

# CRDF Committee Activities and Programs to Develop Solutions

*By Harold Browning*



The January committee meetings of CRDF addressed significant program activities, results and plans going forward. Both the Commercial Product Delivery Committee (CPDC) and Research Management Committee focused on timely planning for field trials and other projects to advance solutions to HLB. A brief synopsis of the Committee activities follows:

Research and delivery projects that have been underway with funding from CRDF have duration of funding for up to 3 years. Looking forward, 80 projects will end by the beginning of the next fiscal year, July 1, 2015. These projects represent competitive research projects as well as commercial product delivery projects, and cover the broad range of efforts to address the vector, pathogen and plant elements of the HLB disease system. Some of the projects have been underway through two cycles of funding, up to 6 years, while others have only been in place for a couple of years. Among these are critical projects that have momentum towards adding to our understanding and providing management tools and tactics. These projects must be identified and encouraged to continue. Other projects are reaching a logical conclusion and may not require further support.

In this portfolio also are projects that qualify for and may have received commitment for continuation of funding from the federal HLB Farm Bill and Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (MAC) programs that have emerged in 2014. CRDF has assumed responsibility for coordinating the current programs with those emerging from the new funding programs, and for continuing to provide the bridge from research to field delivery of solutions. The committees discussed the range of projects that are ending and recommended to the board that those projects that have potential to support development of solutions be invited to develop and submit continuing proposals. This process will follow established procedures that have been used by CRDF since the 2008 cycle of HLB research funding to review and approve the most valuable proposals.

Presentations to the CPDC meeting included a summary of learning to date on the field trials to evaluate the role of applied plant growth regulators in reducing HLB-induced pre-harvest fruit drop. A number of single- and multiple-season trials have been supported by CRDF, and results that have emerged were shared in an effort to direct future efforts. During this meeting, a presentation also was made by the FDACS CHMA coordinator to outline the MAC-funded project to demonstrate the value of strategic removal of unmanaged citrus groves and their associated Asian citrus psyllid populations and disease inoculum. This pilot study has the goal of removal of up to 2,500 acres of unmanaged citrus under compliance agreement with the landowner. Follow-up evaluation by the CHMA program is planned to assess the change in inoculum and vector pressure in managed groves in the vicinity of those removed.

Discussion of another project supported by the MAC Group was held, and this project focused on the application of all available strategies and tactics in new plantings. The UF, IFAS CREC has been awarded funding to assemble a working group to design a planting to incorporate available tools, and to install this planting as a demonstration.

The CPDC also received the quarterly progress report on all project topics overseen by this committee. The report, when approved by the committee and board, is posted to the CRDF website. Interested parties are encouraged to access this report and other information on the website ([citrusrdf.org](http://citrusrdf.org)).

*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.*

