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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Citrus Research Board Hires New Lab Director**

August 11, 2017 – Visalia, California – The Citrus Research Board (CRB) has announced the recent hiring of Qijun Xiang, Ph.D., as director of the Jerry Dimitman Laboratory in Riverside, California.

As lab director, Xiang will work to re-establish a US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)-certified high throughput diagnostic laboratory designation for HLB detection with initial emphasis placed on ACP samples. He will report directly to CRB President Gary Schulz and will supervise laboratory staff responsible for preparing and analyzing insect and plant samples. Xiang's group will work with CRB staff and other agencies such as the California Department of Food and Agriculture/Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Program, USDA-APHIS, USDA Agricultural Research Service and county pest control districts on regional diagnostic programs.

"The laboratory director position provides me with a great opportunity to serve the California citrus industry," Xiang said. "I am looking forward to building and leading a remarkable team to assist in the fight against HLB."

Xiang comes to the CRB from the USDA APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine Center for the Plant Health Science and Technology Laboratory in



Beltsville, Maryland, where he was a North Carolina State University Research Scholar and molecular biologist. This new position will mark a return to Riverside for the laboratory director, who previously had worked as a research specialist in plant pathology at the University of California, Riverside Department of Plant Pathology and Microbiology.

“We are delighted to welcome Dr. Xiang,” said Schulz. “His outstanding background renders him uniquely qualified to play a role in our critical battle against HLB. We look forward to his leadership and abilities.”

A widely published researcher, Xiang received his Ph.D. in Microbiology from the University of California, Berkeley Department of Plant and Microbial Biology. He obtained his Bachelor of Arts and Masters degrees in Plant Genetics and Breeding from the China Agricultural University in Beijing.

The CRB administers the California Citrus Research Program, the grower-funded and grower-directed program established in 1968 under the California Marketing Act as the mechanism enabling the state’s citrus producers to sponsor and support needed research. More information about the Citrus Research Board may be found at [www.citrusresearch.org](http://www.citrusresearch.org).

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