

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Website Redesign

Canadian Simmental Association

RFP Issue Date: July 1, 2026

Proposal Submission Deadline: August 4, 2026

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Canadian Simmental Association

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1. Introduction & Background

The Canadian Simmental Association (CSA) is requesting proposals from qualified web design and development firms to redesign and rebuild its primary organizational website. This Request for Proposal (RFP) outlines the project background, scope of work, technical and functional requirements, submission guidelines, and evaluation criteria for prospective vendors.

1.1 About the Canadian Simmental Association

The Canadian Simmental Association (CSA) is a not-for-profit association incorporated under the Animal Pedigree Act, headquartered in Calgary, Alberta. Formed in 1969 — following the importation of the first Simmental bull into Canada in 1967 — the CSA's main objective is to encourage, develop, and regulate the breeding of Simmental cattle in Canada, and to develop tools that assist its membership in improving beef production across the country.

As a result of the work of the CSA and its membership, the Simmental breed has grown to become one of the largest and most influential cattle breeds in Canada. The CSA maintains the national herdbook and registry, providing members with a comprehensive Expected Progeny Difference (EPD) system to assist cattlemen in selecting bulls that match their production goals — covering traits such as calving ease, birth weight, weaning and yearling growth, and maternal traits including milk production.

The CSA is a proud sponsor of industry events across the country, with provincial member associations active in each region. The organization publishes Simmental Country magazine and distributes regular e-newsletters to keep members and the broader beef industry informed. The CSA also supports two affiliated organizations with dedicated programming:

- Young Canadian Simmental Association (YCSA) — Long recognized as one of the most successful junior cattle organizations in Canada, with programming that has developed many of the industry's current leaders. The YCSA runs scholarships, fundraising programs, and an annual National Classic competition.
- Friends of Canadian Simmental Foundation — A foundation supporting the Simmental breed and its broader community.

The CSA serves members in both English and French, reflecting its national mandate. Its website (www.simmental.com), online herdbook registry, and member resources serve purebred breeders, commercial producers, and industry partners from coast to coast.

1.2 Project Background

The CSA's current website is a static HTML site hosted on a Linux-based VPS. While functional, the site presents three core problems that this project is intended to solve:

- Poor user experience: The site's structure, navigation, and visual design were not developed using modern UX practices, making it difficult for members, breeders, and the public to find information and complete common tasks.
- Difficult content management: Because the site consists of static HTML pages rather than a content management system (CMS), CSA staff without technical or coding expertise are unable to easily update content, requiring manual editing of HTML files for routine changes.

- **Outdated layout and appearance:** The site's visual design and page layout reflect an earlier era of web design and no longer meet the standard expected of a national breed association. The dated appearance undermines the CSA's credibility and does not present the organization, its members, or the Simmental breed in a manner consistent with the association's standing in the Canadian beef industry.

The CSA is seeking a vendor to design and build a new website on a modern, user-friendly CMS platform that resolves all three issues while preserving and improving upon the organization's existing content and core functionality.

1.3 Project Goals

The redesigned website should achieve the following goals:

- Apply modern UX design principles to improve navigation, findability, and ease of use for all visitor types (members, breeders, prospective members, industry partners, and the general public).
- Move the site to a CMS platform that allows non-technical CSA staff to independently create, edit, and publish content (pages, news, events, documents) without developer assistance.
- Deliver a clean, professional, modern visual design that reflects the CSA's brand and credibility within the agricultural and livestock industry.
- Ensure the new site is fully responsive and performs well across desktop, tablet, and mobile devices.
- Improve site performance, accessibility, and search engine visibility relative to the current site.

Note: This RFP is limited strictly to the website redesign and rebuild. It does not include marketing strategy, social media strategy, content writing/copywriting strategy, or ongoing digital marketing services. Vendors should not include such services in their proposed scope or pricing.

2. Scope of Work

The selected vendor will be responsible for the following phases and deliverables. Vendors may propose a refined approach or methodology, provided all core deliverables below are addressed.

2.1 Discovery & Planning

- Review of the current website, existing content, and identification of content to migrate, retire, or restructure.
- Stakeholder consultation with CSA staff and/or board representatives to confirm goals, audiences, and priority tasks.
- Recommendation of a CMS platform suited to a small nonprofit/association staff team with limited technical resources (e.g., WordPress or comparable platform), with rationale.
- Development of a sitemap and information architecture based on UX best practices.

2.2 UX & Design

- Development of wireframes for key page templates (home, about, registry/services, events, news, resources, contact, member-only areas if applicable).

- Visual design concepts/mockups reflecting CSA branding, for review and approval prior to development.
- Design of a responsive layout optimized for desktop, tablet, and mobile.
- Accessibility considerations aligned with WCAG 2.1 AA guidelines where reasonably feasible.

2.3 Development & CMS Build

- Build of the website on the agreed CMS platform.
- Configuration of a content editing experience that allows non-technical staff to add/edit pages, news posts, events, and documents without code.
- Migration of existing content from the current static site, with reasonable restructuring to fit the new architecture (final content list to be confirmed during discovery).
- Basic on-page SEO setup (meta titles/descriptions, clean URL structure, image alt text framework, sitemap.xml).
- Contact and inquiry forms as required by current site functionality.
- Build of the specific functional features detailed in Section 2.4 below (AI chatbot, provincial associations section, international marketplace tab, member event calendar, video library, YCSA section, Foundation section, and analytics).

Note: As confirmed in scoping, this project does not require integration with external systems such as a membership database, breed registry platform, or event management system. If the vendor identifies a need for any such integration based on discovery findings, it should be flagged separately as an optional add-on, not included in the base proposal.

2.4 Specific Functional Features (Requested)

In addition to the general redesign and CMS build described above, the CSA requires the following specific features. Vendors should address each individually in their proposal, including how it would be built, any platform/plugin recommendations, and any cost or complexity implications.

2.4.1 AI Website Chatbot (Site-Scoped Only)

The new website should include an AI-powered chatbot to help visitors find information.

- The chatbot's knowledge must be scoped strictly to the content of the CSA website. It should answer questions using only information published on the site (e.g., registry information, events, news, contact details, provincial association content) and should not pull in or generate information from outside sources.
- Vendor should propose a specific approach/tool for achieving this (e.g., a chatbot built on retrieval from site content, a third-party widget with a configurable knowledge base, or a custom solution), along with associated licensing or usage costs.
- Chatbot should be easy for CSA staff to keep in sync as site content changes, ideally automatically as pages are updated rather than requiring manual retraining.
- Vendor should describe how the chatbot will handle questions outside its scope (e.g., declining gracefully and directing the visitor to contact CSA staff) rather than guessing or fabricating answers.

2.4.2 Provincial Associations Section

The site must include a dedicated section with sub-tabs/sub-pages for each provincial Simmental association, allowing each to house its own documents and content (e.g., newsletters, meeting minutes, bylaws, contact information).

- Structure should allow for one sub-tab per provincial association, with room to add or remove associations over time without a full site rebuild.
- Each provincial association's content should be managed separately from the others, so one association's update does not require touching another's page.
- The CSA has not yet finalized whether each provincial association will be granted its own CMS login to manage their own sub-tab directly, or whether CSA staff will manage updates on their behalf. Vendors should propose how their recommended CMS would support either model, and note any difference in cost or complexity between the two approaches, so the CSA can make an informed decision.
- If direct provincial-association logins are recommended, the proposal should address permission scoping (i.e., ensuring each association can only edit their own sub-tab, not others' or core site content).

2.4.3 International Marketplace Tab

The site must include a dedicated “International” tab where CSA members can advertise cattle/genetics for sale to international buyers.

- This should function as a member-submitted listings page, similar in structure to the event calendar described in Section 2.4.4 (i.e., members submit a listing, rather than CSA staff manually building each entry).
- Each listing should support, at minimum, a title, description, photo(s), and contact information for the seller.
- Vendor should propose a moderation/approval workflow for listings (the CSA's preference is for submissions to follow the same staff-approval model as the event calendar, detailed below, but vendors may propose alternatives for consideration).
- Listings should be browsable/searchable by site visitors without requiring a login.

2.4.4 Member-Submitted Event Calendar

The site must include an events calendar where CSA members can submit their own events (e.g., sales, shows, association meetings) for inclusion.

- Members should be able to submit event details (title, date/time, location, description, contact info) through a front-end form, without needing CMS access.
- Submitted events must not publish automatically. All member-submitted events require CSA staff review and approval before appearing live on the public calendar.
- CSA staff should have a simple way to review pending submissions, approve or reject them, and edit details if needed prior to publishing.
- The calendar should be viewable by month/list view at minimum, and should be easy for staff to also add events directly (without going through the public submission form) for CSA's own events.

2.4.5 Video Library (YouTube-Embedded)

The site must include a dedicated video section that organizes and showcases the CSA's existing video content.

- Videos will continue to be hosted on YouTube; the website does not need to natively store or stream video files. This section should embed and organize existing YouTube content rather than rebuild video hosting infrastructure.
- CSA staff must be able to add, remove, and reorder featured videos through the CMS without code (e.g., by pasting a YouTube URL or video ID).
- Vendor should propose a reasonable content structure for browsing videos (e.g., by category/playlist, such as sales, educational content, association updates) suited to the CSA's existing video library.
- Vendor should confirm the proposed approach does not require an ongoing per-video manual embed process that would be burdensome for non-technical staff (e.g., a YouTube playlist sync or simple embed-by-URL field is preferred over hand-coded embeds).

2.4.6 Young Canadian Simmental Association (YCSA) Section

The site must include a distinct section for the Young Canadian Simmental Association (YCSA), structured similarly to the provincial Associations sections described in Section 2.4.2.

- YCSA should have its own dedicated area of the site with room for content such as programs, events, news, and resources specific to youth members.
- As with the provincial associations, the CSA has not finalized whether YCSA will manage this section directly via its own CMS login or whether CSA staff will manage it on YCSA's behalf. Vendor should propose how either model would work and flag any cost/complexity differences.
- Visual identity for this section may differ slightly from the main CSA site (e.g., distinct branding/colour accents for a youth audience) while remaining part of the same overall website; vendor should confirm this is supported by the proposed platform.

2.4.7 Friends of Canadian Simmental Foundation Section

The site must include a distinct section for the Friends of Canadian Simmental Foundation, structured similarly to the provincial Associations sections described in Section 2.4.2.

- This section should have room for content such as the Foundation's mandate, scholarship/grant programs, donation information, and related news or events.
- As with the provincial associations and YCSA, the CSA has not finalized whether the Foundation will manage this section directly via its own CMS login or whether CSA staff will manage it on the Foundation's behalf. Vendor should propose how either model would work and flag any cost/complexity differences.
- If the Foundation intends to accept online donations in future, this is not required as part of this project; vendor should simply confirm the proposed platform would not preclude adding a donation/payment mechanism later, even though it is out of scope for this RFP.

2.4.8 Website Analytics

The site must have analytics tracking built in from launch so the CSA can understand visitor traffic and behaviour.

- Vendor should recommend a specific analytics tool/platform (e.g., Google Analytics or a comparable alternative) and note any associated cost.
- Analytics should, at minimum, allow CSA staff to see traffic volume, top pages, and traffic sources, through a dashboard or reporting view accessible to non-technical staff (not just raw data requiring a developer to interpret).
- Vendor should confirm the proposed analytics approach complies with applicable Canadian privacy expectations (e.g., reasonable handling of visitor data, availability of a cookie/privacy notice if required by the chosen tool).

2.5 Testing & Quality Assurance

- Cross-browser and cross-device testing.
- Functional testing of forms, navigation, and any interactive elements.
- Basic performance testing (page load speed).

2.6 Training & Documentation

- Hands-on training session(s) for CSA staff on how to use the CMS to update content. The number, length, and format of sessions (e.g., live/virtual, in-person, recorded) is at the vendor's discretion to propose, but the proposal should describe this in enough detail for the CSA to evaluate adequacy for a small, non-technical staff team.
- Written or video documentation/user guide for ongoing content management, covering at minimum: editing pages, publishing news/events, managing the provincial associations section, and approving member-submitted event and marketplace listings.

2.7 Launch & Post-Launch Support

- Migration/deployment to production hosting.
- DNS cutover support and pre-launch checklist (redirects from old URLs, broken link checks).
- A minimum 120-day post-launch support/warranty period, at no additional cost, covering bug fixes and corrections of any functionality that does not match the agreed specification. Vendors may propose a longer period but must meet this 120-day minimum.

2.8 Out of Scope

The following are explicitly out of scope for this RFP and should not be included in vendor proposals:

- Marketing strategy or marketing plan development.
- Social media strategy, social media content, or social media management.
- Ongoing content copywriting beyond migration of existing content.
- Paid advertising or SEO campaign management (as opposed to basic on-page technical SEO setup, which is in scope).
- Integration with third-party membership, registry, or event systems, unless separately proposed as an optional add-on.

- Payment processing for international marketplace listings (the marketplace tab is for advertising/listings only, not a transactional e-commerce platform, unless the vendor wishes to propose this as an optional add-on).
- Online donation/payment processing for the Friends of Canadian Simmental Foundation section (per Section 2.4.7), unless separately proposed as an optional add-on.

3. Current Website Environment

Item	Current State
Platform	Static HTML
Hosting	Linux-based VPS
Content Management	Manual HTML editing (no CMS); not editable by non-technical staff
Known Issues	Site not built on UX design principles; difficult for staff to update content
Domain	https://www.simmental.com www.simmentalcountry.com
Approx. Page Count	Vendor should confirm during discovery

Vendors will be given access to review the existing live site as part of due diligence prior to submitting a proposal, and may request a walkthrough or additional technical details as outlined in Section 6.

4. Functional & Technical Requirements

4.1 Content Management Requirements

- CMS must allow non-technical staff to edit text, images, and basic page layout without writing code.
- CMS must support staff creating and publishing news/announcements and event listings.
- CMS must support document/file uploads (e.g., PDFs of forms, newsletters, reports) for member and public download.
- Role-based user permissions (e.g., staff editor vs. administrator) preferred, including potential permission scoping for provincial association, YCSA, and Foundation contributors as described in Sections 2.4.2, 2.4.6, and 2.4.7.
- CMS/site must support a staff approval queue for member-submitted content (event calendar submissions and international marketplace listings), per Sections 2.4.3 and 2.4.4.

4.2 Hosting & Platform

- Vendor should recommend a hosting solution and CMS platform, including estimated ongoing hosting/licensing costs (to be itemized separately from one-time design/development costs).

- Platform should be widely supported, with a healthy ecosystem of developers/agencies, to avoid future vendor lock-in.

4.3 Performance, Security & Accessibility

- SSL/HTTPS across the entire site.
- Reasonable page-load performance on standard broadband and mobile connections.
- Routine security updates/patching plan (vendor to describe how this will be handled post-launch, even if as a paid maintenance option).
- Design and code should reasonably support accessibility best practices (alt text, semantic HTML, keyboard navigation, color contrast).

4.4 Browser & Device Support

- Current versions of Chrome, Safari, Edge, and Firefox.
- Responsive support for desktop, tablet, and mobile screen sizes.

5. Proposal Submission Requirements

Interested vendors should submit a written proposal that includes the following sections:

1. **Company Overview** — Brief background on your firm, years in operation, and relevant experience, particularly with nonprofit, association, or agricultural-sector clients.
2. **Relevant Experience & Portfolio** — Examples of at least 2-3 comparable website projects, including links to live sites where possible, especially CMS-based redesigns from static or legacy sites.
3. **Proposed Approach & Methodology** — Your proposed process for discovery, UX/design, development, testing, training, and launch.
4. **Recommended Platform** — Your recommended CMS platform and brief rationale for why it fits an organization of CSA's size and technical capacity.
5. **Project Timeline** — A proposed project schedule with major milestones, in line with the target timeline in Section 7.
6. **Pricing** — A detailed cost breakdown (see Section 6 for required format).
7. **Team & Roles** — Names/roles of key team members who will work on the project, and whether any work will be subcontracted.
8. **References** — Contact information for at least two prior clients of comparable scope.
9. **Post-Launch Support** — Confirmation of the required minimum 120-day warranty period (Section 2.7), any proposed extension to that period, and a description of ongoing maintenance options and associated costs beyond the warranty.

6. Pricing Format

To allow for fair comparison across vendors, please structure pricing as follows:

Cost Category	Description	Cost (CAD)
Discovery & UX/IA	Stakeholder consultation, sitemap, wireframes	\$
Visual Design	Mockups/visual design concepts and revisions	\$
Development & CMS Build	Theme/template build, CMS configuration	\$
Content Migration	Migration of existing site content	\$
AI Chatbot (Site-Scoped)	Per Section 2.4.1	\$
Analytics Setup	Per Section 2.4.8	\$
Testing & QA	Cross-browser/device testing	\$
Training & Documentation	Staff training session(s), user guide	\$
Launch Support	Deployment, DNS cutover, redirects	\$
Post-Launch Warranty (120-Day Minimum)	Bug-fix period; must be included at no extra cost	Included
TOTAL ONE-TIME COST		\$
AI Chatbot Usage/Licensing (Annual, if applicable)	Ongoing cost for chatbot tool/API, if separate from hosting	\$

Note: The CSA's working budget for this project is under \$10,000 CAD for the core one-time redesign and rebuild. The CSA recognizes that the features in Section 2.4 (particularly the AI chatbot) may add cost beyond a typical brochure-style redesign. Vendors should price these items individually and transparently rather than omitting detail to fit the target budget. If full scope cannot be delivered within \$10,000 CAD, vendors are encouraged to propose a phased approach (e.g., core redesign and highest-priority features in Phase 1, with remaining Section 2.4 features in a Phase 2) so the CSA can make an informed prioritization decision.

7. Project Timeline

The CSA's target is to complete the redesign and launch the new website within approximately 3 to 6 months of vendor selection. Proposed indicative milestones are outlined below; vendors should adjust based on their own proposed methodology.

Milestone	Target Timing
RFP Issued	July 1, 2026
Vendor Questions Due	July 17, 2026
Proposals Due	August 4, 2026

Vendor Presentations / Interviews (if applicable)	August 11, 2026
Vendor Selection & Contract Signed	September 3, 2026
Discovery & UX Planning Complete	October 9, 2026
Design Concepts Approved	October 23, 2026
Development Complete / Staging Review	November 20, 2026
Staff Training Complete	November 30, 2026
Site Launch	December 11, 2026

8. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated on the following areas. The CSA is not obligated to select the lowest-cost proposal.

Criteria	Description
Relevant Experience	Demonstrated experience with comparable CMS-based redesigns, ideally for nonprofits/associations
UX & Design Quality	Strength of portfolio examples and proposed UX approach
CMS Recommendation Fit	Suitability of recommended platform for a small, non-technical staff team
Proposed Methodology	Clarity and soundness of proposed process and timeline
Pricing & Value	Total cost relative to scope and value delivered
References	Quality of feedback from prior clients

9. Submission Logistics

9.1 Key Dates

- Proposal Submission Deadline: August 4, 2026
- Questions Deadline: July 17, 2026 — all vendor questions should be submitted in writing by this date.

9.2 Submission Instructions

Please submit proposals electronically in PDF format to:

- Contact Name: Sue Giles

- Title: Director of Marketing and Public Relations
- Email: sgiles@simmental.com
- Phone: 403.793.0409

Proposals received after the deadline may not be considered. Please direct all questions to the contact above rather than other CSA staff or board members.

9.3 Reservation of Rights

The Canadian Simmental Association reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, negotiate with any vendor, request clarifications or revised proposals, and cancel or modify this RFP process at any time without obligation or liability to any vendor. Submission of a proposal does not guarantee selection or award of a contract.

10. Closing Statement

The Canadian Simmental Association looks forward to reviewing proposals from qualified vendors who can deliver a modern, user-friendly, and easily maintainable website that better serves our members, breeders, and the broader Simmental community. We appreciate your time and interest in this opportunity.