



Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting

Friday, December 22, 2023

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc. was held on Friday, December 22, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Chairperson Porter. Roll was called, and a quorum was present. Executive Committee members present were Rob Atchley, Rick Dantzler, Ron Mahan, Jeanna Mastrodicasa, Morgan Porter, and John Updike. Also participating were Ute Albrecht, George Hamner, Aaron Himrod, Matt Machata, Audrey Nowicki, Joby Sherrod, and Barbara Thompson.

The minutes of the October 25, 2022, meeting have been approved by the Board of Directors.

Mr. Dantzler led the discussion on grower inquiries regarding recent claims pertaining to the chemistry of OTC injectable products. All members had been sent a video by Tom Johnson of TJ Biotech which claimed that its injectable OTC was superior to its competitor's because the OTC used in the BioTech product was pharmaceutical grade and the OTC in the competing product was not. Grower inquiries suggested that CRDF test the claim, so the Executive Committee was convened to discuss this suggestion.

Mr. Dantzler said he was initially concerned about potential liabilities of embarking upon such work, but after talking this through with Mike Ford, an attorney with UF who assists CRDF, was now not so concerned. There was also discussion that questions such as this was one of the reasons CRDF was created, so the liability concern was discounted.

Mr. Dantzler reported that Dr. Swadesh Santra had done previous work in this area and would be willing to take this on. Dantzler said he had also talked with Dr. Yu Wang who said she could do the work and was willing. It was suggested that if the committee wanted to do such work, it might want to fund both scientists because of the importance to the industry.

Mr. Dantzler noted that he had prepared a disclaimer that should attach to whatever public statement was made by CRDF. He had run it by Mike Ford, who was satisfied with it.

It had also been suggested to Mr. Dantzler that they might want to do a survey among growers about their outcome from both products. The Gulf Coast Research and Education Center has a group that does surveys and is led by Dr. Fritz Roka.

Mr. Hamner noted that this was an advertising issue between two companies, so he was not keen on doing the work suggested, but that if we did, the disclaimer was necessary. He also liked the idea of two researchers working on it.

Mr. Atchley expressed support for the survey instead of the chemist studies.

Dr. Mastrodicasa supported the survey idea and said that UF had a unit that could help.

Matt Machata had a comment on the timeline claimed in the video and agreed with Mr. Hamner that this was primarily a marketing issue. He thought a survey was the best way to go.

Mr. Himrod commented on the cost of the products and how some growers put the more expensive product on their better trees and the less expensive product on their not-so-prime trees, so it could be the quality of the trees that made a difference.

Ms. Morgan stated that historical data would have to be a part of any survey so that the effects of Hurricane Ian did not distort the data.

Dr. Ute Albrecht said that she has a field trial in a commercial grove near Immokalee comparing the two products. Uptake speed is so varied between data sets that it is not possible to say that one product is better than the other. She also commented on the number of environmental differences that could affect outcome.

Mr. Mahan supported an independent assessment when we harvest this fall with growers providing all aspects of how they completed the process.

Mr. Sherrod suggested that CRDF be careful with terminology. What is pharmaceutical grade? What is agricultural grade? Agri-Source will probably refute these accusations made on the video. CRAFT is doing an extensive survey looking at yield history. We need time to get through the early and mid-harvest and the Valencia harvest also, but a survey is a good idea.

Mr. Dantzler said that Mike Ford asked if Agri-Source had responded, and they have not as far as we know. Until it does, the sense of the committee was that it favored a survey over conducting the studies. Ms. Morgan was in agreement and asked if any action needed to be taken. Mr. Dantzler said no action was needed, that we have a sense of what the committee wants and can move forward with the survey, and we will not pursue getting a proposal from the researchers on analyzing the chemistry.

In other business, CRDF has been doing a grapefruit trial on the east coast with Daniel Scott. While HLB tolerance or resistance was not showing as much as we had hoped, the grapefruit seem to have a unique taste. Brandon has crunched the data and identified the top four performers and thought it would be good if Dr. Yu Wang did a taste panel on these four varieties to get feedback from consumers.

Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting

Friday, December 22, 2023

Page 3

It should not cost more than \$2,000. The fruit is being harvested now, so we may need to do an email vote once we get exact pricing. Mr. Sherrod suggested that they be a part of the IFAS variety taste tests.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:06 a.m.

Minutes submitted by Barbara Thompson.