

ASTA VIEWS ON SEED SECTOR SUSTAINABILITY

OUR VIEWS:

The American Seed Trade Association (ASTA) believes:

1. The seed industry plays the essential role of developing and providing diverse, locally and broadly adapted, high-quality seed, enabling farmers to both increase agricultural productivity and conserve natural resources.
2. Continued innovation in seed is critical to support environmental resiliency, ensure global food and nutritional security, and support farmer livelihoods.
3. The collaborative development of science-based policies--which enable farmer access to seed innovations--is vital to ensuring a sustainable agriculture system.

SEED INDUSTRY ROLE:

ASTA and its member companies support these views by:

1. Continuously improving seed, seed-company operations, and on-farm seed production practices.
2. Working with farmers, distributors, retailers, consumers, and the greater agriculture and food value chain to deliver a wide range of seed as a solution to meet sustainability goals.

Founded in 1883, the American Seed Trade Association (ASTA) is one of the oldest trade organizations in the United States. Its membership consists of over 650 companies involved in seed production and distribution, plant breeding, and related industries in North America.

OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH SEED

Today's agriculture and food system faces unprecedented challenges, from climate change to a growing population, and rapidly evolving pests and diseases. Continued innovation in plant breeding and seed variety development are crucial to ensuring long-term economic, social and environmental sustainability. The seed industry is founded on innovation, and innovation is a part of everything we do – from plant breeding and seed treatments, to soil health and habitat restoration. Better seed means better life, for everyone.

Seed is the foundation of the agriculture and food sector. Through strong investment in research and development, seed companies breed new plant varieties for a more sustainable future, providing solutions for the entire food value chain--from farmers and ranchers, to retailers and consumers. Seed solutions can help farmers, agribusinesses, and food companies achieve their own sustainability goals, while helping support key national and global initiatives such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



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VIEWS IN MORE DETAIL:

1

The seed industry plays the essential role of developing and providing diverse, locally and broadly adapted, high-quality seed that enables farmers to both increase agricultural productivity and conserve natural resources.

- Providing global **access to high quality seed** enables farmers of all sizes and in all regions to prosper.
- Quality seed and innovative new seed varieties enable farmers around the world to **produce more, with less**: less land, less water, less inputs, and less degradation to soil.
- Quality, high yielding seed, tailored to specific agronomic conditions and with predictable germination, enables farmers to achieve **positive economic outcomes while maximizing production** under various, and ever changing, environments.
- Providing farmers with seed choice means **increased biodiversity options** on-farm. By utilizing multiple crop species, farmers can improve soil health and increase carbon sequestration.
- Seed varieties developed for cover crops play an important role in **improving soil health** and nutrient retention, while reducing tillage practices, preventing erosion, and sequestering carbon from the atmosphere.
- Cover crop and conservation seed help to **create important wildlife and pollinator habitats** and can be used to **restore lands** devastated by wildfires, natural disasters, and invasive weeds, contributing to a healthy landscape and stable ecosystems and economies.

2

Continued innovation in seed is critical to support environmental resiliency, ensure global food and nutritional security, and support farmer livelihoods.

- Seed companies are **investing an average of 15% of sales income back into research and development** annually, signaling a strong commitment to new innovation as well as the importance of robust intellectual property rights protection. (IHS Markit)
- **Improving seeds is not new.** Plant breeders have been doing this for thousands of years. Today, improvements are made more rapidly and with greater precision and efficiency, thanks to scientific advancements and stronger intellectual property rights protection.
- **Harnessing the power of genetics** enables plant breeders to develop new varieties that are more resilient to drought, flooding, extreme temperatures, evolving pests and diseases, and changing consumer demands.
- The utilization of newer breeding innovations like gene editing supports the development of resilient new seed varieties that can more efficiently and expeditiously **respond to climatic and agronomic challenges.**
- Continued innovation in plant breeding allows for **increased yields, using less land and resources**, helping to meet the global challenge of nutritiously feeding nearly 10 billion people by 2050 (UN FAO).
- **Environmentally responsible seed treatments can work to protect the developing seed** during its most vulnerable time – at planting and germination. The treatments' highly targeted, precise approach means less impact on the surrounding environment.

3

The collaborative development of science-based policies is critical to enabling maximum farmer access to seed innovations —helping to ensure a sustainable agricultural system.

- Scientific exchange, public-private partnerships, and peer-reviewed research enable seed companies to make **informed breeding decisions that support environmental and economic sustainability goals.**
- **Engagement by seed industry** representatives as policies are developed and implemented at the international, federal, state, and local levels is necessary to support continued seed innovation.