

American Seed Trade Association Annual Report 2001-2002



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Who We Are

Founded in 1883, the American Seed Trade Association (ASTA), located in Alexandria, Va., is one of the oldest trade organizations in the United States. Its membership consists of more than 800 companies involved in seed production and distribution, plant breeding, and related industries in North America. As an authority on plant germplasm¹, ASTA advocates science and policy issues of industry importance.

Our Mission

ASTA's mission is to be an effective voice of action in all matters concerning the development, marketing and free movement of seed, associated products, and services throughout the world with a minimum of regulations. ASTA promotes the development of better seed to produce better crops for a better quality of life.

First—The Seed

ASTA's motto, "first—the seed," expresses the basic philosophy that underlies the seed industry: There is no substitute for quality seed—a fact of life dating back to the early settlers who knew it as the difference between survival and disaster. Quality seed is essential for growing quality crops.

What We Do

ASTA, directed by its members, is involved in nearly all issues relating to plant germplasm, focusing on three areas of industry importance:

Regulatory and legislative matters at international, national and state levels;

New technologies impacting all crop species; and

Communication and education of members and appropriate public audiences regarding science and policy issues affecting the seed industry.

Activities include enhancing the visibility and understanding of seed issues in the public arena; lobbying for industry-wide positions on legislation; informing members about environmental and conservation issues and new developments in plant breeding, such as the use of modern biotechnology; conducting conventions and meetings to inform members about seed issues and to encourage fellowship among seed professionals; promoting global sales of U.S. seeds; funding select seed research programs; and maintaining productive working relationships with related professional organizations.

Benefits of Membership

ASTA provides a strong, effective voice in support of the seed industry's interests. It:

Informs members about research developments, industry trends, legislation, and regulations—most everything that can affect the seed business and its profitability;

Provides a forum for sharing ideas, information, opinions and concerns with professionals who have mutual interests;

Offers services and professional development programs specific to the seed industry that are not available from other trade associations; and

Provides member specific assistance on policy, science, trade and other issues affecting the seed industry.

about



Membership Profile

ASTA currently has a total of 818 member companies, including 540 active members that are directly involved in seed production or distribution, research and development, or technology delivered in or on seed; 168 associate members that provide products or services for the seed industry; 85 affiliate members that are related associations and agencies; and 25 corresponding members that produce or distribute seed outside of North America. Most active, affiliate, and associate members are headquartered in North America, predominantly in the United States. ASTA values and promotes diversity of membership in terms of company size, products and geographic area served. Each active member company has one vote, regardless of size.

Leadership

ASTA is led by its membership and governed by a board of directors comprised of a 15-member Executive Committee, all living past-presidents of the association, division directors, chairs of ASTA divisions and International and Legislative & Legal Concerns Committees, and ASTA representatives to the Canadian Seed Trade Association and Mexican Seed Trade Association. The Executive Committee is comprised of the association's president and first and second vice presidents; three most recent past-presidents; regional vice presidents representing U.S. northeast, southeast, southern, central, north central, northwestern and western member companies; and vice presidents from Canada and Mexico.

Committees and Divisions

Most ASTA issues and activities are bottom-up driven from its divisions and committees specific to issues of importance. Members may belong to seven divisions, including the Associate Members, Brokers-Agents, Corn & Sorghum, Farm, Lawn, Soybean, and Vegetable & Flower Seed Divisions. Each division has its own governing body and committees pertaining to division meetings and key topics. ASTA has nine standing committees addressing key seed science, policy, and education issues. They include the Biotechnology, Intellectual Property Rights, International (with a Phytosanitary Subcommittee), Legislative & Legal Concerns, Management Skills Program, Membership, Public Research Advisory, Seed Industry Relations, and Seed Treatment & Environmental Committees as well as a Wildflower and Native Plants Group.

Funding

ASTA receives the bulk of its revenue from membership dues. Other sources of revenue are meeting registrations, exhibitor fees, publications, administrative services, and investments. The association also maintains a number of joint ventures with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Agency for International Development, and Inter-American Development Bank. It continues to oversee accounts and budgets for the American Seed Research Foundation and National Council of Commercial Plant Breeders. ASTA is tax exempt under section 501 (c) (6) of the Internal Revenue Code.

¹ Plant germplasm refers to the reproductive cells of plants, particularly the portion of the cells involved in heredity. Germplasm is both the genetic material (genes, groups of genes, chromosomes) that controls heredity and the tissues, organs, and organisms which express variation contained in the genetic material. Plant germplasm is most commonly conserved in the form of seeds and reproductive vectors (i.e., roots, tubers, whole plants).

American Seed Trade Association Annual Report 2001-2002

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message to the members



The 2001-02 fiscal year was one of the most eventful in the 119-year history of the American Seed Trade Association. ASTA focused on two major issues affecting nearly all North American seed companies: invasive plant species and the adventitious (unintended) presence of biotech events in seed.

Invasive Species

ASTA took a two-pronged approach to the invasive species issue. First, we continued to challenge the inappropriate inclusion of widely planted agricultural species on published state invasive species lists. In Virginia, for example, ASTA's legal counsel challenged a published list that includes 11 common turfgrass species.

Secondly, we focused on defining the long-term role of the U.S. seed industry in protecting the environment from potentially harmful invasive species. Our Executive Committee met with a wide variety of experts, including representatives of The Nature Conservancy and the national Invasive Species Council. ASTA found a spirit of cooperation and a strong desire for seed industry input on invasive species issues.

ASTA also made important organizational changes related to its work on invasive plant species. Jim Shearl, an experienced seed professional and former manager of the Illinois Crop Improvement Association, was appointed chair of ASTA's Invasive Species Working Group, replacing ASTA Second Vice President Don Wertman. Additionally, Dr. Gary Beil, executive director of the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association, was nominated by ASTA and appointed by the U.S. Department of the Interior to serve on its Invasive Species Advisory Committee.

Adventitious Presence

Adventitious presence (AP) of biotech events in seed threatens the free movement of seed worldwide. No lot of seed is safe from delayed delivery or rejection unless rules governing unintended biotech content are agreed upon domestically and internationally.

ASTA formed an Adventitious Presence Steering Committee to coordinate the association's response to issues surrounding AP. Initial work focused on 1) standardized biotech seed testing, 2) varietal purity standards and how they relate to biotechnology, and 3) correlation of AP levels from "seed to stalk." The ASTA Executive Committee mandated consideration of position papers on these topics at the 2002 Annual Convention in Boston by ASTA's Biotechnology Committee and Board of Directors.

The AP action plan calls for a concerted public relations effort to communicate and disseminate ASTA's positions on AP subtopics, with the ultimate goal of domestic and international regulatory acceptance of defined thresholds for adventitious biotech events in seed by January 2003.

World Seed Congress

On May 26-30, 2002, ASTA was the proud host of the World Seed Congress in Chicago, Ill., marking the inaugural meeting of the International Seed Federation (ISF) with the merger of the International Seed Trade Federation (FIS) and International Association of Plant Breeders. FIS President and ASTA Past-President Dietrich Schmidt presided at the meeting.

Organizational Changes

The 2001-02 fiscal year began with a move to ASTA's new headquarters in Alexandria, Va., a short metro ride from our former office in downtown Washington, DC.

In October, ASTA began a search for a new Executive Vice President. The Executive Committee redefined the job description to Chief Executive Officer. After an exhaustive search and approval by ASTA's Board of Directors, Richard (Dick) Crowder was selected for the CEO position.

Operational Improvements

In order to maintain the highest level of member service, an ASTA Administrative Committee was created to supervise the administration of the ASTA office and evaluate staff performance. Policy matters continue to be the responsibility of ASTA's Board of Directors and Executive Committee.

Annual budget reporting was substantially enlarged and expanded compared to previous years in order to make association finances more transparent and understandable for all members.

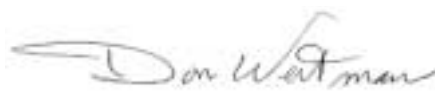
2001-02 was a turning point for ASTA. Our association finished the year stronger, more focused, and better prepared to deliver greater value to our more than 800 member companies.



Drew Kinder
President

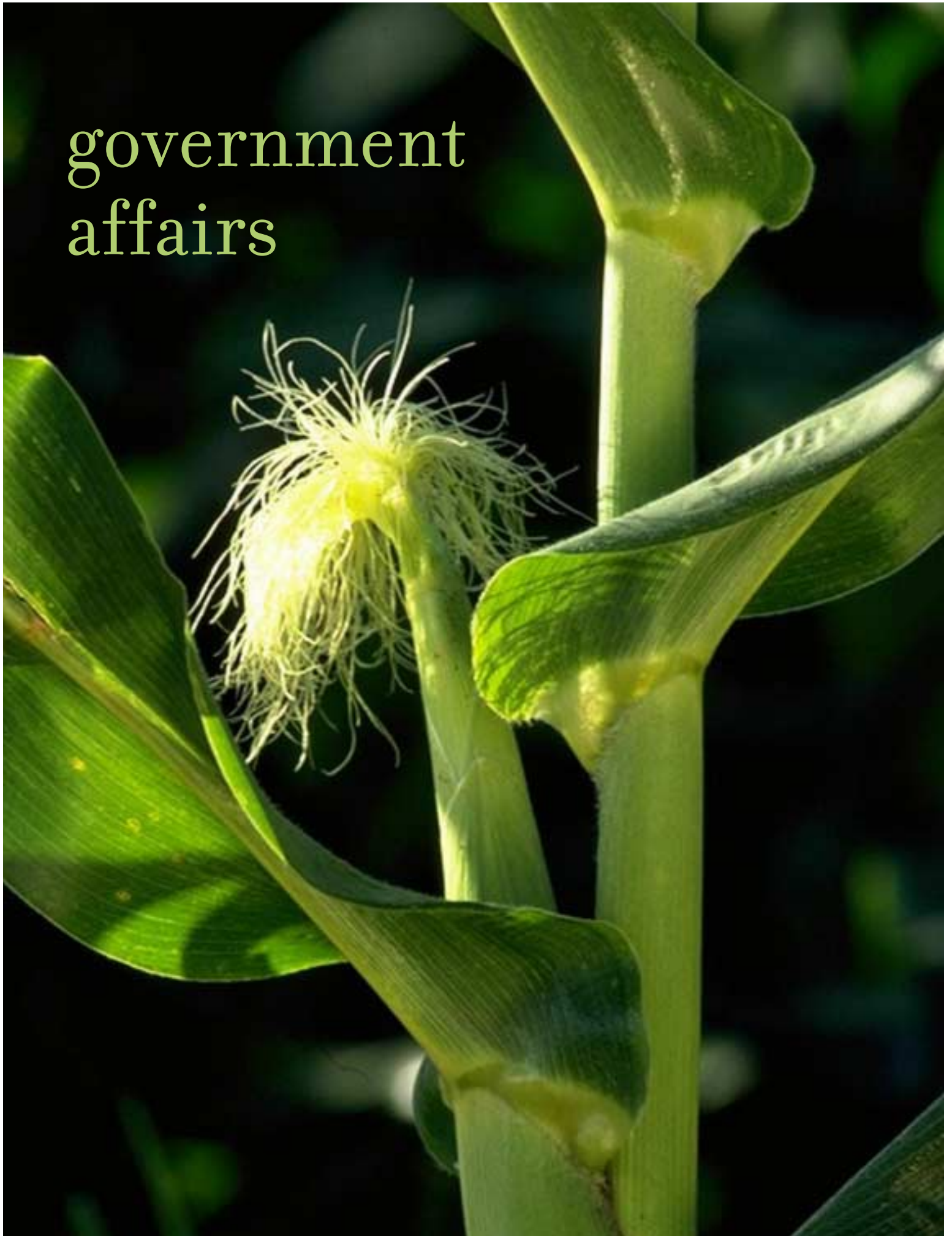


L. Sonny Beck
First Vice President



Donald Wertman
Second Vice President

government
affairs





ASTA continued in 2001-02 its leadership on key issues of industry-wide importance, such as agricultural biotechnology and the adventitious presence of biotech events in seed, intellectual property rights, and invasive plant species. It also dealt with proposed producer protection legislation in certain states and irradiation of U.S. mail due to the 2001 anthrax scares. ASTA continued to work with state and regional seed associations and other stakeholders in the food chain to communicate messages and influence the outcomes of these key issues.

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Adventitious Biotech Presence

In October 2001, the ASTA Executive Committee created an action plan to address the adventitious presence (AP) of not yet approved biotech events in seed, and in January 2002, formed an AP Steering Committee within its Biotechnology Committee. This group, comprised of technology providers and ASTA staff, was charged with compiling inputs for the U.S. Interagency Group on Biotechnology to help develop a government AP policy. Inputs include white papers on seed purity standards, correlation between AP levels in seed and its progeny, and test methods for the detection of AP levels in seed.

ASTA commented in July 2001 on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) *Federal Register* notice on the assessment of additional scientific information concerning StarLink™ corn, which contained the partially approved biotech event Cry9C. The association

encouraged the panel to conclude, based on scientific evidence, that the allergenic potential and exposure of the Cry9C protein was sufficiently evaluated to establish the requested 20 parts per billion tolerance in corn grain.

ASTA encouraged its members involved in corn seed production and distribution to continue testing in 2001-02 for the adventitious presence of the Cry9C protein in non-StarLink™ corn seed varieties.

ASTA responded in October to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA's) *Federal Register* notice on its program priorities for the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition. The development of agency policy on the adventitious presence of biotech events in seed was one of three ASTA-recommended priorities.

Other priority areas were the FDA's mandatory pre-market notification proposal for biotech foods and draft guidance for voluntary labeling of biotech foods.

Other Biotech Issues

ASTA again hosted the Grain Handlers Database, managed by Farm Progress Companies, on its web site this past fiscal year to help corn growers locate grain handling facilities that were willing to purchase, receive, and handle biotech grain not yet approved for export to the European Union (EU). About 2,000 facilities participated in the database, which was updated in time for the 2001 harvest. Links to the database were also maintained on the web sites of the National Corn Growers Association, member companies, and other stakeholders.

ASTA commented on the EPA's *Federal Register* notice about the "Reassessment of Time Limited Registrations for Existing *Bacillus thuringiensis* (*Bt*) Corn and *Bt* Cotton Plant-Incorporated Protectants (PIPs)."

The association supported the renewal of registrations before the Sept. 30, 2001 expiration date for *Bt* cotton and corn products, preferably without any time limitations or restrictions. ASTA also supported the adoption of exemptions for certain PIPs from all of the requirements under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act as proposed by the EPA.

In response to the FDA's proposed recommendations for labeling biotech foods, ASTA voiced support for science-based and non-misleading labeling only for biotech foods that materially differ in composition (including potential allergenicity), nutritional value, or intended use from conventional counterparts. The association expressed concern about labeling foods simply based on their method of production or on ethical considerations. In addition, ASTA called for the development of de minimis levels and other labeling exemptions for adventitious biotech events in food.

Based upon a U.S. Department of Agriculture *Federal Register* notice, ASTA commented in August 2001 to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service that plant pest risks associated with Living Modified Organisms (LMOs) fall within the scope of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) as do invasive species and quarantined pests. However, ASTA noted that seeds

considered LMOs do not inherently pose plant pest issues. The IPPC is recognized by the World Trade Organization in its Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures as international standards for phytosanitary measures affecting trade.

ASTA emphasized that phytosanitary measures to protect plants must be based as much as possible on objective and accurate scientific data.

Intellectual Property Rights

ASTA continued to advocate intellectual property rights (IPR) to seed trade associations and farm and commodity groups worldwide to enhance the protection and development of seed varieties. The association had a new paper drafted in 2001 on the benefits of IPR, including quantitative data and expanded text, to enhance its 1998 position statement. The paper, available on ASTA's web site, is being used to inform policymakers and stakeholders about the importance of IPR in the United States and around the world.



Invasive Species

ASTA's Executive Committee worked in April 2002 to devise an action plan for the seed industry to provide input at the state and national levels on invasive plant species. While some plant species need to be controlled for environmental and/or economic reasons, some agricultural species are erroneously listed as invasive by certain states. The seed industry's ability to market and sell certain species, such as Reed Canary Grass, Crown Vetch, and Bermuda Grass, could be at stake in some states, largely due to lack of science- and risk-based analysis and industry input. ASTA challenged in 2001-02 the invasive species lists in Idaho, Indiana, Virginia, and Wisconsin. The association tried to get beneficial species removed from such lists in the interest of the farm, lawn, flower, and wildflower seed sectors. Panel discussions on state invasive species activities were held at ASTA's 2001 Farm & Lawn Seed Conferences and 2002 Vegetable & Flower Seed Conference.

ASTA nominee Gary Beil, Ph.D., president and CEO of the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association, was appointed on April 1, 2002 to serve on the Invasive Species Advisory Committee (ISAC). The ISAC was created to provide advice to the national Invasive Species Council as authorized by Executive Order 13112 on a broad array of invasive species issues, including the prevention of new introductions, controlling existing invasive species, and minimizing their impacts on the economy, environment, and human health.

In October 2001, Jim Shearl of Golden-Harvest was designated co-chair of ASTA's Working Group on Invasive Species with ASTA Second Vice President Don Wertman of Seedway.

Mail Irradiation

Due to the 2001 anthrax scares, the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) began irradiating small quantities of mail. The Federal Seed Laboratory conducted tests on the effects of irradiation on seed and found that the dose needed to kill anthrax would also kill seed. In response to this finding, ASTA wrote a letter to the U.S. Postmaster

General in November 2001, expressing its concerns about the potential irradiation of seeds sent through the mail. The association also met with USPS officials. As a result, ASTA obtained two seats on the USPS' newly appointed Technical Advisory Committee, charged with assessing mail security issues. Fortunately, seed was not affected in 2001-02 by mail irradiation as it was limited to zip codes 202xx through 205xx, primarily government offices in Washington, DC.



Producer Protection Legislation

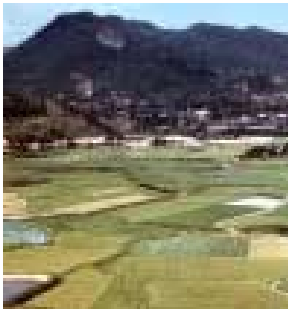
ASTA voiced concern in 2001-02 about model state producer protection legislation law, embraced in 2000 by several state Attorneys General, in a special workshop during ASTA's 2001 Corn & Sorghum and Soybean Seed Conferences. Speakers from a cross-section of the industry and government affairs representatives from several member companies briefed attendees on the risks of uniform contract law provisions and measures that could potentially compromise intellectual property rights.

The Producer Protection Act, initiated as model state legislation in September 2000, outlines unfair practices for agribusiness in contracting with growers or producers. If adopted, such legislation would undermine seed contracting by prohibiting confidentiality clauses and tournament compensation.

In communications with state legislators, ASTA noted that the seed industry should be allowed to maintain its positive business relationships with growers. Contracts between seed companies and growers should include provisions that reward producers for hard work, promote success and investment in producing value-added commodities, and outline fair and reasonable risks and obligations. The association also developed a working paper on this topic in 2002.

A photograph of a vast field of yellow flowers, likely rapeseed, stretching to the horizon under a bright blue sky with light, wispy clouds. The flowers are in full bloom, and the perspective is from a low angle, looking across the field.

international marketing



Collectively, the U.S. seed industry maintains a trade relationship with more than 120 countries worldwide. ASTA's international marketing efforts remained focused in 2001-02 on enhancing the free movement of seed around the world.

A major accomplishment of ASTA during the fiscal year was the U.S. government's adoption of the National Seed Health System (NSHS), a government and industry collaboration designed to address seed health and trade issues in an orderly, scientific, and systematic manner. The NSHS was initiated and developed by ASTA members to benefit seed exporters and enhance international seed trade.



Effective August 17, 2001, the NSHS expedites the phytosanitary certification process required for exports by providing an accreditation scheme for non-government entities to perform laboratory seed health testing, seed sampling, and phytosanitary inspections to meet international import regulations. Accredited entities rapidly collect and report data to the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service for processing phytosanitary certificates. The NSHS also facilitates the logistics of handling and processing seed shipments and uses standardized testing and inspection methods. This allows for improved quality assurance and more timely marketing of seed.

In the past fiscal year, ASTA also initiated trade-enhancing activities in China, Asia and Pacific region, MERCOSUR (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay), Russia, North America, and Africa. Activities focused on regulatory system accreditation programs, regulatory reform related to seed variety registration, seed certification, phytosanitary import requirements, and Plant Variety Protection implementation systems. In addition, ASTA, through the USDA, International Seed Trade Federation (FIS), and Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Seed Schemes, continued to press for globally-accepted tolerance levels for adventitious biotech events to prevent disruptions in international seed trade.

ASTA sponsored key industry representatives and technical experts in 2001-02 at meetings of the FIS, OECD Seed Schemes, United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization, North American Plant Protection Organization, African Seed Trade Association, Asia and Pacific Seed Association, International Seed Testing Association, Convention on Biological Diversity, and International Plant Protection Convention. These representatives provided input to global policymakers on the U.S. seed industry's position on phytosanitary issues, essentially derived plant varieties, and access to and conservation of genetic resources.

ASTA continued to work with Iowa State University, Purdue University, Cornell University, and Michigan State University in the administration of technical assistance programs around the world to foster trade with the U.S. seed industry, encourage regionalization of regulatory systems, and advocate intellectual property rights and the use of modern biotechnology. The association also collaborated with other external organizations that support the U.S. seed industry's international trade policy agenda. Key organizations included the U.S. Agency on International Development, USDA's Agricultural Technical Advisory Committee, U.S. Agricultural Export Development Council, Plant Safeguarding Alliance, and Washington, DC-based AgTradeCoalition.

Following are highlights by region of international marketing projects undertaken in 2001-02:

Asia & Pacific



ASTA concluded its first year of publishing articles in the *China Farmers' Daily*, Foreign Seed Industry Edition, about the U.S. seed sector and its strengths. This newspaper is China's official state agricultural publication with a circulation of 700,000. Eight

articles strove to influence readers' thinking about their own seed sector's freedom to operate, government's role in providing oversight of seed varieties while fostering seed sector growth, use of genetics in seed research and development, value of intellectual property protection, and public-private sector collaboration to enhance seed development and distribution. ASTA hosted Song Xunfeng, editor of *China Farmers' Daily*, at the 2001 Corn & Sorghum and Soybean Seed Research Conferences in Chicago, Ill.

With the help of the Asia Pacific Seed Association, ASTA sponsored workshops on Plant Variety Protection (PVP) in China and Thailand to educate PVP officials there about implementing national PVP laws and effectively operating a PVP office.

ASTA submitted comments in November 2001 to Japan's Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries on proposed revisions to its Seeds and Seedlings Law, which outlines official standards for the production, conditioning, stocking and packing of certain seeds. Quality and labeling standards for biotech corn seeds were included in the proposed revisions. ASTA, through the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, submitted comments to Japan in support of agricultural biotechnology and science-based regulations.

ASTA also submitted comments to the USDA about China's unworkable biotech laws, slated to go into effect March 20, 2002. As a result of ASTA's and other stakeholder concerns about the laws, which could have halted U.S. exports of agricultural commodities, China and the United States reached an agreement to prevent such trade disruption.

South America

As a result of ASTA workshops in South America, accreditation standards for seed testing facilities were passed by MERCOSUR in late 2001 and individual countries—including Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay—began implementing accreditation programs.

ASTA workshops on phytosanitary reform led to representatives from each MERCOSUR country compiling a list of regulated quarantine pests to consider reductions in non-seedborne pests for planting seed from the United States.

Moreover, through relationships with regulators in the region, ASTA created a mechanism for resolving potential trade issues in several key MERCOSUR markets.

North America

ASTA communicated with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) about the negative trade impact of its proposed requirement for phytosanitary certificates from Canada for the importation of nursery stock, plants, roots, bulbs, seeds, and other plant products. This regulation was originally slated to go into effect on Jan. 22, 2002, but ultimately, was not implemented. ASTA, in cooperation with the Canadian Seed Trade Association, encouraged APHIS to work with its Canadian counterpart to safeguard both countries against invasive species, while eliminating the need for phytosanitary certificates.

Through the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO), ASTA pushed for the establishment of standards for a laboratory test for Stewart's wilt in maize seed to eliminate phytosanitary trade disruptions related to it in North America. The test, which shows if Stewart's wilt is on the seed, is undergoing peer review within NAPPO countries and two European Union laboratories. When validated, this test will be recognized by NAPPO and the International Seed Testing Association as the standard.

ASTA hosted the World Seed Congress in Chicago, Ill., May 26-30, 2002. The Congress marked the historic merger between the International Seed Trade Federation and International Association of Plant Breeders, resulting in the new International Seed Federation. ASTA

representatives provided the U.S. seed industry's perspective on issues covered at the Congress' section and committee meetings. A draft paper was discussed on the access of relevant technology to test for adventitious biotech events in seed.

Russia

ASTA worked this past fiscal year with the Government of Russia, Association of Russia Independent Seed Companies (ARISC), and Russian National Seed Association (RNSA) in an advisory capacity to facilitate seed regulatory reform and international trade in Russia. ASTA fostered greater cooperation among these Russian entities as their unification will allow for greater regulatory reform and privatization of the Russian seed industry.

In January 2002, ASTA hosted an industry-government Russian delegation in the United States with stops in Albuquerque, N.M., for ASTA's Vegetable & Flower Seed Conference and in Washington, DC, to meet with USDA officials. Russia's Vice Minister of Agriculture was part of the delegation. During his visit, U.S. and Russian delegates discussed initiating a Pest Risk Assessment for maize seed. Such an assessment could potentially eliminate the phytosanitary barriers that prevent maize seed trade between the United States and Russia.

ASTA was featured in a series of articles in the Russian seed magazine, *Semena Digest*, through a joint agreement between ARISC and ASTA. The purpose of the articles was to heighten awareness and understanding of the U.S. seed industry.

Africa

ASTA continued to work closely with the newly formed African Seed Trade Association (AFSTA). This association provides a forum for African and foreign companies to discuss issues of common interest, explore business opportunities, and advocate seed regulatory systems that are supportive of private sector activity. At its March 2002 annual meeting in Dakar, Senegal, AFSTA developed a draft seed law and called for the establishment of PVP laws throughout the continent.

AFSTA also developed a position statement on sustainable agriculture in April 2002. The paper encourages the use of biotechnology and other technologies to improve agricultural productivity in Africa as well as the enhancement of African capacities to develop and assess biotech crops.

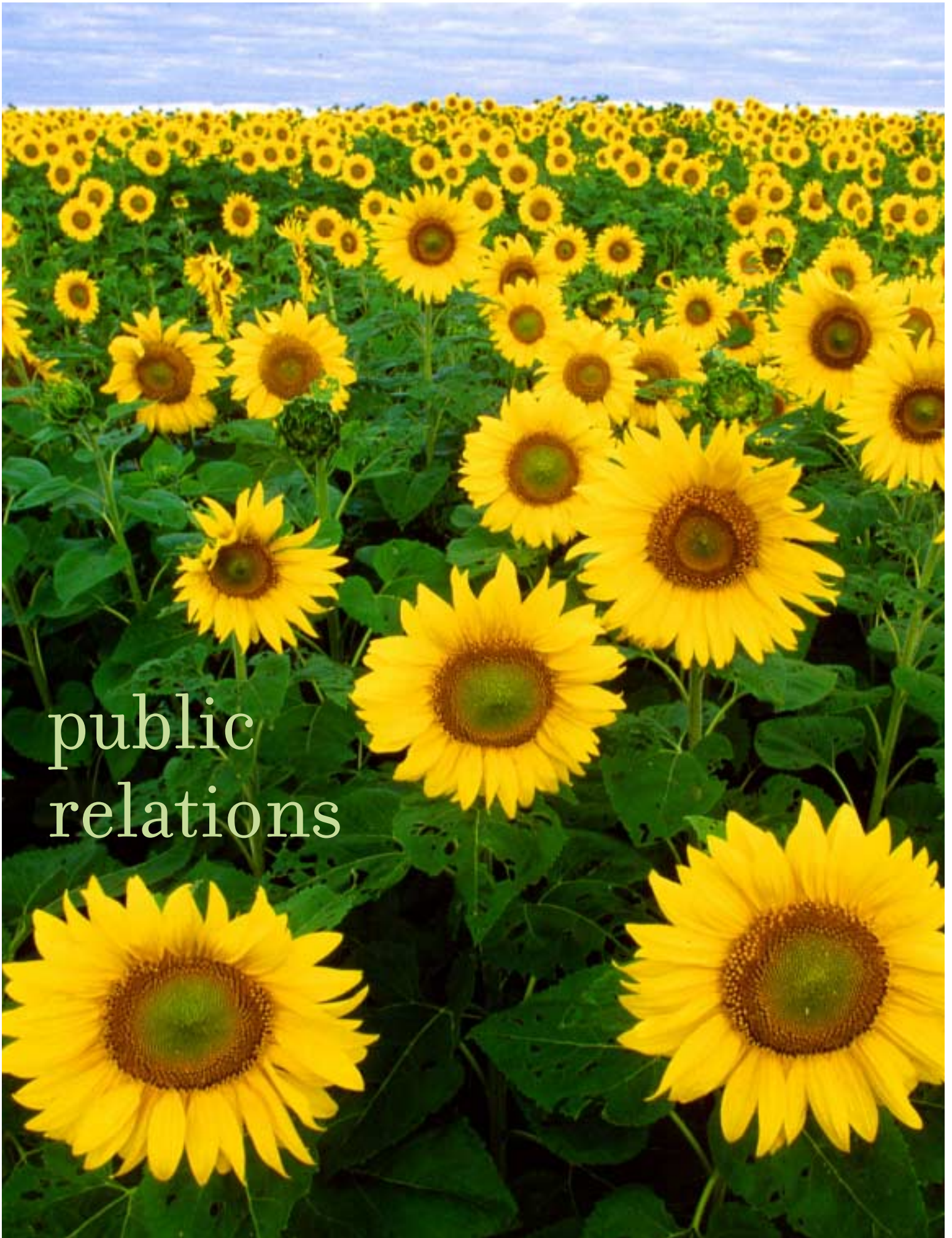
Moreover, AFSTA helped devise action plans to harmonize seed regulations in Sub-Saharan Africa. This harmonization will make regulations more transparent and fair for U.S. companies operating in the region or exporting to it.

With ASTA's assistance, the Uganda Seed Trade Association moved closer to transforming from a government institution to a privatized association. This change will help give local seed companies a more effective voice on seed regulations and issues, ultimately facilitating private seed trade. The Seed Trade Association of Kenya continued to use a grant obtained by ASTA to implement regulatory reform workshops for government officials in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.

East Africa took steps in 2002 to reduce its phytosanitary requirements from 33 to three quarantine pests. Similar initiatives, supported by ASTA and the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization, were initiated in West and Southern Africa.

ASTA, in partnership with the USDA, FIS, and French National Seed Association (Groupement National Interprofessionnel des Semences), provided the stimulus, technical support, and financial means for the establishment of AFSTA in 1999. ASTA's Vice President of International Marketing continued to serve on AFSTA's Board of Directors in 2001-02.





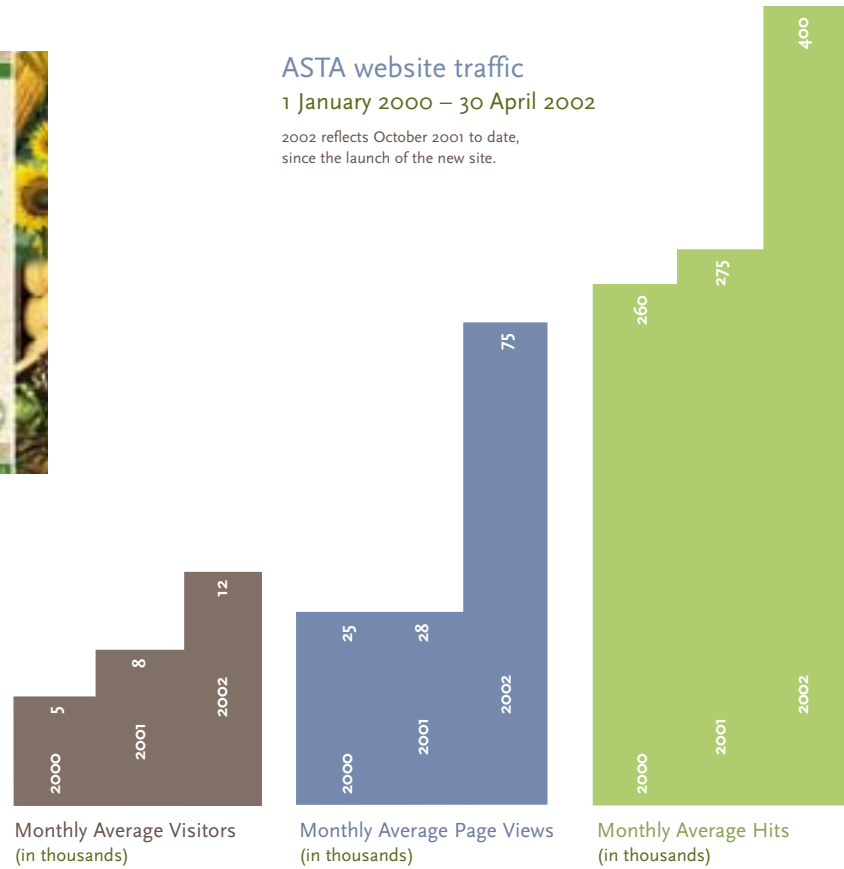
public
relations



ASTA website traffic

1 January 2000 – 30 April 2002

2002 reflects October 2001 to date, since the launch of the new site.



ASTA’s public relations efforts in 2001-02 focused on enhancing information resources for members and ensuring members’ access to them. A major accomplishment was redesigning the ASTA web site to enhance its visual image, content, functionality, interactivity, and data input/maintenance capabilities. Other information resources included the continuation of *ASTA Seed E-News*, an electronic compilation of seed-related news; *INSIDE ASTA*, a monthly internal newsletter focused on policy updates and ASTA activities; news releases on ASTA events and policy comments; Q&As on key issues, such as the adventitious presence of biotech events in seed; online updates on government and international affairs; flash e-vites and other electronic communications on ASTA meetings; and specialized publications for the National Seed Health System and other initiatives.

Communication with trade and consumer news media, agricultural groups, and international delegations on seed issues also remained a priority for ASTA public relations this past fiscal year. Staff regularly contributed to the seed trade magazines *Seed World*, *Seed & Crops Digest*, and *Seed Today*. This included a monthly column on policy issues in *Seed World* as of February 2002. ASTA’s president was featured in *Seed & Crops Digest* and each quarterly issue of *Seed Today* as well as on SeedQuest.com. Hundreds of inquiries

from journalists and other stakeholders were handled. Media interviews were also arranged on specific seed issues for ASTA leaders with trade and consumer press, including WGN-TV and radio network and *Business Week* magazine.

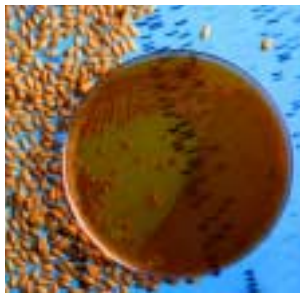
www.amseed.org

ASTA’s new web site launched in September 2001 with new sections and information, updated content on all pages, extensive agricultural links, seed statistics, legal development updates, *Seed E-News* and daily agricultural news, three calendars of events (general, legislative, and international), interactive forms for the transfer of information, and a password-protected members only section.

The members only pages include contact information for ASTA’s Board of Directors and staff, *ASTA Yearbook*, *INSIDE ASTA* newsletter with archives, columns and editorials by ASTA’s president, legal and Amicus Curiae briefs, model arbitration language, Litigation Clearinghouse participation form, international marketing newsletters, and important member-specific updates.

Based on monthly web traffic reports, the number of visitors to the site, number of pages viewed, and total number of hits to ASTA’s web site have tripled since the launch of the new site.

ASRF & NCCPB



American Seed Research Foundation

The American Seed Research Foundation (ASRF) was established in 1959 to encourage research in plant and seed biology and to facilitate the transfer of resulting technology to benefit the seed industry, farmers, and consumers on a global basis. The foundation supports public research in plant and seed biology, applied research projects with broad or crop-specific applications, public-private cooperation in seed-related research, and educational opportunities in seed-related sciences.

Since its inception, the ASRF has reviewed more than 800 research proposals and funded 54 projects. Its investment in basic seed research totals about \$800,000 to date. These funds have

stimulated nearly \$2.5 million in matching funds provided by cooperating organizations. Funds have been distributed to 32 public institutions and 69 individual seed researchers to date. Research from each project is published upon completion for sharing with the seed industry at large. In 2001, six projects funded from 1997-2000 were completed and published.

ASRF launched a new membership drive in the fall of 2001 and obtained 19 new members for a total of 61. A new membership brochure helped with recruitment efforts.

"Operation Student Connection," which sponsors graduate students of seed-related disciplines to attend ASTA's Annual Convention, continued for the second year in 2002. Students are matched with seed company "mentors" during the meeting to learn about seed business. In turn, students are required to give a brief progress report on his or

her area of research to ASRF and ASTA members. The program gives students industry contacts and ASTA members a glimpse of new areas of research. Eight students participated in the program at the 2002 Annual Convention in Boston.



National Council of Commercial Plant Breeders

The National Council of Commercial Plant Breeders (NCCPB) was founded in 1954 as a non-profit organization to promote the achievement and interests of U.S. plant breeders worldwide. It promotes plant breeding, genetic research, and related plant improvement disciplines as career paths to help ensure an ongoing supply of trained plant scientists. The NCCPB

promotes high standards of professional and business ethics concerned with plant breeding and genetic research. It supports voluntary, intellectual property protection for private developers or inventors of plant improvements on a worldwide basis and fosters cooperation and mutual assistance with public plant research agencies.

Moreover, the NCCPB recognizes individual scientific achievements in plant and seed improvement with annual awards. In 2001, Richard McConnell, Ph.D., president of Pioneer Hi-Bred Int'l., Inc., received the Genetics and Plant Breeding Award for Industry for his lifetime of achievement in seed production and business. Graduate students Suzanne Michelson of the University of Wisconsin and Paul Ragsdale of Texas A&M University were honored for their aptitude in plant breeding and leadership skills.

ASTA hosted four major conferences in the 2001-02 fiscal year.

conference highlights

Farm & Lawn Seed Conferences

NOVEMBER, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

Invasive species was again a major topic at the Lawn Seed Conference along with ryegrass grow-out and uniform seed labeling. Representatives from the Missouri and Oregon Departments of Agriculture addressed these topics, respectively. W. David Downey, Ph.D., executive director of Purdue University's Center for Agribusiness, discussed business management skills at the 47th Farm Seed Conference.



Corn & Sorghum and Soybean Seed Research Conferences and Seed Expo

DECEMBER, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

The joint 56th Corn & Sorghum Seed Research Conference, 31st Soybean Seed Research Conference and Seed Expo drew more than 2,700 attendees and 250 exhibit booths. Highlights included sessions on regulatory and consumer issues related to plant biotechnology in the United States and European

Union, seed purity control and harmonizing international purity standards, ways to improve seed production, pest control strategies, new research on plant breeding and genetics, and human resource and business management.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Under Secretary for Regulatory and Marketing Programs Bill Hawks addressed agroterrorism, the Farm Bill, impact of irradiation on seed, and potential domestic policy on adventitious biotech events in seed. ASTA gave Hawks a "Special Service Award" for his work on these issues. Michael Abrashoff, retired Navy Commander of the USS Benfold, delivered a keynote address on retaining and motivating employees. Also featured was a plenary panel on biotechnology and the seed industry.

Vegetable & Flower Seed Conference

JANUARY, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

The 41st Vegetable & Flower Seed Conference covered proposed state biotech legislation, invasive plant species, the National Seed Health System, native plant conservation, and consumer food preferences related

to fruits and vegetables. Motivational speaker and magician Bodine Balasco inspired attendees with keynote messages on leadership and effecting change. ASTA hosted at the conference a Russian delegation, including the Government of Russia's Vice Prime Minister of Agriculture. He and other delegates presented information at the International Committee meeting about the Russian seed sector. In addition, the division created a new Organic Seed Certification Committee.



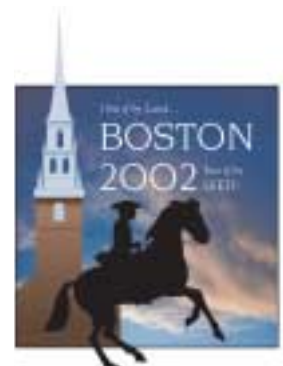
ASTA Annual Convention

JUNE, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

The 119th ASTA Annual Convention brought together all areas of seed business to discuss issues of industry-wide importance, such as policy related to biotech crops, intellectual property protection, and seed marketing. James Watson, Ph.D., co-discoverer of the structure of DNA, was the keynote speaker. Other speakers included Juan Enriquez, Ph.D.,

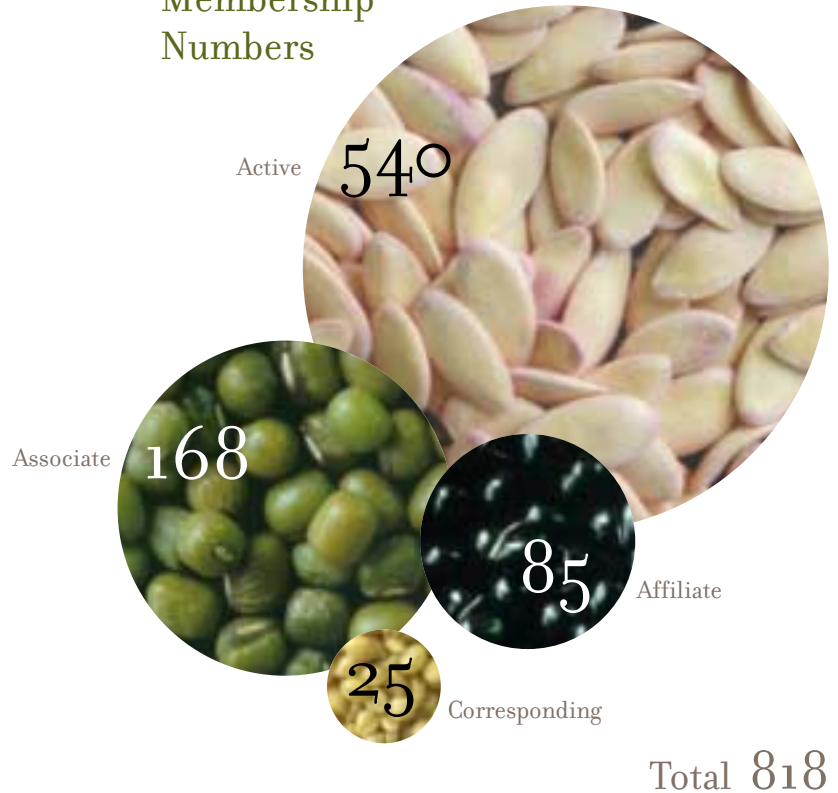
director, Life Sciences Project, Harvard University, and David Bossman, executive vice president of the American Feed Industry Association.

Five seed industry leaders were honored at the Annual Convention for their many years of professional achievement. *Honorary Membership in ASTA* was presented to John Baylor, Ph.D., executive director of the Atlantic Seedsmen's Association, Inc., (ASA) for long and outstanding service to the seed industry through the ASA and ASTA. *Distinguished Service Awards* were given to Greg Lamka, Ph.D., of Pioneer Hi-Bred, Int'l, Inc.; Denis McGee, Ph.D., of Iowa State University; Pieter Vandenberg, Ph.D., of Seminis Vegetable Seeds; and Darrell Maddox, Ph.D., of STA Laboratories for their tireless efforts in establishing the National Seed Health System (see International Marketing for more information).



member services

2001-2002 Membership Numbers



In addition to legislative and regulatory assistance and international programs, ASTA continued to provide its members with information resources, lower meeting registration fees than non-members, affinity programs (i.e., Prudential retirement program and Broadwing telecommunication services), access to ASTA's Management Academy, and individualized customer service. Information resources included electronic summaries of seed-related news, the association's newsletter *INSIDE ASTA*, 2001 Yearbook & Proceedings, and 2001-02 Membership Directory. The latter was redesigned to be more user-friendly.

An action plan was created to recruit new members using revamped recruitment tools to be implemented through 2003. These tools include a new information folder, membership brochure, application form, and corresponding member recruitment brochure. In addition, ASTA pursued all non-member companies at the regional and state levels eligible for association membership. Twenty-five new active members, nine associate, two corresponding, and one affiliate member joined ASTA this past fiscal year.

A telephone survey of randomly selected active, associate, and affiliate members was conducted in 2001 to identify the association's strengths and weaknesses in terms of customer service. A total of 357 interviews were completed. While 96 percent of the members surveyed said they would recommend ASTA membership to others based upon their customer service experiences, the ASTA staff is using feedback from the survey to better serve the membership.

ASTA also revised its active member definition and dues structure in 2001-02. Active members are now defined as firms engaged in transactions involving research, development, growing or selling of seed for planting purposes, and technology delivered in or on seed. Firms engaged in transactions involving the purchase or sale of seed or technology delivered in or on the seed that act as broker, agent, or representative for principals in these transactions are classified as broker-agent members.

ASTA Divisions and Committees

All ASTA divisions and committees met at least once during 2001-02 to discuss and resolve issues specific to planting seed markets. These meetings were held in conjunction with ASTA's 2001 Corn & Sorghum and Soybean Conferences in Chicago, 2002 Vegetable & Flower Conference in Albuquerque, and/or 2002 Annual Convention in Boston. Below were key activities:

Divisions

Members of the **Corn & Sorghum Division** provided input on regulatory and legislative proposals relating to biotech events in seed at the federal and state levels. They continued to call for the establishment of realistic thresholds for the adventitious presence of biotech events in seed and participated in a strategic planning session on this topic with ASTA's Executive Committee in October 2001. The division also conducted another successful joint conference with the Soybean Division.

The Corn & Sorghum Division's Basic Research Committee asked the U.S. House and Senate Subcommittees on Appropriations in March 2002 for a \$1.5 million increase in funding for the Germplasm Enhancement for Maize (GEM) project in the 2003 federal budget. This increase would be in addition to the previously allocated \$500,000. GEM's objective is to increase the productivity and genetic diversity of maize grown in the United States. The Basic Research Committee also reviewed American Seed Research Foundation (ASRF) research proposals for possible funding and concurred with its decisions.

The division's Export Market Development Committee continued to financially support and be involved with the U.S. Grains Council, representing the U.S. feed grain industry. In addition to building global markets, the committee serves international customers for U.S. grains through a unique partnership of U.S. producers and agribusinesses, including the seed industry and public sector.

The Machinery Committees of the Corn & Sorghum and Soybean Divisions evaluated the advantages of ISO 9002 certification for seed plants, new equipment for treating corn seed, and ways to optimize soybean seed quality during harvest.

Agribusiness management was the key topic for the **Farm Seed Division** in 2001-02. The division decided to streamline its resources in the future by holding two, rather than three, meetings. The two future ones will be at the ASTA Annual Convention and Western Seed Association meeting.

The Forage and Small Grains Committee of the Farm Seed Division proposed modifications to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Conservation Reserve Program regarding planting width on terraces. The recommendations would help farmers better utilize their equipment, save them time, and reduce or eliminate costly "point rows." The committee also was engaged with invasive species issues at the state level.

Invasive species remained an important topic for the **Lawn Seed Division**. It provided input on ASTA's comments on the draft National Invasive Species Management Plan and monitored state activities. In

addition, the division continued to pursue acceptance of more accurate fluorescence testing practices for ryegrass.

The **Soybean Division** held another successful Soybean Seed Research Conference, covering Soybean Cyst Nematode research, soybean aphids, and seed marketing issues.

The Soybean Division's Basic Research and Seed Improvement Committee completed its work in establishing and getting funding for the Soybean Cyst Nematode (SCN) and Phytophthora pathogen libraries. Thanks to a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, funding of the pathology libraries increased from \$200,000 for two years to \$2.2 million over three years. The United Soybean Board also contributed money. The committee discussed new SCN nomenclature and recommendations to expand the libraries to other soybean pathogens. In addition, the committee reviewed ASRF research proposals and endorsed foundation selections.

The **Vegetable & Flower Seed Division** identified the need to define "certified organic seeds" with the National Organic Certification Board, so that ASTA members can comply with its rules and regulations. To this end, ASTA established an Organic Seed Certification Committee to develop recommended standards for organic vegetable and flower seeds.

The division requested through a resolution that ASTA support expedited adoption of the Recommended Uniform State

Seed Law (RUSSEL) by states in the interest of packet seed sellers. RUSSEL is a model act to regulate the labeling, sale, offering, exposing, or transporting for sale of agricultural, vegetable, flower, and tree and shrub seeds. Its purpose is to promote uniform and recognized language that states can consider for seed laws.

In addition, the division developed a handbook for incoming officers and chairs to explain the policies, procedures, and general guidelines for effectively running the division.

The Flower Seed Committee of the Vegetable & Flower Seed Division addressed the potential impact on flower seed of postal irradiation and of federal and state invasive species initiatives on the sale of flower seed. Representatives from the seed industry and New Mexico state government discussed invasive species issues in January.

Representatives from the Ornamental Plant Germplasm Center at The Ohio State University (OSU) and the California Crop Improvement Association discussed plant germplasm donation and preservation and defining organic seeds, respectively, with the Vegetable & Flower Seed Division's Home Garden Committee. OSU pledged to identify and evaluate traits desired by the seed industry and consumers along with methods for successful long-term storage of seed. Following a discussion on organic seed, committee members voted to develop a unified position on organic terminology.

The **Brokers-Agents Division** developed ways to enhance and streamline communications with its members.

Standing Committees

ASTA's **Biotechnology Committee** provided input on policy and science developments related to the adventitious presence of biotech events in seed and state biotech regulations. Its meetings featured strong speakers on agricultural biotechnology and labeling as well as updates on the Convention on Biological Diversity and International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The committee also continued to foster relationships with other agriculture and food groups. Committee members provided input to ASTA on *Federal Register* notices and International Seed Trade Federation papers related to biotech crops.

Intellectual Property Rights Committee continued to advocate intellectual property rights (IPR) worldwide by providing input on and promoting a new ASTA position paper and consolidated International Seed Trade Federation brochure on this topic. Committee chair John Gerard spoke to the American Soybean Industry Council about IPR in March 2002 on behalf of ASTA.

The **International Committee** continued to formulate and implement international activities in line with ASTA's Unified Export Strategy, a comprehensive international strategic marketing plan. The committee procured and utilized funds from several external sources to leverage ASTA resources and maximize the U.S. seed industry's response to key issues impacting global seed trade. The committee maintained a leadership role in privatizing international seed

sectors, developing trade-enhancing regulatory and intellectual property protection systems, and advocating industry-friendly policies related to biotech seed. The committee continued to press for thresholds for the adventitious presence of biotech events in seed and testing protocols for detecting these events. Committee members also hosted at ASTA meetings Chinese, Kenyan and Russian delegates, who discussed their respective seed sectors and trade interests.

The **Phytosanitary Subcommittee** of the International Committee redefined its role in relation to the newly formed Phytosanitary Issue Resolution Process within the National Seed Health System (NSHS). The subcommittee plans to coordinate the resolution of import/export phytosanitary problems, using the NSHS as its technical body, and work more with U.S. government and international regulatory bodies to effect phytosanitary reform. Subcommittee members participated on the International Seed Trade Federation's Phytosanitary Committee and the International Seed Health Initiative to set internationally accepted seed health testing protocols.

The **Legislative & Legal Affairs Committee** reviewed and brought forward three resolutions in 2001-02 to ASTA's Board of Directors. In 2001, a resolution was passed on behalf of the Corn & Sorghum Division for ASTA's legal counsel to look into the feasibility of developing model warranty and disclaimer statements regarding adventitious biotech events in seed. Upon consideration, counsel concluded that it would be more appropriate for ASTA to assist individual member companies in the development of their

own statements, if they decide to include such language in product labeling, rather than provide a "one size fits all" statement.

Resolutions passed in 2002 called for the annual dues of the Wildflower and Native Plants Group to be eliminated and for its annual meeting to be held in the future at the Farm and Lawn Seed Conferences as opposed to the Vegetable & Flower Seed Conference. A resolution from the Vegetable & Flower Seed Division asked for expedited adoption of the Recommended Uniform State Seed Law by states in the interest of packet seed sellers.

The **Management Skills Program Committee** co-hosted the first ASTA Executive Management Forum for senior level executives in conjunction with Purdue University in Chicago, Ill., Feb. 25-27, 2002. In addition, the committee co-hosted the 15th ASTA Management Academy with Purdue University on its campus in West Lafayette, Ind., March 4-8. Sixty ASTA members participated in the academy. It featured core management courses in finance, marketing, human resource management, and strategy along with industry-specific sessions on globalization, the Farm Bill, and biotechnology.

The **Membership Committee** amended the definition of active ASTA members and their dues structure, approved by ASTA's Board of Directors in 2002. Committee members personally helped recruit new members and approved an action plan for ASTA recruitment efforts in 2002-03. They also provided input on a new corresponding member brochure and other recruitment tools.

The **Public Research Advisory Committee** began the process of revamping ASTA's policy on the

release of public plant varieties and germplasm. The policy dates back to the 1980s and does not address the way public institutions are releasing varieties and improved germplasm today. Public institutions currently license some of their varieties to private interests and release fewer varieties overall. Added-value varieties, advances in technology, amended Plant Variety Protection laws, and private sector development of new varieties and germplasm have driven changes in the way public varieties are released. The committee aims to ensure that ASTA's policy adequately represents this situation.

The **Seed Industry Relations Committee**, the result of a 2000 merger of the ASTA-Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies and Seed Analysts Liaison Committees, continued to promote the harmonization of seed testing and quality issues worldwide.

The **Seed Treatment and Environmental Committee** worked on treated seed disposal in North America and FIS Seed Treatment & Environmental Committee activities. The Seed Disposal Subcommittee hosted a symposium during ASTA's Corn & Sorghum and Soybean Conferences. It drafted a position statement concerning pesticide-treated seed movement across U.S. borders.

The **Wildflower and Native Plants Group** discussed conservation and plant genetic resource programs as well as ways to retain and recruit new group members. Two ways include eliminating dues and having its annual meeting at the Farm and Lawn Seed Conferences rather than the Vegetable & Flower Seed Conference to reach more potential members.

Division and Committee Chairs

Division Chairs

Dan Briggs
Corn & Sorghum Division
Syngenta Seeds, Inc.
Minneapolis, MN

John Gerard
Brokers-Agents Division
ACCESS Plant
Technology, Inc.
Plymouth, IN

Kelly Kincannon
Associate Members Division
Kincannon & Reed
Vienna, VA

David Pearl
Lawn Seed Division
The CISCO Companies
Indianapolis, IN

Mike Peterson
Soybean Division
Peterson Genetics
Cedar Falls, IA

Steve Strachota
Farm Seed Division
Dairyland Seed Co., Inc.
West Bend, WI

Ben Walraven
Vegetable & Flower Division
Pan American Seed Co.
West Chicago, IL

Division Committee Chairs

Nancy Aerni
Lawn Seed Division
Legislative Committee
Turf Merchants, Inc.
Tangent, OR

Dennis Byron
Soybean Division Basic
Research & Seed Improvement
Committee
Pioneer Hi-Bred Int'l., Inc.
Johnston, IA

Sam Datteri
Farm Seed Division Forage &
Small Grains Committee
ABI Alfalfa, Inc.
Lenexa, KS

Mark Gross
Vegetable & Flower Division
Home Garden Committee
Pan American Seed Co.
West Chicago, IL

Steve Hageman
Corn & Sorghum Division
Export Market Development
Committee
Remington Hybrid Seed

Co., Inc.
Remington, IN

Dave Harper
Corn & Sorghum Division
Basic Research Committee
Holden's Foundation Seeds
Williamsburg, IA

Tim Johnson
Corn & Sorghum Division
2002 Conference Planning
Committee
Seed Genetics, Inc.
Lafayette, IN

Janis Kieft
Vegetable & Flower Division
Flower Seed Committee
NK Lawn & Garden Co.
Chattanooga, TN

Don Latham
Soybean Division 2002
Conference Planning
Committee
Latham Seed Company
Alexander, IA

John Mizicko
Vegetable & Flower Permanent
Research Fund Committee
Harris Moran
Modesto, CA

Fred Mohr
Lawn Seed Division Planning
Committee
Agway, Inc.
York, PA

Tim Primus
Corn & Sorghum Division
Machinery Committee
Soybean Division Machinery
Committee
Mycogen Seeds
Hastings, MN

Rick Roen
Vegetable & Flower Division
Labeling Committee
Lake Valley Seed, Inc.
Boulder, CO

Chip Sundstrom
Vegetable & Flower Division
Organic Seed Certification
Committee
California Crop
Improvement Association
Davis, CA

Standing Committee Chairs

L. Sonny Beck
Membership Committee
Beck's Superior Hybrids
Atlanta, IN

Gary Beil
Public Research Advisory
Committee
Minnesota Crop
Improvement Association
St. Paul, MN

Harry Collins
Biotechnology Committee
Delta & Pine Land Company
Scott, MS

Robin Ernst
Wildflower & Native Plants
Group
Ernst Conservation Seeds
Meadville, PA

John Gerard
Intellectual Property Rights
Committee
ACCESS Plant
Technology, Inc.
Plymouth, IN

Tim Gutormson
Seed Treatment &
Environmental Committee
Mid-West Seed Services
Brookings, SD

Mark Jirak
Management Skills Program
Committee
Syngenta Crop Protection
West Des Moines, IA

Mark Lawson
Legislative & Legal Concerns
Committee
Monsanto Company
DeKalb, IL

Gary Richardson
International Committee
Encinitas, CA

Marsha Stanton
Seed Industry Relations
Committee
Monsanto Company
St. Louis, MO

John Stevens
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Phytosanitary Subcommittee
Pioneer Hi-Bred Int'l., Inc.
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