, and needs of CA Walnuts and agency to edit and create new content.
 - Recommendation should include CMS options that are available and easy to use globally, or other options that would replace a standard CMS system.
- Information architecture.
- Intuitive navigation that is focused on user experience and content.
- Back-end Integration Services such as:
 - Web Analytics Integration – integrate new website/CMS with existing web analytics systems to provide accurate reporting on website activity.
 - Adherence to established data privacy and security standards, including secure CMS configuration, system integrations and coordination with California Walnuts’ external compliance provider.
 - Possible email integration.
 - Possible database integration.
- Optimized for Ai and SEO.
- A blog.
- Social Media integration (share buttons, follow buttons, etc.).
- Assistance with build and implementation of new site.
- Demonstrated expertise in ADA-compliant website development, including adherence to WCAG 2.1 AA standards, accessible design and coding practices (semantic HTML, ARIA roles, keyboard navigation, alt text, color contrast, etc.).
 - The ability to provide both automated and manual accessibility testing with documented compliance (e.g., an Accessibility Conformance Report).

This is a stand-alone project. It is our intent that ongoing maintenance after the build is complete will be handled by the digital agency of record.

Timing of the Project:

Project will begin in March of 2026, ideally to be completed by August 31, 2026. If this is not feasible or limits the quality of the project, please explain in your proposal.

Budget:

Please provide a detailed outline for the budget.

Submission of Proposals:

All proposals must be submitted to:

Marketing Department
California Walnut Board & Commission

110 Woodmere Rd., Suite 250
Folsom, CA 95630
Phone: (916) 932-7070
Email: rfp@walnuts.org

One electronic and two hard copies of the proposal are due to the CWB/CWC on/before **January 15, 2026**. Leading candidates may be interviewed in our offices at their own expense. Final decision will be made no later than **February 28, 2026**. All companies submitting proposals will be notified in writing of selection results. For more information, please contact Christine Lott, Director of Integrated Marketing at the above listed phone and email address.

Agency Background/Criteria:

The selected agency must address the following tasks and features:

- Deliver current state analysis and futureproofing strategy.
- Assess Viability of Business Requirements:
 - Assess current walnuts.org capabilities and assets, make recommendations on components to keep, cut, or repurpose.
 - Make system architecture recommendations to support speed and performance, flexible 3rd party software and plugin integration, enable social integration (i.e. feeds, competitions, voting, reviews), and maximization of search functionality.
 - Maintain all current functionality in some form. For example: Search, Blogs, Newsletters, Printing, etc.
 - Provide recommendation on hosting provider. We currently use WP Engine in the USA.
 - Provide recommendation on CMS platform keeping a global approach top of mind. We currently use WordPress.
 - Business Process Mapping of customizing & configuring new web/CMS system to match our current workflows and business processes.
- System Design – build the web/CMS system to include all business & technical requirements; ensure clear communication, product consistency & aesthetic appeal; provide exceptional usability & easy navigation; conduct usability testing; optimize pages for search engine indexing; integrate with web analytics systems (or build into new system) and build and test all forms.
- Provide mobile friendly display depending on detected OS.
- Documentation & User Manual – build a system administration and user manual to document how the system works and provide reference material.
- Define information architecture and navigation redesign:
 - Establish optimal .com user journey(s), including communication hierarchies.
 - Leverage brand work to rapidly prototype and test navigation approaches with task force and deliver navigation language and approach recommendations.
- Ensure that on-demand DIY functionality is maximized for clients (ie: search/FAQ center). Establish brand- and archetype-aligned UX and UI standards and designs;
 - Define and deliver branded UX/UI experience hierarchy and standards.
- Use UX/UI standards to deliver branded reskin designs for walnuts.org.
- Cultural fluency and regulatory compliance:
 - Ensure Federal, State, local and international law compliance, including but not limited to:
 - Establish full 508 compliant website(s), in all languages/formats as required by USDA compliance with requirements of FDA and USDA
 - GDPR compliance
 - CA Assembly Bill 375 compliance.

- California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA)
 - ADA Compliance - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA
- Create structure that can easily be duplicated and shared across all California Walnuts websites.

Proposal Requirements:

- Corporate Information:
 - Company name, phone number, address and website.
 - Contact information for primary point of contact for this RFP.
 - Years in business.
 - Provide company overview and background information.
- Overview how you will meet our objectives.
- Explanation of recommended platform/CMS.
- Outline of your website design and development strategy.
- Proposed Team
- Project Development Process and Timeline
- Budget Estimate (If new CMS is proposed, training for staff must be included.)
- Website warranty details.
- Samples of prior work
- References & Relevant Experience:
 - List of top 5 clients you've worked with for website design/ development/similar website consolidation and include examples. Should include:
 - Food and food production website design/development;
 - Website reaching multiple audiences such as producers, consumers, health professionals, food professionals, buyers and foodservice operators;
 - Communicating a message that balances "taste," "nutrition," "growing/production" and "issues"; and
 - Association marketing experience.

Selection Criteria:

- Experience with web design and content management systems, specifically with a food and/or agriculture client. (25%)
- Creative and executable ideas for enhancing the site in line with CWB brand. (30%)
- Completeness and thoroughness of proposal. (25%)
- Project Timeline (10%)
- Cost, with breakdown of budget. (10%)

We look forward to reviewing your proposal. Good luck, and please contact us should you have any questions or require additional information.

ABOUT CALIFORNIA WALNUTS

More than 99% of the walnuts grown in the United States are from California, produced by multi-generational farmers encompassing more than 3,700 family orchards. California walnuts, known for their excellent nutritional value and quality, are shipped around the world all year long. With the focus on plant-forward eating, walnuts are enjoyed in a variety of innovative and delicious ways, such as a plant-based meat alternative, walnut milk and walnut butter. They are recognized as a versatile and nutritious snack, a topper for yogurt and oatmeal, and the perfect nut to pair with salads and vegetables. To explore recipes and learn more about California walnut growers, industry information and health research, visit walnuts.org.

About the California Walnut Board and Commission

The California Walnut Board (CWB) and California Walnut Commission (CWC) represent more than 3,700 California walnut growers and approximately 70 handlers, grown in multi-generational farmers' family orchards. California walnuts, known for their excellent nutritional value and quality, are shipped around the world all year long, with more than 99% of the walnuts grown in the United States being from California.

The CWB, established in 1948, promotes usage of walnuts in the United States through publicity and educational programs. The CWB also provides funding for walnut production, food safety and post-harvest research. The CWC, established in 1987, is involved in health research with consuming walnuts as well as domestic and export market development activities.

To explore recipes and learn more about California walnut growers, industry information and health research, visit walnuts.org.

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