

In the Loop

“Keeping You Informed About the Research Process”

Summer 2009



FCIRCC Establishes Research Priorities for 2009

Citrus Research & Development Foundation Functioning

FCC Still Committed to Research, FCM Seeking Federal Funds

Two More Labels in Place for Low Volume Mist Applications

The Florida Citrus Industry Research Coordinating Council

(FCIRCC) has determined their 2009 Research Priorities. Attached you will find the list and background material. The next step in the process will be to obtain the current research projects from the various agencies. This will then allow the FCIRCC to determine the “gaps” that may exist between research needed and actual work that is under way. This process has been effective and encourages research agencies to direct work toward industry priorities. The “Gaps Analysis” should be available this fall.

Over the summer representatives from FCIRCC, FCPRAC, and the Citrus Research & Development Foundation will be meeting with research agencies and other governmental organizations to make sure they are aware of the research needs and ask for their help in securing top scientists to look at greening/canker as well as other priority items in hopes of finding some promising leads in labs that have not been involved with citrus research. In addition, the group will be establishing a better dialogue with agencies that can impact research via regulations. EPA needs to be aware of the importance of low volume mist applications that research has shown can be effective in managing psyllids. EPA has final approval of state 24(c) labels that allow for low volume applications. Last year these visits prompted USDA to bring in top scientists from all over the US to look at greening and canker. Many ideas and suggestions resulted.

The Florida Citrus Research & Development Foundation (the DSO) is organized and in operation. At the first board of directors meeting held May 8, Tom Jerkins was elected President, Ricke Kress VP, Jerry Newlin Secretary and Joe Joyce Treasurer. Tom Turpen was appointed interim chief operating officer (COO). Committee assignments were made and the organization is moving forward. The thirteen member board has two UF/IFAS representatives, one from FDACS and ten are Florida citrus growers. Mixed apprehension, optimism and excitement best describes the feelings of most growers, processor, packers and harvesters. The R&D Foundation has a huge list of challenges to deal with, and as we all know time is not the friend of the Florida citrus grower. Contracts will need to be managed. As soon as the foundation is ready to assume this task, the Florida Department of Citrus will transfer their contracts. A review of research results will need to take place to determine which ones have potential “products” to move forward from lab to the grove and commercialization needs to

In the Loop

take place. A business plan needs to be developed and adopted. The plan will define staffing, budget, goals, objectives, role in the research process and much more. The R&D Foundation has a monumental assignment and no firm blueprint to follow. The 13 members of the board must work together and they need the help of every organization, grower, packer, processor, harvester, regulatory entity, research agency and anyone else associate with the citrus industry. You will be learning more every month as this key entity steps out to manage the research process. They need your support, encouragement and ideas.

The Florida Citrus Commission and Department of Citrus continue to lead the way with their commitment to disease research. The FDOC 2009/2010 preliminary budget contains \$10 Million for continuing the greening/canker research effort. Even though research is not the primary mission of FDOC, they recognize the need to provide grower dollars for the massive effort needed to find a “cure” or at least an economic management strategy to deal with these two destructive diseases.

Florida Citrus Mutual is leading a three state effort to secure additional Citrus Health Response Plan (CHRP) dollars from the federal government. Currently there is a \$104 Million “ask” before congress with strong support from California and Texas as well as Florida. Currently CHRP dollars are approximately \$34 Million. The additional dollars will allow for a step up in research, extension and regulatory activity. Hopefully FCM will be successful and additional dollars will be available before the year is over.

There was good news recently regarding research dollars. The Farm Bill provides research funds to states for “block grants”. The FDACS is the agency administering block grant dollars in Florida. Originally it was anticipated there would be \$2.5 M available, fortunately the amount announced in the Federal Register was a little more than \$4 M. These are competitive grants across all agriculture in Florida. Hopefully citrus researchers will be able to develop sound proposals and receive substantial funding this year.

It appears that funding will not be a limiting factor with regards to citrus research. There are some projects for which funds have not been secured, however, most of the projects deemed productive and necessary by the National Academy of Science review panels and the Florida Citrus Production Research Advisory Council (box tax) have been funded.

As discussed in previous issues of *In the Loop* a strong effort has been made to obtain 24 (c) labels to allow low volume mist applications for psyllid control. Traditionally label changes are a relatively slow process requiring input from several state agencies and EPA approval. We are most fortunate that pesticide manufacturers have worked closely with UF/IFAS, the IR-4 program, FDACS, and FCIRCC-Greening Task Force to submit packages. As of June 1, 2009 Danitol and Delegate have been granted 24(c) labels and can now be applied at low volumes (as low as 2 gallons per acre). Packages for Mustang and Micromite are moving through the process and we are hopeful they will obtain their 24(c) labels soon. In addition UF/IFAS is conducting trials with aerial sprays to obtain efficacy data. Experimental Use Permits (EUP) are being pursued to look at several products. Bottom line, if growers can effectively manage

In the Loop

psyllids with low volume ground and aerial sprays, they can save millions of dollars and treat in a more timely manner. There is still much to do, but we are gaining new tools and valuable information daily.

John Jackson
FCIRCC – Director
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