



CITRUS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION, INC.

Research Management Committee Meeting

Minutes

Monday, July 18, 2022 (as amended 9/14/2022)

A meeting of the Research Management Committee of the Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc. was held on Monday, July 18, 2022, at 1:00 p.m., at the UF-IFAS Citrus Research and Education Center, Ben Hill Griffin Hall, Room 103, 700 Experiment Station Road, Lake Alfred, FL 33850. The meeting was properly noticed and recorded. The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Chairman John Updike. Roll was called and a quorum was present. Committee members participating were Bobby Barben, Holly Chamberlain, Steve Farr, Ned Hancock, Aaron Himrod, David Howard, Ed Leotti, Morgan McKenna, Tom Obreza, Pat Ouimet, Daniel Scott, Shannon Shepp, Wayne Simmons, Buddy Strickland and John Updike.

Also participating were Mike Aerts, Michael Burton, James Chater, James Cooper, HLC, Rick Dantzler, Bill Dawson, Manjul Dutt, Stephen Futch, Jim Graham, George Hamner, Audrey Nowicki, Ajia Paolillo, Brandon Page, Ralph Scorza, Shannon Shepp, Jim Syvertsen, Barbara Thompson and Rosa Walsh.

Mr. Updike noted that the minutes of the May 11, 2022, Research Management Committee meeting were included in the meeting materials and asked there were any edits to the minutes. Ms. Shepp made a motion to approve the May 11, 2022, RMC meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Strickland and passed unanimously.

Mr. Dantzler asked Dr. Michael Burton, recently appointed as Center Director at SWFREC, to introduce himself.

Mr. Dantzler, in response to Ms. Shepp's suggestion at the last meeting to inform the committee of the funds available for new research, stated that the FY 2022-23 budget allocated \$1.5M spending in new projects this year.

Mr. Updike introduced the first directed research project on the agenda, Dr. Chater's proposal for "Citrus germplasm and escape tree evaluation utilizing high-throughput screening, bioinformatics, and artificial intelligence." Discussion followed on the direction from the Board in requesting the proposals from both Dr. Chater, UF, and Dr. Mattia, USDA-ARS, which resulted from the Plant Improvement Review Panel's recommendations. Dr. Scorza, a member of that panel, shared some of the concerns he had with the proposals based on recommendations in the panel's report.

Mr. Dantzler noted that Dr. Mattia also provided a proposal "Establishment and early-stage growth measurements for elite advanced stage cultivars and escape trees from the USDA-ARS Citrus Breeding Program" from USDA as requested by the Committee and Board in February.

There was discussion whether a subcommittee should be formed to address the steps to be taken, or if an RFP should be undertaken to initiate the steps that need to be taken on the recommendations.

Mr. Howard made a motion to write an RFP that would result in an inventory of all trees planted in trials by breeders funded by CRDF. The work would be done by aerial survey, providing data that would help identify trees having the potential for the most benefit to growers. Ms. Shepp seconded the motion to promote further discussion.

Strategic next steps should be included in the RFP, specifying when the report is due. The RFP should include aerial flights of all trials, compiling data as it is received, identifying/evaluating trees of interest for determining which rootstocks and scions to pursue for Stage 2 and 3 trials to follow. The age of trees should be recorded, flagging identified trees to obtain yield later.

In the meantime, prior to announcement of the RFP, staff will contact UF and USDA requesting all trial locations which should be included in the aerals. Committee members should be able to access the data to evaluate as the process evolves. The motion passed unanimously.

The discussion moved to escape trees. Ms. Shepp noted that the Department of Citrus (DOC) is currently initiating plans to address escape trees and asked Dr. Chater if he would collaborate with the DOC in this endeavor. Ms. Shepp noted that the Florida Citrus Commission had recently expressed concern that there was no escape tree program currently and that it should be under DOC. Ms. Shepp moved to request the committee turn the escape tree program over to DOC, and that DOC be the contact point for reporting escapes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Himrod. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Updike initiated discussion of Dr. Hopkins' proposal "Development of a biological control of citrus greening using *Xylella fastidiosa* strain EB92-1 that allows the sustainable production of citrus under high HLB pressure." Dr. Graham summarized the findings from research to date. The previous MAC funding for this project has ended. Mr. Simmons made a motion to not fund Dr. Hopkins' project. The motion was seconded by Mr. Himrod and passed unanimously.

Mr. Updike continued with discussion of the balance of the research project topics to be considered for directed research or inclusion in an RFP:

E1-Diaprepes - Mr. Dantzler noted he has received calls from growers asking for research on Diaprepes, so he asked Dr. Diepenbrock to provide a short, written overview of the problem, which was included in the board materials. It emphasized studying "edge effect," which would possibly prevent growers from having to treat an entire grove. Dr. Syvertsen noted that a lot of research was done on Diaprepes before HLB hit, and that there are new formulations of pesticides that are worth studying, as well as treatments on larva and beneficial use of nematodes. Mr. Barben moved to request a proposal from Dr. Diepenbrock to evaluate the different treatments for effectiveness of each, as well as innovative methods to control Diaprepes, treatment of weevils, and BMPs. The motion was seconded by Mr. Himrod and passed with one no vote from Mr. Simmons.

E2-Snails - Mr. Howard suggested that growers with this problem could reach out to UF-IFAS Extension Agents to help with a solution.

E3-Blight - Dr. Dawson discussed the Para retroviruses and integration in the host DNA. There was no motion from the committee to study this further.

E4-Planting 2- to 3-year-old trees - Mr. Dantzler noted that Dr. Wang had suggested that trees not leave the nursery so fast, that in China, trees remain in the nursery for up to 3 years. Committee members shared their experiences with waiting to plant at the 2- to 3-year stage, that while they thrived initially, after a couple of years there was not a difference in the health of the trees. One committee member noted that the trees later caught up and passed trees planted earlier. Nevertheless, the topic did not move forward due to lack of a motion.

E5-Interstocking - Dr. Dutt reported on recent research and outcomes, most of which is with apples. He discussed different HLB-resistant pre-breeding cultivars, and germplasms that have been produced for future use. Mr. Howard noted that he would like a proposal for proof of concept if it could be done at minimal cost. Mr. Leotti suggested using grapefruit or Hamlin. Mr. Howard moved to request a proposal from Dr. Dutt that incorporates interstocking and inarching. The motion was seconded by Ms. Shepp and passed with one no vote from Mr. Simmons.

E6-Large-Scale Field Trials - Mr. Updike noted the draft RFP in the materials was to comply with proviso that required CRDF to spend \$5 million on large-scale field trials. Ms. Shepp moved to recommend that the Board proceed with the RFP for Large-Scale Field Trials as drafted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Himrod and passed unanimously.

Mr. Page presented his work on ways to use the reset category of CRAFT to help inject OTC in older trees. His purpose was to receive RMC's approval before presenting the proposal to CRAFT. Mr. Himrod moved to express the committee's support for the idea during CRAFT 4 and convey said support to CRAFT board. The motion was seconded by Mr. Strickland and passed unanimously.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Barbara Thompson