GROWER RESEARCH REPORT

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Florida's Natural Growers Support HLB Efforts

This month, the Florida's Natural Growers Board of Directors voted to donate $250,000 to fight citrus greening. "As a Florida grower cooperative, it is important to combat this disease with every resource available. This support of the Citrus Research and Development Foundation and their efforts to battle citrus greening is vital to the long term future of the Florida Citrus Industry," commented Steve Caruso, Florida's Natural Growers CEO. The Cooperative's Board of Directors showed their commitment to the fight with this significant donation to the Citrus Research and Development Foundation, the leader in citrus research against HLB.

Florida's Natural Growers is comprised of thirteen grower organizations representing almost 1,000 individual growers who own nearly 50,000 acres of citrus in Florida. Florida's Natural Growers operates its processing plant in Lake Wales, Florida, with a juice packaging plant in Umatilla, Florida. The Lake Wales facility employs 850 and can extract over nine million pounds of fruit every twenty-four hours in peak season. Brands produced in Lake Wales include *Florida's Natural*®, *Florida's Natural Growers Pride*®, *Donald Duck*®, *Bluebird*®, and *Florida's Natural Earth's Own*™.

Funding the Industry's Research Program

The Florida citrus industry took a bold step in establishing a commitment to fund research by forming the Florida Citrus Production Research Advisory Committee (FCPRAC) in 1990, and establishing a "box tax" that could be applied to develop and deliver solutions to their production challenges. That funding enabled growers to contribute to their own solutions and to encourage scientists to direct their efforts to these issues. In ensuing years, the FCPRAC funded around $1-2 million in projects per year, ranging across horticulture, engineering, disease and pest management, and more. With the emergence of canker in the 90's, this structure proved valuable in redirecting funds to research specific to canker and its impacts on Florida citrus.

When HLB was discovered in Florida in 2005, industry members already understood the value of their own investment in research, but were not prepared to address the magnitude of the research challenge that HLB posed. Building on the success and model of FCPRAC, the industry again responded with a commitment to organize and fund solutions to HLB and canker through CRDF.

The need for sustainable research to address HLB and future challenges The complexity of HLB and lack of ready-to-use solutions suggests longer-term commitments, including evaluation of the magnitude and timing for funding to drive the research and ultimate product development. In this new environment, sustained funds are required to bridge multi-year projects and to provide continuity of effort as short-term solutions are delivered and longer-term solutions are evaluated. CRDF emerged as the vehicle to manage this broader charge and is embracing the funding issues with an open attitude. Current funds available to fuel the research efforts are largely voluntary grower taxes. Commitment of the production research box tax is at the foundation of this funding picture, and that tax has been increased to 3 cents per box for the coming fruit harvest season. Due to the importance of research in responding to HLB and other diseases, marketing box tax proceeds also have been directed to support research. While this expanded budget of annually derived funds is meeting the research needs at present, it does not represent a sustainable approach to funding the research. Efforts to broaden the sources of funding to support current and future projects managed by CRDF will seek partnership funds from other industry sectors. Donations from citrus companies have been vital in expanding the resource base, and to date, CRDF has received pledges of support that amount to more than $3.75 million over a three-year period. In addition to allied partner contributions, there are efforts underway to attract funding from federal and state government programs. While tighter budgets make commitments of these special funds difficult to achieve, incremental progress has been made, and we are encouraged also by opportunities to apply for competitive programmatic research funds managed by U.S. and Florida governments.

Approval of FY 2011 CRDF Budget At the July Board Meeting, CRDF approved a FY 2011-12 budget, projecting approximately $16 million for existing research contracts as well as an estimated $1.6 million in 2011-12 for the new cycle of projects to be requested beginning this fall. Combined with a budget targeted for commercialization/prod-

Upcoming Meetings

August 2011

	24	Wed	Research Management Committee	CREC
	30	Tue	Board of Directors	CREC

uct development and operating expenses, the total budget approved was $18.9 million. Revenue sources to meet projected expenses are comprised primarily of the production research box tax and $10 million grower box tax from the Florida Department of Citrus for this year. Contributions from allied partners also have been integrated in the 2011-12 budget.

It is a challenge to manage an expanded, multi-year research portfolio approaching $19 million with annual budgeting cycles and relying principally on production-based grower taxes. Such an approach is vulnerable to disruption from weather, markets, and other variables. Thus, it is imperative that we seek complementary, longer-term revenue streams to stabilize the research funding picture. A sustainable, broad-based foundation of funding is the ultimate goal.

We Need Your Feedback...

An important element of CRDF's mission is to deliver information to Florida citrus growers and interested parties relating to progress in the fight to find solutions to HLB and canker. We use a variety of methods to meet this goal, including newsletters, presentations, and a website, in addition to public committee and board meetings. We solicit your assistance in getting feedback on how well we are meeting our goals. We would like to hear from you. Are we getting timely information to you as a grower regarding HLB and canker research and CRDF's role on behalf of the industry? What topics are you most interested in reading or hearing about? Do you have suggestions on how we can do a better job of keeping you informed? The results of your efforts will help us plan the content for our communications, as well as to make improvements in the ways that we reach growers. Please contact us at hwbr@citrusrdf.org.

Next Call for Proposals

The Citrus Research and Development Foundation will announce its annual call for research proposals by September 2, 2011. Researchers will have a month to submit a simple, single-page preproposal description of the proposed work. A list of those invited to submit full proposals for funding consideration will be posted at the Foundation web page in late October with a full proposal deadline anticipated for late November. Proposals will be evaluated by outside reviewers, the Foundation Scientific Advisory Board and Research Management Committee before the Board of Directors approves final funding recommendations in February 2012. All program details and instructions will be available at www.citrusrdf.org.

Annual and Final Reports Following are the annual and final reports on CRDF-funded research projects which have been posted online since our last issue. The full report can be accessed from the 'link' button. These and interim progress reports on all projects as well as projects funded by California Research Board and Texas Citrus Producers Board can be found at www.citrusrdf.org -> For Growers -> Search Reports.

LINK	TITLE	RESEARCHER	HEADLINE
	Development of Promising New Rootstocks and Scions for Florida Citrus	Bowman	New Supersour Rootstocks Moving Into Field Trials
	Alternative Hosts for HLB to Assist in Disease Management	Brlansky	Hosts of the Psyllid and Hosts of Liberibacter
	Evaluation of foliar Zinc and Manganese application for control of Huanglongbing or associated symptom development	Graham	Evaluation of foliar zinc/manganese for management of HLB
	Speedy evaluation of citrus germplasm for psyllid resistance	Hall	Germplasm Varies in Susceptibility to ACP Infestations
	Production of Transgenic Commercial Cultivars Resistant to HLB and Canker	Stover	Diverse transgenic strategies mobilized for HLB resistance