

# CRDF research plans for FY 2012-13 are in place



*By Harold Browning*

July 1 marks the beginning of the new fiscal year for CRDF, and a good time to summarize our plans for the next year. CRDF is entering its fourth year of industry leadership of research to address Huanglongbing (HLB) and citrus canker for the Florida citrus industry.

The 69 research projects approved this spring from 99 proposals received and reviewed by the Scientific Advisory Board and the Research Management Committee are being contracted and most are now under way, with start dates for these projects varying from April 1, 2012 onward. Projects range from one to three years in duration and are spread among priorities to address the psyllid vector, the *Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus* (CLas) pathogen, and the citrus plant. Similarly, they represent parallel pursuit of short-, intermediate- and long-term solutions to these diseases.

This new set of projects complements approximately 60 ongoing research projects, and builds on progress in preceding research. The intent is to move steadily from discovery and improved understanding of the HLB disease processes toward testing and delivering solutions. In some cases, research results are allowing CRDF to establish delivery projects, where the research results may require regulatory or commercialization steps for delivery to growers. In these cases, the CRDF Commercial Product Development Committee comes into play, planning and executing the next steps to identify pathways, attract appropriate partners and report on progress with these efforts. An example of these “commercialization projects” is the Committee’s efforts to facilitate expanded labels for soil-applied neonicotinoid pesticides for use in controlling psyllids in young plantings. Recently, steps toward enhanced management of this portion of the CRDF business plan were taken by contracting a product development manager, Dr. James Dukowitz, with Technology Innovation Group, to assist in organizing and reporting on the Commercial Product Development projects. In this way, CRDF is tracking research from exploration and discovery through testing and refinement, to delivery to citrus growers.

In addition to having the research portfolio for the coming year in place, the general contracts that assist CRDF in completing its mission have been updated and renewed. This allows our management team to meet program management, data management, website, and external communication goals that are critical to program success. Keeping the industry informed of progress in finding solutions is a vital component of the establishment of CRDF to work on behalf of the industry, and we remain committed to meeting this important goal.

Importantly, CRDF has worked closely with industry leaders to meet funding requirements which will allow the research plans and projects to continue. Support from state and federal funds is complementing the Production Research and the Promotion and Marketing funds provided directly by citrus growers, and is combined with voluntary contributions from allied partners to secure the funding required. With approval of the CRDF FY 2012-13 Operating Budget at the June board meeting, CRDF is now prepared for the new fiscal year beginning July 1. This budget is just over \$17 million, about \$2.5 million below the FY 2011-12 \$19.5 million budget.

The Florida citrus industry is to be commended for its recurring efforts to address disease challenges through the organization and support of the Citrus Research and Development Foundation.

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

