

# Bactericide Survey Results

By Harold Browning



Florida citrus growers have had access to bactericides to support tree health in the presence of HLB for nearly six months, allowing them to integrate this new tool into their production management systems. Field research supporting the advancement of these materials predicts that season-long application strategies lead to improvement in several metrics important to growers, such as general tree response and reduction in *Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus* titer in the plants. More important improvements that include reduction in pre-harvest fruit drop and increased yield and quality are predicted to appear once tree health has improved.

The Citrus Research and Development Foundation partnered with AgNet Media to conduct a survey to characterize the patterns of use of the bactericides, including what has already been done this season as well as season-long plans. The goal was to gain a better understanding of what growers are doing with the materials and to share that information while we all wait for evidence of impact to appear later in the season.

Growers could complete the survey in conjunction with pre-registration for the 2016 Citrus Expo, and industry organizations distributed the survey widely. There were eight questions that captured the respondents' grove situation and use of bactericides. Some highlights of the results are presented here.

**Respondent Profiles:** There were 100 respondents, representing 240,305 acres. This sample of nearly 50 percent of Florida's citrus acreage was spread across the major production regions, with some growers reporting on groves located in all three regions. Oranges, grapefruit and specialty fruit blocks were represented in proportion to the acreage of that segment of the industry. Respondents also represented the range of size of operations, from less than 500 acres to more than 10,000 acres.

**Use Since March 2016 Approval:** Ninety-three respondents indicated that they have already applied bactericides to their groves, while only two said they do not plan to apply materials this season. An average of 1.9 applications have been made to date, ranging from zero to four.

**Details of Use:** Two-thirds of those who completed the survey indicated they were rotating the two active ingredients, streptomycin and oxytetracycline, while some respondents reported using one or the other active ingredient exclusively. In response to timing, most replied they were applying during day and night periods, and most indicated these treatments are being tank-mixed with other production inputs. Some respondents cautiously applied the bactericides alone to minimize interference with other chemistries.

**Plans for the 2016–17 Season:** Looking to the full-season program, respondents reported that they intend to apply between zero and 11 applications this season. Almost all planned for two to six applications of the bactericides, with the average being 4.1. Respondents were asked what percent of their acreage they intended to treat during this season, and the response was a weighted average of 84 percent, or approximately 201,724 acres. Two-thirds indicated they will treat all of their acreage with these tools.

A more detailed report of this survey will be distributed to the industry.

*Harold Browning is Chief Operations Officer of CRDF. The foundation is charged with funding citrus research and getting the results of that research to use in the grove.*

