



# Ramping up the research investment

By Jack Payne, jackpayne@ufl.edu, @JackPayneIFAS

**A**s you know, since you've all been supporting it with the box tax over the years, research is expensive. Fortunately, citrus growers recognize it as an investment. In the case of citrus greening, the millions we spend now could save a \$10.7 billion industry.

We've been busy getting the public to help you fund the search for solutions to citrus greening. The scope of the HLB challenge requires publicly funded research as a supplement to what's already coming out of your pocket through the box tax and ours through endowed positions such as the entomologist we're seeking in Gainesville.

We're not nearly as effective at carrying the message of the importance of state funding for agricultural research as you are, though. We hope we can count on your help as we seek funding in the 2016 legislative session.

Last year, with the support of Florida Citrus Mutual and other leading agricultural organizations, the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) got state money to hire dozens of new researchers.

They won't all work on citrus greening. We can say HLB will be the focus of a new tree physiologist for the Citrus Research and Education Center in Lake Alfred. A plant physiologist is on her way to our Southwest Florida Research and Education Center (SWFREC) with an expected HLB focus. She'll be followed by a soil microbiologist and a citrus pathologist who'll join in the work on HLB.

We don't know precisely what each scientist will work on until he or she gets here. Because HLB is the highest-profile challenge Florida agriculture faces, you can expect many of these A-list recruits to take an interest in it, though.

## PHYSIOLOGIST TO FOCUS ON HLB

Consider Ute Albrecht. She's a plant physiologist whom we hired to work at the SWFREC in Immokalee. She's been working on HLB for nearly a decade at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

We were able to lure her to UF/IFAS in part with the grand mission of vanquishing HLB. While she's unlikely to solve it herself, she brings her expertise in rootstock-scion interaction to a team of scientists attacking this scourge from as many angles as we can get researchers for.



Albrecht

USDA does great work and is an invaluable partner to UF/IFAS. What we could offer Albrecht is the opportunity to run her own research program. It didn't hurt that SWFREC Director Calvin Arnold ran the USDA Fort Pierce lab Albrecht worked in before he came back to UF/IFAS a year and a half ago.

Albrecht said she was also attracted by the potential for rapid application of her discoveries. No one else has an Extension service like ours to get her discoveries out of the lab and into the groves.

## RESOURCES ATTRACT TOP TALENT

The point is, we're good at attracting top talent, especially now because we have:

- A new president who has demonstrated a welcome devotion to the land-grant mission
- The aforementioned state funding for IFAS research and Extension
- New university pre-eminence resources — state funding to

# SOAR® Bloom Spray improves flowering, fruit set and tree health.



Replicated university-level protocol research shows that SOAR Bloom Spray can improve flowering and fruit set. SOAR Bloom Spray can make a real dollars and sense difference in marketable yields and tree health. Contact us today for more information.



Put SOAR® technology to work for you.

Order SOAR Bloom Spray from your favorite supplier or contact...

**CHEMICAL DYNAMICS**

*Our Business Is To Help You Grow*

**Toll-Free: 800-277-4950**

4206 Business Lane • Plant City, Florida 33566

Always read and follow label directions carefully. © SOAR is a registered trademark of Chemical Dynamics, Inc.

[www.ChemicalDynamics.com](http://www.ChemicalDynamics.com)

raise UF's national stature and impact — going to IFAS work on plant genetics, food systems, biodiversity, informatics and more

- Recently upgraded computing that gives us the most powerful supercomputer in Florida and the third-fastest university supercomputer in the nation
- A multimillion-dollar injection of building and lab improvements in progress in Lake Alfred, Wimauma, Immokalee and elsewhere

With all that momentum, we're a magnet for talent. So if we can get the money to hire more people, you can bet they'll be high caliber.

*Let's continue to work together to ensure a future for citrus.*

## SUPPORT NEEDED TO SUCCEED

We're asking for increased funding for research and Extension in 2016 that will allow us to bring on more scientists, some of whom will collaborate with our existing citrus greening experts. We'll need your support to succeed in expanding our efforts to help you conquer one of the direst threats your industry has ever faced.

Let's continue to work together to ensure a future for citrus. Thermotherapy, a transgenic tree, citrus health management areas and even growing trees under screens all show great promise.

The thing about modern problems is that there's rarely a single, simple solution. There may be avenues we haven't even thought of yet. The more varied the expertise we can assemble, the more likely it is we'll think of those avenues and then speed down them in our race against time for citrus. 🍊

*Jack Payne is the University of Florida's senior vice president for agriculture and natural resources and head of UF's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.*

## FOUR GENERATIONS of FLORIDA CITRUS NURSERIES



WINTER GARDEN, FLORIDA

Now taking orders for 2016-2017 delivery

**EXCLUSIVE LIFETIME REPLACEMENT POLICY**

Every tree is hand nurtured and inspected. We have all available greening tolerant rootstocks, UF varieties, USDA varieties as well as all old varieties.

Call Chris at (407) 404-0355 or Paul at (407) 832-1010

Visit our website **TODAY!**  
[www.blue-heron-nurseries.com](http://www.blue-heron-nurseries.com)

[www.blue-heron-nurseries.com](http://www.blue-heron-nurseries.com)



Reg. # 48006420