

CITRUS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION, INC.

Research Management Committee Meeting

Minutes

Thursday, November 14, 2024

A meeting of the Research Management Committee of the Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc. was held on Thursday, November 14, 2024, at 10:00 AM, at the UF-IFAS-CREC, 700 Experiment Station Rd, Lake Alfred, FL 33850. The meeting was properly noticed and recorded. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM by Chairman Aaron Himrod. Roll was called and a quorum was present. Committee members participating were Scott Adkins, Bobby Barben, Steve Farr, Aaron Himrod, Deeley Hunt, Matt Machata, Bo Meador, Morgan Porter, Daniel Scott, Brian Scully, Shannon Shepp, and Buddy Strickland.

Mr. Himrod noted the minutes of the September 10, 2024, Research Management Committee meeting were included with the meeting materials. Dr. Adkins made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Porter and passed unanimously.

Mr. Dantzler welcomed Bo Meador, new committee member, and asked him to introduce himself to the committee. He also welcomed Dr. John Davis, UF, as the replacement for Dr. Jeanna Mastrodicasa. Scott Lambeth has been invited to join the RMC committee but has not yet accepted.

Mr. Dantzler spoke briefly concerning the budget and noted that if they funded everything on the agenda, there would still be \$500,000.00 left for new research.

Project Funding Consideration

Dr. Jim Graham gave the staff analysis for Project 24-005 – S. Santra – Revised proposal: “Protecting trees using nano-GRAS IPM strategy.” This proposal was revised to remove the OTC portion of the project. There were no changes in the budget. Dr. Graham noted the need for an alternative to copper for controlling canker, as the loss of streptomycin and Blockade-induced resistance has left a gap in control measures. Dr. Scully moved to approve. Ms. Porter seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Dr. Bill Dawson gave the staff analysis for Project 24-015 – M. Dutt – “Rapid production of non-transgenic genome edited citrus plants.” This would provide a second lab with the ability to provide backup to the work that Dr. Nian Wang is now providing. Dr. Dutt would then be ready to continue this work if and when Dr. Wang should leave his program. Dr. Scully moved to approve. Ms. Porter seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Dr. Bill Dawson gave the staff analysis for Project 23-021 – R. Brlansky – “Using improved diagnostics to determine citrus blight prevalence” continuation funding. This would compare edited to non-edited in the field. It is aimed to knock out the Pararetrovirus associated with blight. Bill Dawson explained that the virus is integrated into the citrus DNA and its activation is linked to blight. However, it is not proven that the virus is the cause of blight. Co-PI Bill Schneider agreed with RMC's suggestion to use Carrizo instead of Kuharske for field expression of blight. Mr. Machata made a motion to recommend approval. Mr. Hunt seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Next was the consideration of two preproposals to continue Project 16-026C – Denise Manker (Bayer):

The first project submitted by Mike Edinfield was “Completion of final USDA NIFA CAP trials, Plant Defense Inducers to support OTC injections for healthy citrus and alternative mode of action” has a budget of \$12,000 for 6 months to wind up the Bayer project.

The second project submitted by Mike Edinfield was “Extension of final USDA NIFA CAP trials, Plant Defense Inducers to support OTC injections for healthy citrus and alternative mode of action” with a budget of \$124,000 for 1.5 years. This would be the same as the first project plus adding a year of trials to provide an additional year of data. Ms. Porter moved to recommend approval of this project. Mr. Machata seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The following two presentations by Dr. L. Diepenbrock would be rescheduled for the January RMC meeting: 22-013 – “Getting to the root of the problem: Managing Diaprepes root weevil on trees with HLB” – request for year-3 funding; and 20-002C – “Developing near and long-term management strategies for Lebbeck mealybug (*Nipaecoccus viridis*) in Florida citrus” – request for continuation (Yr 5).

Dr. Yiannis Ampatzidis made a presentation on “The Development of an Automated Delivery System for Therapeutic Materials to Treat HLB-Infected Citrus. This had been submitted to ECDRE but had been denied future funding. They are currently funded by USDA.

Mr. Dantzler noted that Silvec Biologics #23-044 was seeking continuation funding for the acquisition of CTV Vectoring rights and the expected approval of the first generation of spinach defensive genes in 2025. He also mentioned the potential funding need for the Grove First initiative led by Michelle Heck.

The committee discussed the need for a forum to update the industry on transgenic progress. They decided that the forum should cover all available solutions, not just transgenic or conventional breeding, and should be led by experts like Eric Triplett and Manjul Dutt. Dr. Scully suggested a 2-hour session in the morning for the molecular side and after lunch for the applied side, with each presenter limited to 5 slides and 10 minutes.

Mr. Dantzler gave a short update:

We expect EPA to approve the 1st generation of spinach defensive genes in 2025.

One of the priorities discussed was the development of a combination oxytetracycline, streptomycin product. We have been meeting with potential registrants, and there are some companies interested in being the registrant for a product of this nature. We have also been having conversations with EPA. They do not want us to bring them anything until we know for sure that it works. The other thing they want to know for sure is that it has survived a pollinator study. There was a company that was to have started that pollinator study some months ago, so we may be bringing to you an RFP that solicits from registrants a proposal to register a combined OTC/Strep product. We have suggested that CRDF pay for all the science, and these companies pay for all the soft costs, like consultants and attorney’s fees, to actually pursue the registration.

Mr. Dantzler and Brandon have been working on a list of projects that are underway, which are related to streptomycin and other potential bactericides. They will be crosschecked against the list that the researchers have already provided about what they believe still needs to be done. At our next meeting.

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we should have a preproposal for you to that outlines the science that still needs to be done, to try to answer conclusively whether this combination works as well as we think.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:51 AM.

Minutes submitted by Barbara Thompson.