

CRDF 2018 Funding Cycle Is in Full Swing

On April 24, the Citrus Research and Development Foundation (CRDF) board of directors approved research priorities for two separate research funding programs. One is for projects that will lead directly to the development of commercial products, tools or recommendations (Commercial Product Development Committee, CPDC-18). The other is for projects with broader, fundamental researchable questions (Research Management Committee, RMC-18). Both of these funding programs have the goal to improve citrus production and mitigate the effects of pests and diseases, mainly HLB.

The priority categories for research were established following extensive consultations with growers, researchers and other citrus industry stakeholders to identify ideas that will provide solutions to HLB and other important citrus diseases and pests, such as citrus black spot (CBS), postbloom fruit drop (PFD) and citrus nematodes. Both CPDC-18 and RMC-18 have research priorities within five categories: bactericide research, Asian citrus psyllid research, plant improvement, horticultural practices and research on other important pests and diseases affecting the citrus industry.

Bactericide project research priorities aim to identify and test bactericides and delivery strategies that improve tree health and fruit quality of young and mature trees. Also included is examination of the dynamics of chemical movement within the vascular system of the tree to improve bactericide efficacy. Psyllid research priorities focus on developing new or improved strategies for psyllid management along with examining the impact of bactericides on the psyllid, effects on transmission of the HLB bacterium and effects of repeated feeding and inoculation on tree health. Plant improvement research priorities focus on testing existing varieties and developing and testing new varieties, including varieties developed using biotechnology. Horticultural practices priorities address the effect of nutritional treatments on mitigating tree decline, including the effect of micronutrients and macronutrients on root health. Plant growth regulators and the effect of other chemicals or horticultural practices on tree health are also included in these research priorities. Other citrus diseases are also covered under the research priorities, including citrus canker, PFD and CBS.

On April 25, a call for preproposals and guidelines for both funding programs went out to researchers. On May 21, preproposals were due for both CPDC-18 and RMC-18. Preproposals are short descriptions of the projects that researchers plan to propose.

In early June, a panel of independent scientific experts, CRDF committees and the CRDF board of directors will review preproposals, and recommendations will be made on which projects should be invited to be developed into full proposals. Full proposals will be due on July 20. They will be reviewed again by a panel of experts, CRDF committees and the board, and recommendations will be given on top projects to be funded.

New research projects will be funded in early October 2018. CRDF is looking forward to seeing new ideas from researchers in this year's funding cycle. To see the complete list of research priorities and for more information, visit the CRDF website (www.citrusrdf.org).

Prepared by the CRDF project management team

