



CITRUS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION, INC.
Joint Research Management – Plant Improvement
Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 14, 2023

A Joint Meeting of the Research Management Committee and Plant Improvement Committee of the Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc. was held on Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at UF-IFAS-CREC Ben Hill Griffin, Jr. Citrus Hall, 700 Experiment Station Road, Lake Alfred, FL 33850. The meeting was properly noticed and recorded. The meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m. by Chairman John Updike. Roll was called and a quorum was present. Roll was also called for the Plant Improvement Committee.

RMC members participating were Bobby Barben, Steve Farr, Ned Hancock, Aaron Himrod, David Howard, Ed Leotti, Tom Obreza, Morgan Porter, Brian Scully, Shannon Shepp, Wayne Simmons, Buddy Strickland, and John Updike. Participating Plant Improvement Committee members that were not on the Research Management Committee were Steven Callaham, Peter Chaires, Dave Crumbly, Chris Gunter, Gio Ijpkemeule, Nate Jameson, Weston Johnson, Scott Lambeth, Brandon Page, Brian Randolph, Joby Sherrod, Rosa Walsh, and Tamara Wood. Also participating were Scott Adkins, Ute Albrecht, Robin Bryant, John Chater, Rick Dantzler, Bill Dawson, Lauren Diepenbrock, Yongping Duan, Manjul Dutt, Justin Ezell, Stephen Futch, Fred Gmitter, Jim Graham, Jude Grosser, George Hamner, Davie Kadyampakeni, Nick Kretchman, Jeanna Mastrodicasa, Charlie Messina, Zhonglin Mou, Audrey Nowicki, Adam Patton, Orlene Guerra-Peraza, Swadesh Santra, Ralph Scorza, Sarah Spinosa, Lukasz Stelinski, Matt Story, Jim Syvertsen, Barbara Thompson, Janice Zale, and Boce Zhang.

Mr. Dantzler noted that Scott Lambeth was joining the meeting via Zoom and asked him to introduce himself to the group. He is a third-generation citrus grower who graduated from Florida Southern College, currently working with Blue Goose Growers.

Mr. Updike noted the minutes of the September 20, 2023, Research Management Committee meeting were included with the meeting materials. Mr. Hancock made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Mr. Leotti seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Dantzler noted that, while the bylaw change that institutionalizes the Plant Improvement Committee has not yet been approved by the University, their expertise will help guide today's discussions and the members are encouraged to participate. He also went over again the vision for how the two committees would work together. The Plant Improvement Committee will work with plant breeders in placing germplasm in the plant breeding pipeline and making recommendations for Stage II and III trials. Funding decisions and hardcore research that CRDF funds would remain with RMC. Over time, there might be policy areas that would be considered for transfer from RMC to PIC. If so, and if the changes were inconsistent with bylaw language, this would need to be worked out with the University.

The first proposal for consideration was W. Johnson from Coca-Cola – 23-031 'Accelerate Establishment of Stage 2 Citrus Trials to Combat Citrus Greening Disease.' Mr. Johnson gave a short presentation. The Scientific Advisory Board gave high ratings to this proposal. Dr. Futch expressed concern that if the trees were budded in the fall of 2024, they might not be ready for planting in the fall of 2025. Dr. Scully made a

motion to recommend that the Board fund this proposal. Mr. Leotti seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Discussion of final reports from Chater & Mattia of UF and USDA Inventorying Projects: Dr. Mattia was unable to attend. Dr. Chater presented his report on the inventory for UF. Mr. Leotti noted that since there was a major hurricane just prior to the December 2022 drone flyover, we might want to re-fly some areas to verify what remains after the hurricane. Dr. Scully made a motion to recommend that the Board fund this proposal. It was decided that Drs. Chater and Mattia would be asked to re-fly areas affected by the hurricane.

What to do with the 127 acres was discussed. Dr. Scully asked if all the PIs could submit their Research Objectives plus Budget and have it worked out with a full proposal in time for the January Board meeting. Mr. Himrod made a motion to recommend that the Board invite a full proposal. Mr. Sherrod seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

C. Messina Preproposal – ‘Taking Aim at Citrus Greening: Activating the IFAS Crop Transformation Center (ICTC) to implement an idea to product framework.’ Dr. Messina made a presentation and fielded questions. Ms. Shepp made a motion to recommend that the Board invite a full proposal based on the discussion that we must tie our money to research deliverables. Mr. Hancock seconded the motion, and it passed with two no votes.

Y. Duan – 23-028 ‘Exploring the HLB control potential of a new citrus-infecting virus, NMV-M/CFL, and its expression system.’ Dr. Duan is asking for one year of funding to hold him over until he can apply for Federal Funding through a NIFA grant. Dr. Duan was attending via Zoom and answered questions that came up during the discussion. Dr. Adkins asked if Mr. Dantzler could meet with Dr. Duan when he was in Ft. Pierce on Thursday for further discussion. Mr. Himrod made a motion to recommend that the Board move forward with funding one year without Objective 4 which would reduce the budget. Mr. Hancock seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

There was a 10-minute break for everyone to fix their plate for lunch and the meeting continued.

Consideration and recommendation on submissions to RFP 1: Phos acid and Copper – Study on injection of labeled plant protection materials. Brandon gave a short report, noting additional expenses to CRDF would be \$3,500 from the CREC Pilot Plant. Mr. Hancock made a motion to recommend that the Board accept the bid from Mr. Yonce. Mr. Leotti seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Consideration and recommendation on submissions to RFP 2: Testing the injection of OTC in a pH neutral solution. Three proposals were received. One was from Dr. Albrecht; who proposed a two-year project with a budget that includes all the materials, pilot plant, USDA lab and OTC leaf detection costs; and two from crop consultants. CRDF would incur the additional costs for the materials and testing on those two. After a short discussion, Dr. Scully made a motion to recommend that the Board approve Dr. Albrecht’s proposal for two years. Ms. Shepp seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Y. Wang – 23-027 ‘A High-Throughput Screen for natural Antibacterial Agents Against CLAs.’ Dr. Futch gave a summary of the project and personnel. He noted that the SAB had suggested the addition of a plant pathologist to the team. Mr. Updike noted these compounds should not have already been tested on the Bayer NIFA project and are not duplicative of those Dr. Scully is testing. Dr. Scully offered to review the list that Dr. Wang will be testing and stated that he could provide Dr. Wang with about two dozen

compounds to start the project. Mr. Himrod made a motion to recommend that the Board fund the proposal pending the additional PI. Ms. Shepp seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Z. Mou – 23-030 ‘Evaluate new transgenic rootstocks for HLB tolerance.’ Mr. Dantzler noted that SAB reviewers rated this with a 4 and 5. While Carrizo gives quick results, a question was why the PI doesn’t use a rootstock that is used widely in the industry. Dr. Mou responded with further explanation. Mr. Hancock made a motion to recommend that the Board fund the proposal. Mr. Leotti seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

E. Triplett – ‘Proof of concept for phage therapy in the reduction of virus titer and HLB symptoms in citrus.’ Dr. Syvertsen gave a summary of the project. It was suggested to fund Objective 1 for one year to provide proof of concept. Objectives 2 and 3 would follow in the second year if approved. Dr. Scully made a motion to recommend that the Board invite a full proposal for one year. Mr. Himrod seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

D. Kadyampakeni – ‘Comparing two new nutrition programs utilizing CRF to provide year-round elevated levels of secondary and micronutrients with a selected standard commercial nutrition program.’ Mr. Leotti asked if the site would contain 12 acres of treatments. It was questioned how this project differs from Dr. Vashisth’s a few years back. Mr. Leotti suggested root mass, water quality, and economics be included in the project. Mr. Leotti made a motion to recommend inviting a full proposal with the additions discussed and justification for the budget. Mr. Hancock seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Dr. Lukasz Stelinski gave a presentation on L. Diepenbrock’s project 22-013, ‘Getting to the root of the problem: Managing Diaprepes root weevil on trees with HLB.’ Dr. Scully made a motion to recommend that the Board approve year two funding. Mr. Himrod seconded the motion, and it passed with one no vote.

Dr. Diepenbrock presented her progress on 22-014 ‘Developing management for *Bulimulus bonariensis* snails in Florida citrus.’ Dr. Diepenbrock explained the project’s underspending, which she said was due to personnel issues; she now has personnel in place and the project is moving forward as planned. Dr. Scully made a motion for a 6-month no-cost extension before considering second year funding. Mr. Leotti seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Dr. Diepenbrock requested continuation funding of project 20-002C, ‘Developing near and long-term management strategies for Lebbeck mealybug (*Nipaecoccus viridis*) in Florida citrus,’ for year four to sustain the project until federal funding can be secured. Ms. Shepp made a motion to recommend that the Board fund a reduced budget of approximately \$192,000 for year four. Mr. Himrod seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

A suggested topic for the next RFP was ‘Can we turn a mandarin into a juice orange?’.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Barbara Thompson.