



american
seed trade
association

2016/17

Annual Report

VOYAGE
of BETTER SEED

BETTER SEED

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2016/17

Annual Report

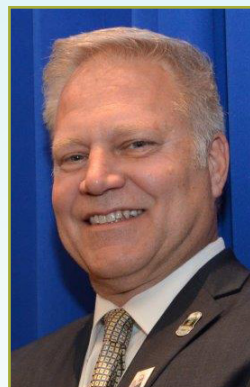


VOYAGE
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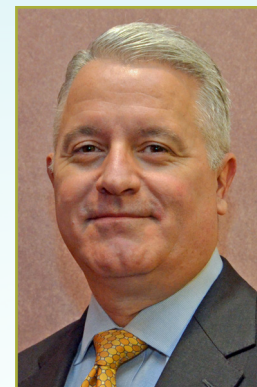
MESSAGE TO ASTA MEMBERSHIP

Dear Friends,

From the ASTA Board of Directors and staff, we can't thank you enough for your strong, continued support for YOUR association. It's no secret that the seed industry has experienced some transition over this past year and will continue to experience further transition into the future. And while we face new challenges, and the uncertainty that often comes along with change, we also face exciting new opportunities as we navigate this voyage, and grow together.



Mark Herrmann
2016/17 Chair



Andrew W. LaVigne
President & CEO

That's why the American Seed Trade Association is so important. We are here to work for you, to help leverage and coalesce, the incredible diversity and talent found within this great industry – an industry which is absolutely fundamental to the very lifeblood of society.

As an industry, we are unique and far-reaching – enabling acres of restored land, pollinator habitat, golf courses and sports fields, produce, flowers, row crops, cover crops, lawns, conservation and environment acres and more. What other industry can say it touches every aspect of life, every single day, in such a foundational way? We not only have an opportunity, we have a responsibility to be engaged – to share our stories, and to shape policy that impacts better seed for a better quality of life, both here and around the world.

From international trade, to plant breeding innovation, Farm Bill reauthorization and funding for critical research and conservation programs, Congress is debating serious issues that will affect the seed industry's ability to continue meeting the evolving needs of farmers, consumers, and the environment in the years ahead. The involvement of every sector of our industry is absolutely critical. Wherever, and whenever, there is a need for expertise involving seed issues, ASTA and its members must be at the table.

This spring, you helped put this into action, as nearly 70 seed-industry advocates from 19 states joined ASTA's 2017 "Storm the Hill Legislative Fly-in." Participants took part in more than 90 meetings on Capitol Hill, in addition to meetings with regulatory agencies and foreign embassies in conjunction with ASTA's International Executive Committee meeting. It's been exciting to see how this event continues to grow from year to year – thanks to your active involvement and engagement. There is truly no better advocate for your issues than you.

As you'll read from this report, ASTA has had an incredibly busy year, which has seen a number of key successes on issues impacting you the most. We could not have accomplished any of this without your ongoing investments of your time, your talents, and your finances. It is our honor to represent you and we wish you all the best for a productive year ahead!

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.

BETTER SEED

LEADERSHIP



From left to right: Jerry Flint, Mark Herrmann, Tracy Tally

CHAIR

Mark Herrmann

AgReliant Genetics, LLC

FIRST VICE CHAIR

Tracy Tally

Justin Seed

SECOND VICE CHAIR

Jerry Flint

DuPont Pioneer

Regional Vice Presidents

Andy Ernst, Northeastern Region Vice President,
Ernst Conservation Seeds

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

Pablo Fernandez, Region Vice President from
Mexico, Dow AgroSciences

Coby Kriegshauser, Southern Region Vice
President, Scott Seed

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

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

Brad May, Southeastern Region Vice
President, Bayer

Bill Merrigan, Northwestern Region Vice
President, Blue Mt. Seeds

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

Dave Pearl, Central Region Vice President, The
CISCO Companies

Wayne Gale, Region Vice President from Canada,
Stoke Seeds

Division Chairs

Jon Moreland, Associate Member, EES Companies

Scott Hart, Soybean, AgVenture, Inc.

Darcy Turner, Farm Seed, Turner Seed Co.

Rob Vanscoy, Lawn Seed, Turf Seed Lead

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

Dave Armstrong, Vegetable & Flower, Sakata Seed America

Eric Brandy, Corn & Sorghum, Monsanto

Directors at Large

Mike Lewis, Monsanto

Chris Garvey, Dow AgroSciences

Ron Wulfkuhle, Syngenta / GreenLeaf

Immediate Past Chairs

Craig Newman, AgReliant Genetics, LLC

Risa DeMasi, Grassland Oregon

John Schoenecker, HM.CLAUSE

STATE AND LOCAL ISSUES

In 2016/17, ASTA continued to enhance its grassroots network by expanding outreach to the grower community. Government, like industry, is constantly evolving, and ASTA is better positioned than ever to respond effectively as new issues arise. In 2017, state legislatures introduced more than 150,000 bills. Of those impacting the seed industry, weed control and invasive species were a common theme. Other significant issues included the use of seed treatments, regulatory funding and state preemption.

In previous years, states filed thousands of bills related to biotechnology alone, with most

addressing food product labeling. However, very few of those types of bills were filed in 2017, thanks to Congress' June 2016 passage of a national GMO disclosure bill including state preemption of genetically engineered food labeling laws. Instead, many 2017 state bills focused on state preemption over local seed regulations. New laws were created to that effect in five states (Delaware, Montana, Arkansas, Texas and Utah), bringing the total number of states with similar laws to 35. In essence, these laws give precedent to state laws over any local laws with regard to seed regulations.

Facilitating ASTA-Member Engagement at the State Level

In 2015, the ASTA State Governmental Affairs Working Group was created to provide a forum for identification, discussion, and resolution of state and local seed issues, in coordination with the ASTA Legislative and Legal Concerns Committee. That Working Group is designed to provide ASTA members with opportunities to engage in state policy activities and directly communicate with state policymakers. During 2016/17, the group held seven conference calls and a face-to-face meeting at the ASTA Annual Convention with participation from more than 50 members at each event. These calls and meetings included overviews and action protocol for state legislation currently under consideration, and updates on primary issues in state and federal arenas (such as biologics, state regulatory funding and harmonization).

Measuring Success

State and local issues have a tendency to evolve into federal issues. With state-legislatures' average bill passage rate of 30-percent, it's critical to maximize ASTA's grassroots network and involvement. Sometimes, what doesn't happen is just as – or more – significant than what does happen.

FEDERAL AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS

Maintaining the Benefits of Treated Seed

On November 22, 2016, a California federal court ruled in favor of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and an agriculture coalition – including ASTA and other industry and grower groups (Intervenors) – in *Anderson v. EPA*. In the lawsuit against EPA, plaintiffs had asked the court to order the agency to regulate seeds treated with pesticides as if the seeds were the pesticides themselves, which would have unnecessarily duplicated EPA's science-based regulatory review of the active ingredients used in treatment products. The ruling allows farmers to continue to benefit from the use of seed treatments which are a critical tool to minimize crop losses from pests and diseases in an economical and environmentally sustainable way.

On April 26, 2017, ASTA, along with the Association of Equipment Manufacturers (AEM) and the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA), hosted more than three dozen officials from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Environmental Protection Agency for a field day of demonstrations on seed treatments, planting practices, and equipment innovations. The event took place on the working farm of NCGA Chairman Chip Bowling in Newburg, Maryland and offered an opportunity for producers

and manufacturers to demonstrate cutting-edge technologies in each respective industry, and how these innovations have made modern agriculture more efficient and sustainable.

Coinciding with the event, ASTA rolled out new educational materials on seed treatment stewardship, including a redesigned website, handouts and a series of videos.

Five Basic Steps for Stewardship of Treated Seed



Follow Directions



Eliminate Weeds



Minimize Dust



Clean and Remove



BeeAware

FEDERAL AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS CONTINUED



ASTA members meet with Senator Ben Sasse of Nebraska

ASTA Continues Support for Soil Health and Conservation Initiatives

The 2016 cover crop survey, sponsored by the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program and the Conservation Technology Information Center with help from ASTA and Purdue University, provided insight from 2,020 farmers from across the country. The annual survey offers a vital glimpse into farmers' use and perceptions of cover crops. For the fourth year in a row, the survey found the use of cover crops is continuing to rise. It also showed a yield boost in corn and soybeans associated with the use of cover crops.

ASTA is involved in a number of conservation-related activities, including: the National Cover Crop Initiative, Soil Health Institute, Pollinator Partnership, and Honeybee Health Coalition. Sustainability continues to be an important goal in agriculture production as farmers and landowners seek to address water quality concerns, soil health, and wildlife needs through voluntary efforts.

ASTA Storms the Hill for the Seed Industry

On April 4 – 5, 2017, seed industry advocates from across the country joined their colleagues in Washington, D.C. to lobby Congress on behalf of ASTA. Over 70 advocates from 19 states participated in 92 meetings, setting a new Storm the Hill record! There were a number of issues discussed with members of Congress and their staffs, including international trade, plant breeding innovation, continued funding for agriculture research, and reauthorization of the 2018 Farm Bill.

Storm the Hill presents a unique opportunity for ASTA members to be engaged on issues of importance to the seed industry. Next year's Storm the Hill will be held in June 2018 in conjunction with the ASTA Policy and Leadership Development Conference in Washington, DC. This is a fantastic opportunity to engage in ASTA for the first time, or to encourage others from your company to get involved.

FEDERAL AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS CONTINUED

Gearing up for the 2018 Farm Bill

While the 2014 Farm Bill doesn't expire until September 30, 2018, Capitol Hill is already hard at work planning for the next one. ASTA has crafted several policy recommendations through the Farm Bill Working Group: and out of 12 different Farm Bill titles, ASTA has developed policy priorities in seven of those titles.

For the Farm Bill reauthorization, the Conservation Title is an area of interest to many ASTA members. This title covers USDA programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and cost share programs for working lands such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. ASTA is examining these programs and will be offering recommendations to the House and Senate Agriculture Committees for ways to improve program functionality and bring more expertise from the seed industry into the program implementation.

ASTA will continue to push for funding for agriculture research through programs such as the Specialty Crop Research Initiative and specialty crop disease research programs, the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research, and Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI). Continued funding for trade programs like the Market Access Program (MAP) and the Foreign Market Development (FMD) program also remain a high priority for the seed industry.

MAP & FMD

Received through the Farm Bill, USDA cooperator funds for programs like MAP and FMD allow ASTA to carry out important work overseas. This includes working with international leadership to resolve technical barriers to the movement of seed and promoting U.S. agricultural exports abroad, while helping develop and expand new markets. For example, through MAP funding, ASTA has been partnering with the Mexican Seed Trade Association (AMSAC) to co-host phytosanitary workshops at points of entry between Mexico and the U.S. These workshops have allowed the U.S. seed industry to gain helpful insights into the policies and procedures of the Mexican government regarding the exports of U.S. seed. ASTA received the following amounts in funding in 2016:

| | |
|-----------|-----------|
| FMD. | \$251,828 |
| MAP. | \$331,518 |

**In addition ASTA members provided 1,200% in matching funds.*



PLANT BREEDING INNOVATION POLICY

USDA Proposes Revisions to Part 340

In January, 2017, in the final days of the Obama administration, USDA Animal Plant Health and Inspection Agency (APHIS) published a proposed rule that proposed revisions to its regulations for genetically engineered organisms. As part of this proposed rule, APHIS proposed to exempt certain categories of plants developed through evolving breeding methods, such as gene editing. ASTA had been actively engaged in discussions with the agency throughout the rule-making process and was pleased that the proposal recognized plant breeders' long track record of safety and quality.

Specifically, USDA's proposal recognized that some applications of gene editing result in plant varieties that are essentially equivalent to varieties developed through more traditional breeding methods and treats these varieties accordingly.

ASTA Weighs In

In formal comments to USDA in June, 2017, ASTA commended the agency for setting a goal of improving its regulatory system for genetically engineered organisms and for using its long experience in regulating these organisms as a basis for making these improvements. USDA's proposal rightly recognizes that some applications of gene editing result in plant varieties that are essentially equivalent to varieties developed through more traditional breeding methods and treats these varieties accordingly in the proposal. ASTA supports excluding these categories of products through the definition of genetically engineered organism.

However, ASTA expressed significant concerns with other aspects of the proposal, notably the proposed

"up front" regulatory status evaluation and the incorporation of USDA'S noxious weed authorities into 7 CFR 340. Because of these concerns, ASTA does not support USDA moving directly to a final rule from this proposal.

Additionally, ASTA submitted comments and supporting documentation in response to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) request for information on genome edited plants.

ASTA continues to encourage the U.S. Government to take a leadership position and actively engage with other governments, particularly among our trading partners, with the goal of working toward internationally consistent, science-based policies.

Coordinating Domestic, International Policy Alignment

At the same time, ASTA is taking a leadership role in working with members of the domestic agriculture value chain as well as international partners toward the goals of industry alignment and consistent, science-based policies across the governments.

To support these efforts, ASTA's Senior Vice President for Domestic and International Policy Bernice Slutsky serves as Chair of the International Seed Federation (ISF) PBI Working Group. As part of the effort to gain science-based, international policy alignment, the Working Group developed a "policy roadmap" concept paper and facilitated a series of meetings with invited government officials, working toward a core group of like-minded countries. ASTA also worked with the Seed Association of the Americas (SAA) to host a workshop to coordinate industry and academia PBI-related policy in the region.

INTERNATIONAL POLICY

Advocating for Seed Trade

Trade is critical for the U.S. seed industry. With the new administration's focus on free trade agreements, ASTA has stepped-up its advocacy efforts around the importance of seed trade. In 2016/17 – supporting the goal of protecting the movement of commercial and pre-commercial seed around the globe – ASTA submitted public comments on seed trade; conducted education and outreach efforts with key personnel in the current and previous administrations; and made trade a key focus area of its Storm the Hill lobbying day on Capitol Hill.

Working on the Ground in China

In March 2017, ASTA expanded its capacity in the priority market of China by working with the American Chamber of Commerce and the U.S.-China Agriculture and Food Partnership to hire a full-time, in-country representative. The representative has made strides in helping strengthen the relationship between ASTA and Chinese government and industry partners. This relationship has increased ASTA's understanding of the Chinese marketplace and government actions and has pushed our priority activities forward in the areas of plant breeding innovations and germplasm movement.

Collaborating in the Asia-Pacific Region

In 2016/17, ASTA and the Asia and Pacific Seed Association (APSA) co-hosted several successful events. ASTA sent representatives to the region and sponsored two phytosanitary workshops to promote science-based pest-risk analysis and adoption of the international seed standard. The organizations also hosted a 19-person seed-industry study tour to northern California where the group met with local ASTA member companies. In November, 2016, an

ASTA representative was elected to APSA's Executive Committee – further fostering ongoing collaboration towards strong seed policies in the region.

Exploring Opportunities in Cuba

As trade relations normalize with Cuba, ASTA investigated potential opportunities for U.S. seed companies. ASTA, in conjunction with the Independent Professional Seed Association, participated in a fact-finding mission to Cuba, where delegates met with key officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, the agriculture cooperative responsible for producing and selling seed, and the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Investment Trade Policy. At ASTA's Vegetable and Flower Seed Conference in January, ASTA facilitated a discussion with leading university and industry experts on the political and business environment in Cuba. In April, ASTA's International Executive Committee met with Cuban Ambassador José Ramón Cabañas to discuss the seed industry and potential future collaboration.



GLOBAL SEED MOVEMENT

In 2016/17, ASTA continued to support its members in helping to resolve country-specific trade issues in a number of markets including: Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, and several African countries. Working closely with USDA and others, ASTA handled a variety of re-export and phytosanitary certification issues here in the U.S., and hosted an import/export workshop in Seattle, Washington, and cross-border workshops in Nogales and Mexicali. Other notable achievements are outlined below.

IPPC Passes Long-Awaited International Seed Standard

On April 6, 2017, a final International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM) for Seed was agreed to during the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) in Korea. ASTA has been advocating for a seed ISPM for nearly 20 years.

The need for a standard has become more apparent, as many National Plant Protection Offices (NPPOs) have been publishing new, usually more restrictive, non-science based, phytosanitary import requirements for seeds. The ISPM for Seed provides guidance to NPPOs on the criteria for harmonizing import requirements and export/re-export procedures, taking into account the unique needs of commercial seed as well as seed used for research, breeding and multiplication.

Favorable Outcome Reached on Proposed Changes to Chile Import Requirements



For more than a year, ASTA had been actively engaged in these discussions related to Chile's proposed modifications to its phytosanitary import measures for corn, wheat, and vegetable seeds. The proposal would have made it extremely difficult for many companies to meet these new requirements; in fact, many were considering moving their plant breeding operations.

After several delegation visits, commissioned scientific research, and an ongoing dialogue with Chilean industry and government, ASTA was extremely pleased with the outcome of the final rule, issued on December 16, 2016. The rule was discussed in detail during the ASTA Phytosanitary Committee meeting during the Vegetable and Flower Seed Conference in January, and the full text is available on the ASTA members-only website.

GLOBAL SEED MOVEMENT CONTINUED

ASTA Works with USDA on Program to Recognize Industry Quality Management Practices

In December, 2016, the USDA-Animal and Plant Health Initiative Service (APHIS) began working on the Regulatory Framework for the Seed Health initiative known as “ReFreSH.” Through the program, APHIS seeks to create a program to recognize standard-industry quality management practices via existing accreditation programs – allowing seed to move in and out of the U.S. in a more safe and efficient manner. ASTA is part of a small industry working group advising APHIS on this project.

The National Seed Health Accreditation Pilot Program (NSHAPP) will be folded into ReFreSH and will likely serve as an initial pilot. ReFreSH will incorporate both the import and export of seed and APHIS has already begun to work with key trading partners to development this program globally.

After Years of Discussion, New Phytosanitary Measures Take Effect in Brazil

Brazil’s new phytosanitary measures, Normative 16, finally went into force in March, 2017, after three years of intense dialogue between the Brazilian and U.S. governments. Over this period, ASTA worked closely with members of the U.S. and Brazil governments, industry, the International Seed Federation, and others to influence Brazil’s Ministry of Agriculture to change its proposed phytosanitary import regulations for commercial research and breeder seed – resulting in a positive outcome for U.S. industry.

As a result of ASTA’s involvement, specific requirements for many pests and pathogens of concern were either significantly modified or eliminated in the final rule. In addition, Brazil agreed to continue to accept technical justifications to further modify these specific requirements after the new rules went into force.



COMMUNICATIONS

Bringing the “Magic of Seed” to EPCOT

ASTA had the incredible opportunity to partner with the talented storytellers at Walt Disney World to bring the “Magic of Seed” to the 2017 EPCOT International Flower & Garden Festival in Orlando, Florida – an event that draws more than 7 million visitors to the park each year.

The 2017 festival featured an ASTA garden outside the Land Pavilion visually depicting the evolution of popular vegetables and flowers over the years, thanks to plant breeding. Through story-boards closely based on ASTA’s Better Seed, Better Life messages, and expert gardener and plant breeder speakers, the story of plant breeding was brought to life in a very public and high-profile way!

As part of the partnership, ASTA plant-breeder speakers delivered a series of presentations on the “Magic of Seed” during the festival’s opening week, March 1-2. The speakers discussed the connection between better seed and better life, and the role of plant breeders as problem-solvers – addressing everything from farmer to home-gardener needs. Topics included things like combating pests, weeds and disease; environmental challenges, like the wise use of natural resources; and consumer needs, like better taste, nutrition and appearance. Festival attendees received a number of give-aways, including space-seed packets from the First-the Seed Foundation student-education program, Tomatosphere.

Now, in its twenty-fourth year, the EPCOT International Flower & Garden Festival runs every March through May.



Telling the Story of Plant Breeding

In 2016/17, ASTA took a leadership role in communications around plant breeding innovation (PBI). As part of a comprehensive proactive communications plan, ASTA commissioned consumer focus groups to uncover key audiences’ views about plant breeding innovation and gene editing. Based on the findings, ASTA developed a number of internal resources, including a message map, discussion guide, and template presentation, to assist member companies and key stakeholders in talking about the evolution of plant breeding and seed industry innovation. ASTA’s public-facing resources – including videos, plant-breeder profiles, infographics, and more – are being promoted on social media channels, and housed on ASTA’s new educational microsite: seedinginnovation.org.

ASTA’s work has focused on ensuring industry and stakeholder partners are in alignment on PBI messaging, both domestically, through a number of speaking engagements with value chain groups in D.C. and around the country, and internationally, through its involvement with the International Seed Federation Communications Working Group. Working closely with the ISF Working Group, ASTA helped develop a PBI-communications toolbox for use at the international level.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Plant Variety Protection

In 2016/17 ASTA, through its Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Committee, engaged in domestic and international efforts supporting the use of molecular markers in the Plant Variety Protection (PVP) process. Domestically, ASTA has a joint working group with the U.S. PVP Advisory Board to develop the technical components for the project, such as a set of publicly available molecular markers on a crop-by-crop basis. Past ASTA work focused on corn with the joint working group now focused on soybeans. The Seed Association of the Americas has a similar project and as part of this effort, ASTA coordinated with its counterparts in Argentina on the soybean project. ASTA has also been active in the UPOV Working Group on Biochemical and Molecular Techniques, providing updates on its efforts in both corn and soybeans.

Access and Benefit Sharing

Working with the International Seed Federation (ISF) and the U.S. delegation to the International Treaty for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), ASTA provided input into the ITPGRFA process to revise the Standard Material Transfer Agreement (SMTA) under the Treaty. ASTA representatives were part of the ISF industry delegation that attended the meetings focused on revising SMTA.

Ongoing Work with China

ASTA continued efforts in 2016/17 to strengthen PVP processes and enforcement in China. In July, the association sent a delegation to China to participate in ongoing discussions regarding implementation and enforcement of the new Chinese Seed Law (enacted January 1, 2016) and revisions to China's PVP law. ASTA submitted official comments to the Chinese government supporting regulations for the Chinese Seed Law. Delegates from ASTA also met with the Ministry of Agriculture several times to answer questions about U.S. IPR protection and the importance of enforcement.

The Ministry of Agriculture requested a follow-up visit to the U.S. to meet with government and industry IPR experts. These discussions are likely to help inform the new PVP Law expected to pass the National People's Congress in late 2017 or early 2018.



INDUSTRY BUILDING AND RECOGNITION

The National Council of Commercial Plant Breeders

For over 20 years, the National Council of Commercial Plant Breeders (NCCPB) has recognized the achievements of rising young talents through its graduate student program. Many of the program participants have achieved leadership positions in the seed industry, and continue to make key contributions in delivering basic know-how and applied innovations while working for ASTA member companies or public institutions in the U.S.

Another NCCPB program, the Career Achievement Award, recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the advancement of plant breeding and genetics in the public sector. The award has been a milestone for the last 50 years and a highlight in the career of many exceptional colleagues. Recipients include authors of foundational books on plant breeding, and other talented plant scientists who have had ground-breaking impacts on society – including Nobel Prize winner Norman Borlaug and World Food Prize winner Gurdev Khush.

The 2016 Career Achievement Award winners were:

- **Allen Van Deynze**, University of California, Davis - Public Sector Breeder
- **Clinton J. Steketee**, University of Georgia - Ph.D. Candidate
- **Christopher D'Angelo**, University of Wisconsin, Madison - Graduate Student

The American Seed Research Foundation

Since 1959, the American Seed Research Foundation (ASRF) has been promoting basic research in seed biology, and facilitating the transfer of resulting technology for the benefit of the seed industry, farmers, growers and consumers around the world.

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 in 2017 were:

- **Narinder Singh**, Kansas State University
- **Brian Pfeiffer**, Texas A&M University
- **Vivian Bernau**, The Ohio State University
- **Mei Zhao**, University of Georgia
- **Jorge Venegas**, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
(Roger Krueger Memorial Scholarship winner)
- **Qiang (Richard) Chen**, Rutgers

INDUSTRY BUILDING AND RECOGNITION CONTINUED

Future Seed Executives

ASTA's Future Seed Executives (FuSE) Committee seeks to develop the next generation of seed industry leaders so they are prepared to meet the challenges and demands of an increasingly dynamic and global industry. In 2016/17, FuSE focused its efforts on rebranding and refocusing its mission and goals. To better represent its purpose, FuSE designed a new logo and tagline: "to stay rooted to ASTA and connect, grow, and lead."

FuSE held several events throughout the year including Educational Units and roundtable discussions. The first Educational Unit was held in September at the Scotts Company in Columbus, Ohio. Attendees got a first-hand look at Scotts' research, strategies, and operations, and had the

opportunity to visit with staff at the Ohio Soybean Council

to learn about the importance of farm shows in the seed industry with a focus on state associations.

Interactive career-development webinars were held throughout the year, including sessions with ASTA Chair Mark Herrmann and Executive Committee member, Wayne Gayle. At ASTA's 133rd Annual Convention, FuSE collaborated with the Management Skills Committee on a session focused on interviewing style and its relation to generational differences. The FuSE-sponsored Campus Connections program selected six students to attend the Convention.



2017 Campus Connections students included:



Nora Faris
University of Missouri



Alec Weber
South Dakota State University



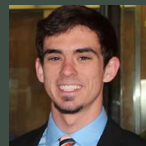
Madison Lynn
Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College



Colby Barton
Fort Hays State University



Keeley Overmeyer
The Ohio State University



William Singer
University of Tennessee at Martin

First-the Seed Foundation

It was a great year for the First-the Seed Foundation! In 2016/17, more than 70 ambassadors participated in FTSF programs, and grade 6-8 curriculum was downloaded more than 500 times. This means the first announcement of the curriculum reached an estimated 16,500 students! The foundation has seen a more than 50-percent growth in its programs, with Tomatosphere

alone growing by more than 54.5-percent!

A new mobile-ready website includes a fully functioning registration page and ensures access to all programs. In addition, the first issue of the new quarterly newsletter was mailed to more than 7,000



INDUSTRY BUILDING AND RECOGNITION CONTINUED

subscribers. In addition, social media accounts were established for both FTSF and Tomatosphere, and the program manager has been actively posting on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

You can find and follow FTSF on:

- Facebook [@FirstTheSeed](#)
- Twitter [@1stTheSeed](#)
- LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/company/firstthe-seed-foundation>

ASTA Honors Seed Industry Leaders



Joe Funk Receives ASTA Distinguished Service Award
SEED TODAY Editor Joe Funk was honored with the 2017 ASTA Distinguished Service Award during the Opening General Session of the ASTA Annual

Convention in Minneapolis. The Distinguished Service Award recognizes those whose efforts have made a significant contribution to the association and the seed industry.

Funk, a Central Illinois native, was raised on a dairy/grain farm near Bloomington in the heart of the world's best farming area. He graduated from the University of Illinois with a B.S. in Agronomy and a minor in economics. His work experience from there included 10 years with the USDA as County Executive Director and a few years as a district sales manager for a regional seed company. Joe began writing for Grain Journal in 1987 and was appointed Editor of SEED TODAY in 1998, about a year after the magazine began publication.

Joe recently began his encore career as an external agriculture communications consultant.



Dr. Stephen Smith Honored with ASTA Lifetime Honorary Membership Award

Dr. Stephen Smith, Iowa State University and previously with DuPont Pioneer, was the 2017 recipient of the ASTA Lifetime

Honorary Membership Award. Honorary Members distinguish themselves through leadership, vision and service to the American seed industry.

"Dr. Smith has been an ardent supporter of ASTA's activities on the domestic and international levels for over 20 years," said 2016/17 ASTA Chair Mark Herrmann. "He is known worldwide, well respected and deeply committed to the seed industry. An unflinching volunteer, a tireless worker and an unrelenting defender and advocate of intellectual property rights, he has traveled the country and the world attending meetings, giving speeches, organizing symposia and other activities related to intellectual property, germplasm protection and breeding for the seed industry. Respected by his colleagues in industry and government, domestically and internationally, he has become a 'go to' person in the industry on seed intellectual property."

Dr. Smith has served on intellectual property committees of ASTA and the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO). He also chairs the International Seed Federation (ISF) Intellectual Property Committee.

CONVENTIONS AND MEETINGS

2016 Farm and Lawn Seed Conference

ASTA's 62nd 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.

A newly-expanded exhibitor area offered service providers greater opportunity to meet and network with conference participants. The modified schedule facilitated committee and division meetings on Sunday afternoon and the popular ASTA town hall breakfast on Monday morning, featuring state and regional seed association reports and a discussion on the importance of communicating the value of the seed industry. Committee and division sessions included discussions on cover crops, a value chain panel discussion among five regional seed companies, and updates during the Environmental and Conservation Seed Committee meeting from the Bureau of Land Management and the Society for Range Management.



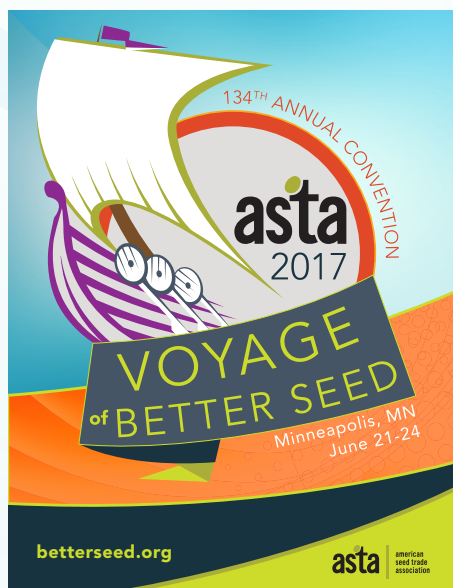
CSS 2016 & Seed Expo

The 2016 Corn, Sorghum and Soybean Seed Research Conference & Seed Expo (CSS) gathered 2,775 registrants and 156 expo exhibitors. The convention featured a new "Columbus Hall Lounge" area with refreshments and live-streaming general sessions amongst the large Columbus Hall exhibit displays – which included a new virtual reality exhibit. The Seed Expo's main show floor was sold out, while the conference sessions experienced higher than usual attendance, including online views of the recordings of the sessions. The Opening General Session once again featured agriculture economist Dan Basse of AgResource with his highly popular annual update on global agricultural markets.

CONVENTIONS AND MEETINGS CONTINUED

56th Vegetable and Flower Seed Conference

ASTA's fastest growing and most international conference continued its upward trend with another record attendance of 948 participants and 131 companies participating in the Trading Room. At the Opening General Session, speakers from Disney's horticulture team announced an exciting collaboration between ASTA and Disney to promote the value of seed inside the Epcot theme park in Walt Disney World (read more about it in the Communications section of this report). More than 20 students from the University of Florida's "Challenge 2050" program attended the conference and presented posters – highlighting their collaborative ideas for what the world will look like by 2050, including issues related to food, water and overall agriculture. Special exclusive horticulture tours of the Disney theme parks were provided to convention participants, led by Disney's Agriculture Science teams.



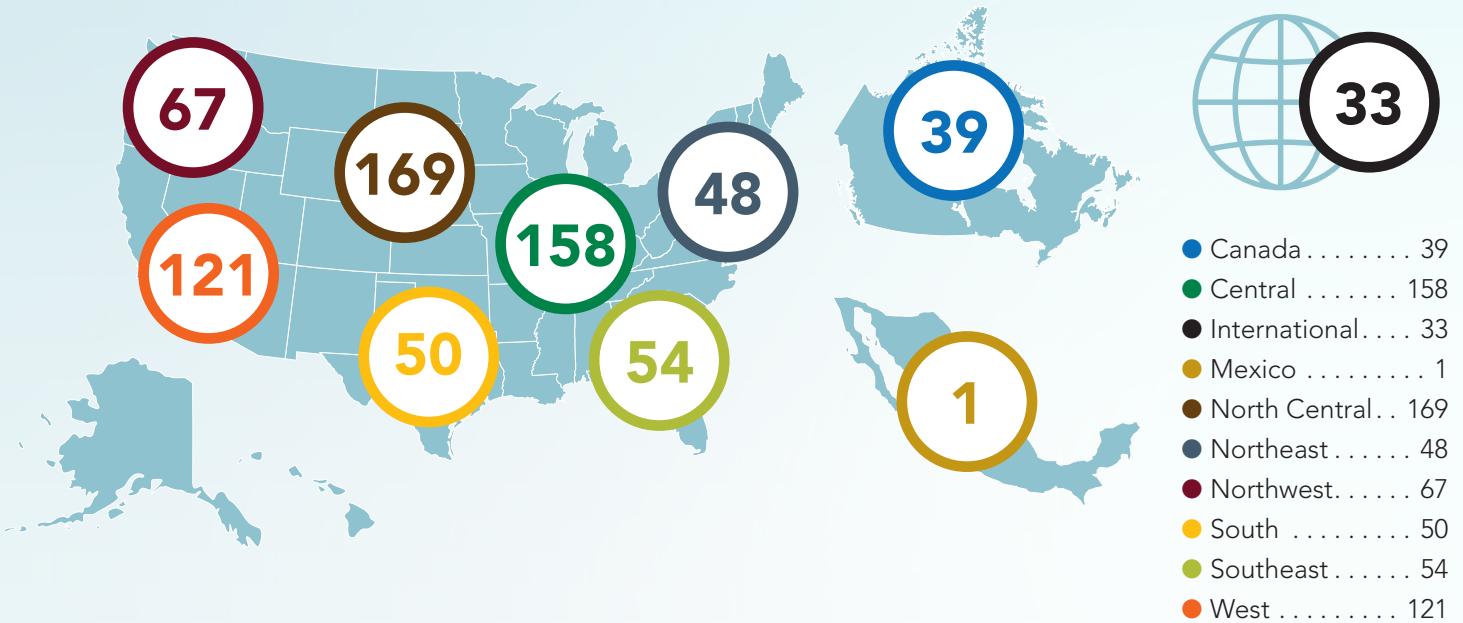
134th Annual Convention

ASTA's 134th Annual Convention, "Voyage of Better Seed," gathered 297 participants in Minneapolis, Minnesota for four days of networking and education, focused on seed industry policy. The Opening General Session featured a panel discussion with representatives of nearby food companies – including General Mills, Cargill and Land O'Lakes – sharing perspectives on consumer trends, sustainability and government regulations. A second major session on cross-cutting domestic and international policy issues was combined with reports from ASTA divisions and respective officer elections. Special area tours gave an inside-look at nearby member companies El Dorado Packaging and the Syngenta Seedcare Institute. During the meeting, the new members of the ASTA Board of Directors were announced, and ASTA's 2017/18 officers were officially installed. The ASTA Board of Directors met on the last day of the convention, including current and incoming Board members for the 2017-18 fiscal year.

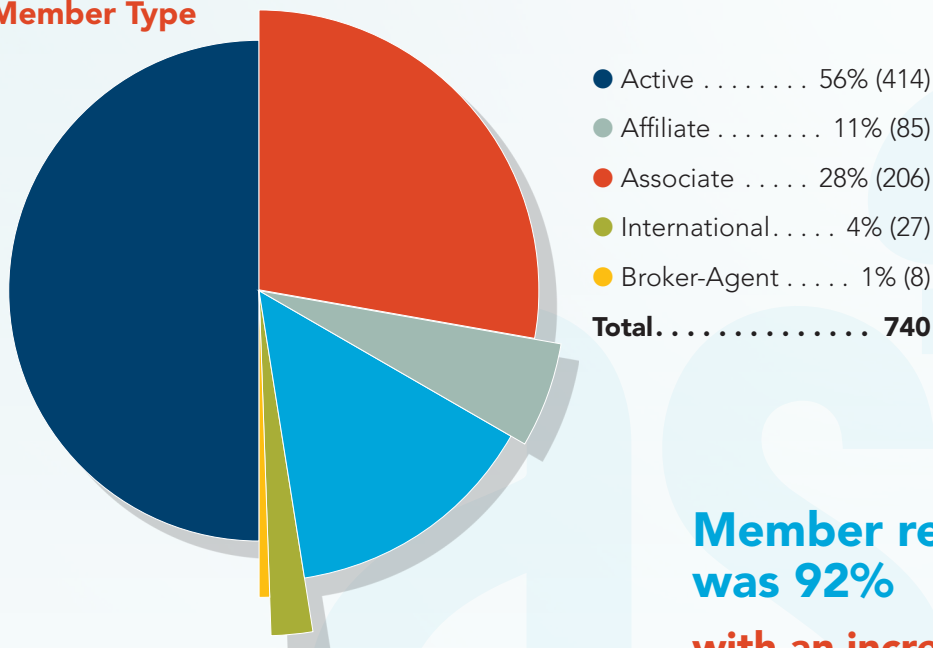
As announced in Minneapolis, 2017 was the last year the summer meeting would be referred to as the "Annual Convention." Starting in 2018, the event will be known as ASTA's "Policy & Leadership Development Conference," to better reflect the mission and purpose of the modern evolution of the event.

MEMBERSHIP

Compare by Region



Member Type



**Member retention
was 92%**

**with an increase
of 49 members.**



FINANCIAL HEALTH

ASTA's Budget

ASTA's budget is based on guidance and approval from the Board of Directors according to determined priorities and the strategic plan. ASTA strives to maintain transparency with the membership about the association's budget and financial status. The Board of Directors approves and regularly reviews the financial status, which enables ASTA to maintain a strong and focused direction. The annual ASTA audit was conducted by Raffa, Inc, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, GAAP. The 2015/16 audit confirmed the financial health of the association. ASTA ended its fiscal year with \$4,508,674 in net assets. ASTA has additionally calculated in kind contributions related to our international activities of \$17,560,711. This includes promotion, travel, research and professional services.

Investment 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 annual ASTA 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 | 3,566,872 |
| Registration Fees | 915,317 |
| Government Grants | 706,610 |
| Sponsorship | 438,355 |
| Exhibits | 432,120 |
| Administrative fees | 20,673 |
| Assessments | 7,845 |
| Other | 337 |

Total Operating Revenue and Support . . .6,088,129

Operating Expenses

Program Services:

| | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| Meetings | 1,274,441 |
| International | 969,584 |
| Policy | 1,253,318 |
| Legislation | 682,166 |
| Membership | 173,351 |
| Other | 43,421 |

Total Program Services

Supporting Services

Total Operating Expenses6,434,969

Change in Net Assets from Operations. . . .346,840

Non-Operating Activities

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Investment Income | 51,866 |
| Branding Expenses | -244,340 |
| Net Assets at beginning of Year | 5,047,988 |
| Prior Year Adjustment | -539,314 |
| Net Assets at beginning of Year-Restated. . . | 4,508,674 |

ASTA STAFF

Executive Office
Andrew W. LaVigne
 President and CEO

Brenda Rowe
 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

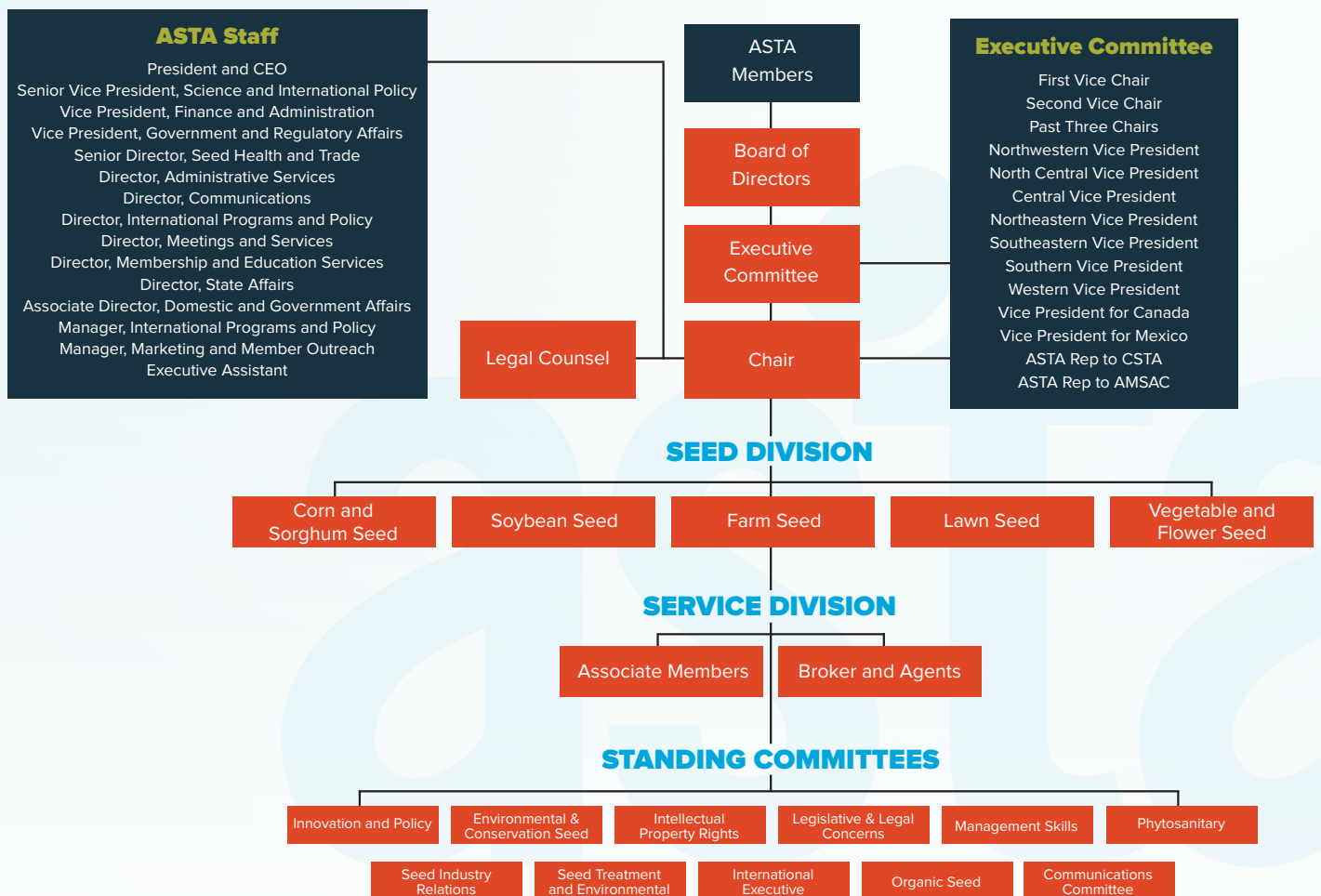
Finance & Administration
Ann Jorss
 Vice President, Finance and Administration

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





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