



CITRUS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION, INC.  
Plant Improvement Committee Meeting  
Minutes  
**Tuesday, April 15, 2025**

A meeting of the Plant Improvement Committee of the Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc. was held on Tuesday, April 15, 2025, via Zoom only. The meeting was properly noticed and recorded. The meeting was called to order at 10:08 AM by Chair Joby Sherrod. Roll was called and a quorum was not present. Committee members participating were Aaron Corkum, Chris Gunter, Steven Hall, Gio Ijpkemeule, Nate Jameson, Wes Johnson, Trevor Murphy, Brandon Page, Erin Roskopf, Joby Sherrod, and Sarah Spinosa.

Chair Joby Sherrod noted that the minutes of the December 3, 2024, (no quorum) and January 27, 2025, Plant Improvement Committee meetings were included with the meeting materials. Mr. Jameson made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Gunter and passed unanimously.

Mr. Dantzler provided an overview of CRDF's financial situation. CRDF has 66 ongoing projects with a funding requirement of \$3.8 million for next year. CRDF has requested \$6.4 million from the legislature. CRDF has identified some items that could be eliminated if necessary to reduce the legislative ask to \$5.4 million if necessary. He emphasized the need for judicious spending until the legislative funding is confirmed.

**Review of Dutt Proposal:**

1. Mr. Sherrod introduced the proposal from Drs. Dutt, Chater, and Grosser: Field Evaluation of HLB-tolerant Sweet Oranges on Improved Rootstocks. He noted that this project was essentially solicited by CRDF, who suggested the idea to have a trial with some of the best scions grafted on the best rootstocks.

Dr. Futch presented the summary to the committee. The proposal is a 3-year project to establish a single field trial on CREC managed property in Lake Alfred. The trial will evaluate the most promising HLB-tolerant rootstocks budded on their most promising HLB-tolerant sweet orange scions. No data was provided as to the evaluation process used for the inclusion of these combinations in the trial. Figure 5 does show the Parson Brown tree at Buckhill grove, but no yield data was given on that particular selection. There was a question on the budget where they request \$18 per tree to produce these trees at Agromillora. They also request greenhouse services for \$40,000 a year in the first 2 years. There were also questions on the request for travel and equipment costs.

Dr. Manjul Dutt responded to the Committee's questions. They proposed that every rootstock will be budded with every scion, so there would be 81 potential combinations. Also, they were using IPCs for the first year to emulate common grower practices and to give the trees a head start; then they would remove the IPCs. They could also have a set of control trees without IPCs just to compare with and without IPCs. Many selections were identified based on observations and limited trials. Dr. Dutt

clarified that Agromillora would handle most of the budding, but they would be responsible for two. He has the data from Parson Brown and will send it to Mr. Sherrod.

Suggestions for a potential location for the trial were leasing land from a grower or using DPI property in Dundee. Caretaking would be contracted out. They have four rootstocks already at DPI, but two more were just recently provided and the plants are not big enough yet.

Dr. Gunter made a motion to recommend advancing the proposal to RMC with the suggestion to have some IPCs compared to no IPCs, reducing first-year costs, and including USDA materials where available. The motion was seconded by Ms. Spinosa and passed unanimously.

**Pathway 3.0:** Mr. Dantzler noted the progression of the Florida citrus industry's sustainability plan leading to Pathway 3.0. Mr. Sherrod instructed the committee to review the draft document in the materials and send any comments to Mr. Dantzler.

**Other Business:**

1. Mr. Page presented a planned rootstock trial with Dr. Ute Albrecht. In 2015, we planted a series of rootstock trials. There were three sites. Two of those sites are still in the ground and being used. CRDF funded Dr. Albrecht to conduct a series of OTC injection trials in these rootstock trials comparing rootstock injection vs scion injection. At that time, you could only inject OTC for two years; so, Dr. Albrecht has presented that data. For the third year, she would like to take the rootstock injection portion of the plot and the scion injection portion of the plot and cut that in half, going to 30 trees for rootstock and 30 trees for scion. She wants to try single-sided injections compared to double-sided injections. When using the single-sided injections, she would use the label recommended rate. When using two injecting devices, it would be the label rate cut in half. You would have half on each side of the tree. The committee were in favor of the proposed project.
2. Brandon then presented the next proposed project with Dr. Albrecht. In 2023 CRDF established a new set of rootstock trials. PIC was instrumental in putting that together. The trials, which involved injecting OTC into scions and rootstocks, showed no significant difference in performance between the two treatments. However, both treatments outperformed the untreated control in terms of yield and fruit quality. The data from these trials was submitted.

These trials were established to be Stage 3 with the evaluation of the most promising rootstocks. There are 13 of them in this trial. There are five standard rootstocks, some USDA plant material, and UF has two rootstocks used. There are five replications for each rootstock. This grower is using OTC injections across pretty much all of his acreage. The design is where a plot is 20 trees consisting of 2 rows of 10 trees per row. We can inject one row and leave the other row untreated.

This block was outfitted with IPCs. Every tree had an IPC on it and the trees have grown well. The IPCs were removed in November 2024. So, we can also look at the timing factor of OTC injection following removal of IPCs. We can start with this season coming up, and then we can also work in the injection factor again next season. With the 10 trees that remain untreated, we can look at injecting

half of those this season, giving us five trees to inject next year. They were using the standard flex inject type of approach. The committee was in favor of the proposed project.

**Public Comments:** Steven Hall from CRAFT shared that they have engaged a data analysis group to analyze their ETT data, which should be available by early summer. He confirmed that they would be able to peruse through the data to answer the question as to whether Rectify or Remedium works better. Mr. Sherrod expressed anticipation for the yield data and the hurricane impact analysis. Mr. Hall also mentioned that they have funding available for the PEP program, which would be open until the end of the month.

Mr. Sherrod reminded everyone about the upcoming RMC meeting and grove tour in Fort Pierce, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:28 AM.

Minutes submitted by Barbara Thompson.