

CRDF Efforts to Address Huanglongbing Over 6 Years

By Harold Browning



The Citrus Research and Development Foundation (CRDF) was formed in April 2009 in response to the Florida citrus industry's need for a single organization to coordinate research in finding solutions to huanglongbing (HLB). The first responsibility for CRDF was to assume oversight of the funded projects begun in 2008 to address this disease. The contracts for more than 100 projects were transferred from the Florida Citrus Production Research Advisory Council and Florida Department of Citrus to this new organization. The founding board and staff established processes and procedures for managing this unprecedented effort. As we recognize the completion of six years of effort, the mission remains the same: to discover and deliver solutions to HLB.

In this 6-year history, the CRDF has engaged in the following efforts to support its mission to provide solutions to HLB.

- Provided a quality funding program to support the best research and delivery efforts
 - 149 completed multi-year research projects
 - 112 active multi-year research projects
 - 52 Commercial Project Delivery projects in place
 - A total of 313 projects each spanning up to three years involving hundreds of scientists
- Projects balanced across the components of the disease system:
 - Asian citrus psyllid vector
 - *Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus* bacterial pathogen
 - Host citrus trees, both rootstocks and scions
 - Interactions between all of the above components
 - The soils, geography and hydrology associated with growing regions
 - Influence of other pests and diseases on health of trees infected with HLB
- Engaged with industry leaders in securing and coordinating funding support from:
 - State legislative appropriation
 - Federal research program support [U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Institute of Food and Agriculture Specialty Crop Research Initiative, Citrus Disease Research & Extension Program]
 - USDA, Animal Plant Health Inspection Service Multi-Agency Coordination Group funding for field-ready testing of solutions to HLB
 - Award of a competitive grant (nuPsyllid) project to USDA
 - Donations from the broader citrus industry community
 - Co-funding projects with the California Citrus Research Board
- Participated in and sponsored efforts to communicate results of HLB research
 - Three International HLB conferences in Orlando to bring HLB researchers together
 - Annual Citrus Expo educational seminars
 - Annual Florida Citrus Industry Conference educational seminars
 - Annual Florida Citrus Growers' Institutes
 - Hosted and sponsored field days and other grower educational events

These are but a few of the activities that have benefited from the growers' vision to establish an organization to lead the fight against HLB. CRDF has been and remains the primary entity for HLB research and delivery efforts across the world, and continues to find solutions for this very difficult challenge.

