

American Seed Trade Association

# ANNUAL REPORT

2012-13







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## Message to the Membership

Fiscal year 2012-13 proved to be another exciting and successful year for the American Seed Trade Association and its members. The ASTA Board of Directors and staff worked diligently to ensure our activities at the local, state, national and international levels drove policy and regulatory activities that met your needs and expectations. We are pleased to bring to you the FY 2012-13 Annual Report that outlines ASTA's activities over the previous year and the state of the association.

One of our crowning activities over that timeframe was the final approval and beginning implementation of the newly revised ASTA Strategic Plan. You will recall that this project was begun under the guidance of 2011-12 ASTA Chairman Mike Gumina. After reviewing the current plan, with direct input from the membership, the Board approved the revised Strategic Plan identifying two key driving focus areas: advocacy and communications.

The revised plan will be the guiding document for the association over the next five years as the Board moves forward to address the issues and opportunities facing the seed industry. Resources – human and financial – will be allocated in accordance to those key areas that have been identified.

In addition to the adoption of the new plan, ASTA had several other key accomplishments that are significant for seed companies and related industries. Some of these were entirely ASTA-driven through our committees and working groups comprised of member representatives and staff; and others were achieved through partnerships with other agriculture industry associations, with representation from our member companies and ASTA staff. Here are a few examples:

- Under the guidance of the ASTA state and national legislative/regulatory team, we continued to build our grassroots efforts in Washington, DC and our state capitals.
- In conjunction with the Biotechnology Industry Organization, we completed and implemented the Ag Accord, a mechanism that provides for the transition of regulatory and stewardship responsibilities for biotechnology events after patent expiration.
- In conjunction with CropLife America, we developed the Guide to Seed Treatment Stewardship, an online source of information and up-to-date guidelines for managing treated seed effectively to minimize potential environmental risks.
- We held a leadership role in initiating an international phytosanitary seed standard to establish phytosanitary guidelines for the movement of seed across international borders.
- We signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Chinese National Seed Association to promote innovation and cooperation between the U.S. and Chinese seed industries.
- We hosted three record-breaking ASTA conferences to facilitate business interactions, promote educational opportunities and debate and formulate policy and trade strategies.

We are particularly proud that we were able to build on accomplishments from previous years. In legislative and regulatory areas, ASTA continues to advance the industry's positions at the state and federal levels. In international trade matters, we continued to expand business opportunities and to facilitate seed movement globally.

Our theme for the annual convention in Nashville was "Sing a Song About the Heartland," which underscored the importance of seed companies – regional, national and international – to ASTA's mission. If the association is to continue to succeed during good times and challenging times, it is imperative that we have the force of the entire seed industry behind us. As the past year clearly demonstrated, when we contribute our expertise, experiences, ideas and resources, we can certainly accomplish great things.

We extend our great appreciation for your continued support of ASTA!



Sale Turbis
Blake Curtis

Curtis & Curtis Seeds
ASTA Chairman 2012-13



Andrew W. LaVigne
President and CEO



## 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 seed industry globally.

## **Domestic Policy**

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

### State and Local Issues

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

### **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 as a high value resource for its members.

## **ASTA Membership and Internal Matters**

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



## Leadership



### Chair:

#### **Blake Curtis**

Curtis & Curtis, Inc.

#### First Vice Chair:

#### **Craig Newman**

AgReliant Genetics, LLC

### **Second Vice Chair:**

John Schoenecker

**HM.CLAUSE** 

### **Regional Vice Presidents**

Risa DeMasi, Northwestern Region, Grassland Oregon

Mervyn Selvidge, Western Region, Z & S Seed Services, Inc.

Terry Dulaney, Southeastern Region, AgVenture, Inc.

Tracy Tally, Southern Region, Justin Seed Co., Inc.

Jim Schweigert, Vice President to Canada, GroAlliance, LLC

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

Matt Hynes, Central Region, GROWMARK, Inc.

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

Fred Mohr, Northeastern Region, Seedway

Francisco Llaguno, AMSAC Representative, Gowan Semillas

Peter Entz, CSTA Representative, Richardson

International Limited

**Richard Taylor,** State/Regional Representative, Southern
Seed Association, Mississippi Seedsmen's Association

### **Division Chairmen**

Lou Buice, Corn & Sorghum Seed Division, Golden Acres

Alan Ostercamp, Farm Seed Division, RiceTec

Sam Cable, Lawn Seed Division, Barenburg USA

**David Bigger,** Soybean Seed Division, Worldwide Soy Technologies, LLC

Kent Croon, Vegetable & Flower Seed Division, Monsanto

Karen McGuire, Associate Division, Envirologix

**Paul Kjolhaug,** Brokers & Agents Division, Mayer SeedLine, LLC

## **Directors at Large**

Mark Herrmann, Monsanto Vegetable

Brad May, Bayer CropScience

David Morgan, Syngenta Seeds, Inc.

Tom Wiltrout, Dow AgroSciences



## Intellectual Property

## The Ag Accord

In November 2012 part one of the Ag Accord framework, the Generic Event Marketability and Access Agreement, was opened for signature. ASTA and the Biotechnology Industry Organization began engaging key stakeholders in discussions two years prior about the opportunities and challenges associated with patent expiration. This private sector driven mechanism sets out rights and obligations for signatories involved in commercializing biotechnology seed products containing off-patent biotechnology events to ensure international regulatory and stewardship responsibilities are maintained.

## State & Local Issues

Biotechnology and GMO labeling dominated legislation introduced in the states throughout the year. Connecticut and Maine passed labeling bills, but each had unique caveats making enactment nearly impossible. Twenty-eight other states introduced GMO labeling legislation but none passed. ASTA-supported legislation passed in Nebraska that changed the expiration notation on the seed label from "tested on" to "sell by" for cool season grasses and the re-testing requirement from nine to 15 months. Other issues considered, but not passed, in states included invasive species designations, seed and input taxes, trespassing/liability, pollinators and native grasses.

ASTA reviewed 200,000 state legislative bills, monitored 400 and was active in 80.

ASTA continued to depend upon its grassroots efforts for success in the states.

The Seed Advocate program was initiated to organize and enhance the structure for affecting policy at that level. The program provides representatives of the seed industry with opportunities to inspire policymakers and regulators to support sound, science-based agricultural policies and fair trade practices, and to better understand the seed industry.



ASTA continued to emphasize the on-going partnerships with key stakeholders of the seed industry, such as state and regional seed associations, key grower organizations, agribusiness associations, farm bureaus and many others. This structure allowed ASTA to respond to policymakers in a timely and effective manner on behalf of our member companies.

An important factor in all of ASTA's domestic advocacy efforts is the cooperation and synergy between the state and federal affairs divisions. Both require similar information exchange systems and communications strategies with the understanding and consideration that the policymakers interact in the same way. It's a system that has evolved very effectively and to fit the seed industry and has proven successful for ASTA.

## Domestic Issues



In 2012, ASTA and CropLife America began aggregating seed treatment research and safety information from universities, seed companies, international seed associations and others in response to the increasing use of seed treatment technologies. During the collection of that information for use by the association, growing concern about the potential effect of seed treatment dust on the environment and pollinators moved the two organizations to develop The Guide to Seed Treatment Stewardship. The Guide evolved into an industry-wide initiative to promote the safe handling and management of treated seed and was launched in March of 2013.

The Guide initiative included a website that garnered nearly 5,000 visits within the first few months, widespread media coverage and distribution of stewardship information among ASTA member companies. The effort was endorsed by the National Corn Growers Association, the American Farm Bureau Federation and the American Soybean Association.

## Government Affairs

After months of delay, action was stepped up on farm bill reauthorization with votes in the summer on both the Senate and House proposals. ASTA participated in an agriculture industry coalition that urged members of Congress to move towards passage of a five-year bill. ASTA also worked to secure sponsorship of an amendment clarifying the requirements of EPA on imported seed. The language was introduced on a bi-partisan basis and included in the bill passed by the House Agriculture Committee.

ASTA welcomed the Environment and Conservation Seed Committee and the Germplasm Enhancement of Maize Technical Steering Group to DC in the spring to meet with key government agencies and members of Congress to support funding for the programs of interest for each group.



## Global Agricultural Policy

ASTA and the China National Seed Association, accompanied by 64-members from CNSA, signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding at CSS in 2012. The MOU is targeted to promote cooperation relating to innovation in the seed industry.



The MOU reflects both parties' desire to promote mutual interests through cooperation, information exchange and training in the areas of intellectual property rights, quality seed, science-based phytosanitary measures, seed movement and innovation in the seed industry on the basis of equality and mutual benefits. Some of the cooperative efforts expected to result from the agreement include: visits and exchanges of scientists; participation in conferences, workshops and exhibitions; exchange of technical data; and joint training and education programs.

### **Phytosanitary Report**

#### **Gap Analysis on Seed Phytosanitary Movements**

In late 2012, the Seed Association of the Americas began implementing a process to update its strategic plan. Phytosanitary issues were identified as an area of focus

and a working group was created that included John Stevens, Pioneer Hi-Bred and Ric Dunkle, ASTA. A key first step was the development of a gap analysis to determine where international standards were not addressing or resolving international seed movement needs. This gap analysis would be used to help develop the SAA strategic plan and was forwarded to the International Plant Protection Convention for use in developing the international seed standard.

#### **Asia and Pacific Seed Association**

In 2012, Ric Dunkle was asked by the Asia and Pacific Seed Association to help organize a phytosanitary workshop to be held in conjunction with their annual seed congress. He was also asked to assume the chairmanship of its Special Group on International Trade and Quarantine. The goals of the workshop, which attracted over 100 participants, were to identify the major phytosanitary issues that impact the international movement of seeds in the region, and to begin developing relationships with the National Plant Protection Offices in the region. The priority issues identified during the workshop were; development of pest risk assessments, seed re-export policies and the need for harmonization of seed health testing methodologies.

#### **US/Mexico Cross Border Workshop**

ASTA and the Mexican Seed Trade Association held a joint, cross-border phytosanitary workshop at the port of Nogales with over 45 participants. The workshop brought together regulatory officials from USDA's Animal Plant Health Inspection Service and DHS' Customs and Border Protection and their respective counterparts from Mexico, as well as, seed industry representatives from both countries. The group developed a long list of consensus issues that are impeding seed movements across the border; for example, problems with re-exporting seed through the U.S. into Mexico, lack of harmonized seed sampling and testing protocols, and problems with phytosanitary measures for organic seed, just to name a few. Both ASTA and AMSAC agreed to work with their respective National Plant Protection Offices to resolve as many of these issues as possible, and to promote the NPPOs to meet bilaterally to resolve the policy-level discrepancies. As a result of this workshop and follow-up actions, a number of administrative and procedural issues were resolved.

#### Phomopsis on Spinach Seed from the EU Impedes Seed Imports

Each year, over \$40 million worth of spinach seed is imported into the U.S. from the EU to meet the needs of growers in California, Washington and Oregon. In July 2012, over 20 shipments were denied entry due to detections of phomopsis. ASTA quickly began talks with officials in USDA's Animal Plant Health Inspection Service and Agricultural Research Service, DHS's Customs and Border Protection and several universities and industry representatives to evaluate and develop a plan forward. As a result, ASTA worked with Dr. Lindsey du Toit, Washington State University, to develop a research proposal funded through ASTA's Vegetable and Flower Brushfire fund. Priority goals were to identify an effective seed treatment so that trade can continue in the short term; to evaluate the pathogenicity of phomopsis on spinach plants and other possible hosts; and to determine to what degree spinach seed could serve as a pathway for introducing these fungal organisms into the U.S. ASTA also worked closely with representatives from the European and Dutch seed associations to coordinate a solution to this issue.

#### **Seed Low Level Presence**

ASTA played a leadership role in the efforts of the International Seed Federation and the Seed Association of the Americas to address the issue of seed Low Level Presence, which is a key global advocacy issue for ASTA. Under the leadership of Bernice Slutsky, ASTA participated in the Global LLP Initiative in Rosario, Argentina and SAA continued to engage regulatory authorities in the Americas on the importance of developing national LLP policies. At the 2013 ISF World Seed Congress in Athens, Greece, the General Assembly adopted a paper on seed LLP through a set of global principles that could guide the development of national seed LLP policies. ASTA chaired the ISF LLP Working Group that developed this paper.

#### Seed Association of the Americas

In 2012, the Seed Association of the Americas undertook a major project to develop a Strategic Plan of action for the association. The plan outlines the key strategic areas for the association including Intellectual Property Rights, phytosanitary policies, seed treatment and biotechnology. Jerry Monk, Warner Seeds, oversaw the development of the SAA Strategic Plan as President of SAA. The key strategic areas for SAA are consistent with the policy areas of focus for ASTA and will be implemented through working groups that focus on the priority policy areas. ASTA members are participating in all of these working groups. SAA continues to be a strategic partner for ASTA in our advocacy efforts in the Americas.



## Industry Building & Recognition

### The National Council of Commercial Plant Breeders

The role of the National Council of Commercial Plant Breeders is increasingly important as the seed industry embraces the expanding challenges of providing affordable, abundant, predictable and nutritionally enhanced food to meet changing global population demands and livelihoods. One way that NCCPB is helping to meet these challenges is by recognizing outstanding graduate students in the field of basic, applied or developmental research in genetics and plant breeding. Every year a monetary award and an opportunity to be mentored at the ASTA CSS meeting is given to three students. This year's winners were:

Katherine Frels – University of Nebraska-Lincoln

**Brian DeVries** – University of Wisconsin-Madison

**Sarah Potts** – University of Illinois

### **American Seed Research Foundation**

Basic research in seed science takes considerable investment in resources and time. Often, basic seed research cannot be justified and is therefore not as high a priority for private seed companies. Public experiment stations do some research in the area of seed science, but funding and facilities are limited and often prioritized to other production agriculture activities. The American Seed Research Foundation encourages seed science research by directly underwriting specific projects, thereby enhancing public information on seed growth and development.

One key function of ASRF is education in seed related sciences, including research in academics. To facilitate this education, ASRF assists and encourages graduate students majoring in seed biology or seed science and technology to attend and participate in ASTA's annual convention. This will allow for the sharing of valuable insight into the private sector of the seed industry and establishing personal contact with members of the seed trade. This year's winners were:

John Orlowski – University of Kentucky

**Susan Latshaw** – Colorado State University

James Anderson – Southern Illinois University

Julie Rothe – Texas A&M University

Whitney Minton Jones – Texas A&M University

Sandra Dunckel – Kansas State University

#### First-the Seed Foundation

The mission of First-the Seed Foundation is to conduct education, outreach and communication on the value of crops and food produced from seed. For the first time, FTSF exhibited at the National FFA Convention & Expo. There was record attendance for 2012 which enabled FTSF to be exposed to 56,176 high schoolers from all over the United States.



FTSF is undertaking a new multi-year outreach initiative strategically planned to create a multi-layered and sustainable education campaign that will:

- Excite and instill a passion in youth for seed science and technology
- · Inspire youth about future career opportunities/potential within the seed industry; and
- Raise awareness about the value and impact of the seed industry in the global marketplace.

## **ASTA Management Academy**

The ASTA-Purdue Management Academy, held on the Purdue campus, focused on the practical application of general management concepts that are vital to the long-term success of seed companies. The core curriculum was designed to broaden general management abilities. Case studies and group activities created ample opportunities for intensive interaction and discussion with faculty, speakers and other seed industry managers. The 2012-13 Academy hosted 39 participants from 12 states, South Africa, France, Australia and Canada.



### **Future Seed Executives**

During 2012-13, the Future Seed Executives underwent a re-branding campaign and restructured itself into four committees: Communications, Connections, Education and New Developments. The Communications Committee developed a new logo, new collateral and promotional materials and spearheaded the marketing of FuSE events and opportunities.

The Connections Committee was responsible for selecting and allocating grants for six members of the 2013 Campus Connections class to attend the ASTA annual convention in Nashville. The Education Committee conducted two well-attended roundtable discussions focused on social media, sponsored by the Independent Professional Seed Association. The committee also organized an educational unit in California, hosted by INCOTEC, Enza Zaden and the Seed Biotechnology Center at UC Davis. The educational unit focused on breeding and seed technology in the vegetable industry.

These programs, in addition to those inspired by the New Developments Committee, are ways in which FuSE directly contributes to the future of the seed industry: by identifying talented young people; by exposing them to the various aspects of the industry; and by working to ensure they have the necessary tools to become future seed industry leaders.

### **Distinguished Service Award**

David R. Shipman, Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service at the USDA, received ASTA's 2013 Distinguished Service Award. Mr. Shipman was the driving force behind the revitalizing of the U.S. Plant Variety Protection Office and was consistently receptive to the general needs of the seed industry and how AMS could best meet those needs.



## **Honorary Lifetime Member**

ASTA's 2013 Lifetime Honorary Membership Award, which recognizes untiring service to the association and to the seed industry, was given to Kelly Keithly, co-founder of Keithly-Williams Seeds. Kelly has long been an active participant in ASTA activities and has held several leadership roles in the association including Chairman of the Vegetable and Flower Seed Division, Western Regional Vice President, Director-at-Large and the 2008-09 ASTA Chairman. Kelly consistently promoted the critical need for member engagement in ASTA activities and capped those efforts with the theme of his annual convention, "Brighten Your Future with ASTA."



As the President and CEO of the largest vegetable seed dealer in North America, Kelly has played a large role in the introduction of new varieties that have resulted in increased production for farmers and higher quality for consumers.

## Conventions & Meetings

### 2012 Farm and Lawn Seed Conference

ASTA's 58th Farm and Lawn Seed Conference, held in conjunction with the Western Seed Association's annual meeting, brought more than 700 seed industry representatives to Kansas City, Mo. Chairman Blake Curtis conducted the first ASTA town hall meeting with conference attendees. The Farm and Lawn Seed Divisions, Invasive Species Working Group and the Environmental and Conservation Seed Committee convened meetings at the conference.

### CSS 2012 & Seed Expo

The Corn, Sorghum and Soybean Seed Research Conference experienced a jump in attendance with more than 2,900 registrants and a record number of exhibitor companies. Among the international attendees was a 64-member delegation from China that witnessed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with ASTA to promote innovation and collaboration. Economist Dan Basse headlined the conference for the second time, providing insights and predictions for the global agriculture market. Other popular sessions featured reports on the benefits of precision seed protection and the Generic Event Marketability and Access Accord. Attendees learned about the latest developments in the corn, sorghum and soybean trade related to biotechnology, breeding and pest management. They also participated in committee meetings on legislative and legal issues, ASTA initiatives and more.



More than 800 vegetable and flower seed industry representatives from across the globe gathered in Scottsdale, AZ for ASTA's fastest growing conference, the 52nd Vegetable & Flower Seed Conference. Attendees and exhibitors packed the general session to hear 14-year-old entrepreneur Katie Stagliano discuss her initiative to fight hunger in the U.S., and to hear industry experts Kenneth Avery and Daniel Summer address global market trends. The conference trading room attracted 115 companies ranging from seed packaging services and seed testing laboratories to equipment and software solution providers. Issues discussed included phytosanitary standards, food safety pathogens, intellectual property rights, U.S./China cooperation, emerging diseases and legal and legislative issues.

### 130th Annual Convention

"Sing a Song About the Heartland" was the theme of the 130th Annual Convention in Nashville, TN. The convention brought together attendees from all sectors of the seed industry to discuss a wide range of seed policies and to hear nationally known economist and Dean of the School of Agriculture and Home Economics at New Mexico State University Lowell Catlett address the "State of Agribusiness." Special events, such as a welcome reception at the Grand Ol' Opry and a dinner at the home of country music star Barbara Mandrel provided attendees with memorable opportunities to network with fellow attendees.



2012-13 was a banner year for ASTA conferences with increased attendance and participation at all four annual events.

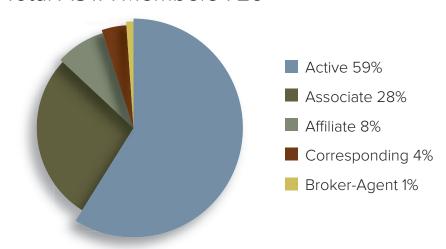




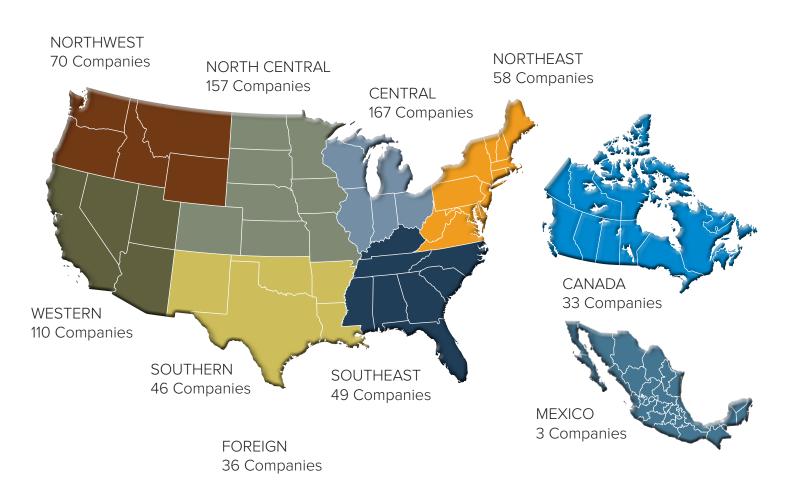
## Membership

ASTA remains committed to retaining and growing membership and finished FY 2012-13 with **729** members, which is a **95% retention rate** and **102% in retained** revenues.

# MEMBERSHIP BY PARTICIPATION Total ASTA Members 729



## **COMPANIES BY REGION**



## Financial Health

ASTA 's budget is based on input from ASTA leadership, strategic plan priorities and divisions, committees and staff. ASTA strives to maintain transparency with membership about the association's budget and financial status. The Board of Directors approves and regularly reviews the association's financial status and strategy, which allows ASTA to maintain its targeted financial reserve. The annual ASTA audit was conducted by McQuade Brennan LLP, in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the U.S. The 2012-13 audit confirmed the financial health of the association. ASTA began its fiscal year with unrestricted net assets of \$4,344,780 and ended with \$4,776,914.

## Investment Policy and Reserve Policy

The Board of Directors established guidelines for the investment and reserve accounts, striving to maintain a balance of 1.5-2 times the operating budget. Of that balance, 10 percent is maintained in an operating reserve, and expenditures are subject to approval of the Executive Committee or the Board of Directors. In addition, 20 percent of the balance is maintained 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. When authorizing expenditures from the long-term reserves, the Board will approve a plan to replenish the amount expended.

### **ASTA Revenue Sources**

Dues	\$2,835,964
Meetings	\$1,305,176
Exhibits	\$341,143
Assessment	\$8,936
Government Reimbursements	\$199,915
Miscellaneous	\$82,537
Administrative Service Fees	\$20,000
Net Investment Gains (Losses)	\$436,072

#### TOTAL REVENUE

### **ASTA Expenses**

CSS	\$380,679
Farm/Lawn	\$7,262
Vegetable & Flower Seed	\$195,865
Export Market Development	\$8,336
Foreign Agricultural Services	\$199,915
Convention	\$279,062
Future Seed Executives (FuSE)	\$13,771
Stewardship Guide	\$37,454
Other Programs	\$23,190
General and Administrative*	\$3,652,075

(\*Includes, but not limited to: rent, utilities, insurance, salaries, taxes, office equipment and maintenance, dues and subscriptions, legal fees, etc.)

#### **TOTAL EXPENSES**

\$4,797,609

\$5,229,743

## ASTA Staff & Organizational Chart

### **Executive Office**

#### Andrew W. LaVigne

President and CEO alavigne@amseed.org

#### **Liz Anderson**

Administrative Assistant landerson@amseed.org

### **Finance & Administration**

#### **Ann Jorss**

Vice President, Finance & Administration ajorss@amseed.org

#### **Barbara Surian**

Director, Administrative Services bsurian@amseed.org

## **Meetings & Services**

#### Jennifer Crouse

Director, Meetings & Services jcrouse@amseed.org

### **Government Affairs**

#### Jane DeMarchi

Vice President, Government and Regulatory Affairs jdemarchi@amseed.org

#### Pat Miller

Director, State Affairs pmiller@amseed.org

## **Membership Services**

#### **Cindy Hinton**

Director, Membership Services chinton@amseed.org

## Science & International Affairs

#### **Bernice Slutsky**

Senior Vice President, Science & International Affairs bslutsky@amseed.org

#### **Ric Dunkle**

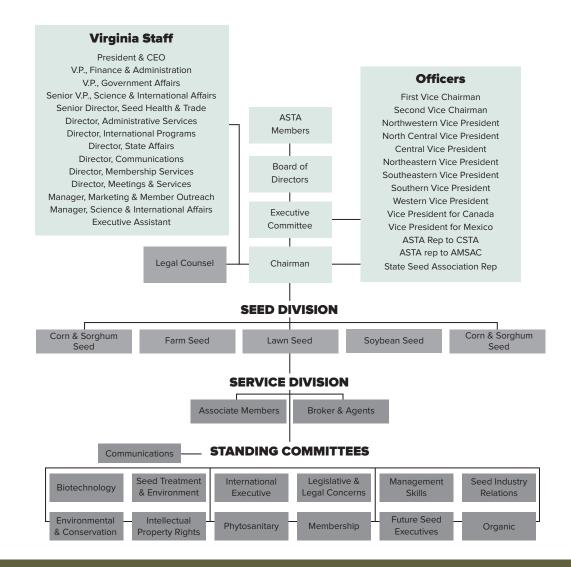
Senior Director, Seed Health & Trade rdunkle@amseed.org

#### **Lisa Nichols**

Director, International Programs Inichols@amseed.org

#### **Kelly Crist**

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