

CRDF Considers the Next Round of Projects

By Harold Browning



The Citrus Research and Development Foundation (CRDF) has moved forward with the process to identify and review projects of value that pursue solutions to HLB. During March, committees and the board approved invitations for full proposals from both research and delivery areas of the foundation's portfolio. Among the projects invited, 28 were under the Research Management area. These projects range from one to three years and will be subjected to peer review and industry review for the value they might contribute to getting solutions into the hands of growers. Highlights of the successful research pre-proposals include:

- Eleven projects are directed toward development and testing of rootstocks and scions that show tolerance or resistance to HLB. These projects represent the core breeding programs at the University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Research Service, but also include projects with non-traditional approaches to developing HLB-resistant plants. This topical area is viewed by many as long-term, but due to prior investment and a continuous effort for more than two decades, many candidates exist, and those submitting new proposals will focus most clearly on getting available materials to the field.
- Four projects focus on continued efforts to culture the bacteria causing HLB. This goal has not yet been met, despite considerable effort. Since it is vital to understanding HLB, tracing movement and disease development and screening for potential solutions, continued culturing effort is warranted. Those writing proposals for this area have been encouraged to join forces and share approaches to reach the goal.
- Two projects continue to focus on Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) movement and transmission of *Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus*.
- Citrus nutrition in the face of HLB is the topic of one proposal, building on previous attention to this area.

Twenty project ideas were invited for full proposals in the Commercial Product Delivery area. These projects test solutions that can be implemented in the short term and include:

- Eight projects support development and testing of bactericides to provide therapy to infected trees. These range from assays to field trials to development of required regulatory information.
- Three projects address ACP efforts through continuing support for citrus health management areas and for pesticide effectiveness and resistance monitoring in areas under increased pesticide use. These projects emphasize the importance of continued diligence in managing ACP populations across the state.
- Five project ideas provide support for continued field trials, including the PCR testing necessary to evaluate treatments and other general support functions related to getting solutions to the field.
- Support for one field site for testing citrus breeding candidates also is included in this set of ideas approved for full proposals.

CRDF plans to put successful projects in place by July 1 as the new fiscal year begins. Close communication with federally funded programs is vital to ensuring that high priorities are met and that solutions come forward more quickly.

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.



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