

# BLAZING TRAILS



**2015/16**  
ANNUAL REPORT

**asta**

american  
seed trade  
association



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# BLAZING TRAILS

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## MESSAGE TO ASTA MEMBERSHIP

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**RISA DEMASI**  
Grassland Oregon



**ANDREW W. LAVIGNE**  
President & CEO

### DEAR FRIENDS,

Thank you for your continued engagement and support for the American Seed Trade Association, your national association. What a year it's been—full of unprecedented challenges and opportunities. We are proud that ASTA brings this great industry together to tackle the issues confronting us today, and to build upon our strong foundation for an even brighter future in the years ahead.

We are a unique, diverse, and far-reaching industry, grounded in proud, longstanding tradition, and built upon continued innovation. Our industry touches virtually every aspect of society in a fundamental way. From the food we eat, to the clothes we wear, and the fuel that powers our cars – it really all does “start with the seed.” And the work we do day-in and day-out truly makes the world a better place. We are stronger together, and each and every one of us plays a vital role.

ASTA's Strategic Plan continues to drive our efforts and keep us focused. Over the past year, ASTA has placed a renewed emphasis on benchmarking. We've had an excellent dialogue within the association, which has resulted in the development of a number of new procedures to help us not only identify what success looks like, but to measure it. This process is moving us from a position of being reactive, to being proactive, and providing us with the confidence to blaze new trails forward. By looking back and seeing just how far we've truly come, and recognizing exactly where we are in this moment of time, we can more clearly, and confidently, look ahead to the future.

Whether it's the threat of regulatory uncertainty, international issues impacting the movement of seed, or simply a lack of understanding from the public about the importance of the work we do – it's never been more important that we come together proactively, with a strong and unified message, to address the issues head-on.

While some of our most challenging issues lie ahead of us, we are well positioned and prepared to face them head on. We are sharing our foundational “Better Seed, Better Life” story in ways that engage the hearts and minds of our members, our communities, our policy-makers and our world. The story of our rich and harmonious diversity, coexistence and shared values is providing confidence to everyone who hears it that what we do is making the world a better place.

We thank you in advance for your continued engagement and support for ASTA. It is truly an honor to represent you. Our best to you for a productive year ahead!

## 2 STRATEGIC GOALS



### ASTA VISION

Contribute to global agriculture and food security by creating an environment where each ASTA member company has the opportunity to create an innovative, sustainable and successful business.

### ASTA MISSION

Be an effective voice of action in all matters concerning the development, marketing and movement of seed, associated products and services throughout the world. ASTA promotes the development of better seed to produce better crops for a better quality of life.

### ASTA CORE VALUES

Members drive the ASTA agenda and identify the issues relevant to the seed industry. ASTA's commitment to one company, one vote ensures that issues affecting the many are identified and result in effective and proactive advocacy and support.

## KEY STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

### INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Advance the use and respect of intellectual property rights protection for the global seed industry.

### STATE AND LOCAL ISSUES

Be recognized as an effective national resource to assist in resolving state and local seed trade issues.

### DOMESTIC POLICY

Be a respected, leading voice on domestic policy issues impacting the seed industry.

### INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

Improve opportunities for ASTA member companies to do business in international markets.

### ASTA COMMUNICATIONS

Establish ASTA as a key advocate for the U.S. seed industry and a high value resource for its members.

### ASTA MEMBERSHIP AND INTERNAL MATTERS

Constantly improve the internal operations of ASTA to more efficiently serve membership with continued emphasis on the importance of effective human and financial management systems.

## LEADERSHIP

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**SECOND VICE CHAIR**

**Tracy Tally**  
Justin Seed Co, Inc.

**CHAIR**

**Risa DeMasi**  
Grassland Oregon

**FIRST VICE CHAIR**

**Mark Herrmann**  
AgReliant Genetics

**REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS**

**Perry Bohn**, Southeastern Region Vice President, BASF

**Andy Ernst**, Northeastern Region Vice President, Ernst Conservation Seeds

**Fred Fabre**, Western Region Vice President, S&W Seed Company

**Wayne Gale**, Region Vice President from Canada, Stokes Seeds

**Jose Luis Gastelum**, Region Vice President from Mexico, Syngenta

**Matt Hynes**, Region Vice President to Canada GROWMARK, Inc.

**John Latham**, North Central Region Vice President, Latham Hi-Tech Seeds Inc.

**Rob Mitchell**, Northwestern Region Vice President, Simplot

**Jerry Monk**, Region Vice President to Mexico Warner Seeds, Inc.

**Alan Ostercamp**, Southern Region Vice President, RiceTec, Inc.

**Dave Pearl**, Central Region Vice President, The CISCO Companies

**DIVISION CHAIRS**

**Christopher Boomsma**, Corn & Sorghum, Purdue University

**Paul Chambers**, Vegetable & Flower, Keithly-Williams Seeds

**Mark Massoudi**, Associate Members, Ag-Biotech Inc.

**Maurice Miller**, Farm Seed, Sharp Brothers Seed Company

**Scott Novak**, Lawn Seed, The Scotts Company

**Carl Scholting**, Soybean, Winfield Solutions, LLC

**Lisa Steere**, Brokers/Agents, Peterson Genetics, Inc.

**DIRECTORS AT LARGE**

**Jerry Flint**, DuPont Pioneer

**Chris Garvey**, Dow AgroSciences

**Brad May**, Bayer CropScience

**Ron Wulfkuhle**, Syngenta / GreenLeaf

**IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIRS**

**John Schoenecker**, HM.CLAUSE

**Craig Newman**, AgReliant Genetics, LLC

**Blake Curtis**, Curtis & Curtis, Inc.

## 4 STATE AND LOCAL ISSUES



**In 2015/16, ASTA actively engaged in advocacy around 164 bills at the state level, and ensured that no state-level bills were passed that would have had negative impacts on the seed industry. To maintain a strong, unified voice at the local level, ASTA representatives attended 22 state and regional seed association meetings, and participated in meetings hosted by state agriculture commissioners, secretaries, directors, farm organizations and other key stakeholders.**

In general, ASTA's state-level priorities align with the association's strategic plan, and include the following issues:

- Assurance of an adequately funded state seed regulatory system
- Consistency of state laws and regulations
- Availability and access to new technologies
- Pollinator protection
- Noxious weed and invasive species policies

The following are highlights of 2015/16 state outreach and engagement efforts:

### NEW STATE GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS WORKING GROUP

Created in the fall of 2015, ASTA's State Governmental Affairs Working Group provides a forum for identification, discussion and resolution of state and local seed issues, in coordination with the ASTA Legislative and Legal Concerns Committee. The working group develops and implements strategies to ensure that the seed industry's policy positions are fully addressed and communicated, and explores opportunities for proactive partnerships and coalitions. The group has received strong participation, meeting regularly in-person and via conference calls.

### RECOMMENDED UNIFORM STATE SEED LAW AMENDMENTS

ASTA offered, and had accepted, two amendments to the Recommended State Uniform Seed Law (RUSSL) this past year. It is important to note that these rule changes will not affect any state laws, but simply serve as guidance for consideration. The first amendment changes the arbitration section to limit the filing of a lawsuit until the arbitration concludes, if arbitration is used in a seed dispute. The second amendment authorizes state seed control officials to utilize other state seed labs for testing of official regulatory samples. A third approved-amendment—drafted by representatives from AASCO, ASTA and seed librarians—eliminates the gray area of the law as it applies to seed libraries, seed swaps and public exchanges.

### PRE-EMPTION OF STATE SEED LAWS

In 2016, four states—Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee—passed state seed-law preemption bills. These new laws disallow local governments from enacting laws or rules that are more stringent than state seed-law regulations. Labeling requirements unique to seed distributed within a specific locality would be overly burdensome due to increased operational costs to comply with the unique local regulations. This would undermine the goal of uniformity without providing commensurate benefit, and would eventually result in restricted sales in the state. Twenty-five states now have state seed preemption laws.

### SEED LAB UNIFORMITY

ASTA continued coordination with the national seed lab associations, the Association of Official Seed Analysts and the Society of Commercial Seed Technologists, to ensure compliance with seed-industry rules and regulations and to preserve the integrity and consistency of enforcement of state seed laws and seed lab results.

## FEDERAL AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS



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### ADVOCATING FOR THE INDUSTRY: ASTA STORMS THE HILL

Seed advocates from 20 states participated in a total of 85 meetings on Capitol Hill as part of ASTA's Storm the Hill Legislative Fly-in, March 15 in Washington, D.C. Storm the Hill is a unique opportunity for seed-industry partners from every sector and every part of the nation to join together with a unified voice on Capitol Hill.



*Pictured from left to right: Paul Nelson, Monsanto; Shannon and John Latham, Latham Hi-Tech Seeds; and John Duesing, DuPont Pioneer Storming the Hill.*

*"While our industry is diverse, we share the common goal of producing better seed for a better quality of life. From ratification of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, to GMO labeling and funding for critical research and conservation programs, Congress is debating serious issues that will impact the seed industry's ability to continue improving seed in the years ahead. Seed is the foundation of life, and the decisions that Congress makes today will have an impact on almost every aspect of society in the future."*

– ASTA President & CEO Andy LaVigne

### SENATE MOVES ON INTERNATIONAL TREATY

In May, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a long-awaited hearing on the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Former ASTA Chair John Schoenecker testified on behalf of the seed industry, explaining the importance of this issue not only to the seed industry, but for global food security at large. Following the successful hearing, the full Committee recommended ratification of the Treaty to the Senate in late June. Ratification of the Treaty remains a pressing issue for the seed industry. *(The Treaty was officially ratified in September, 2016)*



## 6 **FEDERAL AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS CONTINUED**



### **CONGRESS REACHES BIPARTISAN LABELING AGREEMENT**

Nearly a year after the House passed a voluntary labeling bill with federal preemption for state-by-state labeling laws, Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts (R-KS) and Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) successfully reached an agreement that could pass both chambers. The agreement, which eventually passed in July, will create a national standard for the disclosure of food ingredients that are derived from genetically engineered plants, and protects farmers and consumers from a confusing and costly patchwork of state labeling laws. Companies will be able to select from a menu of disclosure options which include electronic, on-pack words or a symbol. ASTA staff and members were actively engaged throughout the long process through calls, emails and visits with elected officials. Grassroots engagement from ASTA and more than 1,000 supporting organizations and companies was instrumental in ensuring passage of this critical legislation. Attention now turns to USDA's Agriculture Marketing Service which is tasked with translating the bill into regulations.

### **SHARING THE MESSAGE OF POLLINATORS AND NATIVE SEED PRODUCTION**

ASTA co-hosted an educational session on pollinators and native seed production at the Society for Range Management Convention, January 31 – February 4 in Corpus Christi, Texas. Led by ASTA's Environmental and Conservation Seed Committee, the session focused on communication and collaboration between the federal government, seed companies and private landowners. The program included speakers from the public and private sectors.

### **ENGAGING WITH FUTURE AGRICULTURE INNOVATORS**

ASTA President and CEO Andrew LaVigne joined more than 60 young farmers, policymakers and industry thought-leaders from across the nation for the FarmNext Summit February 3 in Washington, D.C. The diverse, multi-generational Summit focused on the future of farming and the involvement of young people within the industry.

A White Paper released at the Summit summarized key findings from the group's first-ever listening tour which took place in the summer and fall of 2015. Sponsored by ASTA, CHS, INC., DuPont Pioneer, FarmLink and Kit Bond Strategies, FarmNext was launched in 2015 to help elevate the voice of young farmers on a national scale at a time when farming, technology, and the source of our food is increasingly in the spotlight. The group is a joint initiative between YI Advisors and Global Prairie.

### **BRINGING THE LATEST SEED-POLICY NEWS STRAIGHT TO YOUR INBOX**

In January, ASTA rolled out a brand-new domestic newsletter! Distributed via email on a quarterly basis, "PoliSEEDS" offers ASTA members an in-depth look at the latest legislative and regulatory issues impacting the seed industry, both at the national and state levels. If you're not getting the newsletter and would like to subscribe, contact Virginia Houston at [vhouston@amseed.org](mailto:vhouston@amseed.org) with your full name, affiliation and email address. You must be an ASTA member to receive this publication.



## PLANT BREEDING INNOVATION



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It was a busy year for ASTA's Plant Breeding Innovation Working Group. In addition to developing a set of FAQs around plant breeding innovation, the Working Group developed a "core document" that articulated a set of recommended principles and criteria to be used by the U.S. Government in any policy development directed at products developed using newer breeding technologies such as gene editing. This core document formed the basis for ASTA comments on Federal Register notices published by USDA and the Office of Science Technology and Policy. The Working Group is developing a paper on the common practices used by plant breeders to ensure the quality and safety of new plant varieties. The Working Group met with U.S. regulatory agencies and House and Senate staff to educate them on plant breeding innovations, and the impact of government policies on the utilization of new plant breeding methods.

ASTA continues to serve in a leadership role for the International Seed Federation (ISF) Plant Breeding Innovation Working Group. The ISF Working Group has facilitated two meetings of key government individuals with the goal of working toward consistent policies across countries. This Working Group also developed a set of FAQs to be used by ISF members. Pursuant to ISF's role of alliance-building, meetings have been held with the International Grain Trade Coalition and other sectors of the international agriculture value chain.



## INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

### Working Groups Focus on Use of Molecular Markers in PVP Process

ASTA formed a joint working group with the U.S. Plant Variety Protection Office (PVPO) to work on how molecular markers can best be used in the PVP application process. The ASTA/PVPO Joint Molecular Marker Working Group has focused on the technical aspects of the use of molecular markers, and has given presentations at several meetings of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV).

The ASTA Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Emerging Issues Working Group has been focused on policy issues around the use of molecular markers in the PVP process. The working group revised ASTA's position statement on the use of molecular markers for DUS testing, which was later approved by the full IPR Committee and the ASTA Board of Directors.

## 8 INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURE POLICY



### ASTA, CHINA NATIONAL SEED ASSOCIATION EXTEND MOU



In October, ASTA and the China National Seed Association extended their Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for another three years. Under the last MOU the two organizations held a dozen events to promote intellectual property rights, high quality seed and science-based phytosanitary measures.

### FIRST IMPORT-EXPORT WORKSHOP IS A SUCCESS

ASTA held its first import-export workshop in October. The two-day workshop took place in Oxnard, California, with more than a dozen industry representatives participating, along with representatives from the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP). The workshop was the first time APHIS, CBP and the U.S. seed industry held a joint discussion about the global movement of seed. Thanks to the successful workshop, ASTA members now have contacts at both agencies in the event of future import-export issues.

### COMMUNICATIONS HIGHLIGHTS INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

This year ASTA's quarterly international newsletter was rebranded as Global Seed News with a new look and expanded content. In addition, the international and communication teams jointly produced a case study on Ukraine and an informational graphic outlining best practices for exporting seed. Coinciding with the International Seed Federation's World Seed Congress, ASTA coined May as "International Month" and developed a targeted communications plan to share ASTA's international efforts with membership and stakeholders. This content is available on the International section of ASTA's members-only website.

### ASTA, SEED ASSOCIATION OF THE AMERICAS EXPAND COOPERATION

ASTA expanded its joint programming with the Seed Association of the Americas (SAA) and several South American National Seed Associations that are active in SAA. In October, ASTA and the Argentine Seed Association hosted two government officials in the U.S. to learn about striga quarantine measures. Argentina reversed its phytosanitary measure that would have required field inspections of all corn seed producing fields nationwide for Striga, which would have made shipping corn seed to Argentina much more difficult and expensive. Similarly, ASTA sent a delegation of experts to Chile in March to meet with the Chilean Seed Association, SAA and the Chilean National Plant Protection Office. After the visit, Chile temporarily delayed implementation of its proposed new phytosanitary requirements for corn, wheat, and vegetable seed imports until additional technical information could be provided. Strong relationships with SAA and its members enable ASTA to quickly address issues that could have major implications for the U.S. seed industry.

## GLOBAL SEED MOVEMENT



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### PHYTOSANITARY EFFORTS

ASTA continues to assist member companies in addressing individual problems that arise when shipping seed internationally, many involving pest-risk assessments. In 2014, ASTA commissioned a pest-risk database to streamline this process and make information more readily available to companies. ASTA also provided technical advice and support to companies working in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, South Korea, China, the EU, Australia, and several African and Middle Eastern countries. Efforts to solve country-level and specific shipment issues have been successful because of ASTA's strong relationships with the USDA, Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS), the U.S. Trade Representative's Office, embassies and counterpart national seed associations.

### INTERNATIONAL SEED STANDARD

ASTA continued its partnership with ISF and the Seed Association of the Americas to ensure the international seed standard reflects the concerns and needs of the seed industry. Based on these collective efforts, the International Plant Protection Convention developed a revised draft standard that will be sent for another round of country consultations in 2016.

### NORTH AMERICAN PLANT PROTECTION ORGANIZATION'S SEED EXPERT WORKING GROUP

ASTA was successful in encouraging the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO) to resurrect the seed-expert working group, focusing on harmonization of seed-testing methods throughout the NAPPO region. The working group will also incorporate the technical information collected into the NAPPO seed standard (RSPM 36) annexes.

### APHIS RELATIONS

Throughout the past year, ASTA forged a stronger relationship with USDA's APHIS to seek new non-or-minimally regulatory approaches to address phytosanitary issues and concerns. This collaboration between industry and its regulatory body to develop a non-burdensome solution is a unique opportunity afforded to the seed industry. As a result, a partnership program titled the National Seed Health Accreditation Pilot Program was established to prevent introductions of the devastating, seed-transmitted pathogen Cucumber Green Mottle Mosaic Virus. This pilot program focuses on establishing compliance agreements that recognize current quality management practices, such as seed testing, which provide necessary levels of phytosanitary protection. This helps avoid unnecessary or duplicative phytosanitary requirements.

### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR SPECIALTY CROPS GRANT

In 2014, ASTA was awarded a three-year, \$836,000 federal grant to quantify the inherent risk-reduction associated with company quality-management practices and to develop a model for companies to assess the phytosanitary risk of any seed/pest combination. ASTA is working with an internationally recognized USDA-ARS research scientist on this project. Once published, this research will likely change the process of future seed risk-assessments, and could also support the development of an international accreditation for seed companies that already meet high standards of phytosanitary risk management.



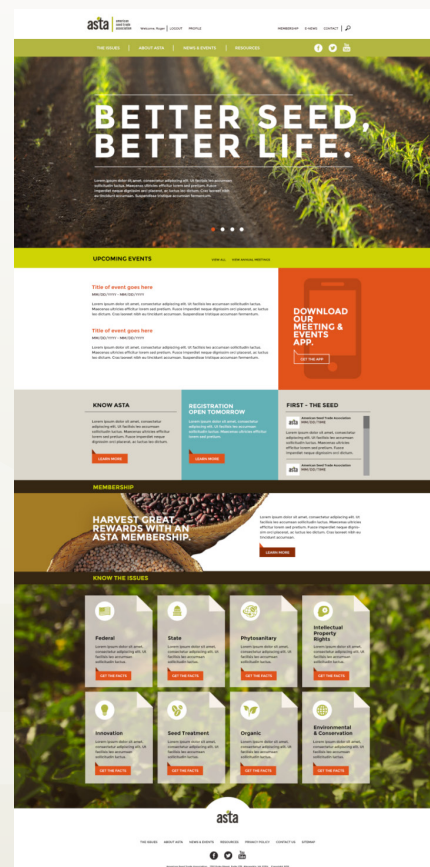
## TELLING THE STORY OF “BETTER SEED, BETTER LIFE”

Building upon the foundational work of the previous year, ASTA's Communications Committee oversaw the rollout of a number of deliverables under the multi-year Better Seed, Better Life (BSBL) public-facing communications initiative to promote the value of seed and seed improvements to everyday life.

As the cornerstone of these efforts, the Committee assisted in the development of a core message deck highlighting the connection between seed improvement and our quality of life – with foundational messages focusing on the environment, health and wellness, and economic benefits of seed. The turn-key deck, available on ASTA's members-only website, is highly customizable—with alternate photo options and modules focusing on seed intellectual property and biotechnology—in order to cater the presentation to the needs and interests of a variety of audiences. The deck was rolled out internally with a number of ASTA training sessions during 2015/16. Throughout the coming year, ASTA, through engagement and participation of our membership, will continue to use the deck to carry the ASTA to our partners and other stakeholders in the food, agriculture, and academic sectors.

Other major BSBL deliverables included an ASTA brand re-fresh and style guide, and a new association website. The new “go to” source for value chain, industry allies and policymakers, **www.**

**BetterSeed.org** is built with a mobile-optimized, open-source CMS platform and features ASTA's refreshed style, with a public-facing, dynamic interface that highlights the BSBL foundational messages. In addition to the website, ASTA bolstered its online presence through an integrated social media strategy, with monthly content calendars for ASTA membership to provide a coordinated, unified message across the industry. As part of the efforts to increase engagement online, ASTA staff and Communications Committee members led a “social media 101” session at the Management Skills Committee meeting during the 2016 ASTA Annual Convention. Get online and get engaged in the conversation by following **@Better\_Seed** and using the hashtag **#BetterSeed**.



## PLANT BREEDING INNOVATION TAKES CENTER STAGE

Plant Breeding Innovation became a hot topic in the media this year. A Letter to the Editor by ASTA President & CEO Andrew LaVigne responded to misguided fears about gene editing and other new breeding innovations. “Continued innovation is paramount to the future of agriculture and our quality of life,” said LaVigne in the April 29 letter in the Washington Post.

In 2015/16, the ASTA Communications Committee and Plant Breeding Innovation Working Group formed a joint Communications sub-group to work on a comprehensive communications strategy around plant breeding innovation.

## INDUSTRY BUILDING AND RECOGNITION



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### THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF COMMERCIAL PLANT BREEDERS

ASTA continued to support the work of the National Council of Commercial Plant Breeders (NCCPB), which represents member companies in the business of plant improvement, and encourages collaboration with public research and educational institutions. Through its awards program, NCCPB recognizes outstanding scientific contributions in public and private plant breeding by both professional plant breeders and students. Students are given a monetary award and an opportunity to be mentored at ASTA's CSS & Seed Expo in December.

The 2015 winners were:

- **Jim Kelly**, Michigan State University  
- Public Sector Breeder
- **Benjamin Stewart-Brown**, University of Georgia  
- Graduate Student
- **Craig Beil**, Colorado State University  
- Graduate Student
- **Benjamin Campbell**, University of Minnesota  
- Graduate Student

### THE AMERICAN SEED RESEARCH FOUNDATION

ASTA is pleased to continue its partnership with the American Seed Research Foundation (ASRF). ASRF promotes basic research in seed biology that has the potential for application across different crop species, and facilitates the transfer of resulting technology to benefit the seed industry, farmers/growers and consumers on a global basis. The organization underwrites research projects and educates future researchers through the Operation Student Connection (OSC) program, which offers scholarships to encourage graduate students majoring in seed biology or seed science to attend ASTA's annual convention. In addition, one OSC student who shows exceptional passion for the seed industry is awarded the Roger Krueger Memorial Scholarship.

Students selected for the program were:

- **Matthew Rhine**, Texas A&M University  
(Roger Krueger award winner)
- **Amanda Easterly**, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- **Ryan Huffman**, Iowa State University
- **Matthew Mattia**, University of Florida
- **Lillian Brzostowski**, University of Illinois
- **Emmanuel Santa-Martinez**, University of Wisconsin

### FIRST-THE SEED FOUNDATION

The First-the Seed Foundation is a not-for-profit organization established by ASTA in 2008 to inform today's



consumers and tomorrow's workforce about the importance of the seed industry. Its mission is to conduct education, outreach, and communication on the value of crops and food produced from seed.

The First-the Seed Foundation's Tomatosphere™ in partnership with NASA helps educate and inspire young students, building their capacity and understanding of scientific inquiry and opening the door to extended space exploration. Last year, it reached 4818 classes and just over 110,000 students. It was administered in approximately 100,000 public schools and 30,000 private schools.

As part of the Foundation's Ambassador program, in December 2015, FTSF along with FuSE sent over 20 volunteers to the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences to judge their yearly science fair.



ASTA Volunteer judges at the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences Science Fair

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Throughout 2015/16, the Future Seed Executives (FuSE) committee focused its efforts on introducing careers in the seed industry to the next generation, developing programming for new seed industry professionals, and building a strong network of future seed executives.



FuSE held several events throughout the year including Educational Units and roundtable discussions.

The FuSE sponsored Campus Connections program had five students participate in ASTA's 133rd Annual Convention in Portland, Oregon. The students were paired with mentors representing all areas of the seed industry, and participated in all the events of the conference throughout the week.

**Participants Included:**

- **Luke Knight**, Auburn University
- **Chang Lui**, Iowa State University
- **Justin Belknap**, Iowa State University
- **Lauren Peacock**, Purdue University
- **Savannah Stienke**, Purdue University

**ASTA HONORS SEED INDUSTRY LEADERS**

Congratulations to the winners of the 2015/16 ASTA Awards!



**Larry Nees**, Office of Indiana State Chemist, was awarded the Distinguished Service Award which recognizes those who have made significant contributions to the association and the seed industry. For more than 35 years, Larry has served as the seed control official for Indiana, responsible for enforcement and administration of the Indiana

Seed Law, the Indiana Seed Arbitration Law, the Indiana Legume Inoculants and Plant Growth Substances Law, and the Inspections Under Seed Contracts Law.



**Mike Gumina**, RiceTec, Inc., received ASTA's Lifetime Honorary Membership Award. This award is one of the highest awards given by the association and is in recognition of untiring service to the association as well as the seed industry. Mike

has been an active participant in ASTA for years, including service as Chairman of the Board from 2011-2012 and as a key creator of ASTA's current Strategic Plan which is still in use. He has served as the ISF representative to the ASTA Board and remains a key international figure in forwarding the interests of the American seed industry.



**Owen J. Newlin**, DuPont Pioneer (retired), was presented the inaugural Lifetime Industry Achievement Award. The award acknowledges exceptional professionals whose career contributions to the seed industry span more than 50 years. Owen is active

both in and out of the seed industry. A longtime ambassador and advocate for Iowa State University, he has served as a member of the Board of Regents, State of Iowa, for 12 years, with eight years as president. Owen was also President of the American Seed Research Foundation (ASRF) from 1982-84 and remains an active ASRF Board Member to this day. Owen is the longest running ASTA Past President who remains an active participant on the ASTA Board of Directors.

## CONVENTIONS AND MEETINGS



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### 2015 FARM AND LAWN SEED CONFERENCE



November 8-9, 2015 • Kansas City, MO

ASTA's 61st Annual Farm and Lawn Seed Conference, held in conjunction with the Western Seed Association Conference, brought more than 700 seed industry representatives to Kansas City, Missouri for networking and business meetings. The schedule included committee and division meetings and the Seed Industry Issues Summit. Sessions explored topics including: water conservation; the impact

of building codes and standards on turf; the Soil Health Partnership, cover crops and the USDA-NRCS cover crop trials; wheat flag smut in Kansas; alfalfa innovations; and coordination with BLM on restoration efforts. An expanded and reconfigured exhibit area featured 16 company displays, along with lively trading tables in the ballroom.

### CSS 2015 & SEED EXPO

The CSS 2015 & Seed Expo gathered nearly 2,900 attendees and 156 expo exhibitors. The conference continued with the new program format, which began in 2014, with sessions focused on cross-sector topics, rather than crop-specific programming. Sessions were scheduled during dedicated periods throughout the week to limit conflicts with expo hours and times for affiliated events. A new feature of the conference was the Innovations Lounge which afforded companies the opportunity to showcase new commercial products to attendees in a theater setting. The conference enjoyed huge success with the expansion of its students program, featuring a day of student-track programming, including the new "Seed the Future" interactive lunch reception event inside the Seed Expo. There were 58 registered students, with a record number of 30 students presenting posters. A keynote presentation during the Opening General Session was given by renowned agricultural economist Dan Basse of AgResource.





### 55th VEGETABLE AND FLOWER SEED CONFERENCE

ASTA's 2016 Vegetable & Flower Seed Conference in Anaheim, California served as part-one of a two-part series being held at Disney hotels – offering interactive and exclusive learning opportunities with the Disney Horticultural team. The conference hit a new attendance record with 872 registrants and more than 130 participating companies in the Trading Room. A keynote presentation was given by Adam Schwerner, Director of Horticulture for Disneyland theme park, followed by a presentation on plant breeding for the consumer by Don Goodwin of Golden Sun Marketing. The convention included Disneyland theme park tours offering an exclusive, behind-the-scenes look at factors affecting Disney's purchasing decisions for plant varieties and the methodology used in landscaping its parks. The conference included a new retailer program, in which five industry retailer chains were invited to meet with key supplier companies to plan for future trends. The Welcome Reception featured a presentation by the teenage cooking duo, the Twin Chefs, who shared their passion for cooking and child nutrition with a live cooking demonstration.



### 133rd ANNUAL CONVENTION



ASTA's 133rd Annual Convention was held jointly with the Oregon Seed Association's (OSA) 47th Annual Convention in Portland, Oregon. Attendance set a new 8-year record of 473 registrants, including an 88-percent increase in participation by Oregon seed industry professionals. The Opening General Session featured a keynote presentation by Former Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, Krysta Harden, who is currently the Vice President, Public Policy & Chief Sustainability Officer for DuPont. Harden emphasized the importance of proactively speaking to groups outside the agriculture community. A special presentation by Debbie Wells of the Center for the Advancement of Science in Space (CASIS) highlighted the Tomatosphere project being conducted in partnership with the First – the Seed Foundation, CASIS and NASA.

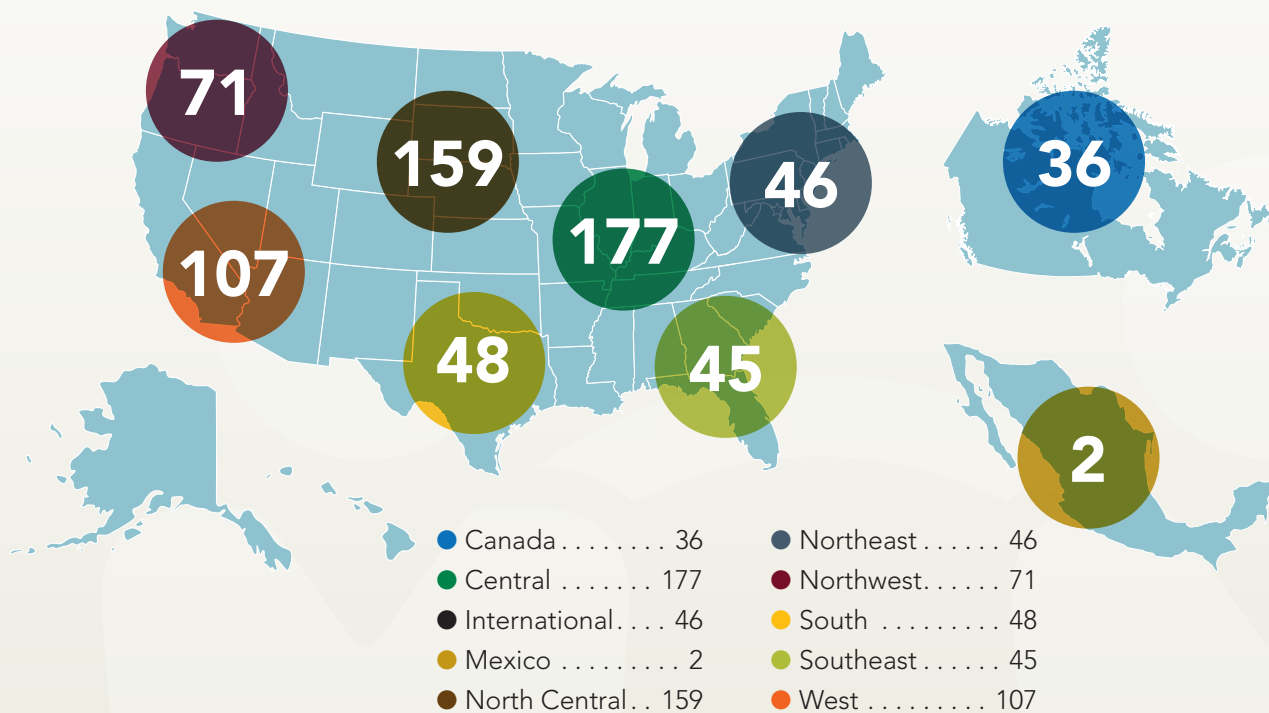
The convention included committee and division breakout sessions for each organization, including five sessions where the matching committees of ASTA and OSA were combined into a joint meeting. A new Student Preparation Workshop was hosted by the American Seed Research Foundation, with good participation. The closing Gala Banquet highlighted the rotation of officers for both organizations.

## MEMBERSHIP

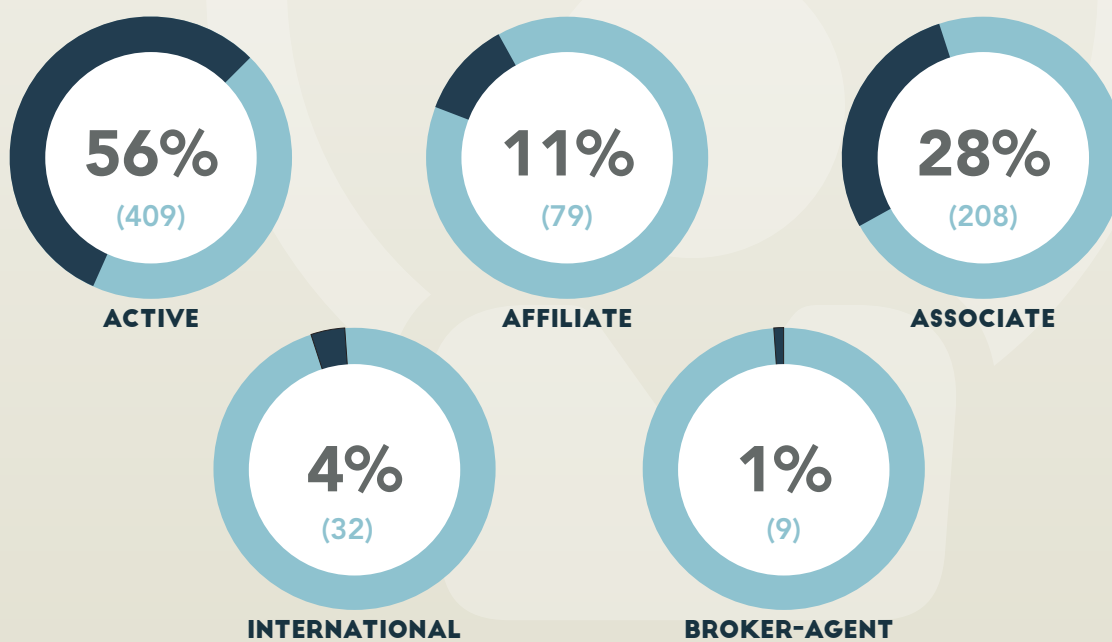


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## COMPARE BY REGION



## MEMBER TYPE



## 16 FINANCIAL HEALTH



ASTA's budget is based on guidance and approval from the Board of Directors, divisions, committees, strategic plan priorities and staff. ASTA strives to maintain transparency with our membership about the association's budget and financial status. The Board of Directors approves and regularly reviews the association's financial status and strategy, which enables ASTA to maintain a strong targeted financial reserve. The annual ASTA audit was conducted by Raffa, Inc., in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. The 2014/15 audit confirmed the financial health of the association. ASTA began its fiscal year with unrestricted net assets of \$5,343,591 and ended with \$5,047,988, including \$459,018 applied to the Better Seed, Better Life communications initiative.

### INVESTMENT POLICY AND RESERVE POLICY

The Board of Directors established guidelines for the investment and reserve accounts, striving to maintain a balance of one-and-a-half to two times the operating budget. Of that reserve, 10 percent is maintained in an operating reserve, and expenditures are subject to approval of the Executive Committee or the Board of Directors. The remaining balance is divided between 20-percent in a mid-term reserve and 70-percent in a long-term reserve. Expenditures from those reserves are vetted through the Finance Committee and approved by the Board of Directors. Under this policy, when authorizing expenditures from the long-term reserves, the Board will approve a plan to replenish the amount expended.

### Operating Revenue and Support

Membership Dues .....	3,490,027
Registration Fees .....	846,788
Sponsorship .....	487,949
Exhibits .....	402,233
Government Grants .....	387,413
Administrative fees .....	20,000
Other .....	11,120

**Total Operating Revenue and Support . . 5,645,530**

### Operating Expenses

#### *Program Services:*

Meetings .....	1,128,483
International .....	731,018
Policy .....	620,728
Legislation .....	606,390
Membership .....	293,702
Other .....	37,824

Total Program Services .....

Supporting Services .....

**Total Operating Expenses . . . . . 5,575,319**

**Change in Net Assets from Operations. . . . . 70,211**

### Non-Operating Activities

Investment Income .....	93,204
Branding Expenses .....	-459,018
Net Assets at beginning of Year .....	5,386,572
Prior Year Adjustment .....	-42,981
Net Assets at beginning of Year-Restated. . .	5,343,591

**Net Assets, End of Year June 30, 2015. . . 5,047,988**

# ASTA STAFF



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## Executive Office

**Andrew W. LaVigne**  
President and CEO

**Jennifer Vanderhoff**  
Executive Assistant

## Domestic and International Policy

**Bernice Slutsky**  
Senior Vice President, Domestic and International Policy

## Jane DeMarchi

Vice President, Government and Regulatory Affairs

## Ric Dunkle

Senior Director, Seed Health and Trade

## Michelle Klieger

Director, International Programs and Policy

## Pat Miller

Director, State Affairs

## Virginia Houston

Associate Director, Domestic and Government Affairs

## Kelly Crist

Manager, International Programs and Policy

## Finance & Administration

### Ann Jorss

Vice President, Finance and Administration

## Barbara Surian

Director, Administrative Services

## Communications

### Bethany Shively

Director, Communications

## Nikki Barnes

Manager, Marketing and Member Outreach

## Meetings & Services

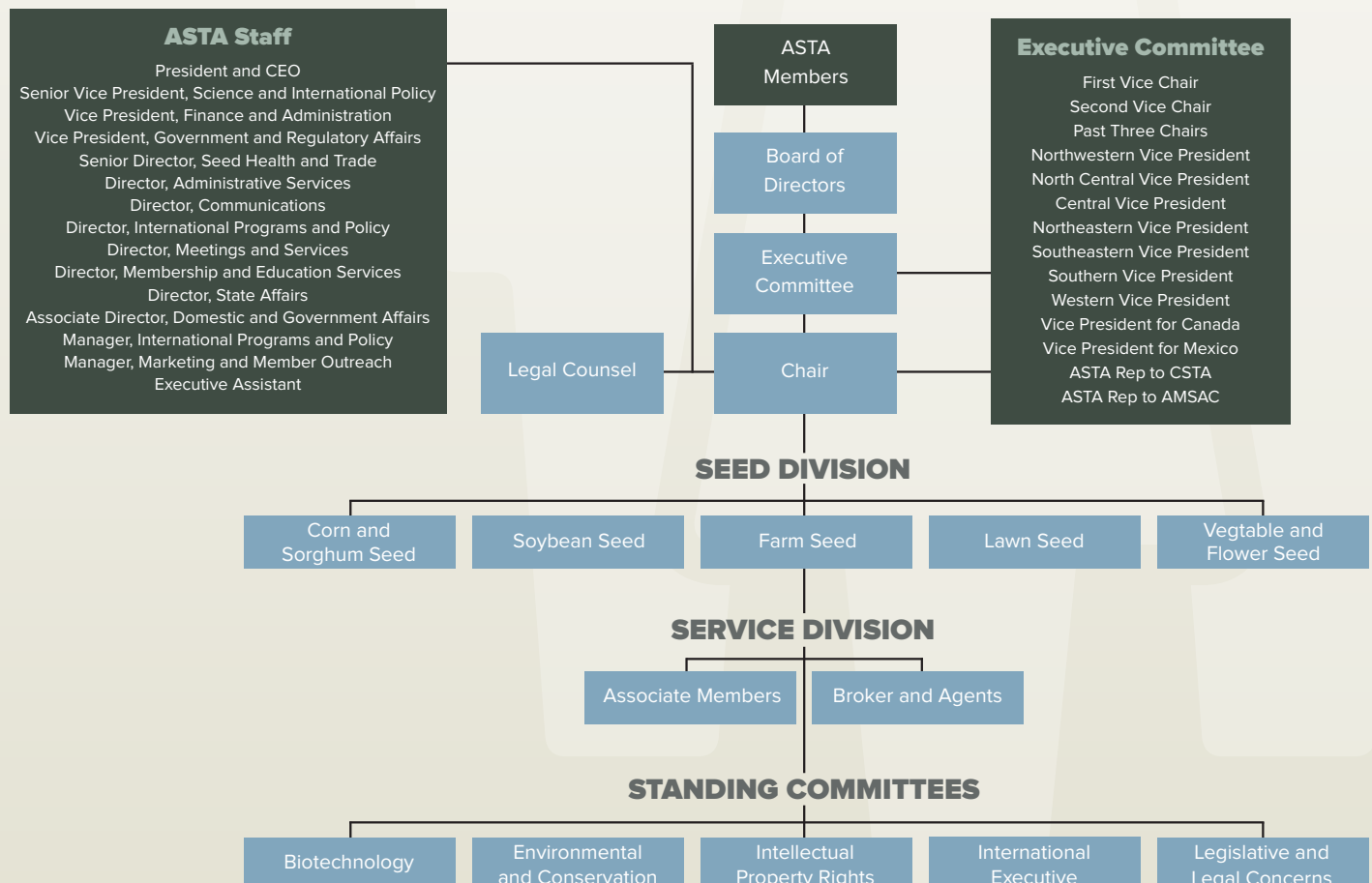
### Jennifer Crouse

Director, Meetings and Services

## Membership Services

### Stan Barrett

Director, Membership and Education Services





american  
seed trade  
association

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