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## **Citrus Research Board Announces Interim President**

**VISALIA, CALIF. – October 8, 2018** – The Citrus Research Board (CRB) is pleased to announce Franco Bernardi will serve as the organizations interim president. As of October 15, Bernardi will lead daily staff operations and management.

Bernardi's leadership will guide the CRB during the next several months as it celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and continues to invest in solutions to Huanglongbing (HLB), the deadly citrus disease that has devastated other citrus-growing regions worldwide.

"We are extremely fortunate to be able to call on one of the leaders of our industry to steer the helm as our search committee looks for a full-time president," said CRB Chairman Dan Dreyer, who will announce Bernardi's appointment formally on October 10 at the annual California Citrus Conference, which is attended by hundreds of citrus growers, researchers and other industry representatives.

Bernardi held a seat on the CRB Board for 27-years, serving as CRB chairman from 1997-99, Bernardi had chaired a number of CRB committees during his nearly three decades on the Board. He also served on the boards of other organizations, such as the Central California Orange Growers Cooperative, California Citrus Advisory

Committee, California Citrus Mutual and the California Citrus Quality Council, to name only a few.

Early in Bernardi's career, he worked at Del Monte Foods in their ag research division and then as a senior research associate for the University of Arizona. For 38 years prior to his retirement, he served in management at a number of citrus operations, including Superior Farming, Paramount Citrus, Sun World, Duda Farm Fresh Foods and Agricultural Capital Management.

The Lucca, Italy native is a 28-year resident of Visalia, who studied agricultural science at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. He and his wife Kathy have been married for 52 years and have five children and 11 grandchildren.

The CRB administers the California Citrus Research Program, the grower-funded and grower-directed program established in 1968 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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