



Request for Proposal (RFP)
Critical Review of "The Looming Threat to Napa Valley's Terroir"

Issued by Napa Valley Grapegrowers (NVG)

Date of Issue: August 5, 2025

Proposal Deadline: September 5, 2025, 5:00 PM PT

I. Introduction

The Napa Valley Grapegrowers (NVG), a 501(c)3 nonprofit, represents over 600 local growers dedicated to agricultural excellence, sustainability, and stewardship in Napa Valley. As part of our ongoing efforts to promote soil health and informed viticultural practices, we seek proposals for a critical review of the report "[*The Looming Threat to Napa Valley's Terroir: Understanding the Potential Decline in Vineyard Soil Fertility*](#)" by Ted W. Hall ("Hall report").

This review will help NVG and its members better understand the validity of claims made in the Hall report and support data-driven decision-making for Napa Valley's agricultural future.

This project is funded by a grant from the USDA Risk Management Agency, ensuring resources are available to support a high-quality review and timely deliverable.

II. Purpose of the RFP

We are soliciting proposals from qualified researchers or institutions to provide an **independent, science-based critique** of the Hall report, evaluating:

- The logic and structure of arguments
- The quality and interpretation of cited evidence
- The consistency of conclusions with established viticultural science
- Potential limitations, assumptions, or biases

This critical review is intended as a stand-alone effort; no new research or field analysis will be required.

III. Scope of Work

The objective is to provide an **independent, rigorous, and science-based critique** of the Hall report, focusing on its scientific merit, argumentation, and relevance to Napa Valley viticulture.

The critique must evaluate:

- **Argument Structure and Logic:** Analyze the coherence and structure of the report's arguments and evaluate how convincingly it connects factors like tillage, herbicides, microbial activity, vine health, and vineyard lifespan.
- **Evidence Base and Interpretation:** Assess the quality and relevance of cited evidence and the interpretations drawn, determining if alternative interpretations exist and whether conclusions about declining fertility and lifespan are well-supported.
- **Implicit Methodology:** Although not a primary research study, assess the Hall report's implicit methodology for synthesizing and selecting evidence, identifying potential analytical weaknesses or bias.
- **Conclusion Robustness:** Evaluate whether conclusions—particularly the hypothesis of a widespread decline in fertility contributing to shortened vineyard lifespans—logically follow from the arguments and evidence provided.
- **Alignment with Existing Literature:** Compare the report's claims with peer-reviewed scientific literature relevant to Napa soils, vineyard longevity, and terroir expression, identifying any omissions or misinterpretations.
- **Assumptions, Limitations, and Biases:** Identify underlying assumptions and discuss limitations or potential biases that could affect the report's conclusions.
- **Overall Scientific Credibility:** Provide an overall assessment of the report's credibility as a scientific contribution and its value as a basis for informing grower practices or NVG policy.

IV. Deliverables

- **Critical Review Report:**
A written report suitable for both technical and industry audiences, summarizing findings and recommendations.
Due no later than January 15, 2026.

V. Proposal Requirements

Proposals should include:

1. **Cover Page:** Project title, principal investigator(s), affiliation(s), and contact information.
2. **Executive Summary:** Brief overview of the proposed approach.
3. **Approach:** Outline of the methodology and framework for evaluating the Hall report.
4. **Qualifications:** Summary of relevant experience and expertise
5. **Budget:** Estimated cost with brief justification, reflecting the focused scope of this project.

VI. Timeline

- **RFP Issued:** August 5, 2025
- **Proposal Deadline:** September 5, 2025
- **Notification of Award:** September 15, 2025
- **Project Start:** October 1, 2025
- **Critical Review Report Due:** January 15, 2026

VII. Budget and Payment

This project is grant funded by the USDA Risk Management Agency and NVG can provide up to \$20,000 for the full scope of work. Budgets should reflect reasonable costs for a focused literature-based critical review. Payment will be made upon successful completion of the deliverable, with terms defined in the contract agreement.

VIII. Submission

Proposals should be submitted electronically as a single searchable PDF to **Ben O'Dwyer** at bodwyer@napagrowers.org

Subject line: **"RFP Submission: NVG Critical Review – [PI Last Name/Institution]"**