

**CITRUS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION, INC.**  
**Research Management Committee Meeting**  
**Minutes**

**Wednesday, July 16, 2025**

A meeting of the Research Management Committee of the Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc. was held on Wednesday, July 16, 2025, via Zoom only. 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 Bobby Barben, Larry Black, Holly Chamberlain, John Davis, Ned Hancock, Matt Machata, Charlie McKee, Morgan Porter, Daniel Scott, Brian Scully, Shannon Shepp, Wayne Simmons, and John Updike.

Mr. Machata noted the minutes of the June 3, 2025, Research Management Committee meeting were included with the meeting materials. Mr. Simmons made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Porter and passed unanimously.

Mr. Dantzler informed the committee that Buddy Strickland had retired after 50 years of dedication to the industry and let Mr. Dantzler know that he was stepping down from RMC, so CRDF would need to find his replacement as soon as possible.

Mr. Dantzler and Brandon visited Codes Estes' Grove-First project in Vero Beach. This project has evolved to finding molecules that work better than OTC. The trees are showing clear separation of which molecules are working the best and some are showing excellent efficacy against canker, too. Some of the new compounds used will not need to be registered.

Mr. Black would like CRDF to use the Bayer testing methodology in Grove-First. Mr. Dantzler said he would follow up.

Dr. Nian Wang has submitted his new target genes to DPI.

Soilcea shared with Mr. Dantzler that EPA had opened up its 30-day window for comments on the Soilcea transgenic rootstock. Dantzler said he would be submitting comments from CRDF after the meeting.

The Board has approved spending \$1.2 million on new research. Mr. Dantzler asked the committee to vote for each project they felt would be beneficial to the industry, and CRDF would find the funding.

The meeting then moved to the discussion of Dr. Stelinski's full proposal on Assessing Susceptibility to Insecticides and Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus Prevalence in Asian Citrus Psyllid Field Populations in Florida. Dr. Graham, as project manager, summarized the proposal's changes and priorities. Dr. Stelinski and his team would monitor insecticide resistance and CLas

infection rates in psyllid populations across Florida. The proposal includes 8 to 10 sites from north to south, sampling 15 to 20 trees per site. The Scientific Advisory Board recommended funding the proposal but one committee member suggested extending the survey to northern Florida to compare infection rates and climate effects. There were some concerns about the significant budget increase from the preproposal, but this was attributed to the addition of resistance monitoring work. The committee discussed potentially refining site selection and evaluating whether to continue CLas prevalence monitoring after the first year. Dr. Scully moved to approve. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hancock and passed unanimously.

The CRDF RFP for large-scale field trials was discussed next. Mr. Dantzler explained that the language was largely as it had been in previous years, but that the dollar amounts and proviso were updated to conform to legislative directive. CRAFT would be submitting a proposal for the CRDF large-scale field trial RFP. Per the request of CRAFT, paragraph 7 from page 3 will be stricken from the RFP. Steven Hall explained that this was data that CRAFT was considering not requiring anymore because they intended to streamline the process. Also, Mr. Hall explained that CRAFT was considering a "sandbox" approach to allow testing of unreleased varieties. The funding allocation would ensure fair distribution among growers of different sizes. Matt Joyner clarified that the program provides payments to growers which can be used for tree acquisition and planting costs. Mr. Dantzler said that he, and he was sure Mr. Hall, would be available to speak to industry organizations to answer questions. Ms. Porter made a motion to recommend the RFP to the Board. The motion was seconded by Dr. Scully and passed unanimously.

Next was a discussion of CRDF research topics/priorities for the new budget year. Mr. Dantzler explained that he had asked Drs. Rogers and Adkins and Yianni Lagos (since Soilcea has the rights to many of the possible trees of the future) if they had research suggestions. Also, he explained that CRDF staff had met to discuss possible topics, which resulted in the following list:

1. Collaborate with Fundecitrus to get GM trees which repel psyllids into Florida for testing in our environment. If Fundecitrus would agree, perhaps a more efficient way of doing this would be to get the transformation construct with the gene from Brazil and have Dr. Zale transform it into Florida trees.
2. Consideration of the Dutt and Messina transgenic proposals. Staff will provide an update.

The Dutt project had been advanced from pre-proposal to full proposal status. Then, during the discussion of each of these projects, it was decided that it made sense to try to blend them together and come back with just one proposal.

The university is prepared to do this however we wish. Dantzler and Dr. Dutt spoke a few days ago and Dr. Dutt said that he and Dr. Messina had already begun blending the two projects and had it down to roughly half the cost of the two separately.

Within the context of the conversation about these proposals was the idea of retaining the consulting services of Dr. Leandro Pena, perhaps the world leader in citrus biotechnology. This was embraced by the RMC. Mr. Dantzler said he had shared the possibility with Drs. Messina, Angle, and Rogers and there was no objection. RMC was in consensus and they approved in concept. This would go before the board for further perusal.

There was also discussion among committee members and Dr. Davis regarding the IFAS Town Hall held in February and the suggestion of a second town hall that could continue where the first one left off. Now that we have the inventory of all the constructs and genes, we can go to the next step to find out: Where are they in the process? Where are the trees? If we get down to a more granular level, that might be very useful for the grower community to have and to know to use.

3. Seek ways to accelerate pulling trees out of juvenility for germplasm needing this assistance.
4. Propagate at least 500 of Dr. Mou's GM trees which overexpress NPR1.
5. Prepare the DPI property in Dundee for a new GM tree field trial site, plus a site for conventionally bred germplasm which needs to be field trialed.
6. Populate the transgenic field trial site at Picos with new germplasm. Out with the old and in with the new.
7. Establish an antimicrobial peptide (AMP) test pipeline using Dr. Ping Duan's Clas culture system.
8. Increasing performance of OTC. Muriatic acid is not the optimal acidifier/adjuvant to stabilize OTC in tank mixes before injection or to facilitate distribution of OTC during and after injections. Adjuvants that are nonphytotoxic and protect OTC from oxidation are needed.
9. Protecting newly planted trees from Clas infection:
  - a. Individual protective covers (IPCs) have been demonstrated to protect trees from infection. Extending the period of protection has been achieved with brassinosteroids, which repel ACP and delay Clas transmission/infection.
  - b. Another strategy is to maintain trees for longer durations under larger size IPCs.
  - c. Installing IPCs has been used to rejuvenate previously unprotected trees by protecting them from debilitating ACP feeding damage.

These approaches are being explored by growers but none of them have been optimized in replicated research trials.

10. Jasmonic acid spray products have been used effectively on other crops to deal with bacterial infections. It has been suggested that this be tested on Clas and canker. There is no preliminary data.
11. Coordinated usage of PGRs and nutrition. This has been suggested, but horticultural factors cannot be managed apart from nutrition.
12. Assist in the mass propagation of the Soilcea GM rootstock. EPA has opened a 30-day comment period, so a decision may be forthcoming soon.

With no public comments and no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 AM.

Minutes submitted by Barbara Thompson.