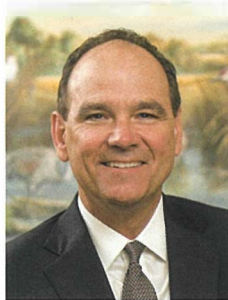


A Spring of Special Importance

By Rick Dantzler, CRDF chief operating officer



Over the course of my career, I've had four separate and distinct occupations. What they have been is unimportant, but this diversity has put me with young people who would occasionally ask for advice on what field of work to go into.

To provide guidance, I sometimes suggested they think of a time when they really liked *where* they were, not *what* they were doing. For example, someone might remember the excitement of the first time on a college campus, which could suggest a job with a university. Another person might think of the thrill felt when visiting a courtroom as part of a class trip, raising the possibility of a career as a lawyer. You get the point.

I suspect that for many of you, your happy place that led to your career choice was being in a citrus grove, especially in the spring. I know that was true for me when I would ride with my father as he counted trees and valued groves. We owned a few, too, so I did a variety of work in the groves. While I can't say all of that was great, I sure liked where I was.

There are few places on earth as nice as a citrus grove in March, but this spring holds special importance. The Valencia crop will start coming in, so growers will be anxiously watching to see how the first round of oxytetracycline (OTC) injection has affected fruit yield and quality. There is a lot riding on this therapy.

Many early and mid-season varieties have already received a second injection. The labels of the injectable products which most growers have used require that OTC not be applied for one out of three years. This third "off" year will be upon us before we know it. Consequently, the Citrus Research and Development Foundation (CRDF) is funding the testing of many compounds and molecules that might be used during the off year.

Because time is of the essence, we are focused on products that are available or nearly so. For example, a peptide product developed by Elemental Enzymes marketed under the name Aura Citrus recently received a Section 3 regulatory approval for foliar application. Since there may be merit in giving the tree a break from receiving back-to-back-to-back injections, spraying a product is particularly interesting. We are testing other products, but one thing we are curious about with Aura Citrus is if it helps minimize reinfection since it works by switching on the tree's natural defenses. If OTC can knock back CLAs titer levels, and plant defense modulators can help reduce reinfection, that might make OTC even more effective when injections resume.

A primary focus for CRDF is killing the pathogen. OTC kills it, so maximizing its efficacy is a high priority for us.



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