



Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting January 28, 2025

A meeting of the Board of Directors, Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc. was held on Tuesday, January 28, 2025, at UF-IFAS-CREC, 700 Experiment Station Rd, Lake Alfred, FL 33850. The meeting was properly noticed and recorded. President Morgan Porter called the meeting to order at 10:07 AM.

Roll was called and a quorum was present. Board members present were George Hamner, Deeley Hunt, Matt Machata, Morgan Porter, Joby Sherrod, and Matt Story.

President Morgan Porter noted the minutes from the December 3, 2024 Board meeting were available in their packet for review and approval. Mr. Hunt made a motion to accept the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Machata and passed unanimously.

Public Comments: None.

Executive Committee: Did not meet.

Finance and Audit Committee: Audrey Nowicki gave the financial summary for December 31, 2024, covering variances, net assets, revenues, research expenses, cash balances, uncommitted funds, and current fiscal year projections, leaving a balance of \$457,040 that could be funded on new projects through June 30, 2025. Mr. Machata brought forth the motion to accept the financial summary as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hunt and passed unanimously.

Matt Joyner reported on funding available from other sources that could be accessed quickly. Mr. Dantzler noted that projects could also be terminated, if needed, in order to save the industry. Before 2018, CRDF always kept a large reserve for this, but the Legislature began directing us to spend down our reserves.

Dr. Graham put together a call with Fundecitrus last week and we learned that in March an international biotechnology, multimillion dollar research effort is going to begin. It was brought to Dr. Angle's attention that UF-IFAS was not involved, and he said he would help out however he could.

Nate Jameson's idea of seeking legislative appropriation for at least one 40-acre large-scale field trial site where UFarm charges would not have to be levied was discussed. He suggested that CRDF lease a piece of land and have that available for the researchers for these large scale-trials for all the germplasm that they have created.

Governance Committee: Did not meet. Mr. Dantzler noted a few Governance issues that have arisen. Aaron Himrod left RMC. Charlie McKee sat in on RMC on Wednesday as a possible

replacement. Scott Lambeth is unable to serve, so we are looking for his replacement with another East Coast grower. FDACS replacement for Dr. Taylor is not official. Matt Machata was Vice-Chair on RMC. With Mr. Himrod's resignation, Mr. Machata was elevated to Chair. This position change would need to be approved by the Board. Mr. Hunt so moved. With a second from Mr. Hamner, it passed unanimously.

Plant Improvement Committee: Chair Joby Sherrod noted that they met on December 3, 2024 and had a very robust conversation on the status and future of citrus breeding, genetic and otherwise, and conventional breeding potentials, as well as other therapies such as OTC and strep. Chairman Sherrod next shared that the committee considered Dr. Chaparro's scion trial on three rootstocks. There was support for the project, but we thought he needed more data. PIC agreed with RMC on the purchase of a PCR but that the hood replacement and any other lab equipment should be funded through UF. Next he explained that PIC also supported the Johnson – Coca-Cola project and that Nate Jameson brought forth the idea of leasing a site for new material with an existing caretaking operation so that all methods would be the same throughout the trials.

Research Management Committee: Mr. Machata noted that RMC had met on January 22, 2025. Project funding consideration was given to the following proposals:

Stelinski/Dutt - Development of Bt-transformed citrus varieties for simultaneous control of psyllids and root weevils. It was noted that SAB supported this project, as well as FCM when presented there. A motion to approve was made by Mr. Machata. It was seconded by Mr. Hunt and passed unanimously.

Batuman – Determining the effect of oxytetracycline and streptomycin injections on phytotoxicity and CLAs reduction in mature citrus trees. RMC recommended approval with results coming back to the committee in a year to help determine whether to proceed with seeking approval of a combined strep-OTC product. The committee also recommended increasing the dosages to be tested, and adding residue testing, fruit and flowers and other EPA requirements necessary for regulatory approval. With those additions, Mr. Machata made a motion to approve. It was seconded by Mr. Hunt and passed unanimously.

Turgeon, Cornell – 22-020 Yr. 3 continuation: Protecting citrus trees from citrus greening with anchored, single-chain antibodies. RMC recommended approval. Mr. Dantzler noted that from a staff perspective this is extremely well managed. Dr. Turgeon has transformed 16 plants and they have been exposed to psyllids and are now all hot. The cost going forward is to evaluate what has already been created, but they do have a few new transformations they would like to create as well. That is the reason for the additional funding. A motion to approve was made by Mr. Machata. It was seconded by Mr. Hunt and passed unanimously.

Chaparro – Generation and evaluation of citrus hybrids for processing. RMC recommended approval. The Plant Improvement Committee reviewed the project and agreed on the purchase of the PCR. There was discussion on deleting Objective 3, but Dr. Chaparro stated that Objective 3 was an integral part of this project. RMC recommended approval of funding of the project as presented, including Objective 3. Mr. Machata made a motion to approve. It was seconded by Mr. Hunt and passed unanimously.

Johnson – The Coca Cola Company – Trial of 30: The Next Stage 2 Citrus Trials to Combat Citrus Greening Disease. PIC supported this project. FCM liked that it was not all hybrids but included sweet orange as well. Mr. Hunt made a motion to approve. It was seconded by Mr. Machata and passed unanimously.

Diepenbrock #22-013 – Request for year 3 funding: Getting to the root of the problem: Managing Diaprepes root weevil on trees with HLB. Upon recommendation, Dr. Diepenbrock agreed to add the component of night fogging to this project. The funding request was \$115,000 for the third year. She still has \$68,000 remaining, so the Continuation funding would only be \$47,000. A motion to approve was made by Mr. Machata. It was seconded by Mr. Hunt and passed unanimously.

Diepenbrock #20-002C – Request for year 5 funding: Developing near and long-term management strategies for Lebbeck mealybug (*Nipaecoccus viridis*) in Florida citrus. Dr. Diepenbrock was given a no-cost extension and asked to tailor her mealybug project for CUPS and come back with that proposal.

Mr. Dantzler shared that Tanishka B. Aglave – a high school sophomore and \$10,000 scholarship winner on her report on curry leaf extract – presented at the RMC and they were thoroughly impressed with her and her project. CRDF could help her with funding to get the curry extract from India.

Next was the discussion of the Silvec Biologics project that was funded for exclusive licensing of the Southern Gardens, CTV vectoring technology, as well as the spinach defense gene. Mr. Dantzler explained the situation that has arisen over Silvec's discovery of the language in Chapter 601 that potentially affects the company's ability to market its products, as well as the freezing of HLB-MAC funding that affects Silvec's ability to access federal grant funds.

The board discussed its research strategy. Mr. Machata shared the idea of modifying a non-citrus host that is attractive to ACP in a way that prevents them from carrying the vector.

A question was asked as to how Brazil achieved a GMO tree in the field producing fruit. The answer is mature tissue transformation.

In answer to Ms. Porter's question as to whether CRDF is funding research that is actively looking for genes, Dr. Chater shared that in two of his projects that CRDF funded, they are actively looking for genes. They are working with the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory to do so, and the timeline on that is 2 or 3 years for this program to look at all the tolerant material at IFAS and USDA, working with Matt Mattia. Any genes that are discovered in their program will be made available. They will be disseminated to the public, and they hope to work very closely with the plant transformation lab, whether that will be in juvenile or mature tissue.

COO Report: The COO reported that Fundecitrus has invited a group from CRDF to travel to Brazil to see first-hand what is being done to fight HLB.

The RMC discussed the creation of a grower committee to assist our breeders in getting their creation to growers more quickly. There would be challenges, but there was general support.

Partnership Updates:

USDA – Matt Joyner provided an update on the Farm Bill and grant monies.

CRAFT – Steven Hall shared that CRAFT is within days of getting all the contracts out the door. Once the deadline has been met, they will be able to reallocate the funds to the growers that are on the waiting list.

New Business: None

Public Comments: None

Future Meeting: The next Board of Directors meeting date and location will be determined and announced at a later time.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:57 AM.

Minutes submitted by George Hamner, Secretary.