

CITRUS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION, INC.

Research Management Committee Meeting

Minutes

Wednesday, April 16, 2025

A meeting of the Research Management Committee of the Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc. was held on Wednesday, April 16, 2025, at 10:00 AM, at the USDA-ARS, 2001 South Rock Road, Fort Pierce, FL 34945. The meeting was properly noticed and recorded. The meeting was called to order at 10:07 AM by Chair Matt Machata. Roll was called and a quorum was present. Committee members participating were Scott Adkins, Bobby Barben, Holly Chamberlain, John Davis, Ned Hancock, Matt Machata, Charlie McKee, Bo Meador, Morgan Porter, Shannon Shepp, and Buddy Strickland.

Dr. Scott Adkins welcomed the Research Management Committee back to Ft. Pierce and outlined the stops on the Grove Tours following lunch.

Mr. Machata noted the minutes of the January 22, 2025 Research Management Committee meeting were included with the meeting materials for review. Ms. Porter made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Chamberlain and passed unanimously.

Mr. Dantzler gave an overview of CRDF's finances. On paper, the 66 projects under contract require \$3.8 million during the next fiscal year. The legislative ask for the next fiscal year is \$6.4 million, which would cover the costs of these 66 projects and leave approximately \$1.5 million for new research. Senator Albritton is seeking a \$200 million citrus industry funding package.

The first full proposal considered was from Dr. L. Diepenbrock on Hibiscus/Lebbeck Mealybug Management in CUPS. After much discussion, it was suggested to ask the PI to focus on Objective 1, finish work on IPCs, and adjust the budget (only 2-yr project, remove foreign travel). If Objective 2 was pursued, a degradation curve on the life of the pesticidal coating of the netting should be included. There was not a recommendation to advance the proposal at this time, but depending on funding availability, perhaps ask the PI to revise and resubmit in accordance with these comments.

The second proposal considered was from Drs. Dutt, Chater, and Grosser on Field evaluation of select HLB tolerant sweet oranges on improved rootstocks. The question was raised as to why there were three PIs on the project. The reply was that since Dr. Grosser would be retiring before the end of the project, it would make for a smoother transition if Dr. Dutt were already listed as the main PI. Also, since CRDF typically only funds projects for three years, at the end of the first three years, funding for another three years would be requested to complete the project. There was a lack of supporting data for the rootstock and scion nominations, so the committee wanted the PIs to summarize the data for each of their nominations. The supplemental fertilizer chosen in this proposal was a slow-release blend that would skew the data; therefore, they should use a grower standard. RMC thought that IPCs should not be used, and the first-year costs were much too high. There was discussion that some of the testing could be done by CRAFT, which would require CRAFT to allow germplasm which has not been released. Dr. Scully moved to send the proposal

back to the Plant Improvement Committee to obtain the answers to questions raised by RMC. The motion was seconded by Mr. Leotti and passed unanimously.

The first preproposal considered was from Cole Arrant, a high school student, on the evaluation of commercially available chemicals for use in trunk injection of citrus. This is a low-budget project (\$3,500) that mimics what Grove First is doing. RMC suggested that he join Dr. Michelle Heck so he could learn how they work and the Grove First group could assist in his project. Mr. Leotti made a motion to recommend asking for a full proposal. The motion was seconded by Ms. Porter and passed unanimously.

The second preproposal was from B. Morkos on the investigation of autonomous drug delivery for citrus trees. This preproposal was not advanced for lack of a motion. The concern was that these researchers, who were new to this work and disease, would be too far behind what Dr. Ampatzidis has developed.

RMC then presented the Other Proposed Projects which included:

U. Albrecht – Third year OTC injection of 2015 rootstock trials. Dr. Albrecht wanted to modify the design and investigate the efficacy of a single site with two-sided injections. It was suggested to inject twice a year (with a half dose in each injection). Mr. Leotti made a motion to recommend asking for a preproposal with the new design. It was seconded by Mr. McKee and passed unanimously.

U. Albrecht – Discussion of 2023 rootstock trial injection policy. Brandon Page gave a presentation with input from Dr. Albrecht. The suggestion was to overlay an injection trial with the existing design. She would like to use half of the plot, which would be one row of 10 trees, as untreated control; the other half would be treated with OTC at the label recommended rate. The following season, she would go back to the untreated section and treat 5 trees there. Mr. McKee made a motion to ask for a preproposal. The motion was seconded by Ms. Porter and passed unanimously.

C. Messina – Transformation of 51 genes, including the Bt gene from Dr. Bonning. Ms. Porter made a motion to ask for a preproposal. The motion was seconded by Mr. Barben and passed unanimously.

L. Stelinski – Inoculum measurement on a macro scale in the age of OTC usage, including a state-wide assessment of psyllid infection levels (continuation of #23-001). The budget request is \$100,000. The work would be over the course of 2 years. Dr. Scully made a motion to recommend asking for a preproposal. The motion was seconded by Ms. Porter and passed unanimously.

Next was a discussion on the OTC and streptomycin combined product. Laura Fleitas of AgroSource gave a presentation and Dr. Albrecht fielded questions. RMC did not want to hold up any of the regulatory matters due to not having residue testing completed, so the committee recommended that CRDF pay for the residue testing as well as a pollinator study if it gets to that point to any company that desires to do so. The data would be available to CRDF and disseminated to companies that participate. As of now, those are AgroSource and TJ Biotech. Mr. Barben moved to fund the cost with no upper limit and a provision to make the results available to all producers of the product. The motion was seconded by Mr. McKee. Dr. Albrecht noted they have been advised to do residue studies on the whole fruit, peel and all, not just the juice. The motion passed.

Z. Pang, Silvec, involved a discussion on the termination of project 23-044 and re-direction of funds. Ms. Porter made a motion to hold this matter in abeyance to see if its federal funding came, which would

allow Silvec to repay CRDF the funds it had paid and transition the project to HLB MAC. The motion was seconded by Mr. Leotti and passed unanimously.

For Other Potential Projects, Matt Machata suggested a mandatory state-funded psyllid spray program which would consist of 12 aerial sprays per year to combat reinfestation of CLas. The committee discussed the practicality of the plan and possible suitable substitutes.

With time restraints, the remainder of the agenda was dispensed with to be dealt with at a later date. There were no public comments, so the meeting was adjourned at 1:49 PM.

Minutes submitted by Barbara Thompson.

After the meeting adjourned, Dr. Adkins shared that on their tours the committee would see the transgenic field block led by Dr. Matt Mattia, and that Dr. Manjul Dutt from the CREC would be presenting his material in the grove. Dr. Kim Bowman would share data on juvenility, and Randy Niedz would complete the tour with the Grove First results. Dr. Adkins showed some slides and gave an overview of the status of what was happening in each area.