FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cquesta and the United Soybean Board Announce Continued Partnership to Enhance Soybean Resilience

St. Louis, MO — February 2, 2026 — Cquesta, a leading agricultural biotechnology company specializing in improving plant root systems, and the United Soybean Board (USB) are pleased to announce the continuation of their strategic partnership for the 2026 fiscal year. This renewed collaboration builds on the successful foundation established in 2025 and advances the development of next-generation soybean traits designed to improve yield, resilience, and nutrient use efficiency.

The 2026 program focuses on optimizing root system architecture (RSA) in soybeans to enhance water and nutrient uptake. By leveraging Cquesta's expertise in root biology—and advancing gene targets discovered through its long-standing partnership with the Salk Institute—the initiative aims to deliver soybean varieties that better withstand environmental stressors such as drought while contributing to healthier, more resilient soils.

"Our partnership with the United Soybean Board is critical to bringing cutting-edge root-trait technology directly to the field," said **Dr. Tim Ulmasov, President and Chief Science Officer at Cquesta**. "By focusing on the 'hidden half' of the plant—the roots—we are developing solutions that help farmers maintain high yields even under challenging conditions, all while fostering a more sustainable agricultural ecosystem."

"USB invests in innovations that deliver real, measurable value to soybean farmers," said **Laurie Isley, Michigan farmer and USB Sustainable Production Work Group Lead.** "Cquesta's work to strengthen root systems aligns directly with our priorities—improving resilience, protecting yields, and ensuring U.S. soy remains competitive in a changing climate. We're excited to continue supporting technologies that help farmers succeed for the long haul."

Primary Deliverables for the 2026 Funding Cycle

- Conduct field trials of Cquesta's DR1 gene lead to characterize phenotypic outcomes and key agronomic traits, including yield.
- Generate CRISPR edits in multiple target genes within advanced soybean germplasm and characterize resulting phenotypes in laboratory and greenhouse settings.
- Advance field validation of root-focused trait candidates to support future commercialization pathways.

Project Goals

- **Increase yields:** Improve access to water and nutrients and enable higher-density planting without requiring changes to existing agronomic practices.
- **Increase resource efficiency:** Enhance the plant's ability to use water and nutrients more effectively, reducing input requirements and improving performance across diverse soil types.
- **Improve soil health:** Promote traits that reduce erosion and increase carbon sequestration, supporting long-term sustainability goals across the soybean value chain.
- **Boost farmer profitability:** Deliver traits that provide consistent, measurable economic benefits through higher yields and improved stress tolerance.

While not a primary focus of the 2026 studies, Cquesta anticipates that its edited soybean varieties will also increase the amount and durability of carbon stored in root systems—an important long-term opportunity for climate-smart agriculture.

This investment by the United Soybean Board underscores its commitment to delivering long-term value to U.S. soybean farmers through strategic research and innovation. By supporting projects like Cquesta's, USB continues to drive advancements that strengthen the farm economy and ensure the global competitiveness of U.S. soy.

About Cquesta

Spun out of the Salk Institute for Biological Studies' Harnessing Plants Initiative, Cquesta is an agricultural biotechnology company developing higher-yield, climate-resilient crop solutions with the potential to reduce global CO_2 levels at gigaton scale. By combining cutting-edge genetic innovation with advanced phenotyping technologies, Cquesta delivers next-generation crop varieties designed to meet the challenges of a changing climate and growing global food demand. For more information, visit **www.cquesta.com**.

About the United Soybean Board

United Soybean Board's 77 volunteer farmer-leaders work on behalf of all U.S. soybean farmers to achieve maximum value for their Soy Checkoff investments. These volunteers create value by stewarding investments in research, education and promotion with the vision to deliver sustainable soy solutions to every life, every day across the priority areas of Infrastructure & Connectivity, Health & Nutrition, Innovation & Technology and Exports. As stipulated in the federal Soybean Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Act, the

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service has oversight responsibilities for USB and the Soy Checkoff. For more information on the United Soybean Board, visit unitedsoybean.org.