



**California Prune Board
Call for Letters of Interest**

Response Deadline: Friday August 26, 2022

The California Prune Board (CPB) represents growers and prune handlers under the authority of the California Department of Food and Agriculture. California is the world’s largest producer of premium prunes and the CPB supports research to discover new and/or add validity to known health and nutrition benefits of eating prunes. Nutrition research provides the scientific rationale for consumers to include prunes as a nutritious food as part of a healthy dietary pattern and lifestyle. (For information on the nutrient and health benefits of prunes, see <https://californiaprunes.org/healthy-living/benefits-of-prunes/>.)

The CPB has a robust nutrition research program primarily focused on the investigation of how prunes favorably affect bone health and bone health outcomes. To date, much of the scientific investigations initiated by CPB have been conducted in the United States (US). CPB has identified the need to conduct bone research in Japan, a top export market for California Prunes, where cultural practices, lifestyle choices, food choices and dietary patterns can differ greatly from those in the US, thus potentially impacting measured outcomes.

The CPB also understands that improving and maximizing digestive health via changes in the gut microbiome may mediate some of the effect of prunes on bone health. The interest of consumers in gut health is currently trending in Japan. Thus, the CPB aims to both identify the role of prunes in the gut-bone axis and conduct research with outcomes that will resonate with Japanese consumers.

The CPB invites non-binding Letters of Interest (LOI) to be submitted in English by August 26, 2022 to investigate the effects of daily consumption of whole prunes on changes to the gut microbiota and bone health status in Japanese women who are no more than five years post menopause.

LOIs will be evaluated by CPB’s Nutrition Advisory Panel. Successful applicants will be notified by October 5, 2022 whether to submit a full proposal which would again be reviewed prior to approval. The total budget for the study should not exceed \$250,000 US dollars (USD). Projects that exceed \$250,000 USD must be justified in writing by the Principal Investigator. Funding would be available December 2022.

PLEASE USE THE GUIDELINES THAT FOLLOW

Guidelines – Submitted in English

The Letter of Interest shall be submitted in English. The LOI is a succinct statement, not to exceed 5 pages, which identifies the research gap to be addressed, describes the study design to address the research gap (relevance), provides the approximate cost, and provides investigator qualifications.

Note: Exceptions or modifications to the below protocol guidelines will be considered when specific justification is provided.

The Letter of Interest (5 pages maximum) must include:

- Name of the Principal Investigator/co-investigators, institution, and e-mail address of the Principal Investigator
- Title of the project
- Brief (1 page) literature review identifying the research gap to be addressed/rationale
- Design/approach to investigation
- Study population (postmenopausal women no more than 5 years post menopause)
- Power calculations to estimate participants needed for statistical significance
- Objectives & methods to meet the research objectives
 - Examples of potential measurable variables include:
 - bone mineral density, strength, and geometry via pQCT
 - bone biomarkers of formation and resorption (measured every 1-2 months); e.g., CTX, P1NP, TRAP-5b, NFATc1
 - fecal sampling plan for changes in gut microbiota (measured every 1-2 months); e.g., fecal weight, alpha and beta diversity, differential taxa, bacteria levels, etc.
 - biomarkers of inflammation
 - food diary/dietary intake plans
- Estimated timeline indicating submission of monthly or bi-monthly interim and final reports along with stated manuscript/presentation plans
- Total budget by broad category - as an instrumentality of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, CPB requests that indirect costs be waived
- Quantity of prunes needed for the study (50 grams of prunes are equivalent to about 5-6 standard sized prunes)
- Experience of the Principal Investigator and institution responsible for the research; include two citations of work relevant to the area of research in bone health and the gut microbiome

Submit the LOI in English using the following format guidelines:

- Word document file
- Font no smaller than 11 point
- Margins no smaller than 1 inch (approx. 2.5 cm)

CPB's staff, consultants, and members of the CPB Nutrition Research Advisory Panel will review and evaluate the Letters of Interest on clearly stated objectives and methods, cost-effectiveness, timeliness, and potential impact resulting from unique findings. Applicants will be notified by October 7, 2022 if a full proposal is to be submitted. Upon selection of a full proposal, funding would be available December 2022.

Inquiries are welcome and are to be submitted electronically via email to: Andrea N. Giancoli at AGiancoli@CaliforniaPrunes.org.

**Return Letters of Interest electronically via e-mail
by August 26, 2022 to:**

Andrea N. Giancoli, MPH, RD
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