



# ***INVITATION TO NEGOTIATE***

***ITN25-01 - 'FAES1312' Zoysiagrass Cultivar (U.S. Patent Pending)***

Florida Foundation Seed Producers, Inc. (FFSP) invites all interested parties and stakeholders to submit comments and/or proposals for the exclusive licensing opportunities disclosed in this announcement. For more information, please contact FFSP at [jholm@ffsp.net](mailto:jholm@ffsp.net).

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## ITN Description and Specifications

- **ITN Title:** 'FAES1312' Zoysiagrass Cultivar
- **ITN Number:** ITN25-01
- **ITN Territory:** As proposed by ITN respondents
- **ITN Announcement Date:** January 15, 2025
- **ITN Proposal Due Date:** Friday, February 14, 2025, 12PM ET
- **Cultivar Description:**

'FAES1312' is a perennial zoysiagrass that was identified for its superior attributes amongst a collection of zoysiagrass plants that were being evaluated for turfgrass quality traits in Citra, Florida. 'FAES1312' can be distinguished by its improved winter survival, superior turfgrass quality, and superior turfgrass density. 'FAES1312' may be used as a turfgrass that is suitable for home lawns and commercial turf applications. 'FAES1312' is well-suited to the southern and central areas of the U.S. zoysiagrass adaptation zone, and it should be equally well-suited to other subtropical and tropical areas worldwide where zoysiagrasses are currently grown. Additionally, the observed cool season turfgrass quality and winter survival of 'FAES1312' indicates that it would be well-suited for use in the U.S. zoysiagrass transition zone and other regions within the U.S. Midwest that are outside this zone, such as areas of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois.



## ITN Description and Specifications

Morphological characteristics of 'FAES1312' and the commercial zoysiagrass varieties 'SS-500' (sold under the “Empire” brand), 'BK-9' (sold under the “Geo” brand), and 'FAES1319' (sold under the “Brazos” brand) and the experimental zoysiagrass variety 'FAES1313' were compared head-to-head in 2015 using potted plants that were approximately 6 months in age. The plants were grown and compared in a greenhouse located near Gainesville, FL, with a nighttime low of 60° F and daytime high of 90° F. The plants were grown under natural day length without supplemental lighting and fertilized using a soluble fertilizer of 20-20-20 in four equal soluble applications per month, which equated to approximately one pound of nitrogen (N) per month. Leaf length (cm) and width (mm) were measured on the second fully expanded leaf below the growing meristem of a stolon. The length of the third internode below the growing meristem (cm) and the stolon diameter between the second and third internodes (mm) were also measured. The measurements of these four characteristics for these five varieties are provided in Table 1.

**Table 1. Morphological comparison of 'FAES1312' and commercial and experimental zoysiagrasses.**

Variety	Leaf length	Leaf width	Internode length	Stolon diameter
<i>'FAES1312'</i>	7.95	3.78	9.22	1.60
Empire® 'SS-500'	9.11	4.22	14.44	1.74
Geo® 'BK-9'	5.78	2.00	13.78	1.32
<i>'FAES1313'</i>	8.00	3.00	10.43	1.31
Brazos™ 'FAES1319'	9.05	3.33	18.78	1.54
LSD (p = 0.05)	1.43	0.38	7.36	0.25

'FAES1312' was evaluated in field plot trials conducted near Citra, FL, near West Lafayette, IN, and near College Station, TX. In these trials, the turfgrass quality, color, and density of the entries were evaluated using the industry recognized rating systems established by the United States Golf Association (U.S.G.A.). Turfgrass quality was rated on a "1" to "9" scale in which "9" indicates "best," "6" indicates "minimally accepted," and "1" indicates "poorest"; turfgrass color was rated on a "1" to "9" scale in which "9" indicates the darkest green; and turfgrass density was rated on a "1" to "9" scale in which "9" indicates "best," "6" indicates "minimally accepted," and "1" indicates "poorest." Entries for 'FAES1312', the experimental variety 'FAES1313', and the commercial varieties 'SS-500', 'Meyer', 'Zeon', and 'FAES1319' were established from rooted plugs at these locations. These entries were maintained as standard turfgrass plots that were mowed at 7.5 cm height and were regularly observed and rated through the end of 2016. The data obtained from these trials is presented in Table 2.

## ITN Description and Specifications

**Table 2. Turf comparison of 'FAES1312' and commercial and experimental zoysiagrasses.**

Variety	Fall color		Density	Quality
	TX	FL	FL	IN
'FAES1312'	5.7	5.3	7.7	7.7
'Meyer'	3.3	2.7	5.0	7.7
Empire® 'SS-500'	4.3	2.7	7.0	5.7
'Zeon'	7.3	5.0	7.7	7.3
'FAES1313'	7.7	6.3	8.0	Dead
Brazos™ 'FAES1319'	7.0	6.3	9.0	Dead
LSD (p = 0.05)	1.5	1.4	1.1	1.3

'FAES1312' was entered into the 2013 National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (N.T.E.P.) trials to evaluate its long-term performance under multiple environments, as long-term performance is weighted heavily when considering the merit of a turfgrass. These trials were conducted over 17 locations throughout the U.S. and utilized 'SS-500', 'Meyer', and 'Zeon' as the check varieties. In addition to evaluating the long-term performance of a variety, certain data from these trials can be extracted from the overall dataset in such a way that the turfgrass quality ratings under specific conditions can be determined, for example, the turfgrass quality within certain growing zones or under different seasons. Cool season quality of a variety, which is also important to consider when evaluating a turfgrass, may also be determined accordingly. An overall turfgrass quality rating in which all ratings performed over the 4-year duration of the trial at 11 of the 17 trial locations were averaged. Cool season quality evaluations were obtained from Gainesville, FL and the more northern Manhattan, KS (U.S.D.A. hardiness zone 6A) location. Data obtained from the N.T.E.P. trial and the cool season trial is presented in Table 3. Another trial was conducted in Gainesville, FL to evaluate the ability of a turfgrass to maintain quality and color when grown in the shade. Shade tolerance is also considered when evaluating the merit of turfgrasses. 'FAES1312' was included in this trial in which all entries were grown under 70% shade for 3 years. Data obtained from the shade tolerance trial is also presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. Long-term, cool season, and shade turfgrass quality of 'FAES1312' and commercial and experimental zoysiagrasses.**

Variety	Long-term	Cool season		Shade
	11 locations	KS	FL	FL
'FAES1312'	6.6	7.3	5.7	6.6
'Meyer'	5.3	1.7	2.0	5.3
'SS-500'	5.7	6.0	4.3	3.0
'Zeon'	5.4	9.0	5.0	5.4
'FAES1313'	6.4	8.0	6.7	6.4
'FAES1319'	6.7	8.0	5.7	6.7
LSD (p = 0.05)	0.3	1.5	1.0	0.3

## What is an ITN?

Newly developed cultivars, experimental lines, and plant germplasm are routinely approved for release through UF's Florida Agricultural Experiment Station (FAES). Florida Foundation Seed Producers, Inc. (FFSP), a non-profit corporation and direct support organization of the University of Florida, is continuously seeking strategic production and marketing companies in commercialization of a diverse portfolio of newly developed plant cultivars. For certain crops, several companies may express interest in an opportunity for an exclusive license for an improved plant cultivar. The Invitation to Negotiate (ITN), implemented in 2006, is a process which enables FFSP to fairly and objectively evaluate all commercial proposals and comments to effectively identify superior companies to deliver new cultivars to the public. In return, licensed companies provide royalties back to FFSP for reinvestment in the breeding and development of new, improved cultivars at the FAES.

The ITN process encourages an open engagement of all interested companies and stakeholders. Companies submitting proposals and/or comments to an ITN will be evaluated consistently and fairly by a review committee comprised of staff members of FFSP and expert faculty advisors from FAES.

FFSP strives to secure the partner/partners that best meet the needs of the State of Florida and its people, UF, and the FAES breeding program. Responders to the ITN will be evaluated using a consistent methodology, allowing review committee members to weigh core elements and objectively evaluate multiple proposals. The ITN specifications objectively guide critical responses in a proposal and are designed to explore the project's commercial scope for a sustainable business, consistent with the necessity to deliver FAES plant breeding products and technology to the public. The ITN requires interested companies to describe their prior experience and current business model. Companies are asked to describe a plan of action concerning the new business opportunity. The ITN also requests details of marketing and production plans which will successfully deliver a sound commercial operation and ensure that sustaining royalties are returned to support the FAES breeding program. Initiation of an ITN and the participation by a company in an ITN process does not mean an exclusive agreement will be eventually awarded; only that responsive companies will receive consideration and a fair evaluation of proposals and comments submitted.

At the conclusion of the ITN process, it is everyone's hope that most details can be mutually agreed upon, resulting in an award of a license to a qualified and successful partner.

Please refer to the general conditions of this ITN for specific specifications and instructions.

## Instructions for Submitting Comments and/or Proposals

If you or your company is interested in commenting on and/or submitting a proposal for this exclusive licensing opportunity, please complete the three steps on this list:

**Step 1:** Carefully read the general conditions of this announcement.

**Step 2:** Complete and sign the Acknowledgment Form(s) of this announcement and return to Florida Foundation Seed Producers, Inc., Attn: Jim R. Holm (By Email: jholm@ffsp.net; By U.S. Mail or Express Courier: 3760 NW 83rd St., Suite 2, Gainesville FL 32606; or By fax: (877) 839-9162).

**Step 3:** After FFSP receives the Acknowledgment Form(s), you will receive a sample questionnaire which you may use to submit your proposal(s). If you are only interested in commenting, please indicate such on your Acknowledgment Form(s), and submit your comments upon returning the Acknowledgment Form(s). All proposals and comments must be received by Florida Foundation Seed Producers, Inc. (By Email: jholm@ffsp.net; By U.S. Mail or Express Courier: 3760 NW 83rd St., Suite 2, Gainesville FL 32606) prior to the ITN Proposal Due Date specified in the ITN Description and Specifications of this announcement.

All proposals and comments will be objectively and confidentially evaluated. FFSP is committed to evaluating proposals and comments using the following four (4) principles of the ITN process:

- 1. What is good for the State of Florida and its people?**
- 2. What is good for UF/IFAS?**
- 3. What is good for the breeder and the breeding program?**
- 4. What is good for world food security?**

**NOTICE:** Late proposals and/or comments will not be accepted or considered.

**Florida Foundation Seed Producers, Inc. (FFSP), a non-profit corporation and direct support organization of the University of Florida (University) offers the following Invitation to Negotiate (ITN).**

**GENERAL CONDITIONS:**

**ITN FORM.** All proposals should be submitted after submitting the FFSP ITN Acknowledgment Form. All proposals should be submitted with one (1) complete original proposal and three (3) complete photocopies in a sealed envelope, with the following information on the outside of the envelope: ITN number, date and time of ITN closing (as stated on Acknowledgment Form), and company name. All ITN responses must be executed and submitted in a sealed envelope. (DO NOT INCLUDE MORE THAN ONE ITN RESPONSE PER ENVELOPE)

1. EXECUTION OF ITN. The ITN Acknowledgment Form must contain a manual signature of an authorized representative in the space provided. ITN proposals must be typed or printed in ink. Use of erasable ink or pencil is not permitted. All corrections made by Proposer must be initialed. All ITN proposals are subject to the conditions specified herein and those which do not comply are subject to rejection.

2. NO ITN SUBMITTED. If not submitting an ITN, respond by returning only the ITN Acknowledgment Form, marking it "NO ITN RESPONSE", and explain the reason in the space provided along with any comments. Failure to respond three (3) times in succession without justification may be cause for removal of your company's name from the ITN notification list. NOTE: To qualify as a respondent, Proposer must submit a "NO ITN RESPONSE", and it must be received no later than the stated ITN closing date and hour.

3. ITN DELIVERY. If ITN proposals are mailed through the U. S. Postal Service as regular mail, address the proposal to the PO Box as shown on the Invitation to Negotiate Acknowledgment Form; or if the ITN proposal will be delivered by a service other than the U. S. Postal Service regular mail, i.e., Federal Express, Airborne, United Parcel Service, Courier, U. S. Postal Express Mail, etc., address the proposal to the building and room number as shown on the ITN Acknowledgment Form.

4. ITN OPENING. Proposals shall be opened after the closing date and time specified on the ITN Acknowledgment Form. Proposers shall be responsible to assure that the ITN response is delivered at the proper time and place prior to the ITN closing. ITN responses, which for any reason are not so delivered, will not be considered. NOTE: ITN Notice of an unspecified award may be posted electronically at <http://FFSP.net> listed as ITN.

5. PROPOSAL WITHDRAWAL. A Proposer may withdraw a submitted proposal at any time up to the ITN closing. To withdraw a proposal, the Proposer must submit a written request, signed by an authorized representative, to FFSP before the ITN closing. After withdrawing a previously submitted proposal, the Proposer may submit another proposal at any time up to the ITN closing.

6. INQUIRIES. All changes, if necessary, shall be made by written addendum to the ITN. Any explanation desired by Proposers must be requested of FFSP in writing, and if an explanation is necessary, a reply shall be made in the form of an addendum, a copy of which will be forwarded to each Proposer who has submitted an Acknowledgment Form to FFSP. FFSP will not give verbal answers to inquiries regarding the specifications, or verbal instructions prior to or after the award of this ITN. A verbal statement regarding same by any person shall be non-binding. FFSP is not liable for any costs or actions resulting from the Proposer accepting verbal direction.

7. ERRORS. FFSP is not liable for any errors or misinterpretations made by the Proposer in responding to this ITN.

8. AMENDMENT AND CLARIFICATION. FFSP reserves the unilateral right to amend this ITN in writing at any time. FFSP reserves the right to cancel or reissue the ITN at its sole discretion. Proposers shall respond to the final written ITN and any exhibits, attachments, and amendments.

9. ITN INTERPRETATION. Interpretation of the wording of the ITN document submitted by the Proposer will be the responsibility of FFSP and that interpretation will be final and binding.

10. PROPOSAL REJECTION. FFSP shall have the right to reject any or all ITN proposals and in particular to reject a proposal not accompanied by data required by the ITN or in any way incomplete or irregular, including omission of financial considerations. Conditional ITN proposals will not be accepted.

11. PRICES, TERMS. Proposers are expected to examine the project scope, specifications, schedule, proposed terms, and all instructions pertaining to the ITN. Failure to do so will be at Proposers' risk. Prices proposed will govern in the award, however, Fees, Royalties and Price are not the only considerations in selection for the award.

12. CONFLICT OF INTEREST. Proposers must disclose with their proposal any actual or potential conflicts of interest. All Proposers must disclose with their ITN the name of any officer, director, or agent who is also an employee of FFSP or University or any State Employee. Further, all Proposers must disclose the name of any State employee who owns,

directly or indirectly, an interest of five percent (5%) or more in the Proposer's firm or any of its branches.

13. PERFORMANCE INVESTIGATIONS. As part of the proposal evaluation process, FFSP may make inquiries and investigations, including verbal or written references from Proposer's customers, to determine the ability of the Proposer to offer service.

14. INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR. Nothing herein is intended or shall be construed as in any way creating or establishing the relationship of co-partners between the parties or in any way making the Proposer an agent or representative of FFSP for any purposes in any manner whatsoever. Proposer is, and shall remain, an independent contractor with respect to all services performed under any License or Research Agreement awarded as a result of this ITN.

15. SELECTION. As the best interest of FFSP acting as a direct support organization of the University may require, the right is reserved to make selections by individual item, group of items, all or none, or a combination thereof; to reject any and all ITN proposals or waive any minor irregularity or technicality in ITN proposals received. Proposers are cautioned to make no assumptions of acceptance, until receiving written notice. Fees, Royalties and Price are not the only considerations in the award.

16. AWARD. Award shall be made to the responsive Proposer whose proposal is determined to be the most advantageous to FFSP. Price, although a consideration, will not be the sole determining factor. FFSP or University is under no obligation to award a contract as a result of this ITN.

17. CANCELLATION. FFSP, by written notice, may terminate this ITN without penalty or cause, in whole or in part, when such action is deemed by FFSP to be in the best interest of FFSP.

18. INTERPRETATIONS/DISPUTES. Any questions concerning conditions or negotiation considerations shall be directed in writing to FFSP. Inquiries must reference the date of ITN closing and the ITN number. No interpretations shall be considered binding unless provided in writing by the FFSP in response to requests in full compliance with this provision.

19. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS. This ITN and any contract resulting from this ITN, and any disputes thereunder, shall be construed exclusively in accordance with the laws of the State of Florida without regard to conflict of laws provisions and enforced in the courts of the State of Florida. FFSP and Proposer hereby agree that venue shall lie exclusively in Alachua County, Florida.

20. ADVERTISING. In submitting an ITN proposal, the Proposer agrees not to use the results therefrom as a part of any commercial advertising.

21. ASSIGNMENT. Any contract issued pursuant to this ITN and the monies, which may become due hereunder, are not assignable except with the prior written approval of FFSP.

22. LIABILITY and INDEMNITY. The Proposer shall indemnify and hold FFSP, the University of Florida Board of Trustees, the Florida Board of Governors, and their respective employees, directors, officers, and agents harmless from all costs, expenses, claims, damages, penalties and losses (including without limitation reasonable attorneys' fees and experts' fees) arising out of, relating to, or resulting from any contract awarded as a result of this ITN and from the Proposer's or third persons' use of the FFSP licensed materials.

23. FACILITIES. FFSP reserves the right to inspect the Proposer's facilities at any time with prior notice.

24. TERMINATION. Upon termination of the agreement that may result from the ITN, FFSP shall give notice with instructions for return of plant materials. Upon receiving a written request from FFSP, Proposer agrees to return to FFSP plant material as instructed. If no instructions are received from FFSP, the Proposer shall give fifteen (15) days notice to destroy all plant material to FFSP. After fifteen (15) days, all plant material shall be destroyed by the Proposer, without exception for other options or hold backs.

25. RESERVATION OF RIGHTS. FFSP retains sole rights, titles and ownership of the supplied plant material and associated information provided in performance of the project, including all Intellectual Property (IP) and all current and future patents, plant variety protection (PVP) certificates, copyrights, trademarks, and other intellectual property rights. No one is permitted to file for IP protection, except University, FFSP or their designees. FFSP is enabled by University to file for IP protection and to contract out all forms of IP to commercial entities. Breeding, selection, or modifications to the plant materials and IP supplied are prohibited.

26. CONFLICT BETWEEN DOCUMENTS. If any terms and conditions contained within the documents that are a part of this ITN or resulting contract are in conflict with any other terms and conditions contained therein, then the various documents comprising this ITN or resulting License or Research Agreement, as applicable, shall govern in the following order of precedence: amendment, contract and addendum(s), addenda to invitation to negotiation, special conditions, general conditions, invitation to negotiate.

27. EXPENSE. All proposals submitted in response to this ITN must be submitted at the sole expense of the Proposer, whether or not any agreement is signed as a result of this ITN. Proposers will pay all costs associated with the preparation of proposals and necessary visits to FFSP and other required site visits.

28. NO WARRANTIES. FFSP MAKES NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES WHATSOEVER WITH RESPECT TO THE MATERIALS, INCLUDING, WITHOUT LIMITATION, (I) THAT THE USE OF THE MATERIALS DOES NOT OR WILL NOT INFRINGE ANY PATENT OR OTHER INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS OF ANY THIRD PARTY, (II) THAT A THIRD PARTY'S INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS DO NOT INFRINGE ANY PATENT OR OTHER INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS OF THE MATERIALS, OR (III) THAT THE USE OF THE MATERIALS IS SAFE AND WITHOUT HAZARD. FFSP IS UNDER NO OBLIGATION TO OBTAIN OR PROVIDE LICENSES THAT MAY BE REQUIRED FOR THE USE OF THE MATERIALS BY PROPOSER. IN ADDITION, PROPOSER SHALL ASSUME ALL RISKS RELATING TO, RESULTING FROM OR ARISING OUT OF THE USE OF THE MATERIALS.

**SPECIAL CONDITIONS:**

29. USE OF TERMS. The terms proposer, cooperator, firm, vendor, company, and contractor are used synonymously in this ITN unless otherwise indicated.

30. CONTRACT. This ITN, the written proposal submitted, and modifications to terms as negotiated and agreed to by the parties shall be incorporated into the final contract for consideration.





**If you or your company is interested in commenting on and/or submitting a proposal for these exclusive licensing opportunities, please complete and sign this Acknowledgment Form agreeing to the terms and conditions of the ITN and fax it back to Florida Foundation Seed Producers, Inc. FFSP will then send your company a sample questionnaire which may be used for submission of your proposal.**

**SUBMIT ITN RESPONSE AND COMMENTS TO:**  
 FLORIDA FOUNDATION SEED PRODUCERS, INC.  
 Attn: Jim R. Holm  
 By Email: [jholm@ffsp.net](mailto:jholm@ffsp.net)  
 By U.S. Mail or Express Courier: 3760 NW 83rd St., Suite 2,  
 Gainesville FL 32606  
 By Fax: (877) 839-9162

## Acknowledgment Form



### *INVITATION TO NEGOTIATE*

ITN NUMBER: ITN25-01	
ITN TITLE: 'FAES1312' Zoysiagrass Cultivar	
PROPOSER NAME/COMPANY NAME:	PROPOSER CONTACT (NAME):
PROPOSER'S MAILING ADDRESS (Phys.):	CITY – STATE – ZIP CODE - COUNTRY:
TELEPHONE NO.:	EMAIL:
ALTERNATE TELEPHONE NO.:	WEBSITE:
FAX NO.:	

Is it acceptable to send your ITN sample questionnaire via e-mail? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If no, what method should be used? \_\_\_\_\_

*I certify that this ITN Proposal is made without prior understanding, agreement, or connection with any corporation, firm, or person submitting an ITN Proposal for the same materials and is in all respects fair and without collusion or fraud. I agree to be bound by all terms and conditions of this ITN and certify that I am authorized to sign this acknowledgement form and submit an ITN Proposal for the Proposer.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
 SIGNATURE DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
 NAME (TYPED), TITLE