

**State of Maine  
Master Score Sheet**

RFP# 202403069

**Farms for the Future Phase 2**

		Bidder Name:	Circle B Farm	Dandy Ram Farm
		Proposed Cost:		\$25,000
Scoring Sections	Points Available			
Eligibility	Pass/Fail	FAIL	PASS	
Completeness of the Business Plan	<b>5</b>	N/A	5	
<b>Management Capacity</b> - The application and business plan demonstrate applicant's knowledge, experience, and capacity to successfully plan, implement and manage the proposed changes to the farm business.	<b>20</b>	N/A	20	
<b>Financial Capacity and Debt Management</b> - The changes proposed in the business plan will improve the cash flow, and management of debt load needed to pay any new debt associated with the proposed changes to the farm business.	<b>10</b>	N/A	10	
<b>Collateral and Asset Base</b> –The application and business plan demonstrate that the farm will improve the productivity of the land (soil quality, fertility, water holding capacity), the physical condition of the buildings and equipment, and maintain any newly acquired assets to increase the overall sustainability of the farm business.	<b>20</b>	N/A	20	
<b>Farm Vitality &amp; Development of New Capital</b> – The Business Plan demonstrates, through better strategies, marketing, production efficiencies and upgrading of facilities and equipment, an increase in profitability and overall net worth that will improve the overall sustainability of the Farm Business.	<b>30</b>	N/A	30	
<b>Other Conditions</b> (A) The Business Plan identifies how the current or proposed farm operations will accomplish broader conservation objectives such as protecting water quality, improving wildlife habitat, or maintaining open space and local scenic and cultural amenities as long as such practices enhance or maintain the profitability of the farm. (5 points) (B) The percentage of the farmland owned by the applicant that is to be protected under the Farmland Protection Agreement. (5 points) (C) The degree to which the change in the business is new and different to the business. (5 points)	<b>15</b>	N/A	15	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>100</u></b>	N/A	<b><u>95</u></b>	



STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY  
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER  
22 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333

JANET T. MILLS  
GOVERNOR

AMANDA E. BEAL  
COMMISSIONER

June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024

Circle B Farms  
c/o Tom Ayer  
290 East Presque Isle Road.  
Caribou, ME 04736

SUBJECT: Notice of Conditional Contract Award under RFP #202403069,  
Farms for the Future Phase 2

Dear Tom:

This letter is in regard to the subject Request for Proposals (RFP), issued by the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry for Farms for the Future Phase 2. The Department has evaluated the proposals received using the evaluation criteria identified in the RFP, and the Department is hereby announcing its conditional contract award to the following bidder:

- Dandy Ram Farm

The bidder listed above received the evaluation team's highest ranking. The Department will be contacting the aforementioned bidder soon to negotiate a contract. As provided in the RFP, the Notice of Conditional Contract Award is subject to execution of a written contract and, as a result, this Notice does NOT constitute the formation of a contract between the Department and the apparent successful vendor. The vendor shall not acquire any legal or equitable rights relative to the contract services until a contract containing terms and conditions acceptable to the Department is executed. The Department further reserves the right to cancel this Notice of Conditional Contract Award at any time prior to the execution of a written contract.

As stated in the RFP, following announcement of this award decision, all submissions in response to the RFP are considered public records available for public inspection pursuant to the State of Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA). 1 M.R.S. §§ 401 et seq.; 5 M.R.S. § 1825-B (6).

HARLOW BUILDING  
18 ELKINS LANE  
AUGUSTA, MAINE



PHONE: (207) 287-3200  
FAX: (207) 287-2400  
WEB: [WWW.MAINE.GOV/DACF](http://WWW.MAINE.GOV/DACF)

This award decision is conditioned upon final approval by the State Procurement Review Committee and the successful negotiation of a contract. A Statement of Appeal Rights has been provided with this letter; see below.

Thank you for your interest in doing business with the State of Maine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mariam Taleb', written in a cursive style.

Mariam Taleb, Ph.D.

Program Administrator  
[Mariam.taleb@maine.gov](mailto:Mariam.taleb@maine.gov)  
(207) 592-0640

## **STATEMENT OF APPEAL RIGHTS**

Any person aggrieved by an award decision may request an appeal hearing. The request must be made to the Director of the Bureau of General Services, in writing, within 15 days of notification of the contract award as provided in 5 M.R.S. § 1825-E (2) and the Rules of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Bureau of General Services, Division of Purchases, Chapter 120, § (2) (2).



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AMANDA E. BEAL  
COMMISSIONER

June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024

Dandy Ram Farm  
c/o Bo Dennis  
77 W. Main St.  
Monroe, ME 04951

SUBJECT: Notice of Conditional Contract Award under RFP #202403069,  
Farms for the Future Phase 2

Dear Bo:

This letter is in regard to the subject Request for Proposals (RFP), issued by the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry for Farms for the Future Phase 2. The Department has evaluated the proposals received using the evaluation criteria identified in the RFP, and the Department is hereby announcing its conditional contract award to the following bidder:

- Dandy Ram Farm

The bidder listed above received the evaluation team's highest ranking. The Department will be contacting the aforementioned bidder soon to negotiate a contract. As provided in the RFP, the Notice of Conditional Contract Award is subject to execution of a written contract and, as a result, this Notice does NOT constitute the formation of a contract between the Department and the apparent successful vendor. The vendor shall not acquire any legal or equitable rights relative to the contract services until a contract containing terms and conditions acceptable to the Department is executed. The Department further reserves the right to cancel this Notice of Conditional Contract Award at any time prior to the execution of a written contract.

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This award decision is conditioned upon final approval by the State Procurement Review Committee and the successful negotiation of a contract. A Statement of Appeal Rights has been provided with this letter; see below.

Thank you for your interest in doing business with the State of Maine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mariam Taleb', written in a cursive style.

Mariam Taleb, Ph.D.

Program Administrator  
[Mariam.taleb@maine.gov](mailto:Mariam.taleb@maine.gov)  
(207) 592-0640

## **STATEMENT OF APPEAL RIGHTS**

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**STATE OF MAINE  
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

**RFP #:** 202403069  
**RFP TITLE:** Farms for the Future Phase 2  
**BIDDER:** Circle B Farm  
**DATE:** 05/02/2024

**SUMMARY PAGE**

**Department Name:** Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry  
**Name of RFP Coordinator:** Mariam Taleb  
**Names of Evaluators:** Claire Hawkins, Matt Boucher, Leslie Forstadt, Chris Wood, Brittany Peats

<u>Pass/Fail Criteria</u>	<u>Pass</u>	<u>Fail</u>
Eligibility		<b>X</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant was awarded a Phase 1 Business Planning grant between January 2020 and December 2023, but was not awarded a Phase 2 Implementation grant in that timeframe</li> <li>• The applicant has completed a Business Plan, as defined in the RFA</li> </ul>		
<u>Scoring Sections</u>	<u>Points Available</u>	<u>Points Awarded</u>
Completeness of the Business Plan	<b>5</b>	
<b>Management Capacity</b> - <i>“Will the applicant be able to implement the Idea for Change?”</i> The application and business plan demonstrate applicant’s knowledge, experience, and capacity to successfully plan, implement and manage the proposed changes to the farm business.	<b>20</b>	
<b>Financial Capacity and Debt Management</b> - <i>“Will the Idea for Change improve the applicant’s business’ financial health? Are they ready to take this on?”</i> The changes proposed in the business plan will improve the cash flow, and management of debt load needed to pay any new debt associated with the proposed changes to the farm business.	<b>10</b>	
<b>Collateral and Asset Base</b> – <i>“Can existing resources support this new direction?”</i> The application and business plan demonstrate that the farm will improve the productivity of the land (soil quality, fertility, water holding capacity), the physical condition of the buildings and equipment, and maintain any newly acquired assets to increase the overall sustainability of the farm business.	<b>20</b>	
<b>Farm Vitality &amp; Development of New Capital</b> – <i>“Will it work?”</i> The Business Plan demonstrates, through better strategies, marketing, production efficiencies and upgrading of facilities and	<b>30</b>	



**STATE OF MAINE  
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

**RFP #:** 202403069

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**BIDDER:** Circle B Farm

**DATE:** 05/02/2024

equipment, an increase in profitability and overall net worth that will improve the overall sustainability of the Farm Business.		
<p><b>Other Conditions</b></p> <p>(A) The Business Plan identifies how the current or proposed farm operations will accomplish broader conservation objectives such as protecting water quality, improving wildlife habitat, or maintaining open space and local scenic and cultural amenities as long as such practices enhance or maintain the profitability of the farm. (5 points)</p> <p>(B) The percentage of the farmland owned by the applicant that is to be protected under the Farmland Protection Agreement. (5 points)</p> <p>(C) The degree to which the change in the business is new and different to the business. (5 points)</p>	<b>15</b>	
<b><u>Total Points</u></b>	<b><u>100</u></b>	<b><u>Fail</u></b>

**STATE OF MAINE  
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

**RFP #:** 202403069  
**RFP TITLE:** Farms for the Future Phase 2  
**BIDDER:** Circle B Farm  
**DATE:** 05/02/2024

**OVERVIEW OF SECTION I  
Preliminary Information**

Section I. Preliminary Information (Eligibility)

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**Evaluation Team Comments:**

- The application was incomplete, missing the application form, and therefore was not eligible for review

**STATE OF MAINE  
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

**RFP #:** 202403069  
**RFP TITLE:** Farms for the Future Phase 2  
**BIDDER:** Circle B Farm  
**DATE:** 05/02/2024

**EVALUATION OF SECTION II  
Completeness of the Business Plan**

	<u>Points Available</u>	<u>Points Awarded</u>
Completeness of the Business Plan	<b>5</b>	

**Evaluation Team Comments:**

**EVALUATION OF SECTION III  
Management Capacity**

	<u>Points Available</u>	<u>Points Awarded</u>
<b>Management Capacity</b> - <i>“Will the applicant be able to implement the Idea for Change?”</i> The application and business plan demonstrate applicant’s knowledge, experience, and capacity to successfully plan, implement and manage the proposed changes to the farm business.	<b>20</b>	

**Evaluation Team Comments:**

**STATE OF MAINE  
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

**RFP #:** 202403069  
**RFP TITLE:** Farms for the Future Phase 2  
**BIDDER:** Circle B Farm  
**DATE:** 05/02/2024

**EVALUATION OF SECTION IV  
Financial Capacity and Debt Management**

	<u>Points Available</u>	<u>Points Awarded</u>
<p><b>Financial Capacity and Debt Management</b> - <i>“Will the Idea for Change improve the applicant’s business’ financial health? Are they ready to take this on?”</i></p> <p>The changes proposed in the business plan will improve the cash flow, and management of debt load needed to pay any new debt associated with the proposed changes to the farm business.</p>	<b>10</b>	

**Evaluation Team Comments:**

**EVALUATION OF SECTION IV  
Collateral and Asset Base**

	<u>Points Available</u>	<u>Points Awarded</u>
<p><b>Collateral and Asset Base</b> – <i>“Can existing resources support this new direction?”</i></p> <p>The application and business plan demonstrate that the farm will improve the productivity of the land (soil quality, fertility, water holding capacity), the physical condition of the buildings and equipment, and maintain any newly acquired assets to increase the overall sustainability of the farm business.</p>	<b>20</b>	

**Evaluation Team Comments:**

**STATE OF MAINE  
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

**RFP #:** 202403069

**RFP TITLE:** Farms for the Future Phase 2

**BIDDER:** Circle B Farm

**DATE:** 05/02/2024

**EVALUATION OF SECTION IV  
Farm Vitality & Development of New Capital**

	<u>Points Available</u>	<u>Points Awarded</u>
<b>Farm Vitality &amp; Development of New Capital – “Will it work?”</b> The Business Plan demonstrates, through better strategies, marketing, production efficiencies and upgrading of facilities and equipment, an increase in profitability and overall net worth that will improve the overall sustainability of the Farm Business.	<b>30</b>	

**Evaluation Team Comments:**

**STATE OF MAINE  
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

**RFP #:** 202403069  
**RFP TITLE:** Farms for the Future Phase 2  
**BIDDER:** Circle B Farm  
**DATE:** 05/02/2024

**EVALUATION OF SECTION IV  
Other Conditions**

	<u>Points Available</u>	<u>Points Awarded</u>
<p><b>Other Conditions</b></p> <p>(A) The Business Plan identifies how the current or proposed farm operations will accomplish broader conservation objectives such as protecting water quality, improving wildlife habitat, or maintaining open space and local scenic and cultural amenities as long as such practices enhance or maintain the profitability of the farm. (5 points)</p> <p>(B) The percentage of the farmland owned by the applicant that is to be protected under the Farmland Protection Agreement. (5 points)</p> <p>(C) The degree to which the change in the business is new and different to the business. (5 points)</p>	<b>15</b>	

**Evaluation Team Comments:**

**STATE OF MAINE  
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

**RFP #:** 202403069  
**RFP TITLE:** Farms for the Future Phase 2  
**BIDDER:** Dandy Ram Farm  
**DATE:** 05/02/2024

**SUMMARY PAGE**

**Department Name:** Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry  
**Name of RFP Coordinator:** Mariam Taleb  
**Names of Evaluators:** Claire Hawkins, Matt Boucher, Leslie Forstadt, Chris Wood, Brittany Peats

<u>Pass/Fail Criteria</u>	<u>Pass</u>	<u>Fail</u>
Eligibility		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The applicant was awarded a Phase 1 Business Planning grant between January 2020 and December 2023, but was not awarded a Phase 2 Implementation grant in that timeframe</li> </ul>	<b>X</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The applicant has completed a Business Plan, as defined in the RFA</li> </ul>	<b>X</b>	
<u>Scoring Sections</u>	<u>Points Available</u>	<u>Points Awarded</u>
Completeness of the Business Plan	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Management Capacity</b> - <i>“Will the applicant be able to implement the Idea for Change?”</i> The application and business plan demonstrate applicant’s knowledge, experience, and capacity to successfully plan, implement and manage the proposed changes to the farm business.	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Financial Capacity and Debt Management</b> - <i>“Will the Idea for Change improve the applicant’s business’ financial health? Are they ready to take this on?”</i> The changes proposed in the business plan will improve the cash flow, and management of debt load needed to pay any new debt associated with the proposed changes to the farm business.	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Collateral and Asset Base</b> – <i>“Can existing resources support this new direction?”</i> The application and business plan demonstrate that the farm will improve the productivity of the land (soil quality, fertility, water holding capacity), the physical condition of the buildings and equipment, and maintain any newly acquired assets to increase the overall sustainability of the farm business.	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Farm Vitality &amp; Development of New Capital</b> – <i>“Will it work?”</i> The Business Plan demonstrates, through better strategies, marketing, production efficiencies and upgrading of facilities and	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>

**STATE OF MAINE  
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

**RFP #:** 202403069

**RFP TITLE:** Farms for the Future Phase 2

**BIDDER:** Dandy Ram Farm

**DATE:** 05/02/2024

equipment, an increase in profitability and overall net worth that will improve the overall sustainability of the Farm Business.		
<p><b>Other Conditions</b></p> <p>(A) The Business Plan identifies how the current or proposed farm operations will accomplish broader conservation objectives such as protecting water quality, improving wildlife habitat, or maintaining open space and local scenic and cultural amenities as long as such practices enhance or maintain the profitability of the farm. (5 points)</p> <p>(B) The percentage of the farmland owned by the applicant that is to be protected under the Farmland Protection Agreement. (5 points)</p> <p>(C) The degree to which the change in the business is new and different to the business. (5 points)</p>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>
<b><u>Total Points</u></b>	<b><u>100</u></b>	<b><u>95</u></b>



**STATE OF MAINE  
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

**RFP #:** 202403069  
**RFP TITLE:** Farms for the Future Phase 2  
**BIDDER:** Dandy Ram Farm  
**DATE:** 05/02/2024

**OVERVIEW OF SECTION I  
Preliminary Information**

Section I. Preliminary Information (Eligibility)

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**Evaluation Team Comments:**

- The applicant is eligible.

**STATE OF MAINE  
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

**RFP #:** 202403069  
**RFP TITLE:** Farms for the Future Phase 2  
**BIDDER:** Dandy Ram Farm  
**DATE:** 05/02/2024

**EVALUATION OF SECTION II  
Completeness of the Business Plan**

	<u>Points Available</u>	<u>Points Awarded</u>
Completeness of the Business Plan	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>

**Evaluation Team Comments:**

- A. Executive Summary
  - Thorough, clear, and clear description of project proposal
- B. Business Description
  - Good overview of business, income streams, infrastructure and soil, and long term vision
- C. Marketing Plan
  - Very complete, explaining products and how they fit into trends, good understanding of demographics, and good comparisons to competitors
  - Referenced specific enterprise budgets
  - diversified marketing and seasonal marketing plans
  - clear connection between proposed project and marketing plan
- D. Production/Operations
  - Will this project lead to a full season work space? There is insulation noted in the estimate. Is there a need for heating?
  - targets are achievable, production styles/cultivation methods are likely to be sustainable in the long term
  - Farming on owned land, 5 in production.
  - Leasing acreage for evergreen wreath production. Is there long-term stability in that access?
    - Project may be more related to owned acreage, in any case
- E. Personnel
  - 2 full time, 5 part-time currently
  - Management styles, needs of staff well-articulated
  - Anticipate some change as applicant works towards goal of transitioning to off-farm income
  - Overall a very robust application
  - great use of additional resources and advisory support
- F. Project Summary & Sources and Uses
  - plans are clear, comprehensive, and indicate readiness to start the project
  - actual design of barn included in application

**STATE OF MAINE  
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

**RFP #:** 202403069

**RFP TITLE:** Farms for the Future Phase 2

**BIDDER:** Dandy Ram Farm

**DATE:** 05/02/2024

- articulates risk analysis well, including potential interruptions in the project itself—thoughtful.
- Appropriate considerations of risk
- clearly laid out sources
- No budget for overages, and no personal fall back.
  - Builder does include potential materials overages
- applicant seems to have a good sense of risk overall. A typical amount of risk for a business of this maturity
- 

**G. Financial Statements**

- financials are complete
- projections are as accurate as possible
- minimal growth year over year
- strong financial understanding of the business—shown in SWOT analysis and projections

**H. Required Appendices to Business Plan**

- outlines the appendices
- financial statements present and clear
- 
-

**STATE OF MAINE  
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

**RFP #:** 202403069  
**RFP TITLE:** Farms for the Future Phase 2  
**BIDDER:** Dandy Ram Farm  
**DATE:** 05/02/2024

**EVALUATION OF SECTION III  
Management Capacity**

	<u>Points Available</u>	<u>Points Awarded</u>
<b>Management Capacity</b> - <i>“Will the applicant be able to implement the Idea for Change?”</i> The application and business plan demonstrate applicant’s knowledge, experience, and capacity to successfully plan, implement and manage the proposed changes to the farm business.	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>

**Evaluation Team Comments:**

- experience is well laid out
- business owner is debt averse
- manageable amount of money
- strong project. Farms often progress after investments like this to being able to take on more debt.
- There’s capacity to manage this business growth.

**STATE OF MAINE  
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

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**EVALUATION OF SECTION IV  
Financial Capacity and Debt Management**

---

	<u>Points Available</u>	<u>Points Awarded</u>
<b>Financial Capacity and Debt Management</b> - <i>“Will the Idea for Change improve the applicant’s business’ financial health? Are they ready to take this on?”</i> The changes proposed in the business plan will improve the cash flow, and management of debt load needed to pay any new debt associated with the proposed changes to the farm business.	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>

**Evaluation Team Comments:**

- demonstrable capacity to steward these financial changes well.
- see notes above

**STATE OF MAINE  
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

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**BIDDER:** Dandy Ram Farm  
**DATE:** 05/02/2024

**EVALUATION OF SECTION IV  
Collateral and Asset Base**

	<u>Points Available</u>	<u>Points Awarded</u>
<p><b>Collateral and Asset Base</b> – <i>“Can existing resources support this new direction?”</i></p> <p>The application and business plan demonstrate that the farm will improve the productivity of the land (soil quality, fertility, water holding capacity), the physical condition of the buildings and equipment, and maintain any newly acquired assets to increase the overall sustainability of the farm business.</p>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>

**Evaluation Team Comments:**

- the productivity and quality of the land/soil is likely to improve as a result of this farm’s production style.
- Improved land quality and improved production likely to also support financial capacity growth.
- Asset of a barn can last a long time, if well built. Plans indicate quality materials.
- plans for growth indicate a capacity to continue to maintain and improve assets

**STATE OF MAINE  
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

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**BIDDER:** Dandy Ram Farm  
**DATE:** 05/02/2024

**EVALUATION OF SECTION IV  
Farm Vitality & Development of New Capital**

	<u>Points Available</u>	<u>Points Awarded</u>
<b>Farm Vitality &amp; Development of New Capital – “Will it work?”</b> The Business Plan demonstrates, through better strategies, marketing, production efficiencies and upgrading of facilities and equipment, an increase in profitability and overall net worth that will improve the overall sustainability of the Farm Business.	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>

**Evaluation Team Comments:**

- See notes above

**STATE OF MAINE  
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

**RFP #:** 202403069  
**RFP TITLE:** Farms for the Future Phase 2  
**BIDDER:** Dandy Ram Farm  
**DATE:** 05/02/2024

**EVALUATION OF SECTION IV  
Other Conditions**

	<u>Points Available</u>	<u>Points Awarded</u>
<p><b>Other Conditions</b></p> <p>(A) The Business Plan identifies how the current or proposed farm operations will accomplish broader conservation objectives such as protecting water quality, improving wildlife habitat, or maintaining open space and local scenic and cultural amenities as long as such practices enhance or maintain the profitability of the farm. (5 points)</p> <p>(B) The percentage of the farmland owned by the applicant that is to be protected under the Farmland Protection Agreement. (5 points)</p> <p>(C) The degree to which the change in the business is new and different to the business. (5 points)</p>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>

**Evaluation Team Comments:**

- Will be hosting affinity events for LGBTQfarmers
- will leave wildlife and pollinator refuges
- - no information specific to farmland protection agreement
- the change will be new, different, scalable, and offer the ability to innovate based on market trends
-



**STATE OF MAINE  
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

**RFP #:** 202403069

**RFP TITLE:** Farms for the Future Phase 2

**BIDDER NAME:** Dandy Ram Farm

**EVALUATOR NAME:** Brittany Peats

**EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT:** Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

\*\*\*\*\*

**Instructions:** *The purpose of this form is to record proposal review notes written by **individual** evaluators for this Request for Proposals (RFP) process. It is **required** that each individual evaluator make notes for each proposal that he or she reviews. No numerical scoring should take place on these notes, as that is performed only during team consensus evaluation meetings. A separate form is available for team consensus evaluation notes and scoring. Once complete, please submit a copy of this document to your Department's RFP Coordinator or Lead Evaluator for this RFP.*

\*\*\*\*\*

**Individual Evaluator Comments:**

I. Application

1. Proposed Project

- Build a barn for processing and storage of flowers
- 
- 

2. Budget for Project(s)

- Yes
- 
- 

II. Business Plan

1. Executive Summary

- Build a barn for processing and storage of flowers
- 
- 

2. Business Description

- Flowers for events and evergreen for wreaths, dried flowers and plant dyed merchandise
- Floral is limited by a small space for design and storing
- 

3. Marketing Plan

- A variety of products, building on trends. Both nationally and locally.
- Understand their demographic and how to reach them through word of mouth, social media, etc.
- Comparison to competitors are included

4. Production/Operations

**STATE OF MAINE  
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

**RFP #:** 202403069

**RFP TITLE:** Farms for the Future Phase 2

**BIDDER NAME:** Dandy Ram Farm

**EVALUATOR NAME:** Brittany Peats

**EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT:** Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

- 
- 
- 5. Personnel
  - Many years of experience farming
  - Four returning staff
- 
- 6. Project Summary & Sources and Uses
  - Clear design and funding plan
  - 7 times bigger than the existing space
- 
- 7. Financial Statements
  - complete
- 
- 
- 8. Required Appendices to Business Plan
  - Yes
- 
-

**STATE OF MAINE  
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

**RFP #:** 202403069

**RFP TITLE:** Farms for the Future Phase 2

**BIDDER NAME:** Dandy Ram Farm

**DATE:** 05/01/2024

**EVALUATOR NAME:** Claire Hawkins

**EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT:** Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

\*\*\*\*\*

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\*\*\*\*\*

**Individual Evaluator Comments:**

I. Application

1. Proposed Project

- Expansion project; seeking financing to construct a 32 x 32 2-story barn in June 2024 (this is next month??).
- Expanded product processing and design space, larger walk in, shipping station, and storage space.

2. Budget for Project(s)

- Total project cost is \$113,000; Dandy Ram Farm contribution of \$28,000.
- Requesting FFF Phase 2 grant in the amount of \$25,000; also requesting recommendation for 2% interest rate for \$60,000 AMLF loan.

II. Business Plan

1. Executive Summary

- Farm consists of 18 owned acres, 5 of which are in active agriculture production, and 15 leased wooded acres for the harvest of balsam tips for the evergreen wreath production.
- Produces for both local markets and national markets. Locally, Dandy Ram sells to multiple wholesale accounts, 1 farmers market, and multiple pop-up markets from May-October. Dandy Ram currently provides floral design for 20 full service weddings a year.

2. Business Description

- See above.

**STATE OF MAINE  
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

**RFP #:** 202403069

**RFP TITLE:** Farms for the Future Phase 2

**BIDDER NAME:** Dandy Ram Farm

**DATE:** 05/01/2024

**EVALUATOR NAME:** Claire Hawkins

**EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT:** Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

3. Marketing Plan

- Goal 1: Expand national distribution of products to be at least 30% of business.
- Goal 2: Increase scale of individual wedding clients to increase income from the same amount of events (around 20-25 weddings/season).
- Business split between local (farmers market and wedding floral design) and national (plant-dyed bandanas, dried florals, evergreen wreaths) markets/customers.

4. Production/Operations

- 5 owned acres in active production.
- Organic growing practices & low tillage methods. In addition to active cultivation spaces on the farm, there are dedicated planted strips of perennial pollinator throughout the farm.
- Tunnels & open air cultivation.

5. Personnel

- Goal to build a business that will net profit at least \$50k/ year to be able to transition away from off farm income for owner, Bo Dennis, while paying a thriving wage to multiple employees.
- Owner/operator (Bo Dennis, applicant).
- Seasonal crew; internships.
- Robust professional advisory team.

6. Project Summary & Sources and Uses

- Starting in May of 2024 we are building a 2 story 32 x 32 barn with attic trusses with design studio, 8 x 10 walk in, upstairs vase and box storage, bucket washing station, and shipping station to drastically increase our ability to scale the profitability of our business.
- General contractor teed up for June 2024.
- Design specifications included in app.

7. Financial Statements

- Financials and risk assessment included in business plan.
- Exit strategy and succession plan noted.

**STATE OF MAINE  
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

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**EVALUATOR NAME:** Claire Hawkins

**EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT:** Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

- FY23 total income ~\$92K
- Expenses ~\$75K
- Net income ~\$17K (necessitates outside work for Owner/Operator)
- Relatively modest liabilities.
- Cash flow & sales well documented.

8. Required Appendices to Business Plan

- Robust documentation included.

**STATE OF MAINE  
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

**RFP #:** 202403069

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**BIDDER NAME:** Dandy Ram Farm

**DATE:** 05/01/2024

**EVALUATOR NAME:** Chris Wood

**EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT:** Bangor Savings Bank

\*\*\*\*\*

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\*\*\*\*\*

**Individual Evaluator Comments:**

I. Application

1. Proposed Project

- Yes
- 
- 

2. Budget for Project(s)

- Yes
- 
- 

II. Business Plan

1. Executive Summary

- Established goals and outlined plan for funds.
- Vision outlined of business and why there farm
- 

2. Business Description

- Details revenue lines
- What amount is farmed and farmland versus overall acreage owned
- Infrastructure outlined and highlighted.

3. Marketing Plan

- Breaks out ideas – would like to see more financial impact of each plan. What is the value add and cost of each idea to bring out of the plan phase and into actual production
- 

4. Production/Operations

**STATE OF MAINE  
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

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**EVALUATOR NAME:** Chris Wood

**EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT:** Bangor Savings Bank

- Owners have experience and have a brand that is identifiable but also separates them from their competitors.
- 
- 5. Personnel
  - Ownership is very experienced and knowledgeable about industry trends
  - Outlines goals and objectives well. Debt adverse outside of personal mortgage
  - Good support system in place
- 6. Project Summary & Sources and Uses
  - Covers in detail plans, outline of build, and expenses
  - No overage built in
  - Realistic
- 7. Financial Statements
  - Well thought out. Detailed in scope.
  - Debt adverse and thoughtful about taking on additional debt
  -
- 8. Required Appendices to Business Plan
  - They are referenced but more detailed could be added to be very specific
  - 
  -

**STATE OF MAINE  
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

**RFP #:** 202403069

**RFP TITLE:** Farms for the Future Phase 2

**BIDDER NAME:** Dandy Ram Farm

**DATE:** 05/01/2024

**EVALUATOR NAME:** Leslie Forstadt

**EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT:** UMaine Cooperative Extension

\*\*\*\*\*

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\*\*\*\*\*

**Individual Evaluator Comments:**

- P (Positive): strengths.
- N (Negative): weaknesses.
- Q (Question): Questions about the application materials
- I (Interesting): innovative or unexpected ideas

I. Application

1. Proposed Project

- Increase space to expand processing, design, walk-in, shipping, and storage
- Building a 2-story barn
- 

2. Budget for Project(s)

- \$113K; self-funding \$28, seeking \$25K cash from grant and 2% interest rate through Ag marketing loan fund
- 
- 

II. Business Plan

1. Executive Summary

- Complete description of farm and plan for these funds and expansion
- 
- 

2. Business Description

- Strong sense of profit and areas for growth and rationale for how the barn will increase the business capacity and increase profit to



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**EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT:** UMaine Cooperative Extension

work toward farm providing income for owner and not needing off-farm income

- Question-page 6 business plan notes a date of April 2023 to begin construction. June 2024 used elsewhere.
- Weakness/question in goal 2, ambitious objectives - achievable by April 2024 and June 2024?
- Weakness/question in goal 3 – will barn be built and functional in one month? (by July 2024)-proposed to be built between 6/1-7/31

3. Marketing Plan

- Strong use of enterprise budgets for pricing
- 

4. Production/Operations

- Only one person can work in work space currently-question about the barn-ensure full season use that is needed?
- 

5. Personnel

- Owner desiring to work FT on farm, employees who assemble and design, all strengths
- Contingencies built in in the event staffing changes are needed based on success of IG and social recruitment
- Bo seems capable of management of increased business once the barn is built, and it may take time before the profit is actualized to shift from off farm work (2FTE, 5PT staff)

6. Project Summary & Sources and Uses

- Question p16 timing again-has building begun? (they paid \$13K of profits toward this in Dec 2023) oh okay, the \$28K is \$13 from 2023, and \$15 current (p 18 clarifies)
- 
- 

7. Financial Statements

- Positive – lack of debt and limited liabilities
- Promising favorable relationship with BSB
- 

8. Required Appendices to Business Plan

- 
- 
-

**STATE OF MAINE  
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

**RFP #:** 202403069

**RFP TITLE:** Farms for the Future Phase 2

**BIDDER NAME:** Dandy Ram Farm

**DATE:** 05/01/2024

**EVALUATOR NAME:** Matt Boucher

**EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT:** Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

\*\*\*\*\*

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**Individual Evaluator Comments:**

- I. Application
  - 1. Proposed Project
    - 32x32, 2 story barn
    - Barn will expand product processing space as well as other backend tasks related to farm operation.
    - Project slated to begin in June 2024
  - 2. Budget for Project(s)
    - Total: \$113,000
    - \$28k self-funded
    - \$25k FFF P2 Grant
    - \$60k FFF P2 Loan @ 2% interest
- II. Business Plan
  - 1. Executive Summary
    - LGBTQ+ flower, seed, evergreen farm
    - Started in 2019, scaled quickly
    - 5/18 acres in production, lease 15 acres for evergreen harvest
    - Goal is to build a barn to increase processing capacity
  - 2. Business Description
    - Business leases crop land to trans beginning farmers
    - Project will increase ability of farm founder to provide employment
    - Farmable acreage is 45% boothbay silt loam
    - Organic
    - Woven wire deer fence, 3 hoop houses, heated propagation greenhouse, design studio, walk in cooler, shop
    - Design, processing, and shipping tasks are biggest limiting factors

**STATE OF MAINE  
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

**RFP #:** 202403069

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**DATE:** 05/01/2024

**EVALUATOR NAME:** Matt Boucher

**EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT:** Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

- 1 farmers market, 20 weddings a year, dried floral shipping, 500 evergreen wreaths, plant-dyed farm merchandise, grow seeds on contract for seed companies
  - Vision: continue scaling current operation while serving as an incubator for LGBTQ+ ag businesses; increase founder salary to reduce need for off-farm income; paying livable wage to employees
3. Marketing Plan
- Local florals, wedding floral design, shipped/wholesale dried florals, plant-dyed bandanas, evergreen wreaths (harvested from leased land)
  - Maine Flower Collective – collective marketing opportunities
  - Shipping to tourists/agritourism
  - Values-driven business
  - Year-round shipping to major metros (dried florals, bandanas)
  - Evergreen wreath shipping (Nov-Dec)
  - Good grasp of customer demographics for targeted marketing
4. Production/Operations
- Flowering hedgerows, willow groves, pollinator wildflower meadows
  - May – Oct growing season
  - 25 weddings, 10 week farmers market, 300 evergreen wreaths
  - Access to land to expand production
  - Organic, reduced till, dedicated perennial pollinator habitat
  - Lease farmers required to grow organically, though no need to be certified
5. Personnel
- Bo Dennis, owner 16 years farming experience MOFGA apprentice/journeyperson programs, farm beginnings/business courses. Beginning Farmer Specialist at MOFGA
  - Paid crew – 3<sup>rd</sup> year of same crew, no issues hiring. \$18 - \$35/hr plus bonuses/healthcare stipend
  - Advisory team incl. financial advisors, legal, other farmers
6. Project Summary & Sources and Uses
- Design of project barn included
  - Some discrepancies between dollar figures in executive summary and project description
7. Financial Statements

**STATE OF MAINE  
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

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**EVALUATOR NAME:** Matt Boucher

**EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT:** Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

- Appropriate consideration of risks, with scenario and exit strategy planning included
  - Detailed financials included and clear
8. Required Appendices to Business Plan
- All information present and highly detailed.



STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,  
CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

Janet T. Mills  
Governor

Amanda Beal  
Commissioner

**AGREEMENT AND DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**  
**RFP #: 202403069**  
**RFP TITLE: Farms for the Future Phase 2**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ Claire Hawkins \_\_\_\_\_, accept the offer to become a member of the Request for Proposals (RFP) Evaluation Team for the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. I do hereby accept the terms set forth in this agreement AND hereby disclose any affiliation or relationship I may have in connection with a bidder who has submitted a proposal to this RFP.

Neither I nor any member of my immediate family have a personal or financial interest, direct or indirect, in the bidders whose proposals I will be reviewing. "Interest" may include, but is not limited to: current or former ownership in the bidder's company; current or former Board membership; current or former employment with the bidder; current or former personal contractual relationship with the bidder (example: paid consultant); and/or current or former relationship to a bidder's official which could reasonably be construed to constitute a conflict of interest (personal relationships may be perceived by the public as a potential conflict of interest).

I have not advised, consulted with or assisted any bidder in the preparation of any proposal submitted in response to this RFP nor have I submitted a letter of support or similar endorsement.

I understand and agree that the evaluation process is to be conducted in an impartial manner without bias or prejudice. In this regard, I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, there are no circumstances that would reasonably support a good faith charge of bias. I further understand that in the event a good faith charge of bias is made, it will rest with me to decide whether I should be disqualified from participation in the evaluation process.

**I agree to hold confidential all information related to the contents of Requests for Proposals presented during the review process until such time as the Department formally releases the award decision notices for public distribution.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Claire H. Hawkins*  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
May 1, 2024  
Date



**STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,  
CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY**

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Governor

Amanda Beal  
Commissioner

**AGREEMENT AND DISCLOSURE STATEMENT  
RFP #: 202403069  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

MTBOUCHER

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

5/1/24



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CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

Janet T. Mills  
Governor

Amanda Beal  
Commissioner

AGREEMENT AND DISCLOSURE STATEMENT  
RFP #: 202403069  
RFP TITLE: Farms for the Future Phase 2

I, Brittany Peat, accept the offer to become a member of the Request for Proposals (RFP) Evaluation Team for the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. I do hereby accept the terms set forth in this agreement AND hereby disclose any affiliation or relationship I may have in connection with a bidder who has submitted a proposal to this RFP.

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Signature

May 1, 2024  
Date



STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,  
CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

Janet T. Mills  
Governor

Amanda Beal  
Commissioner

AGREEMENT AND DISCLOSURE STATEMENT  
RFP #: 202403069  
RFP TITLE: Farms for the Future Phase 2

I, Chris Wood, accept the offer to become a member of the Request for Proposals (RFP) Evaluation Team for the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. I do hereby accept the terms set forth in this agreement AND hereby disclose any affiliation or relationship I may have in connection with a bidder who has submitted a proposal to this RFP.

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Signature

Date

5/2/2024





STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,  
CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

Janet T. Mills  
Governor

Amanda Beal  
Commissioner

**AGREEMENT AND DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**  
**RFP #: 202403069**  
**RFP TITLE: Farms for the Future Phase 2**

I, \_\_\_\_\_Leslie Forstadt\_\_\_\_\_, accept the offer to become a member of the Request for Proposals (RFP) Evaluation Team for the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. I do hereby accept the terms set forth in this agreement AND hereby disclose any affiliation or relationship I may have in connection with a bidder who has submitted a proposal to this RFP.

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*LS*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

5.1.24