

Updating the CRDF Business Plan



By Rick Dantzer

In 2009, the business plan for the Citrus Research and Development Foundation (CRDF) was adopted by the board of directors. Since then, the industry has evolved in the face of HLB, and so must CRDF. Lessons have been learned, and our knowledge of greening has greatly expanded. Our challenge is to now convert this knowledge to practical use for growers.

It is against this backdrop that the current board of directors of CRDF is updating the organization's business plan. The draft which the board is considering places greater emphasis on applied research — research aimed at providing immediate, practical help to growers who are trying to squeeze additional yield from greening-infected trees. To be sure, there are still basic research questions to be answered, but helping growers stay in business until long-term solutions can be found must be our highest priority.

The document lays out in clear terms the role of CRDF, as well as how it shall manage the research it funds. Of special note to growers is the document does not prohibit CRDF from going wherever it must to find the answers the industry needs.

Regarding the process for making research decisions, the draft maintains review of proposals by unbiased, third-party advisors for assurance that proposals have scientific merit and a reasonable opportunity for practical benefit to growers. Likewise, it gives CRDF the ability to move quickly so it can take advantage of research ideas or opportunities that manifest themselves at any point during the year.

It clearly states that assisting in field evaluations and data collection and distribution is an allowable CRDF activity. Whether to do this is still being considered by the board, but if there is a role for CRDF to play and the board agrees, the document would allow it.

Finally, it stays true to the initial intent of the founders of keeping CRDF lean administratively. In fact, CRDF has reduced its office personnel by 25 percent in the last two months.

The next board meeting is Dec. 11. At this meeting, the board will again consider the draft business plan. If you have suggestions for what it should or should not include, please let us know. After all, the Florida citrus industry is the ultimate intended beneficiary of CRDF's work, so it is completely appropriate for you to have input, and we welcome it.

You may email your ideas to support@citrusrdf.org or call us at 863-956-8817.

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