Success Story Template

Calendar Year *(year activity is completed; if not completed, enter latest active year)*
2015
Cooperator
American Seed Trade Association
Non-cooperator organization *(if you are not a cooperator, but you use FAS programs like EMP, TASC, or GSM)*
Organization type: private or public *(public means government)*
Private
FAS program(s) used/funding sources *(e.g. MAP, MAP/GBI, EMP, etc)*
MAP
Commodity *(if applicable, include if product is fresh, dried, concentrate, etc, like Fresh Sweet Cherries)*
Planting Seeds
Country/region *(to which you are exporting)*
Canada, Mexico, South America
HQ State *(state where headquarters of cooperator or non-cooperator organization is located)*
Virginia
Producing/exporting state(s) *(attempt to determine exporting state; can enter "multi" if number of states is greater than 5)*
New Mexico, California, Maine, Oregon, New York, Arizona, Colorado, Missouri, Iowa
Export dollars/projected sales **(provide the dollar value/projected sales in the current program year and comparable data from previous program year)**
Congressional district(s) *(Example: CA-04;TX-11. Attempt to determine congressional districts of producing/exporting areas; enter n/a if unknown; can enter "multi" if number of districts is greater than 5.)*
Multi
Story type *(focus of story: trade show, small company, cooperator, FAS/post, program)*
Program
For branded, company name, if applicable

ASTA was founding member of the Seed Association of the Americas (SAA). Over the last ten years, SAA has worked to build consensus within the region to address trade issues. SAA has four working groups, intellectual property (IP), biotechnology, phytosanitary, and seed treatments. ASTA has representation on all four working groups and over the last ten years ASTA members have chaired each of these working groups. The U.S. seed industry expressed interest in having a capacity building workshop for Plant Variety Protection Officers across the region in order to harmonize standards. ASTA worked with

SAA to organize two IP workshops where industry and government officials could meet to discuss IP and how industry and government can work together. This concept is novel in South America, where the government distrusts industry.

How did FAS help achieve success? ASTA used MAP funds to pay for meeting space, translation, and U.S. industry representatives to facilitate this meeting. Translation services are critical for representatives to feel comfortable expressing their views. FAS is extremely knowledgeable about the seed industry in South America and provides ASTA with much needed market intel, including proposed changes to local seed laws.

Specifically, how did U.S. agriculture benefit? This meeting sent a clear signal to the national PVP offices that industries across the region want a regional electronic PVP filing system and to use molecular markers for PVP identification and enforcement. The regional system will reduce company costs associated with filing a PVP in multiple countries. Since seed moves through several countries, companies file for PVPs in all countries that the seed will enter to maximize their protection. The regional, electronic system will reduce the amount of time to file PVPs. The electronic system will lower their costs and increase their protection.

Industry also wants molecular marker data included in PVP applications. This helps companies enforce their IP protection. By including this data, it makes it admissible in misappropriation cases. Lack of IP protection in a market is the number one reason why U.S. companies avoid markets. The use of molecular markers will increase protection and open new markets to U.S. exports. Also, SAA is a leader in this area. We hope that when SAA's system is in place other regions will follow.

Highlight the USDA or FAS program that was used: ASTA spend approximately $35,000 of MAP funding in 2015 to support the Buenos Aires workshop.

Market Access: Having strong intellectual property rights increases companies' willingness to export germplasm to foreign markets. Lack of intellectual property protection is the primary companies avoid markets. Within the SAA region, many countries are reviewing policies that will severely weaken intellectual property rights which would likely force U.S. exporters to exit these markets.

Budget impact and return on investment: One company estimated that an electronic filing system for the region alone would save them upward of $500,000 per year. ASTA hopes this regional system will be expanded to a global system, which would multiply these savings. The $500,000 results in an ROI of 1,300% for the first year.

Timeframe: One year. The electronic filing system will be reviewed by UPOV in October.