

CRDF Activities Coming Up

By Harold Browning



As citrus harvest gets underway and the growing season ends, there are a few activities that are high on the list for CRDF. We meet regularly throughout the year, so committee and board meetings continue through the winter. The next board meeting will be held 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, December 9, at the UF, IFAS Citrus Research and Education Center Ben Hill Griffin Citrus Hall, Lake Alfred. This will serve as a combined November/December board meeting, bridging the two holiday periods toward the end of each month. Committee meetings are being scheduled as appropriate to occur prior to the board meeting.

Efforts to move potential HLB solutions to the field continue during this period as well. Grower cooperators are being sought in preparation for installation of three regional HLB-tolerant commercial-scale rootstock trials in spring 2015. Sufficient trees have been propagated on five newly-released University of Florida and United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service (USDA, ARS) rootstocks. These rootstocks have shown promise in withstanding HLB disease progression in the field, at least in early stages of tree life. Plots of each rootstock will be planted in sufficient size to compare initial infection by *Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus* (CLAs). CRDF will provide support in measurement of growth, onset and progression of disease in each of the rootstocks, as compared to plots of two standard rootstocks planted at each site. A field trial of up to 35 acres will be planted in the Indian River, Ridge and Southwest regions of the state.

Many ongoing field trials will be moving through harvest and fruit quality evaluation as commercial harvest unfolds, including experiments evaluating plant growth regulators, HLB treatments, and combinations of cultural practices designed to enhance young tree growth and success. Harvest data will complement other measurements taken during the growing season.

In addition, field trials of various chemical and thermal therapy strategies are being evaluated. Within-season measures have been taken in these trials as well, and fruit evaluation will move forward in the next few months.

Many of these trials will continue into subsequent years, and data derived from the current year will guide directions for next year. CRDF project managers and the field trial administrator are working with researchers and grower cooperators to keep these trials on target and to evaluate results.

New trials are being planned for 2015 to extend the goals of developing and demonstrating HLB solutions. New field trials of bactericidal candidates are being envisioned. In addition, the thermal therapy scale-up efforts being considered for support by the USDA, APHIS Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Group will be followed by CRDF support staff to compare treatments and to help in evaluating the impact of heat therapy on HLB-infected trees.

CRDF continues to work with registrants of Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) control chemicals to extend current labels for these materials and meets frequently with state and regulatory agencies to discuss plans for additional tools for ACP and HLB.

The CRDF website (Citrusrdf.org) provides information activities, meeting dates and other details of CRDF activities.

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.

