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seed trade
association

betterseed.org

The background of the cover features a stylized American flag. The top left corner has a white field with red stripes. The bottom right corner is a solid dark blue field with a pattern of small white stars. A faint, large-scale silhouette of the U.S. Capitol dome is visible in the background. In the bottom left corner, there is a green leaf with white veins.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

2017-18
ANNUAL REPORT

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2017-18 ANNUAL REPORT

MAKE YOUR
VOICE
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MESSAGE TO ASTA MEMBERSHIP

Dear Friends,

We are pleased to share with you the Fiscal Year 2017-18 ASTA Annual Report which highlights our key activities, successes, and ongoing engagement over the past year. On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff, we can't thank you enough for contributing to the success of this association through the ongoing investments of your time, talents, and finances.

This fiscal year, ASTA completed the process of updating its multi-year strategic plan. This process included involvement from ASTA's diverse membership to ensure we're focusing on the issues that matter most to our members.

We've also put a stepped-up emphasis both on bringing new talent to the industry, and on growing new leaders from within. This includes new management skills training opportunities to build the next generation of seed industry leaders, as well as advocacy and communications training to help all of us do a better job of sharing our story – whether it be with our friends, neighbors, coworkers, or with our state and federal legislators.

In addition, we're forging stronger connections with students – at every level – from continuing initiatives like the First-the Seed Foundation Tomatosphere program in elementary schools, to building new partnerships with high school students through a first of its kind MOU with the National FFA, and a new Better Seed, Better Life student video contest for college students.

At the same time, we never lose sight of the issues that matter to you in Washington, D.C., and in our state capitols. In today's political climate, it's more important than ever that our industry has a seat at the table when policy decisions that impact you are being made. Whether it's trade negotiations, plant breeding innovation, reauthorization of the Farm Bill, or funding for important research or international programs, ASTA is engaged and working for you, day in and day out.

It is an honor to work side-by-side in partnership with you to ensure a strong future for this great industry. We hope that over the past year, you've taken the opportunity to engage with our staff and leadership on an individual basis. Not only do we love hearing from you, but we also believe having strong, ongoing, two-way communication is absolutely vital to our ability to be effective representatives for you at the state, national, and international levels.

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 support. It is our pleasure to represent you, and we wish you all the best for a productive year ahead!



Tracy Tally
2017-18 Chair



Andy LaVigne
President & CEO

STRATEGIC GOALS & KEY FOCUS AREAS

ASTA's 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's Mission

ASTA's mission is to 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's 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

Domestic Policy

Be a respected voice on domestic policy issues impacting the seed industry. Continue to grow and enhance the ASTA comprehensive government affairs program and regularly engage and communicate with members and stakeholders on federal, state and local issues. Determine action on active issues where ASTA leads, supports or monitors.

Innovation

Strive to develop a domestic and international environment that facilitates innovation throughout the seed industry.

Communications

Establish ASTA as the leading voice for the US seed industry, demonstrated by its position as the go-to source on seed issues for consumers, ASTA members, member organizations, legislators, regulators, media, and other stakeholder groups.

Intellectual Property Rights

Advance the use and respect of intellectual property rights (IPR) protection for the seed sector globally.

International

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

ASTA Membership & Internal Matters

Maintain and grow strong plans for: membership retention, engagement and recruitment; meetings structure and management; and human and financial resource management to ensure the key issues of membership are addressed through a sound association foundation.

BETTER SEED

LEADERSHIP



From left to right: Wayne Gale, Tracy Tally, and Jerry Flint.

CHAIR

Tracy Tally
Justin Seed

FIRST VICE CHAIR

Jerry Flint
DuPont Pioneer

SECOND VICE CHAIR

Wayne Gale
Stoke Seeds

Regional Vice Presidents

Andy Ernst, Northeastern Region Vice President,
Ernst Conservation Seeds

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

Angel Saavedra, Region Vice President Mexico,
DuPont Pioneer

Coby Kriegshauser, Southern Region Vice
President, Scott Seed

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

Dave Pearl, Central Region Vice President, The
CISCO Companies

Jim Schweigert, Region Vice President Canada,
Gro Alliance, LLC

Division Chairs

Jon Moreland, Associate Member, EES Companies

Mark Seem, Soybean, AgReliant Genetics, LLC

Lucas Solis, Farm & Lawn Seed, Pure Seed

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

Steve Wiley, Vegetable & Flower, American Takii, Inc.

Jacob Wyffels, Corn & Sorghum, Wyffels Hybrids, Inc.

Directors at Large

Mike Lewis, Monsanto

Chris Garvey, Dow AgroSciences

Dave Treinen, Syngenta, Greenleaf Genetics

Immediate Past Chairs

Mark Herrman, AgReliant Genetics, LLC

Risa DeMasi, Grassland Oregon

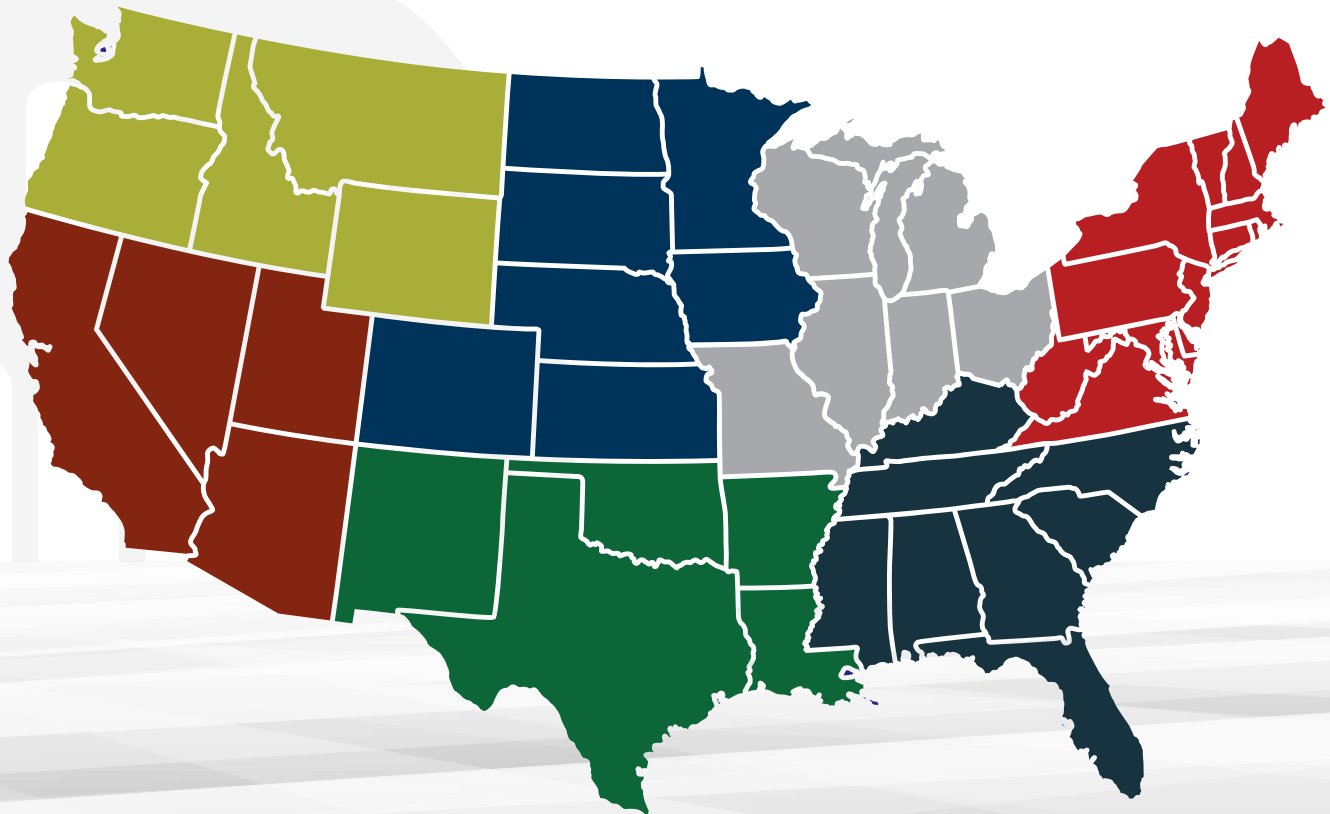
John Schoenecker, HM.CLAUSE

STATE AND LOCAL ISSUES

Throughout the year, ASTA continually monitored each state legislature for movement on key issues impacting the seed industry. Of the more than 210,000 bills filed by states in 2018, ASTA reviewed more than 12,000 bills and actively tracked over 120 on a daily basis. After the legislative sessions concluded, the ASTA State Governmental Affairs Working Group, in coordination with the ASTA Seed Treatment and Environmental Committee, created a plan to be pro-active with weed and seed applied technology issues in the states due to increased activity on these two issues.

State legislatures continued to focus on regulatory funding and consistency of state laws, with hemp legalization becoming a new hot topic. Legislation was passed in Congress and in various states to address concerns surrounding GMO labeling and seed libraries.

During the legislative sessions of 2018, the ASTA State Governmental Affairs Working Group continued to successfully provide 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 is comprised of representatives from state and regional seed and agribusiness associations, member company governmental affairs professionals, and related national associations. These representatives reviewed each piece of legislation on the tracking list during monthly conference calls. The collective insight cultivated deeper grassroots involvement and activated a singular presence in action toward the resolution of the legislative involvement and communication with state policymakers.



FEDERAL AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS

Legislative

ASTA continues to create opportunities to educate Congress on priority seed industry issues; and these efforts led to a number of positive legislative outcomes during the past year.

On July 12, 2017, ASTA President & CEO Andy LaVigne testified before the U.S. House Agriculture Committee on the Farm Bill and innovation in specialty crops. LaVigne stressed the importance of promoting a climate of innovation through the funding of critical Farm Bill research programs and the enactment of clear and consistent, science-based policies across the government, particularly related to evolving breeding techniques like gene editing.

On February 12, 2018, more than 70 Hill staffers, partners and members of media attended a seminar by the National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research (National C-FAR), with support from ASTA, on the importance of seed banks for agriculture. The seminar featured Dr. Colin Khoury of the USDA-Agricultural Research Service lab in Ft. Collins, Colorado, a noted expert on the role of crop genetic diversity in promoting food and economic security.

While creating much-anticipated tax relief, the Tax Bill passed in December 2017 also threatened to distort grain markets by changing the Section 199A provision regarding cooperatives. After months of work and near misses, the final Omnibus spending bill passed in March included a critical amendment – supported by ASTA – resolving the 199A tax issue. The language restored the tax benefits afforded to farmer-owned cooperatives and their farmer patrons under the previous Section 199A, thereby leveling the playing field between co-op and non-coop grain purchasers and seed producers.

In June, ASTA hosted its popular Storm the Hill event in conjunction with the inaugural Policy and Leadership Development Conference in Washington, D.C. More than 100 participants representing 25 states took part in over 170 meetings with lawmakers and staff. While on the Hill, ASTA members lobbied on a number of key issues including trade, innovation and reauthorization of the Farm Bill.

The 2014 Farm Bill expired on September 30, 2018. As of October 1, the House and Senate continue to negotiate differences between the bills for inclusion in the final package. The House and Senate versions each include priority items for ASTA including expansion of the Plant Variety Protection Act to asexually reproduced materials; a definition for biostimulants; a crop insurance fix for cover crops; a study on the National Plant Germplasm System; and funding for the Foundation for Food and Agricultural Research. It is ASTA's expectation that these priorities will be included in the final bill when passed.

FEDERAL AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS CONTINUED



Representatives from Texas with Chairman Conaway during 2018 Storm the Hill

Regulatory

In the regulatory arena, issues often take years to resolve. The National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Standard Act passed in July 2016, giving USDA two years to finalize the regulations. While USDA did not meet this statutory deadline, they did publish proposed rules in 2018. ASTA submitted both comments from the association and group comments as part of the broad Coalition for Safe and Affordable Food. ASTA is seeking to maintain clarity on the scope of the regulation for plant breeders. It will likely be several years before these regulations come into place.

ASTA members received much-needed relief from burdensome regulations associated with the Food Safety Modernization Act. After nearly seven years of discussion, on January 8, 2018, FDA announced an exemption for seed conditioning facilities that send discarded seed materials for consumption by either animals or humans.

PLANT BREEDING INNOVATION POLICY

In November 2017, the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) announced it was withdrawing its proposed rule to revise and update the Agency's biotechnology regulations for the purpose of soliciting additional stakeholder input. ASTA supported several key aspects of the proposed rule – most importantly, its recognition that some applications of gene editing result in plant varieties that are essentially equivalent to varieties developed through more traditional breeding methods, and should be treated as such from a policy perspective. However, ASTA supported USDA's decision to look at other policy options and expand outreach to stakeholders. Subsequently, Secretary Perdue issued a statement in March 2018 reaffirming that USDA had not changed its position with respect to gene editing and how USDA will treat plant varieties developed with these breeding methods. ASTA strongly supported the secretary's statement.

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 with respect to breeding methods.

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 governments.

ASTA's Senior Vice President for Domestic and International Policy Bernice Slutsky, continues to serve as Chair of the International Seed Federation (ISF) PBI Working Group to work toward alignment of policies across countries. To this end, an international roundtable discussion on gene editing and evolving plant breeding methods was held in Beijing, China, December 13-14, 2017. ISF also held a number of meetings and webinars with the International Grain Trade Coalition to discuss the potential gene editing brings to the grain industry and how new varieties will come to market.



INTERNATIONAL POLICY

China

As part of ASTA's ongoing focus on intellectual property rights, in July 2017 the association hosted a delegation from the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture's Seed Management Bureau and National People's Congress. Discussions focused on the use of molecular markers in the Plant Variety Protection law to increase protection for plant breeders and to include the concept in the determination of essentially derived varieties.

ASTA and the China National Seed Association (CNSA) continue to work under their joint Memorandum of Understanding. In March 2018, an ASTA delegation attended the first annual CNSA Congress, where representatives presented on topics including seed movement, seed certification and intellectual property rights.

In May 2018, ASTA's representative in China, along with representatives from the U.S. Embassy, had the opportunity to meet with U.S. Department of Agriculture Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs Ted McKinney in Beijing. Among the topics of discussion was ASTA's corn seed pilot project, which will allow U.S. seed companies to export corn seed directly to China for research and breeding – a practice which is currently prohibited under Chinese law. Developed under the Market Access Program, the project will connect the two largest corn producing countries in the world.

Trade

ASTA ramped-up its federal advocacy efforts on trade policy as the U.S. increased its negotiating activity around key free-trade agreements. During the renegotiations of the 23-year old North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), ASTA followed and commented on three seed-specific issues: intellectual

property rights; phytosanitary measures; and regulatory cooperation between the three countries.

As part of a larger coalition of USDA agriculture cooperators, ASTA advocated for the continued funding of the Market Access Program (MAP), the Foreign Market Development Program (FMD) and the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (TASC) grant program. Not only did ASTA sign onto support letters, but members of the ASTA International Executive Committee (IEC) went to Capitol Hill to meet with Congressional staff to explain the importance of these programs to the seed sector.

International and Regional Seed Associations

ASTA continues to play a leadership role at the International Seed Federation (ISF) on key issues impacting the global movement of seeds. In 2018, ASTA members assumed the chairs of the ISF Breeders and Intellectual Property Committees, as well as having active membership on all ISF section boards, committees and working groups. ASTA also has positions on the Executive Committee of the Asia and Pacific Seed Association (APSA) and the Boards of the Seed Association of the Americas (SAA) and the African Seed Trade Association (AFSTA). Active engagement in these organizations is critical to ASTA's ability to accomplish its international advocacy goals on behalf of its members.

GLOBAL SEED MOVEMENT

In FY 2017-18, ASTA led the way on the international level in developing innovations to facilitate the global movement of seed. Efforts focused on: implementation of the new international seed standard (ISPM 38); further development of the Regulatory Framework for Seed Health (ReFreSH) initiative and QM seed production practices model; and implementation of the new international electronic phytosanitary certificate (E-PHYTO) system. In addition, ASTA continued to address specific phytosanitary certification and market access issues involving Mexico, South Korea, Brazil, Australia, Chile, Ecuador, Colombia, and others. ASTA partnered with the International Seed Federation (ISF), the Seed Association of the Americas (SAA), the Asia and Pacific Seed Association (APSA), and numerous other NSAs, Animal Plant Health Inspection System (APHIS), USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), and other NPPOs around the world to help harmonize and align phytosanitary measures at the global level.

ReFreSH

During the fiscal year, ASTA made significant progress with USDA in developing the ReFreSH initiative to help streamline international seed movements. The initiative will recognize seed company QM seed production programs through an accreditation process, providing an alternative to consignment-by-consignment phytosanitary risk reduction practices. Developed using tomato seed and tomato canker as a model system, ReFreSH is now being adapted to apply to other seed species and to include viral and fungal pathogens.

Seed Health Testing Issues

Many countries hold seed shipments and test them for pathogens without prior notification. Over the past year, many consignments were rejected by authorities, particularly in South Korea and Mexico. ASTA worked with USDA APHIS and regulatory authorities in these countries to investigate the root causes for these rejections. ASTA hosted delegations from Korea and Mexico to visit U.S. lab testing facilities and exchange information on seed testing methods. ASTA began developing databases on pests of concern and this information is available to members to help avoid future trade disruptions on the ASTA member's only website.



GLOBAL SEED MOVEMENT CONTINUED

Workshops and Webinars

ASTA organized and participated in a number of important phytosanitary workshops and educational sessions throughout the year. In June 2018, ASTA organized a joint industry/government workshop on pest-risk management, held in conjunction with the AMSAC Annual Congress in Mexico City. ASTA representatives attended a SAA/COSAVE workshop in Montevideo, Uruguay focusing on implementation of the new international seed standard and the development of the systems approach for facilitating international seed movements. ASTA representatives, along with regulatory and technical experts from 5 countries, participated in a special workshop organized through the International Seed Federation for the purpose of developing a path forward for a globally recognized systems approach. In addition, ASTA continued to hold monthly calls with USDA APHIS to address ongoing and emerging phytosanitary issues; these regular check-ins have provided an effective platform for resolving specific trade issues and communications around phytosanitary activities.

New APHIS Plants-for-Planting Manual Released

In the spring of 2018, APHIS released a new manual that consolidates all requirements and conditions for the importation of plants-for-planting, including seeds. Notably, the manual included several significant changes in procedures for importing seeds from Canada which initially disrupted seed movements into the US from Canada. ASTA worked closely with its members and APHIS to resolve many of these problems, some of which have required APHIS to make changes to this manual.



COMMUNICATIONS

Media Tour

In August 2017, ASTA partnered with the National Garden Bureau and California Seed Association on its first-ever media tour. The day-and-a-half event took place in northern California during seed company field trials, and was attended by garden writers, food bloggers and regional media. Tour stops included: the UC Davis Seed Biotechnology Center and research plots; lab, greenhouse and field trials at HM.Clause; and Monsanto Vegetable Seeds' All-American Selections Garden, field trials and pathology lab. The hands-on tour provided media with a first-hand look at the vegetable seed industry – from lab, to field, to market.

Student Video Contest

Also in the summer of 2017, ASTA, along with National Association of Plant Breeders (NAPB) and the American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America and Soil Science Society of America (Tri-Societies) hosted its first Better Seed, Better Life Student Video Contest.

Open to graduate and undergraduate students, the contest sought to bring plant breeding innovation, and the many sectors of the plant sciences that play a role in the plant breeding arena, to life through the next generation of plant scientists.

A group of volunteer judges from the sponsoring organizations selected the following winners:

- **FIRST PLACE:** Katelyn Fritz – Iowa State University
- **SECOND PLACE:** Stephanie Karhoff – Ohio State University
- **THIRD PLACE:** David Hammett – Fort Hays State University

Winning students received tiered cash prizes and recognition through ASTA's communications channels.

ASTA President & CEO Andy LaVigne and Tri-Societies Director of Member Services Susan Chapman present Katelyn Fritz with an award during the Opening General Session of ASTA's 2017 CSS & Seed Expo in Chicago.



Seed Ambassador Leadership Team

Another new communications initiative in FY 2017-18 was the development of a Seed Ambassador Leadership Team (SALT). The mission of SALT is to build an internal network of seed influencers in order to actively engage, promote, and support the seed industry with a unified voice.

While the diverse team members – approximately 40 in total – represent a variety of job functions and sectors of the seed industry, they all share a common passion: spreading the message of better seed, better life with their friends, families and communities!

SALT members were trained at all-day workshops which featured expert speakers providing interactive training in areas such as: answering tough questions, best practices for media interviews, social media strategy, communications styles, and how to be an effective every-day ambassador for the industry. After the training, ASTA provides ambassadors with ongoing support – through access to turn-key communications resources, including monthly social media calendars, template presentations, FAQs, and continuing education webinars – to help them become more effective seed ambassadors in their local communities and online networks.

COMMUNICATIONS *CONTINUED*

Seed Treatment Stewardship

In the Spring of 2018, ASTA launched a multi-faceted communications campaign around seed treatment stewardship. The campaign included media outreach, a public service announcement on farm broadcasting networks, social media collateral, and an update and rebranding of the ASTA Guide to Seed Treatment Stewardship site – with new resources including videos and handouts focusing on the five steps for the stewardship of treated seed.

Five Basic Steps for Stewardship of Treated Seed

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



Plant Breeding Innovation

ASTA continues to be a leader in communications and outreach around plant breeding innovation (PBI) and evolving breeding techniques. New public-facing content, including videos, infographics and plant breeder profiles, are available on the seedinginnovation microsite and @Better_Seed social media channels. Throughout the year, ASTA staff did a variety of media interviews and presented to many partner and stakeholder groups on the topic of PBI communications. Association staff also serve on several PBI working groups and coalitions at both the domestic and international levels, working to gain alignment on messaging and policy development.



INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

In 2017-18, ASTA engaged in domestic and international efforts supporting the use of molecular markers in the Plant Variety Protection (PVP) process through its Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Committee. 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 (SAA) has a similar project in soybeans and as part of this effort, ASTA coordinated with its counterparts in South America on this 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.

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 the SMTA.



ASTA AFFILIATES AND PARTNERS

New Seed Science Foundation

In a historic move, in June 2018, the American Seed Research Foundation and the National Council of Commercial Plant Breeders combined efforts to create the Seed Science Foundation. Created as a 501(c)(3) organization, the foundation will: address seed and plant science challenges; encourage plant breeding education and seed research in support of the ever-changing needs of the global seed industry; and provide insight and recommend solutions that enable the U.S. seed industry to function with global effectiveness. The foundation will bring tremendous value by providing a proactive and integrated source of plant science expertise for the U.S. seed industry. Further, the Seed Science Foundation will be very active in facilitating several student programs within ASTA's revitalized student connections efforts, encouraging future generations of talent to join the seed industry.

National Council of Commercial Plant Breeders

Established in 1954, the National Council of Commercial Plant Breeders (NCCPB) has a long history of encouraging cooperation, partnering and mutual support with public research and educational institutions. The council actively supports the improvement and simplification of intellectual property protection systems to enhance development and improvement of seeds and plants around the world. NCCPB regularly recognizes and rewards the important contributions of public and private plant breeders and plant breeding graduate students.

American Seed Research Foundation

Established in 1959, the American Seed Research Foundation (ASRF) has a long and impactful history in encouraging basic research in seed biology that has the potential for application to multiple crop species, and then facilitating the transfer of that research to benefit the seed industry, farmers/growers and consumers around the world. The ASRF manages several crop research funds. The organization underwrites research projects

2017 Operation Student Connection Participants

- Nathalia Penna Cruzato, Texas A&M University (Krueger Scholarship recipient)
- Raquel Peron, Purdue University
- Shandrea Stallworth, Mississippi State University
- Aniruddha Maity, Texas A&M University
- Steven Langlie Anderson II, Texas A&M University



2017 Public Plant Breeder Award

- Natalia de Leon, University of Wisconsin

2017 Graduate Student Awards

- Stacie Shuler, University of Wisconsin
- Mitchell Schumann, Texas A&M University
- Race Higgins, Iowa State University

and educates future researchers through the Operation Student Connection (OSC) program, which offers scholarships each year to encourage graduate students majoring in seed biology or seed science to attend ASTA's annual convention. One OSC student who shows exceptional passion for the seed industry is awarded the Roger Krueger Memorial Scholarship.

ASTA AFFILIATES AND PARTNERS *CONTINUED*

Leadership Development Webinar Series

In 2018, in a joint venture with the Tri-Societies, ASTA's Management Skills and FuSE Committees created an employee-development webinar series. The highly-attended series was designed to help new or rising managers in the seed industry develop people-management skills and ultimately become better leaders within their organizations.

The series consisted of five monthly, one-hour webinars, occurring from January through May, culminating with a final session broadcast via live webinar from ASTA's Policy and Leadership Development Conference in June. Led by experienced seed industry professionals, webinar topics included:

- Managing through organizational change;
- Supervising former peers;
- Dealing with conflict within the work environment;
- Delegating appropriately;
- Getting (better) feedback; and
- Leading across generations.

Future Seed Executives Committee

The Future Seed Executives Committee (FuSE) is a subcommittee of ASTA's Management Skills Committee. Since its formal inception in 2004, FuSE has focused on educating and supporting seed industry professionals with fewer than seven years of seed industry experience.

FuSE is comprised of three-sub-committees: Communications, Education, and Connections. The Communications Committee focuses on providing

consistent and clear messages to multiple audiences connected to FuSE. The Education Committee provides learning opportunities, promotes industry networking and improves the membership's general understanding of the seed industry. The Connections Committee identifies and organizes opportunities for FuSE members to network with one another, connect with college students interested in the seed industry, and get to know ASTA's many industry supporters. Events include Campus Connections, a program that brings college undergraduates to the ASTA Annual Convention, and other FuSE activities at the four annual ASTA meetings.



2018 Campus Connection Students

- Abbey Weninger, University of Wisconsin
- Wyatt Jones, The Ohio State University
- Lauren Braddy, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College
- Jennifer Fishburn, Purdue University
- Justine Fisher, Michigan State University
- Elizabeth Patchell, Delaware Valley University

ASTA AFFILIATES AND PARTNERS *CONTINUED*

ASTA and National FFA Join Forces

In June 2018, ASTA and the National FFA Organization signed a memorandum of understanding which will align ASTA's strategic goals and resources with the three-component model of agricultural education, providing teacher curriculum and resources; supervised agricultural experience support and mentors; and leadership and career development.

ASTA Honors Seed Industry Leaders

ASTA presented its annual seed industry leadership awards during the 2018 Policy & Leadership Development Conference in Washington, D.C.



Virginia and Maryland State FFA Officers with Director of Corporate Giving Todd Greenwood



OSAMA EL-LISSY RECEIVES ASTA DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

The ASTA Distinguished Service award was presented to Osama El-Lissy, Deputy Administrator for the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's (APHIS) Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) division. The award recognizes those whose efforts have made a significant contribution to the association and the U.S. seed industry.

During his tenure as the APHIS deputy, Mr. El-Lissy has provided significant support to the seed industry, including the development of key initiatives for addressing phytosanitary challenges. Under his leadership, and in close coordination with the seed industry, APHIS has successfully implemented the National Seed Accreditation Pilot Program for the exotic cucumber green mottle mosaic virus, and a new Regulatory Framework for Seed Health, known as ReFreSH, which should have significant benefits for the international movement of seed.



WENDELL HOWARD HONORED WITH ASTA LIFETIME HONORARY MEMBERSHIP AWARD

The ASTA Honorary Lifetime Member award was presented to Wendell Howard, Regional Sales Manager for Warner Seed, Inc. Honorary Members distinguish themselves through leadership, vision and service.

Mr. Howard started his distinguished career in the seed industry at R.C. Young Seed & Grain Co. where he worked during his Junior and Senior years at Texas Tech University. After graduating in 1961, he continued full time with R.C. Young, and served on the Texas Certified Seed Board in 1963-64. When R.C. Young was sold to Agrigenetics in 1970, Mr. Howard continued with the company for the next decade before taking another job with Richardson Seed, LLC, where he worked from 1980 to 2010. In 2010, he went to work for his current employer, Warner Seed, Inc.

During his career, he has held a number of volunteer leadership positions with the industry, including serving as President of the Texas Seed Trade Association from 1992-93, President of the Southern Seed Association in 1999, and President of the Western Seed Association in 2014.

CONVENTIONS AND MEETINGS



2017 Farm and Lawn Seed Conference

ASTA's 63rd 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 the opportunity for reserved appointment tables, for the first time, which produced a sold-out ballroom of tables and exhibitors. The conference included meetings of the Farm and Lawn Seed Division, the Cover Crop Working Group and the Environmental and Conservation Seed Committee, covering topics from trade, wild seed testing and weed seed strategies. The ASTA breakfast session included association updates from ASTA and a variety of state and regional seed associations.

CSS 2017 & Seed Expo

ASTA's CSS 2017 & Seed Expo gathered nearly 2,500 registrants and over 150 exhibitor companies. Major conference topics include: plant breeding innovation, seed treatment, soybean production and new herbicide systems, digital agriculture, and the back-by-popular-demand global agricultural outlook presentation by economist Dan Basse of AgResource.

A major data analysis – including enhanced attendee demographic and engagement data in the different areas of the event – was conducted in order to drive future conference updates and enhancements to be planned for 2018. The "Columbus Hall Lounge" area was expanded for a more open networking area, with live-streaming general sessions amongst the large exhibit displays. The Seed Expo's main show floor was sold out, while the conference sessions experienced high attendance.



CONVENTIONS AND MEETINGS CONTINUED



57th Vegetable and Flower Seed Conference

In 2018, ASTA's Vegetable & Flower Seed Conference – the association's fastest growing and most international conference – was held in San Diego, California. The conference continued to set new participation records with a total attendance of 959 registrants participants and 138 companies participating in the Trading Room. A packed General Session/Vegetable & Flower Seed Division meeting featured a powerful panel of speakers on the topic of Innovation in Agricultural Production and Distribution – including speakers discussing vertical farming, mechanization and block chain production.

Conference sessions were well-attended and covered topics including: phytosanitary issues, organic seed, communications, food safety, management skills, emerging diseases, innovation in plant breeding, seed treatment, intellectual property rights, and more

Policy & Leadership Development Conference

The former ASTA Annual Convention was reinvented in 2018, after a major redesign resulted in the advent of the new ASTA Policy & Leadership Development Conference (PLDC). With just over 230 total participants, the conference brought an entirely new energy to the previous ASTA event. With a more deliberate and purposeful approach, special programming and new registration categories helped bring together key audiences of both high-level seed industry executives and young professionals for collaborative learning and networking opportunities.

The conference offered tracks of educational content covering the four ASTA strategic issue areas of: innovation, sustainability, trade/international, and leadership development. In between sessions, "PL/DC Lightning Talks" offered quick learning opportunities on a wide variety of fresh and current industry topics. Special immersive learning experiences included a "Better Seed, Better Life" educational luncheon, which offered "SALT" ambassadors, students, "Emerging Leader" registrants, and even attending spouses and family members to learn how to speak knowledgeably about the seed industry over lunch.

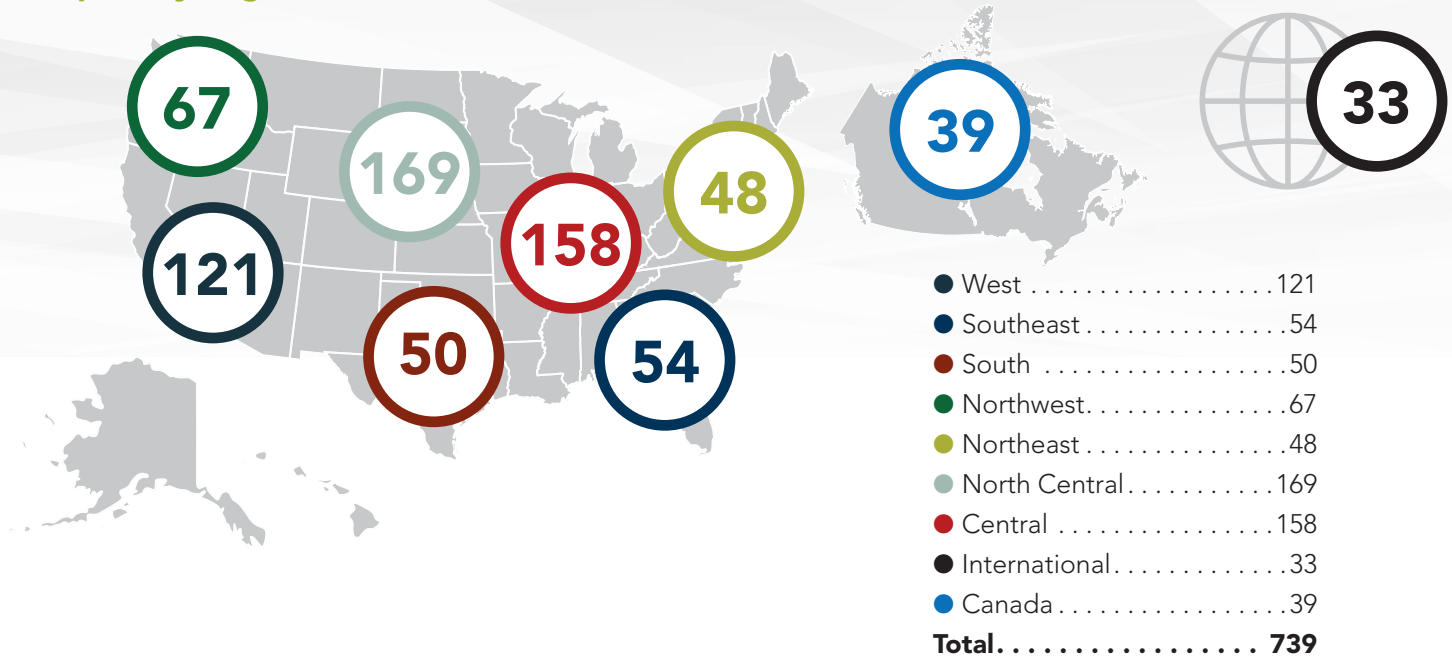
The conference's educational sessions led up to ASTA's "Storm the Hill" lobbying event, which brought members together for more than 170 meetings on Capitol Hill. Other major conference accomplishments included: the signing of a new Memorandum of Understanding between ASTA and the National FFA Foundation; and the passage of the new ASTA Strategic Plan to drive the association's work over the next three years.

Several key government representatives participated as speakers from a variety of agencies and organizations, including: the U.S. Grains Council, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, the World Wildlife Fund, the Organic Trade Association, USDA-APHIS. A special keynote presentation was given by USDA Under Secretary of Agriculture Greg Ibach.

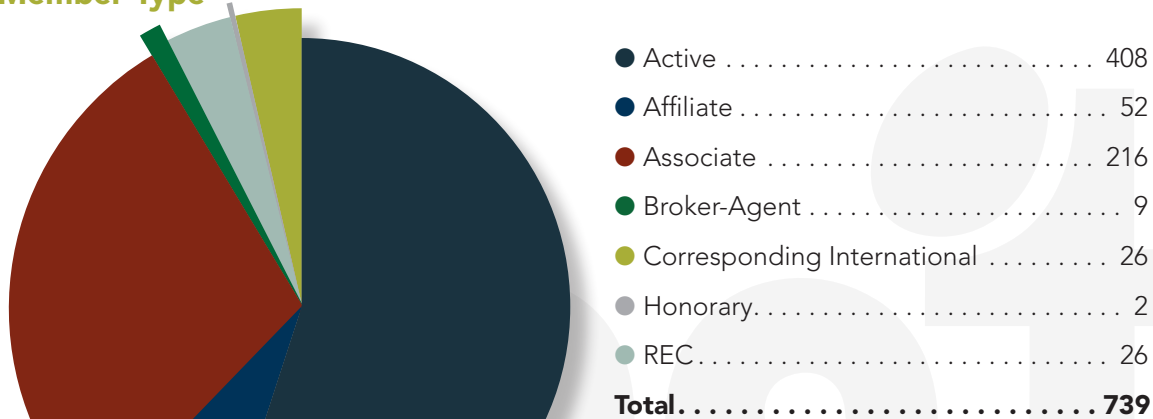


MEMBERSHIP

Compare by Region



Member Type



**Member retention
was 92%**



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 audit was conducted by ASTA's auditors, Raffa, Inc, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, GAAP. The 2016/17 audit confirmed the financial health of the association. ASTA ended its fiscal year with \$4,755,245 in net assets, an increase of almost \$250,000. ASTA has additionally calculated in kind contributions from industry related to the international activities of \$13,015,087. 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 account and 70-percent in a long-term reserve account. 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

In-kind contributions	13,015,087
Membership dues	3,684,650
Registration fees	1,028,017
Government grants and contracts	862,761
Contributions and sponsorship	502,040
Exhibit fees	423,283
Administrative service fees	20,000
Assessments	8,879
Other income	661
Net assets released from restrictions: Satisfaction of program restrictions	

Total Operating Revenue and Support 19,545,378

Operating Expenses

Program Services:	
International initiatives	14,186,556
Policy	1,425,844
Meetings	1,140,311
Legislation	697,009
Membership	156,937
Other	54,677

Total Program Services 17,661,334

Supporting Service:	
General & Administrative	1,897,723

Total Operating Expenses 19,559,057

Change in Net Assets from Operations 13,679

Nonoperating Activities

Investment income, net	494,633
Branding expenses	234,383
Change in net Assets	246,571
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	4,508,674
Net Assets, End of Year	4,755,245

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

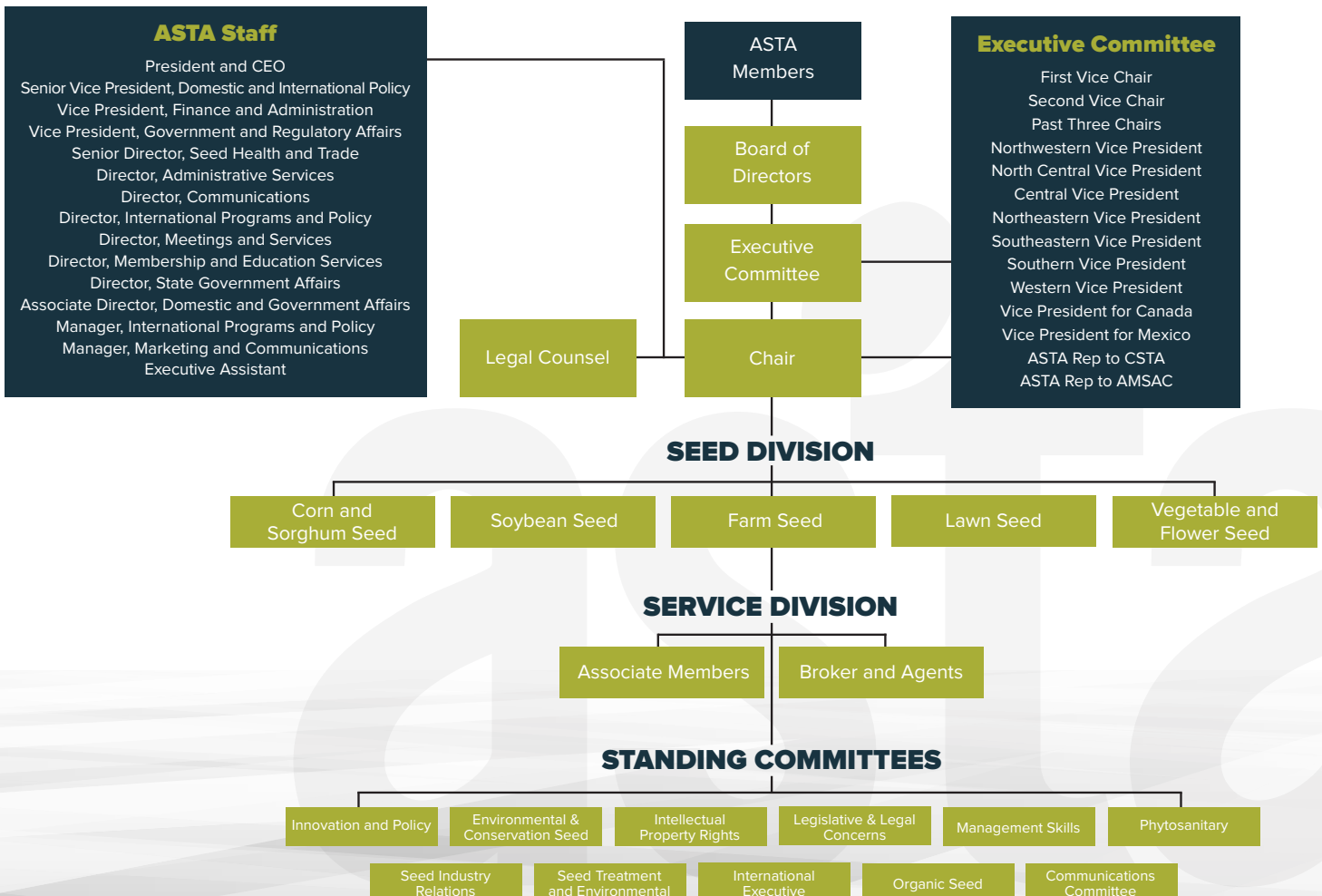
Ann Jorss
Vice President, Finance and Administration

Barbara Surian
Director, Administrative Services

Communications
Bethany Shively
Director, Communications

Kaity Carpenter
Manager, Marketing and Communications

Meetings & Services
Jennifer Crouse
Director, Meetings and Services





**american
seed trade
association**

**1701 Duke Street, Suite 275
Alexandria, VA 22314**

P (703) 837-8140

F (703) 837-9365

betterseed.org

