

REPORT



Coca-Cola and Cutrale Announce Research Funding

The Coca-Cola Company and Cutrale Citrus Juices of Brazil announced donations of \$3.0 million to the University of Florida Foundation in support of long-term research aimed at preventing diseases that affect citrus crops. Each company will donate \$500,000 per year for 3 years with funds to be managed by the Citrus Research and Development Foundation in support of projects to find long-term solutions for HLB. These are the first significant donations to be received by the Foundation to support HLB research, and they are coming in at an opportune time in that the Research Management Committee will be making funding decisions on a number of research proposals that have been received.

These donations will allow the Research Management Committee to consider funding projects that would have otherwise gone unfunded. The Foundation will solicit other companies in the industry and allied companies that could benefit directly from discovery of solutions for HLB. Florida citrus growers have funded most of the HLB research from taxes collected on each box. In his acknowledgement of the receipt of the donations, Tom Jerkins, President of the CRDF, recognized that HLB is the greatest threat among all the diseases that citrus growers face and that the generous donations by Coca-Cola and Cutrale allows the CRDF to continue to pursue the fight to eliminate HLB.

Potential Supplemental Funding for CRDF *A Progress Report*

A report was presented to the CRDF Board of Directors on December 9, updating efforts to identify alternative funding opportunities. With a robust research agenda, the CRDF is interested in expanding its resource base, and one option is to pursue partnerships with non-profit organizations (NPOs) which support agricultural research and development. Domestic and international non-profits were researched with the goal of matching CRDF program goals with the missions and funding goals of each organization. Using information on funding priorities, sponsorship protocols, and lists of current and previously funded projects, each potential funding organization was rated for its potential as a CRDF funding prospect.

Several funding themes emerged, allowing each NPO to be further characterized according to the elements of their mission. Themes of greatest interest to NPOs were Agriculture, Education, Rural Development, Technology Development, Health and Medicine, and Children and Youth. A strong emphasis on International Agricultural Development was noted. With an estimated 50% of the

world's people living on about \$2 per day, improving staple food crop production in rural areas is viewed as vital to improving nutrition, overcoming poverty, and creating opportunities for education and community support. A number of the organizations reviewed are of interest to CRDF, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Crop Life Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Monsanto Foundation, and the international Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Since most NPOs make funding available exclusively through publishing a specific Request for Application (RFA), the CRDF Board approved extending the contract to respond to publication of NPO calls for proposals while expanding the search for alternative funding sources through June, 2011.

Dates to Remember

January 25, 2011

CRDF Board of Directors meeting

Board Approves Establishing Commercial Products Development Committee

The CRDF Board, at its meeting on December 9, approved a Governance Committee recommendation to establish a Commercial Product Development Committee. This new committee will be defined in the bylaws as a standing committee of the Foundation. The Commercial Product Development Committee's responsibilities pick up where the Research Management Committee's work stops. Once a research solution for a pest or disease is identified, the Commercial Product Development Committee will be responsible for working with the research, manufacturing, and marketing partners to protect the

technology and gain the needed regulatory approvals so that the industry can put the discoveries to work.

The Commercial Product Development Committee will also be responsible for representing the industry in dealing with the regulatory issues on pesticides currently approved for use on citrus. The Board approved negotiation of a contract with FFVA to support the Commercial Product Development Committee's activities. Ben McLean III was nominated by the Governance Committee to be Chairman of the new committee and the nomination was approved by the Board.

Choosing Research Investments

The CRDF is currently evaluating proposals submitted under the 2010 Citrus Advanced Technology Program (CATP10) to add to our current portfolio of research investments. Since there is no crystal ball to see the future of research results, there is no perfect system to identify what should be funded. So, how does CRDF decide?

Similar to the best practices of other public and private funding organizations, the Foundation seeks a mix of projects focused on our priorities that balance the following objectives:

1. Select projects of high quality and high impact to industry.
2. Promote innovation with diverse participation and a free flow of ideas while avoiding "group think," the process whereby experts can sometimes converge to the wrong answer.
3. Raise the profile of the threat of infectious disease to citrus production and the corresponding markets for new products.
4. Maintain an objective process with high integrity and respect for science and science professionals.
5. Budget for "follow-on" investments to build the science base for future product development decisions and bridge the gap from research results to commercial use.

There are already several such follow-on investments planned and in progress. For example, in prior Foundation supported work new molecules active in

controlling both the HLB pathogen (antibiotics) and the psyllid vector (RNAi) have been discovered. Our goal now is to analyze the top 100 antibiotics and RNAi to select the ones with high potency and low cost for further field-testing and ultimately registration to help control HLB.

For CATP10, we are currently soliciting expert outside reviewers who will provide a written critique of 39 full research proposals. We invite a minimum of three reviewers for each proposal to submit their comments to our Scientific Advisory Board (SAB). At the annual meeting of the SAB, the quality and impact of the work is assessed based on the written reviews, the SAB's own discussion and analysis, and the fit with research progress in the existing portfolio. The recommendations of the SAB are further discussed in detail and presented to the Research Management Committee of the Foundation Board, all of whom have access to the same materials. The CRDF Board then makes final funding decisions.

This system can be continually optimized but will always depend on the capable minds and efforts of those we are able to inspire to help us solve problems like HLB. The system is transparent and consistent with our objectives. It facilitates dialogue and promotes a common understanding between those with production and those with technical experience. It is open to the full range of opinion from what may be possible to what is surely practical. Above all it delivers accurate data so that future grower decisions can be confidently based on the reality of controlled field observations.