



CITRUS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION, INC.
Research Management Committee Meeting
Minutes
Tuesday, April 16, 2024

A meeting of the Research Management Committee of the Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc. was held on Tuesday, April 16, 2024, at the Highlands County UF-IFAS Extension Office, Bert J. Harris Agriculture Civic Center Conference Center Room 2, 4509 George Blvd, Sebring, FL 33875. The meeting was properly noticed and recorded. The meeting was called to order at 10:10 AM by Chair Aaron Himrod. Roll was called and a quorum was present. Committee members participating were Scott Adkins, Larry Black, Steve Farr, Ned Hancock, Aaron Himrod, Deeley Hunt, Ed Leotti, Matt Machata, Tom Obreza, Morgan Porter, Brian Scully, Shannon Shepp, and Wayne Simmons. Also participating were Ute Albrecht, Kim Bowman, Rick Dantzler, Bill Dawson, Jim Graham, Matt Mattia, Riley McKenna, Audrey Nowicki, Brandon Page, Kirsten Pelz-Stelinski, Mark Ritenour, Lukasz Stelinski, Taylor Smith, Jim Syvertsen, Barbara Thompson, John Updike, Rosa Walsh, and Flavia Zambon.

Mr. Himrod noted the minutes of the March 14, 2024, Research Management Committee meeting were included with the meeting materials. Mr. Hancock made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Farr and passed unanimously.

Mr. Dantzler noted that we had researchers at the meeting to present and would like to accommodate their schedules by allowing them to go first in the agenda. He introduced Dr. Kirsten Pelz-Stelinski and Dr. Lukasz Stelinski to present the status of their project for second-year funding.

23-001 – K. Pelz-Stelinski – ‘Effects of trunk-injected oxytetracycline on tree infection and health, psyllid pathogenicity, and vector population’

Dr. Pelz-Stelinski explained in her presentation that they had three different experiments to look at the effects of two formulations of OTC. They looked at Remedium and Rectify and compared that to Fireline as an injection showing acquisition, inoculation, and translocation. They are seeking funding of \$125,611 for the second year. Mr. Simmons made a motion to recommend funding for the second year. The motion was seconded by Mr. Farr. The question was raised as to whether they could add strep to their testing. If so, additional funds would be needed to cover the addition of the new product and protocol that is required. The motion passed unanimously.

23-003 – M. Ritenour – ‘Evaluation of potential HLB tolerant grapefruit rootstock/scion combinations in Florida’

Mr. Dantzler introduced Dr. Flavia Zambon who presented on her project with Dr. Ritenour. He noted that this project was important for East Coast growers, and a lot has been invested in that project up until last year. They were out of money, so CRDF agreed to step in so they could collect their data.

Dr. Flavia Zambon noted that this project is in its fifth year. She planted some of these trees as a postdoc in the lab. Dr. Flavia Zambon noted that they used seven scions and six rootstocks. Southern Gardens propagated and put them into the field. There were 12,000 trees, so they used a drone for higher capacity. In Spring 2024, they hope to hire additional personnel to better compile data and prepare for the 2024-25 harvest taking place from October to February. They are seeking funding of \$96,721 for the second year. Dr. Scully made a motion to recommend second-year funding. Ms. Porter made a substitute motion to postpone a decision until they could get feedback from East Coast growers. Dr. Scully withdrew his motion and Ms. Porter’s motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Dantzler turned the Chair over to Morgan Porter who introduced Dr. Ute Albrecht to present Project 23-002 for second-year funding.

23-002 – U. Albrecht – ‘Directed Research: Evaluating different rates of oxytetracycline administered by trunk injection in mature sweet orange trees’

Dr. Albrecht noted that Trial 1 was Hamlin on Kuharske rootstock that was planted in 2005. The first objective was to test OTC at the various rates of 50%, 75%, 100%, and 150% of the label rate and compare that to the untreated control. The second objective was to test different applications using OTC for two consecutive years, two alternating years, and three years straight. Trial 2 was Valencia on Swingle rootstock. The first two objectives were the same, but they added objective three to test whether the early May/June injection or the later September injection was better. Fruit size was smaller if injected in September and larger if injected in June. They are seeking \$86,501 for the second year of the project. Mr. Hancock made a motion to recommend second-year funding. Ms. Porter seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Himrod switched over from Zoom to in-person and chaired the rest of the meeting.

Revised Proposal #23-044 – Z. Pang, Silvec Biologics, ‘A combined approach to reduce CLas and reverse symptoms in orchard trees’

Mr. Dantzler noted that Silvec has acquired the vectoring technology from Southern Gardens, and IR-4 is assisting in trying to get that across the finish line in regard to regulation. When this came to RMC before, it was suggested that they delete Objective 2 using citrus yellow-vein virus since that is not found in Florida and only fund Objective 1 on *L. crescens* and *Pseudomonas*. This was later changed to only on CLAs. They reduced the budget from \$400,000 to \$233,239 for one year.

They have also met with Dr. Choa El-Mohtar and will be doing trials in Florida. Dr. Scully made a motion to recommend funding. Mr. Hancock made a motion to recommend funding with a caveat for repayment upon commercialization. The motion was seconded by Ms. Porter and passed with one opposed.

21-008 – K. Bowman – ‘Development of Next-Generation SuperSour rootstocks with tolerance to HLB’

Next on the agenda was a presentation by Dr. Kim Bowman who is working with Dr. Ute Albrecht on Project 21-008. Objective 1 was to collect field performance data from replicated rootstock field trials and release new rootstock cultivars as justified by superior performance in multi-year field trials and outstanding traits. Objective 2 was to create hybrid rootstocks that combine germplasm from parental material with good rootstock traits and HLB tolerance, propagate the most promising of these hybrids, and establish new replicated rootstock field trials. He showed integration of field performance data from five sweet orange rootstock trials in Florida comparing 203 new hybrid rootstocks with the four standard rootstocks: Cleopatra, Sour orange, Swingle, and Ridge orange. SuperSour hybrid rootstocks 3, 4, and 5 are superior to these. They are seeking funding of \$279,287 for the next year. Mr. Black made a motion to recommend third-year funding. It was seconded by Mr. Leotti and passed unanimously.

Responses to RFP for third-year treatments protocol field trial

Mr. George Sutherland’s bid was \$101,500 and Mr. Henry Yonce’s bid was \$35,000. Mr. Page provided clarification on the trials. Two molecules, EDTA and Aliette, which came out of the Grove First program of Drs. Heck and Scully, would be used. He noted that \$4,810 would be added to both bids to cover Pilot Plant Fruit Quality Analysis and cost of injection product. Mr. Farr made a motion to accept Mr. Yonce’s bid of \$35,000. Mr. Hancock seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

In other business, Mr. Dantzler noted that Dr. Yonce is conducting a field trial injecting OTC on one side of the tree compared to both sides of the tree to see if two injections are better than one. They are seeing good results and would like to extend this for a second year. The original bid was \$13,000. A second year would be \$16,000. Mr. Farr made a motion to recommend funding a second year. Mr. Leotti seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Dantzler’s second item was guidance on the Bayer project. Bayer has submitted two proposals. One for \$12,000 that would allow them to get fruit quality data from the two trials that are underway, and one for \$124,000 to extend the trial for an additional year. They are testing OTC, OTC with Faulk 7 (which is the product they intend to commercialize), OTC followed by Isotianil, OTC followed by a pesticide which they are getting close to getting registered, and any other item you might want them to test. All trees will start the therapy in the same condition.

Dr. Graham explained about hydrochloride toxicity levels and that we are trying to get away from using chloride. Mr. Black gave his support toward both avenues and wondered if items from

Dr. Heck's study could be utilized in Bayer's study. Dr. Scully noted that anything coming out of the Grove First program to be used by Bayer would need Dr. Heck's approval.

The third item is that Drs. Heck and Scully have reached their bandwidth for what they can do with growers in their area, and they wondered if it might be possible to expand and include growers from all over the State and would look to expanding into other regions.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:23 PM.

Minutes submitted by Barbara Thompson.