



CITRUS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION, INC.

Research Management Committee Meeting

Minutes

Tuesday, August 19, 2025

A meeting of the Research Management Committee of the Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc. was held on Tuesday, August 19, 2025, via Zoom. The meeting was properly noticed and recorded. The meeting was called to order at 10:03 AM by Chairman Matt Machata. Roll was called and a quorum was present. Committee members participating were Dr. Scott Adkins, Dr. John Davis, Ned Hancock, Deeley Hunt, Matt Machata, Charlie McKee, Morgan Porter, Daniel Scott, Dr. Brian Scully, Shannon Shepp, and John Updike.

Mr. Machata noted the minutes of the July 16, 2025, 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. Machata introduced the first order of business, the Large-Scale Field Trial proposal from CRAFT received in response to the RFP, and asked Mr. Dantzler to summarize the proposal. Mr. Dantzler reported that he received a few inquiries regarding the RFP, but no additional proposals were submitted. He noted that the CRAFT proposal was responsive to the RFP, projecting the planting of 2 million new trees and continuing the Existing Tree Therapies component of CRAFT. He noted that CRDF had received a letter of support for the entire \$100 million to be spent with CRAFT.

He noted that categories for funding such as conventionally bred trees or more experimental trees like the Soilcea transgenic rootstock tree which he and a few growers had toured two weeks ago were not outlined in the FRP. Further, he noted that in calls with Steven Hall he was told that the CRAFT board would attempt to accommodate grower desires on what to plant. He reviewed the budget page and noted that both Steven Hall and Matt Joyner were on the call if there were any questions on their projected allocation of the funds or funding process.

Mr. Dantzler also noted that proviso stated that the Department of Citrus was to be consulted on the expenditure of the funds and invited Ms. Shepp to comment. Ms. Shepp appreciated the recognition of proviso language in light of the high dollar amount and stated she believed it best to affirm CRDF's decision with the full commission at its September 17th meeting and invited Mr. Dantzler and Mr. Hall to attend. Mr. Hall noted that the current application window is open until October 3rd and that \$10 million has been set aside for new varieties and also includes another

round of PEP funding. Interest to date has been strong, with \$18M in applications having been received in the first two weeks. Mr. Hancock moved to recommend the Board approve funding the CRAFT proposal. The motion was seconded by Ms. Porter.

In the discussion that followed, Dr. Scully asked what the CRAFT budget was last year, and if there have been any practices resulting to date that will get the industry back up and running. Also, what had the total amount of funding to CRAFT been over the life of the program. Mr. Hall responded that, including this year's funding, \$180M to date. He reported that the website is close to being populated that will inform growers of the successes and what products were used. After this year's harvest, in the spring of 2026, it will include the full three years of data from the OTC injection projects with the growing and weather conditions around the state. This will be reported on at the citrus conferences. Ms. Shepp noted that Marisa Zansler reported on the economic data on crop forecasting and economic impact of the program at the June conference and she will provide the presentation to be distributed to the committee and board. Mr. Machata and Ms. Porter echoed the importance of getting new trees in the ground the last four to six years afforded by the CRAFT programs. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Nabil Killiny presented his previous research on targeting citrus root weevil using RNA interference and Bt toxin to develop transgenic rootstock solutions that could interrupt the pest's life cycle without affecting beneficial insects like honeybees. He continues screening to identify the best combination of RNA interference targets and Bt toxins for citrus weevil, determining if RNA transcripts move from rootstock to scion, and collaborating with Dr. Bryony Bonning to develop the final product formulation. It was suggested that he schedule a preliminary meeting with EPA at this stage to learn about the regulatory requirements for these therapies.

Mr. Machata asked Mr. Dantzler to update the committee on pending projects that have been under discussion. Dantzler reported that five full proposals are due on August 25th, and he expects at least four preproposals for the juvenility RFP which are also due by August 25th, so it will be a busy September.

Responding to a question from Dr. Scully, Dr. Futch reported that he has been working with FDACS on the requirements for the Dundee field trial site, including fencing and irrigation installation costs so that CRDF can move forward if it is viable economically.

There were no public comments.

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 AM.