

# USDA approves project to seek longer-term solution to ACP and HLB



By Harold Browning

The Florida citrus industry received some good news in early October. On Monday, Oct. 1, USDA, National Institute of Food and Agriculture reported an award of \$9 million to fund a CRDF project under the Specialty Crop Research Initiative with a five-year timeline.

The project goal is to develop and field-test a novel approach to combat citrus greening by blocking the ability of psyllids to move the disease from infected trees to healthy ones. Based on an approach used in medical disease management, the project plan is to create and introduce a psyllid population that is incapable of vectoring HLB, and to deploy those psyllids in a way that displaces the existing wild-type psyllid population. The research team will also conduct outreach to growers and consumers to increase the adoption of this new biological control system, which would also be useful to the citrus industries in Arizona, California and Texas.

CRDF, as the applicant, will serve as contact point for this national project, and Dr. Tom Turpen will serve as project director. The project research and delivery team of more than 40 scientists will include representatives from many universities, state departments of agriculture, and USDA laboratories in many states, including Florida, Texas, California, Arizona, Oregon, Washington and Wisconsin. There will also be an advisory committee that includes citrus stakeholders, scientific expertise and regulatory experts.

## **SOIL APPLIED ADMIRE PRO® SPECIAL LOCAL NEED LABEL APPROVED FOR YOUNG CITRUS**

On Oct. 5, FDACS announced the conditional acceptance of a Special Local Need (SLN) registration for the expanded use of Admire Pro® (active ingredient imidacloprid) as a soil drench insecticide treatment for citrus trees that are 5- to 9-foot tall (3 to 5 years old) and are particularly vulnerable to psyllid infestation.

The conditional acceptance by FDACS is effective immediately and allows growers to further protect 3- to 5-year-old, 5- to 9-foot citrus trees. Rather than being limited to one application of 0.5 lb. active ingredient (a.i.) per acre per year, growers will now be allowed to make two applications of 0.5 lb. a.i. per application per acre for a maximum application rate of 1.0 lb. of Admire Pro® per acre per year. This second application to 3- to 5-year-old trees cannot be made between Nov. 1 and the completion of flower petal-fall the following year. Growers must carefully read and comply with all the SLN labeling instructions, and be sure to keep the SLN label on hand during application.

CRDF wishes to thank the Florida Department of Agriculture and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for their thorough evaluation and determination in approving this registration; Bayer CropScience for working with the Florida citrus industry and regulatory agencies to make this improvement to our ability to manage Asian citrus psyllid populations; and Florida citrus growers for their active participation on the CRDF Commercial Product Development Committee, discussions with regulatory agencies, and forwarding strong letters of support for the need for this SLN.

Special recognition is due Mr. Dan Botts of Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association, who coordinated the overall effort and provided the communication link with all involved; and to University of Florida researcher Dr. Michael Rogers, who assisted the process by establishing the basis for the need and by providing data and background to support the request.

*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.*

