

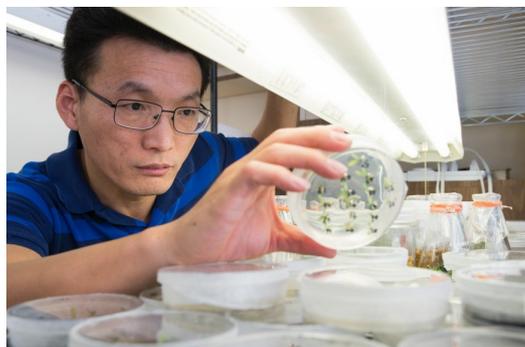


By Carl Collen

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Research grant boost for UF/IFAS

UF/IFAS faculty to use US\$141M in research funding to manage citrus greening and develop sweetcorn, among other projects



Scientists at the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) are using this year's allotment of US\$141m in research funding to develop better sweetcorn and make further progress toward controlling citrus greening disease, among other initiatives.

Robert Gilbert, dean of UF/IFAS Research and director of the Florida Agricultural Experiment Station, gleaned information from major grants from fiscal year 2019/20 and said he saw many bright spots.

"These grants illustrate the tremendous breadth and depth of UF/IFAS programs," Gilbert said. "Our faculty is doing cutting-edge basic research and applying the results to make a tremendous impact in the lives of citizens of Florida, the nation and the world."

Much of this research helps Florida's farmers save money, fertiliser, pesticides, water and other inputs necessary to

produce their crops, which in turn support billions of dollars of economic activity throughout the state.

During the fiscal year 2019/20, funding helped several ongoing projects at UF/IFAS.

In horticultural sciences, assistant professor Marcio Resende and professor Mark Settles received more than US\$4.3m from the US Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA), to help investigate integrated technologies to improve sweetcorn production and marketability.

In plant pathology, professor Pamela Roberts at the UF/IFAS Southwest Florida Research and Education Center garnered US\$1.9m from USDA-NIFA to manage bacterial diseases in peppers.

Meanwhile, in microbiology and cell science, professor Nian Wang of the UF/IFAS Citrus Research and Education Center received a US\$560,000 grant from USDA-NIFA to use citrus

immunity to combat citrus greening – also known as huanglongbing (HLB).

Covid-19 is not slowing UF/IFAS researchers – in fact, they're applying for more grant funding, Gilbert said.

From 1 March-1 August 2019, UF/IFAS faculty submitted US\$175m in grant applications. During the same period in 2020, they applied for nearly twice that amount – US\$338m in grants.

"This shows the dedication of our research faculty and bodes well for the future of our research enterprise," Gilbert added.

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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