



INVITATION TO NEGOTIATE

ITN26-03 - 'FL SME' Annual Ryegrass Cultivar

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

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ITN Description and Specifications

- **ITN Title:** ‘FL SME’ Annual Ryegrass Cultivar
- **ITN No.:** ITN26-03
- **ITN Territory:** As proposed by ITN Respondents.
- **ITN Announcement Date:** April 24, 2026
- **ITN Proposal Due Date:** Friday, June 5, 2026, 12PM ET
- **Cultivar Description:**

‘FL SME’ is an early maturing diploid forage-type annual ryegrass developed in Gainesville, Florida by the University of Florida’s Forage Breeding and Genetics Program. ‘FL SME’ is a consistently high yielding variety with a high level of gray leaf spot resistance caused by *Pyricularia oryzae* and crown rust resistance caused by *Puccinia coronata*. ‘FL SME’ has been evaluated extensively in the coastal plain’s region of the southern U.S. and is expected to perform well across the southern U.S. annual ryegrass growing region. Thirty pounds of clean breeder seed is available for seed production start-up.

As shown in Tables 1, 2 and 3, overall dry matter yields (DMY) (lb/acre/season) of ‘FL SME’ were statistically higher compared to selected commercial cultivars over multiple locations and years. A bolded and “*” entry had significantly greater DMY than the best control and population mean. A bolded and underlined entry was not statistically different than the best control but produced higher DMY compared to the other controls and the population mean. LSD values from Hague, FL and Citra, FL are at P=0.05, and from Georgia at P=0.10.

Table 1.

Entry	2018-19		2019-20			2020-21			
	Hague, FL	Tifton, GA	Tifton, GA	Athens, GA	Hague, FL	Hague, FL	Marianna, FL	Tifton, Ga	Plains, GA
FL 4x Late	6627	5804	7340	4884	6886	7329	-	-	-
FL SME	7064*	-	7471	4683	6816	8054	7321	5489	5077
Big Boss	4992	5608	-	-	5622	5954	-	-	-
Attain	4984	5597	-	-	6671	6177	-	-	-
Frostproof	5684	5609	7536	3882	6066	6459	-	-	-
TetraStar	5780	5946	8440	4809	5984	5516	7531	5619	5558
LoneStar	3969	6469	7939	3945	5992	5747	7098	5764	5798
Average	5426	5448	6629	4127	5995	6609	7081	5403	5274
n	32	47	48	48	37	36	32	34	34
LSD	1452	1222	747	987	1107	1759	672	405	805

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Table 2.

Entry	2021-22				2022-23			
	Hague, FL	Marianna, FL	Tifton, GA	Plains, GA	Hague, FL	Marianna, FL	Tifton, GA	Plains, GA
FL 4x Late	9237	-	-	-	9923*	-	-	-
FL SME	9078	7248	6432*	3586	8043*	4639*	6432*	4196
Big Boss	8424	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Attain	7944	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Frostproof	8260	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TetraStar	-	-	-	-	3838	3171	6084	3601
LoneStar	-	-	-	-	5107	3038	5430	4429
Average	8163	6608	5822	3295	7128	3038	5404	3521
n	24	23	22	22	19	40	29	29
LSD	1408	751	572	626	1870	358	911	541

Table 3.

Entry	2023-24					2024-25				
	Citra, FL	Rome, GA	Griffin, GA	Plains, GA	Tifton, GA	Citra, FL	Rome, GA	Griffin, GA	Plains, GA	Tifton, GA
FL 4x Late	7923*	7089	6508	4095	4040	11171*	3091	6306	3648	4231
FL SME	6890*	9164	6570	3804	4586	11008*	4340*	6443	3999*	3971
Big Boss	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Attain	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Frostproof	6110	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TetraStar	6212	8683	7968	3920	3832	10582	2982	6195	3252	4400
LoneStar	6539	7135	6977	4037	4638	9171	3826	6092	3068	4517
Average	5939	7571	6831	3751	4268	9860	3246	6252	3348	4182
n	22	30	30	30	30	24	40	40	40	40
LSD	368	901	NS	251	280	654	407	NS	675	310

As shown in Tables 4 and 5, 'FL SME' has been found to have excellent resistance to foliar diseases and an early maturity date over multiple years and locations. "CR" indicates Crown Rust caused by *Puccinia coronata* Corda, "GLS" indicates Gray Leaf Spot caused by *Pyricularia oryzae* Cavara, and "BIP" indicates Bipolaris caused by *Bipolaris sorokiniana*. All ratings are on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 = no disease and 10 = 100% coverage. A bolded and "*" entry had significantly greater DMY than the best control and population mean. A bolded and underlined entry was not statistically different than the best control. LSD values from Hague, FL and Citra, FL are at P=0.05. Maturity was determined by the date of first anthesis.

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Table 4.

Entry	2018-19		Maturity, Hague, FL	2019-20	
	GLS, Citra, FL 3/19/2019	GLS, Hague, FL 3/20/2019		GLS, Hague, FL 4/13/2020	Maturity, Hague, FL
FL 4x Late	4.0	2.7	2-Apr	4.0	24-Mar
FL SME	2.7*	3.7	18-Feb	1.6*	15-Feb
Big Boss	7.0	4.7	2-Apr	8.0	7-Apr
Attain	5.7	3.7	5-Apr	6.7	7-Apr
Frostproof	4.3	3.0	27-Mar	4.0	22-Mar
TetraStar	5.7	5.3	2-Apr	8.3	26-Mar
LoneStar	7.3	5.3	5-Apr	9.7	1-Apr
Average	5.0	3.7		6.3	
n	40	40	40	45	45
LSD	1.2	1.5		1.6	

Table 5.

Entry	2020-21			2021-22		2022-23	
	GLS, Hague, FL 3/18/2021	CR, Hague, FL 3/18/2021	Maturity, Hague, FL	GLS, Hague, FL 4/15/2022	Maturity, Hague, FL	BIP, Hague, FL 3/22/23	Maturity, Hague, FL
FL 4x Late	2.0	1.6	16-Apr	2.7	25-Mar	3.3*	14-Mar
FL SME	2.0	2.1	18-Feb	4.0	3-Mar	3.3*	24-Feb
Big Boss	3.0	3.5	2-Apr	5.7	4-Apr	-	-
Attain	3.7	3.0	5-Apr	4.7	8-Apr	-	-
Frostproof	3.0	1.8	18-Mar	3.3	1-Apr	-	-
TetraStar	4.3	6.3	2-Apr	-	-	6.3	2-Apr
LoneStar	4.7	6.5	26-Mar	-	-	6.6	27-Mar
Average	3.3	5.3		3.3		5.6	
n	37	37	37	26	26	20	20
LSD	1.1	1.8		1.1		1.2	

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 mail or fax 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 Street, Gainesville, FL 32606, Fax: (850) 594-1068)

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 Street, 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 this exclusive licensing opportunity, 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

By U.S. Mail or Express Courier: 3760 NW 83rd St.,
Suite 2,

Gainesville FL 32606

By Fax: (850) 594-1068

Acknowledgment Form



INVITATION TO NEGOTIATE

ITN NO.: ITN26-03	
ITN TITLE: 'FL SME' ANNUAL RYEGRASS 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 Proposal and certify that I am authorized to sign this ITN Proposal for the Proposer.

SIGNATURE

DATE

NAME (TYPED), TITLE