

A stylized illustration of a plant with three green leaves and a curved stem, set against a background of a light blue sky and a large, semi-circular sun or moon in shades of orange and pink. The plant is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the image.

asta

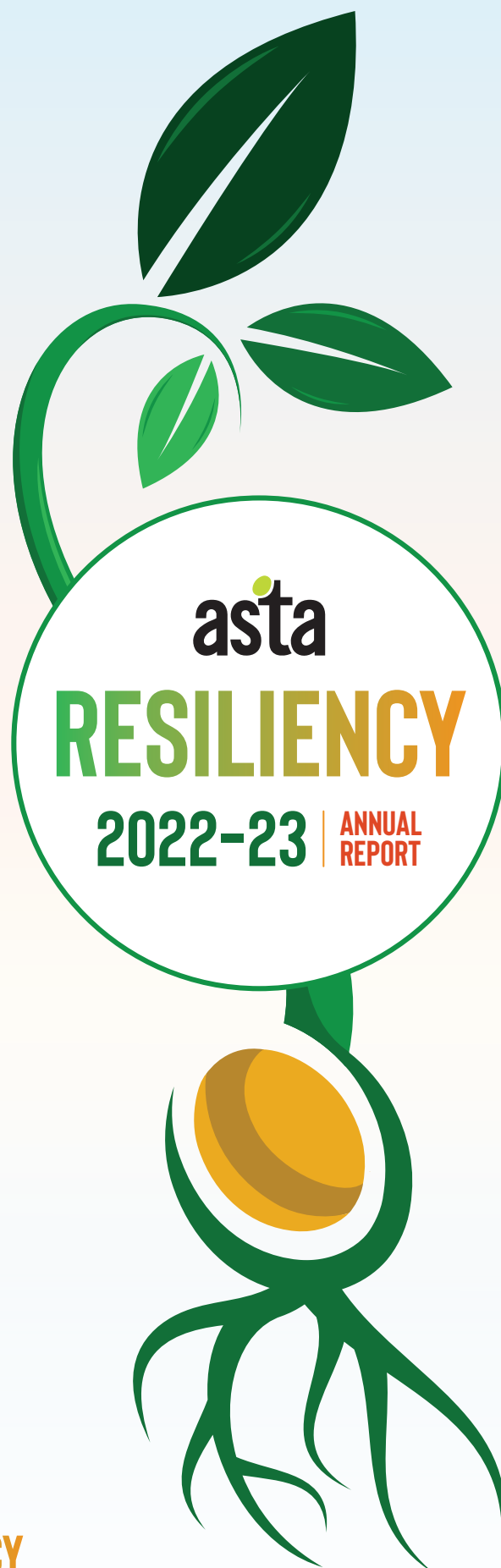
RESILIENCY

2022-23

ANNUAL
REPORT

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MESSAGE TO THE ASTA MEMBERSHIP

On behalf of the ASTA Board of Directors and staff, we are pleased to present to you the American Seed Trade Association's (ASTA) FY 2022-23 Annual Report.

Looking back over the past year, we are reminded that ASTA's ongoing legacy is one that embraces the future. Our industry has a strong heritage, grounded in innovation and in its people. We build on that heritage each and every day, through continued investment and improvement—never being satisfied with the status quo, but continually looking ahead, embracing innovation, and building up the next generation of our industry. We strive to develop the solutions that will shape the future of our industry and our world. It really is hard to think of any other industry that is so foundational to society and life. The solutions of tomorrow start with us; they start with our people; they start with seed.

So, thank you for all you do—to support ASTA, your employees, and ultimately, a better life, for all, through better seed. It is our honor to represent you, as your national association. We hope you'll take time to read through this Annual Report to learn more about the many ways we're working on your behalf—at the state, federal and international levels—and more recently, at the employee level, with an increased investment in leadership development to support your company's workforce needs.

This past year saw ASTA's Leadership Summit continue to grow and expand with new interactive opportunities for cross-generational education and networking, and we look forward to building upon the Summit as a cornerstone event for the future. At the same time, your association staff continues its hard work advocating for your interests in the timely policy discussions happening in the states, Washington, D.C. and around the globe. Key themes this past year included: treated seed; the Farm Bill; seed IP and competition; and plant breeding innovation. ASTA continues to be a respected leader and trusted voice on your behalf, with invitations this past year to participate in White House listening sessions, Congressional hearings, and high-profile federal and international coalitions.

We couldn't do any of this without your strong partnership and support. Your individual engagement makes for a stronger, collective industry. And that gives us great optimism for the future. As always, we welcome your feedback, questions, and ideas about how we can continue to improve and better serve you moving forward. Thank you, again, for all you do and for your ongoing investment in ASTA. We look forward to working with you in the year ahead, and beyond.

Sincerely,



Jim Schweigert

Gro Alliance
ASTA Chair FY 2022-23



Andrew W. LaVigne

ASTA
President & CEO

STRATEGIC GOALS & KEY FOCUS AREAS



ASTA'S VISION

To 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

To be the leading and 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.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

Domestic Policy

Be the leading voice on domestic policy issues impacting the seed industry. Implement a comprehensive government affairs program and regularly engage and communicate with ASTA members and stakeholders on federal, state and local issues. Determine action on active issues—identify where ASTA should lead, support or monitor.

Innovation

Advocate for a domestic and international environment that facilitates the development and implementation of innovation in breeding of seed crops and in seed associated products.

Communications

Reinforce ASTA's role as the authoritative voice and trusted resource for the U.S. seed industry. Maintain the association's position as the go-to source on seed matters for ASTA members, member organizations, state and federal government leaders, commodity groups, and media; while continuing to build its brand with consumers, consumer influencers, students, educators, and other stakeholder groups along the ag and food value chain.

Intellectual Property Rights

Advance the use and respect of intellectual property rights for the seed sector globally. Increase awareness for how intellectual property contributes to the success of seed systems and supports sustainability goals.

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.

Sustainability

Recognize the role of seed in sustainable agriculture as policies are developed in the public and private sectors at the local, national, and international levels.

FY 2022-23 LEADERSHIP



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Jim Schweigert
Gro Alliance



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Sakata Seed America



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John Seymour
Roundstone Seeds

South

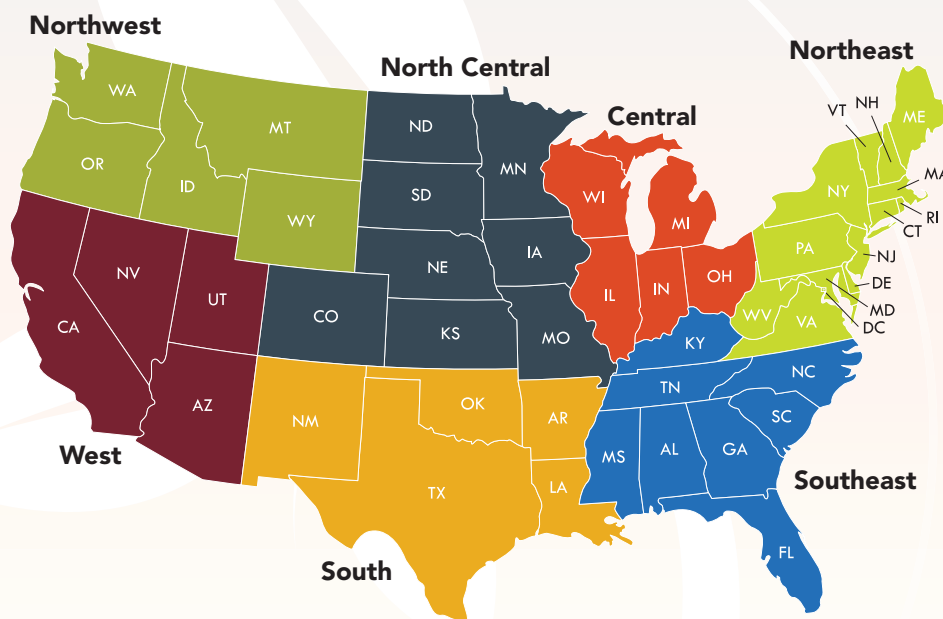
Luke Turner
Turner Seed Co.

West

John Marchese
HeinzSeed

AMSAC Rep.

Juan Labastida
Enza Zaden North America, Inc.



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Kendall Palmer, Corteva Agriscience
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Latham Hi-Tech Seeds, Inc.
Wayne Gale, Stokes Seed

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Ben Ford, Corn & Sorghum, Syngenta Seeds, LLC
Lisa James, Vegetable & Flower, Bayer
Lisa Steere, Brokers/Agents, Peterson Genetics, Inc.
Blake Croegaert, Associate Member, Verdant Partners LLC

STATE & LOCAL ISSUES

As state legislation related to the seed industry continues to evolve toward broader issues with more potential for impact, ASTA's grassroots and partner network education efforts are rising to the challenge.

Of the legislation that passed, directly aimed at the seed industry, most was related to state administrative procedures and had the blessing of the seed industry in the state. However, as is often the case, it was the legislation that didn't pass which was the most significant.

A common theme in almost all states revolved around treated seed. Below are some highlights:



A bill **passed** providing additional guidance around the life-cycle management of treated seed. Specifically, the bill:

- Prohibits certain disposal methods including proximity to water sources, composting, or incineration within a dwelling.
- Issues consumer guidance regarding the proper use and disposal of pesticide-treated seed.
- Identifies the regulatory jurisdiction of state agencies and local governments with regard to disposal of pesticide-treated seed.
- Allows cities of the first class (more than 100,000 inhabitants) to enact an ordinance, which may include penalty and enforcement provisions, that prohibits a person from applying or using a pollinator-lethal pesticide (Minneapolis, St. Paul, Duluth, and Rochester). This does not apply to pesticides on land used for agricultural production located in an area zoned for agricultural use.



A bill that **did not pass**, but was carried over to the next legislative session, would have limited the treated article regulations applicability for seed, among other things.

During the interim, a coalition has been created by the California Seed Association to work through the concerns with the sponsor with the goal of addressing common objectives.



A bill **passed** the Senate and Assembly in 2022 that would have banned the use of neonic pesticides in the state; but due to procedural action, it **did not become law**.

The 2022 bill was **reintroduced** in 2023 and has passed the legislature, with the final outcome dependent on the Governor's action (pending at time of publication).

That bill, if signed into law as is by the Governor, would ban neonic-treated seed effective January 1, 2027. It also authorizes the ag commissioner to allow for variances if the lack of availability of the treated seed would result in an undue hardship for farmers.

There is no doubt that the 2024 state sessions will be equally as challenging, but ASTA's membership will rise to the challenge, as they have done in the past, to make sure the seed industry is adequately represented.

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY AFFAIRS

FARM BILL REAUTHORIZATION

With the current Farm Bill set to expire at the end of September 2023, ASTA has been no stranger to Capitol Hill. As members of the House and Senate Ag Committees draft language for the next Farm Bill, ASTA has prioritized bicameral and bipartisan meetings in order to convey policy priorities on behalf of the seed industry. As an association, proposals were developed through careful consideration within ASTA committees and working groups. While ASTA priorities span multiple titles of the Farm Bill, the majority of ASTA priorities lie within Title II (Conservation), Title III (Trade), and Title VII (Research). Below is a summary of ASTA's key priorities. A full list can be found at betterseed.org/farm-bill.

Title II (Conservation)

Due to the nature of the years-long seed production process, it is critical that the seed industry be equipped to respond to changes in farmer demand. As demand for conservation and cover crop seed continues to rise, the ability to meet the specific variety needs of farmers in the future requires clear and predictable long-term policies and collaboration among the seed industry, growers and government.

Title III (Trade)

To continue to expand U.S. agricultural exports, protect and create American jobs, strengthen farm income, and help offset the government-supported advantages afforded to international competitors, the Farm Bill must include investment toward public/private partnerships designed to support these efforts. Specifically, the Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development (FMD) program funds have supported U.S. leadership in key international venues to influence customs, intellectual property, labeling, marketing, phytosanitary, and biotechnology regulatory policies. Sustained, long-term capacity building with international partners through these funds, which the seed sector has matched with investments and in-kind contributions to amplify impact, is critical to the development of new markets.

Title VII (Research)

ASTA supports strong investments in agriculture research to foster innovation, improve crops and production practices, and remain competitive in a global marketplace. Strong investments in research, from discovery through development, lead to better seed, which means better outcomes for farmers, consumers, and the environment, in the short and long-term. Additionally, the Farm Bill supports critical programs including the National Plant Germplasm System (NPGS). Programs like the NPGS are imperative in the preservation of the genetic diversity of crop plants.

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY AFFAIRS, CONTINUED

ADVOCACY

To convey these priorities in greater depth, ASTA welcomed several members to Washington D.C. to bring the seed industry voices to the halls of Congress. ASTA prioritized issue-specific Capitol Hill fly-ins with our industry experts to discuss priorities in the areas of conservation and research. As part of the International Committee's meeting in Washington, D.C., members met with Congress on issues relating to trade, and the importance of funding seed export programs.

SUSTAINABILITY

Alongside ASTA's Farm Bill advocacy efforts, sustainability continues to be a topic of great importance to ASTA, its members, and the seed industry at large. As an association, ASTA understands that the seed industry plays a critical role in sustainability, and there is great value and necessity in having a seat at the table as policy is being crafted, discussed, and implemented. For this reason, ASTA remains engaged in a variety of coalitions, including the Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance (FACA), which is comprised of a diverse group of organizations within the agriculture value chain, including farmers, ranchers, forest owners, agribusiness, manufacturers, the food and innovation sector, state governments, sportsmen, and environmental advocates.



Members of ASTA's International Committee prepare to lobby for seed industry issues during fly-in

Ahead of the writing of the Farm Bill, the FACA came together to draft policy recommendations to send to Congress. Through ASTA's leadership as a Research, Extension, and Innovation Working Group Co-Chair, ASTA advocated for the inclusion of language on continued development of innovation in plant breeding to fully capitalize on plant-based solutions for adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change, as well as a federal definition of "biostimulants." Also, as part of the Conservation Working Group, ASTA championed language supporting additional mid-contract management opportunities within the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and supported offering more practices within EQIP and CSP to increase biodiversity. A full list of FACA Farm Bill priorities can be found at www.agclimatealliance.com.

PLANT BREEDING INNOVATION

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT

EPA PIP Rule

In May 2023, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published a much-anticipated final rule codifying two new plant-incorporated protectant (PIP) categories that are exempted from tolerance under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA) and registration under Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). The exemptions are disappointingly limited, despite active outreach from ASTA, along with the National Association of Plant Breeders, the International Fresh Produce Association, and members of the Agricultural Biotechnology Alliance, to EPA, the White House and Congressional leadership. ASTA continues to meet with EPA leadership to provide recommendations for guidance so that implementation of the final rule does not create unintended barriers to entry, especially when it comes to plant breeders working with small acreage plant varieties or developing characteristics that should be outside the scope of EPA PIP regulation. In addition, ASTA and its allies are working towards a legislative solution that would provide enduring clarity on the limited scope of EPA regulatory authority over new plant varieties.

USDA APHIS Policy

The USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service Biotechnology Regulatory Services (BRS) is entering its third year of implementing the May 2020 final rule, *Movement of Organisms Modified or Produced Through Genetic Engineering*. While BRS has made strides in publishing exemption confirmations and completed regulatory status reviews, BRS continues to fail to meet its regulatory timelines. Furthermore, due to the narrow categories of modifications that qualify for regulatory exemption and the slowness of the Regulatory Status Review (RSR) process, plant breeders are compelled to apply for permits to keep product development on track, though the permitting process is also encumbered by delays and inefficiencies.

ASTA continues to advocate for codification of additional exemption categories that would be applicable to polyploid plants and multiplexing of modifications. This in turn would alleviate the resource demand of RSRs and issuance of permits. In addition, ASTA continues to dialogue with BRS and APHIS leadership to push for improvements in the RSR and permitting process.

FDA Guidance

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) continues to delay the publication of guidance for foods derived from plants produced using genome editing. ASTA's strategic investment in outreach assets resulted in the publication of a paper, titled, *Assuring the Food Safety of Crops Developed through Breeding*, in the ACS Agricultural Science & Technology journal. The publication is a comprehensive review of the safety of plant breeding and the legal basis of the FDA 1992 Statement of Policy on Foods Derived from New Plant Varieties. Additionally, ASTA developed, and shared with FDA, detailed recommendations for process improvements.

ASTA remains committed to support initiatives stemming from President Biden's Executive Order (EO) on Advancing Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing Innovation for a Sustainable, Safe, and Secure American Bioeconomy. ASTA provided comments to a Request for Information (RFI) from the White House Office of Science Technology Policy (OSTP) on the National Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing Initiative (NBBI), focusing on research and development, and biomanufacturing. ASTA also provided comments to an RFI from USDA on biotechnology regulation clarity and efficiency. In addition, ASTA participated in the White House hosted roundtable discussion and listening sessions on the EO. Finally, ASTA hosted a seed industry listening session at ASTA's Vegetable & Flower Seed Conference for U.S. government officials. ASTA continues to monitor opportunities to represent the seed industry in activities resulting from the EO.

PLANT BREEDING INNOVATION, CONTINUED

VALUE CHAIN COLLABORATION

ASTA continues to respond to interest by the domestic and international value chain in information-sharing for products of plant breeding innovation. The association is monitoring the value chain reception to the Center for Food Integrity (CFI) Framework for the Responsible Use of Gene Editing in Agriculture and remains engaged in the development of the Global Stewardship Group (GSG) Plant Breeding Innovation Management Program.

Additionally, ASTA has invested in a partnership with the International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA) to strengthen the connection between the seed sector and the fresh-market value chain. The partnership has resulted in opportunities to speak and engage at key conferences and obtain insights to inform our future efforts.

INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY



ASTA supported the Chair of the International Seed Federation (ISF) Plant Breeding Innovation Coordination Group (PBI CG) through January 2023 and was actively engaged in the development of an advocacy plan and resource material to dialogue with governments about future-proofing regulatory processes. Two webinars were held with key policymakers around the globe to share information about advancement of genome editing applications in plant breeding.

ASTA continues to work closely with regional seed associations and other partners to create venues to bring together international policymakers and regulators to promote harmonization in the scope of PBI oversight and implementation. ASTA worked closely with the Seed Association of the Americas (SAA) Biotechnology Working Group to showcase and encourage South American leadership in PBI policy development at the SAA Congress. Furthermore, ASTA worked with CropLife International and ISF to organize PBI programming at the 16th International Society for Biosafety Research. The event brought together, for the first time in several years, regulators from around the world to share experiences in policy development and implementation.

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS AND POLICY

International programs and policy collaboration with national and regional seed association partners remains a main mechanism to build alliances and advance ASTA policy positions around the world. In Europe, ASTA partnered with Euroseeds to build support for the European Commission legislative initiative on new genomic techniques (NGTs), and ASTA submitted comments during the public consultation period to advocate for expeditious advancement of a legislative proposal that would provide transparency and predictability.

For the first time in many years, ASTA staff and members sent two delegations to Africa in 2023, including the African Seed Congress in Dakar, Senegal, and the World Seed Congress in Cape Town, South Africa. These meetings provided an opportunity to continue shaping trade policies that will build market access across the African sub-continent.

In China, despite the inability to travel until early 2023 due to pandemic restrictions, ASTA's in-country representative attended the China Seed Congress as well as several other conferences and trade shows on our behalf. In June 2023, after years of virtual meetings, the China Seed Association (CSA), China National Seed Trade Association (CNSTA), and ASTA met in-person on the margins of the World Seed



ASTA staff attend the African Seed Congress in Dakar, Senegal

Congress to continue cooperation on key issues such as plant breeding, intellectual property rights, germplasm exchange, marketing and seed trade.

In India, ASTA works with its colleagues at the Federation of Seed Industry India (FSII) and an in country representative to advocate for IPR protection, PBI policy and a transparent phytosanitary system. After repeated engagement in collaboration with partners at FSII, India adopted a policy for plant breeding innovation (PBI) that will allow genome-edited products a streamlined pathway to market. ASTA's international team and International Committee (IC) have also played a critical role in advocating on seed movement and phytosanitary issues with Indian government officials across multiple embassies and government agencies.

In the Asia Pacific region, ASTA collaborated with the Asia and Pacific Seed Association (APSA) to continue annual workshops among seed associations and ministries of agriculture in Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos to discuss plant variety protection, lab accreditation, and phytosanitary regulations. In the Americas, ASTA supported and participated in the Seed Associations of the Americas' (SAA) Congress and hosted an in-person meeting between ASTA and the Mexican Seed Association (AMSAC) in Mexico City.



Chinese delegation in Cape Town

GLOBAL SEED MOVEMENT

Phytosanitary challenges that impact the global movement of seed continued to escalate in 2022 as national plant protection authorities (NPPOs) adopted more restrictive phytosanitary measures. The trend toward the use of molecular PCR-based seed health testing methods by NPPOs as a front-line protective measure is resulting in more difficulties for seed companies to obtain phytosanitary certificates; higher numbers of shipment rejections when re-tested at ports of entry; and major disruptions in seed re-exports.

To address these new and emerging challenges, ASTA continues to promote and enhance science-based communication with NPPOs, embassies, and other governmental agencies directly, and with regional plant protection organizations and international bodies such as the IPPC in partnership with other NSAs, regional seed associations, and ISF. The goal is to address and resolve immediate problems and seek sustainable longer term policy solutions to these problems that will minimize or prevent their reoccurrence.

For example, ASTA, working with the Seed Science Foundation, is supporting novel research to develop methods to calibrate molecular test results (bioassay on a chip); and develop new information for estimating and managing risk of seed transmitted and seed borne pathogens.

ASTA is also working with universities and regulators to find ways to accelerate the pace of development and validation of new test methods; enhance

the development of pest databases; and provide leadership in the development of the systems approach. Pilot projects are progressing with several countries, including: Chile, Brazil and South Africa.

Critical pest issues are continuing to require ASTA's proactive attention and coordination include CGMMV, tomato and pepper seed viruses and viroids, and more recently high plains virus (HPV) associated with corn seed shipments to Chile and New Zealand. In 2022 ASTA worked closely with USDA APHIS, ANPROS, and the Chilean phytosanitary authorities to maintain corn seed exports to Chile certified free from HPV without disruption, thus avoiding a regulatory crisis.

ASTA is partnering with the American Phytopathological Society (APS), Washington State University and Iowa State University in the development of a "Seed Pathology 101" virtual 12-week course to help build plant and seed pathology capacity needed in the industry and the global regulatory community, which is being offered in the fall of 2023. ASTA responded to numerous WTO and other stakeholder notifications by providing science-based analyses and comments (Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Brazil, Chile, EU, and USDA pest risk assessments on melon, tomato, and spinach seed). The primary issues have been imposition of phytosanitary measures for many pests that are technically unjustified and overlapping phytosanitary measures that are too restrictive and overly disruptive to seed re-export.

COMMUNICATIONS

To kick off the fiscal year, ASTA rolled out its newly re-branded ASTA newsletter, the Better Seed Bulletin, formerly Seed E-News. The bi-weekly newsletter reaches an audience of 8,388, including ASTA members, partner organizations, growers, Capitol Hill, federal agency staff, and more.



PLANT BREEDING INNOVATION



On March 14 (Pi/Science Education Day) the First the Seed foundation, in partnership with ASTA's Innovature program, launched new curriculum allowing students to explore plant breeding innovation. Titled **Innovate**, the curriculum takes students in grades 1–8 on an exploration of the history and future of plant breeding. From fruits and vegetables, to turf and flowers, Innovate's interactive modules look at the latest innovations, including CRISPR gene editing, and answer questions like: what is it, is it safe, and how will it impact the future of our planet, health and food? The curriculum was promoted through Innovature, ASTA and the First the seed Foundation channels.

In May, following the release of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) final rule on PIPs, ASTA conducted targeted internal and external outreach to express the strong concerns of industry and the larger plant breeding community. ASTA drafted testimony and prepped its witness—a plant science professor at the University of Arkansas—to testify at a hearing of the Senate Agriculture Horticulture Subcommittee on research priorities for specialty crops. ASTA's testimony focused heavily on plant breeding innovation and the expected unintended impacts of EPA's rule on future innovation, especially for small and medium-sized entities and public sector breeders. ASTA conducted press outreach before and after the hearing, resulting in a number of media interviews and articles highlighting ASTA's perspective. ASTA's witness was quoted in a Senate Agriculture Committee press release following the hearing. In addition to outreach tied specifically to the hearing, ASTA issued a press statement, drafted a Q&A for use by its members, and secured a joint op-ed, with the International Fresh Produce Association, which ran in Agri-Pulse. ASTA's comments were covered in more than a dozen media outlets.



Dr. Margaret Leigh Worthington testifies at U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Food and Nutrition, Specialty Crops, Organics and Research hearing

COMMUNICATIONS, CONTINUED

SUSTAINABILITY

ASTA continued its focus on sustainability with the launch of a comprehensive Sustainable Seed Production & Operations Guide (the Guide) and supporting communications tools. During a members-only webinar in October, ASTA staff previewed the Guide along with a corresponding member survey. The survey, now complete, provides a benchmark on overall industry sustainability practices and serves as a tool for companies to evaluate their own sustainability practices.



[BETTERSEED.ORG/SUSTAINABILITY](https://betterseed.org/sustainability)

COMMUNICATIONS, CONTINUED

TREATED SEED

Throughout the summer, ASTA ran a digital ad campaign to drive traffic to its new landing page, focusing on treated seed benefits and safety. Building on the campaign, in February, ASTA developed and launched a new Treated Seed Myths vs. Facts resource along with a corresponding social media campaign.



Heading into harvest season, in August, the association launched its annual treated seed stewardship campaign targeted at farmers. Key deliverables included: a communications toolkit for customization by grower groups and the grain industry; a PSA on farm broadcasting networks; a social media campaign; and trade media outreach. A similar campaign was launched in the spring tied to the planting season.

FARM BILL

In March, ASTA publicly rolled out its priorities for the 2023 Farm Bill. The detailed priorities can be found on a dedicated landing page on the ASTA website, along with a one-pager for use on Capitol Hill. Media outreach resulted in coverage in a number of targeted outlets, including: RFD-TV; **Brownfield**; AgNet Media; **AgWired**; Hagstrom Report; and more. Additionally, as a member of the Food & Agriculture Climate Alliance (FACA), ASTA supported the rollout of the coalition's Farm Bill priorities, including the design and release of a report, press conference, stakeholder outreach and coordinated social media campaign.

In November, an ASTA-supported witness at a Senate Agriculture Committee hearing highlighted seed industry priorities for the Farm Bill Research Title. ASTA's media outreach resulted in coverage in more than a dozen news outlets.



Dr. Katy Martin Rainey, Purdue, testifies on behalf of ASTA at a Senate Agriculture Committee hearing.

COMMUNICATIONS, CONTINUED



COVER CROP SEED

In early fall, ASTA conducted outreach to grower and conservation organizations and trade media outlets encouraging farmers to plan ahead for cover crop seed and reminding them of ASTA's conservation and cover crop digital seed map to help locate local professional seed dealers. As part of the campaign, ASTA penned a column for the American Farm Bureau Federation's "Focus on Agriculture" newsletter, which is widely distributed to both farmers and non-farmers alike. The column discussed the importance of planning ahead, using quality cover crop seed, and always purchasing seed from a professional seed dealer.

In the spring, ASTA, along with USDA-NIFA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program and the Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC), launched the seventh **national survey** to gather insight from farmers on their use of cover crops. The report will be finalized and rolled out publicly in the summer of 2023.

In March, ASTA staff joined GO Seed and SARE at the Commodity Classic Climate Smart Hub. The booth featured a variety of interactive sessions delving into the latest climate mitigation technologies, the future of carbon markets, and innovations in cover crops.

MEMBER ADVOCACY

ASTA continued to grow its Seed Ambassador Leadership Team (SALT) with full-day workshops held in Chicago (with more than 20 participants) and in Orlando (with a full house of 30 participants). The workshops continue to evolve with new interactive components and targeted recruitment efforts to expand and diversify its reach. Planning is underway for a robust continuing education curriculum launching at the beginning of 2024.



ASTA's newest SALT Ambassadors in Orlando, Florida

INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

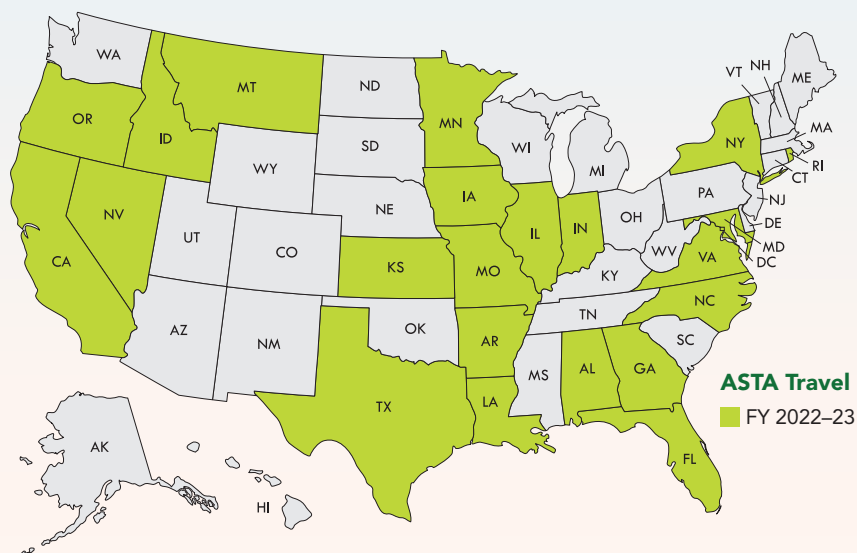
ASTA remains actively engaged in the International Seed Federation (ISF) Communications Working Group, collaborating on global messaging and communications resources. In FY 2022-23, the group built and rolled out a comprehensive set of FAQs around plant breeding innovation. ASTA staff participated in the ISF midterm meetings in Rome, providing guidance on the federation's long-term strategy and goals.

MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

ASTA continues to focus on the needs of its members by proactively eliciting feedback on conference sessions, committee structures, educational training, and much more. Over the last year, ASTA has taken an intentional approach to making sure member companies of all sizes and sectors are receiving clear value from their participation in ASTA. Below are some of the highlights of those efforts.

OUT AND ABOUT

The ASTA staff focused on maximizing travel across the nation, often combining speaking engagements with member company site visits. During these visits, staff met with individual members to learn more about the issues they faced and their day-to-day operations. ASTA staff strategically targeted states they'd not previously visited and asked the Regional Vice Presidents (RVPs) to represent the association where appropriate. In total, staff visited nearly 25 states during this fiscal year. ASTA will continue to make these strategic visits and engage with its members to provide the highest standard of support for the industry.



Additionally, ASTA ramped up its focus on promoting the many association resources available to members. To do this, staff increased communication with their respective ASTA Committees and held several webinars that linked members not only to internal resources but also state and federal programming. Most notably, ASTA held a two-part webinar about the recent USDA report on *Competition and the Intellectual Property System: Seeds and Other Agricultural Inputs* (as described below in the IPR section). These webinars and the many others ASTA hosted have been well attended and covered a variety of topics. ASTA will continue to utilize webinars when appropriate to update and engage with our members on timely industry issues.

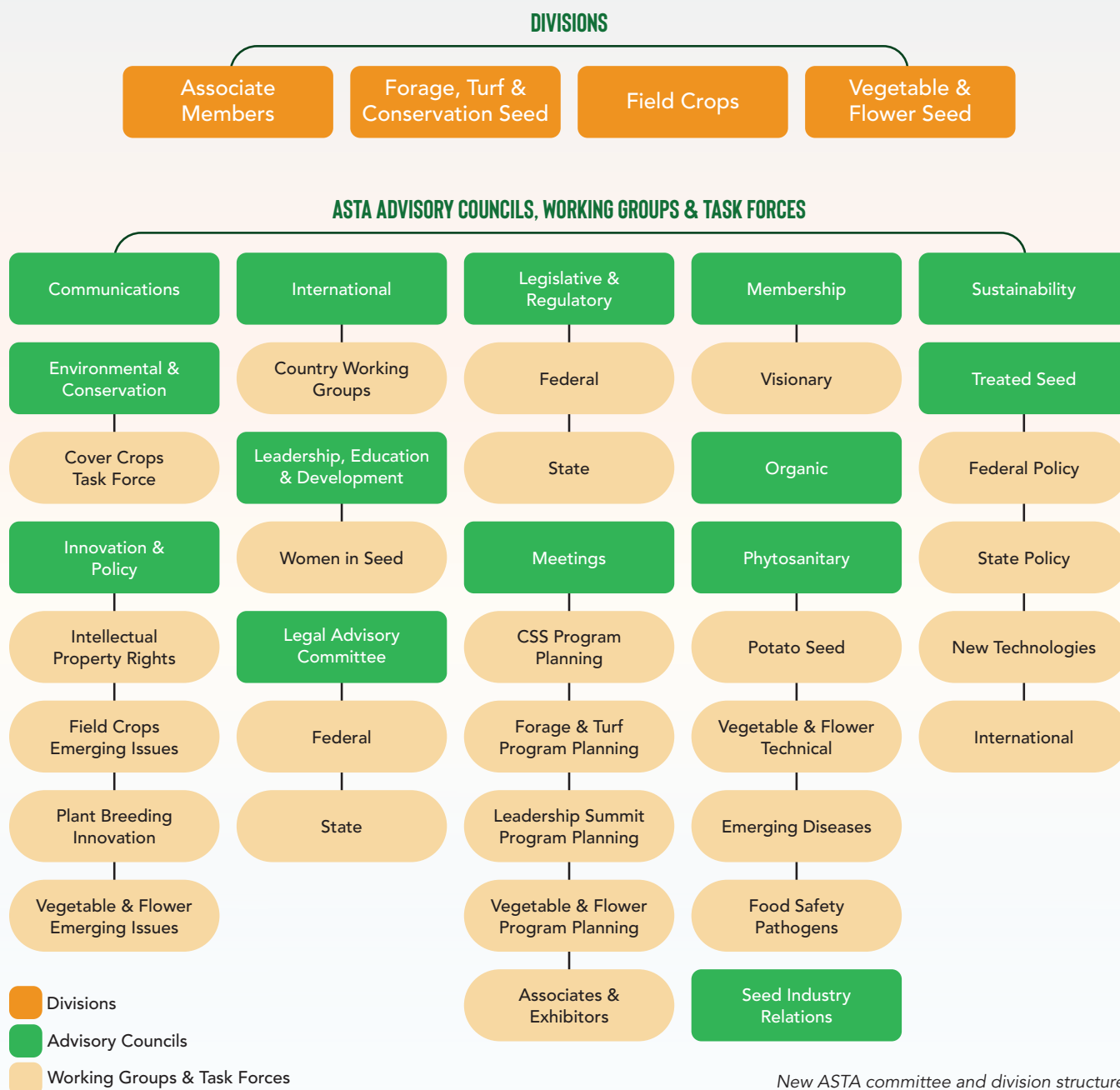
STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

ASTA is pleased to cultivate the future of the seed industry through its student membership, currently with more than 115 members ranging from FFA students to PhD candidates. Partner universities are helping to promote ASTA membership to students in relevant programs. ASTA's Communications Committee and Leadership, Education, and Development (LEAD) Committee worked to develop different ways to engage the association's student members through events and contests. The monthly student newsletter is another way of delivering benefits to these young members. The newsletter includes industry news and updates, company spotlights, student member spotlights, scholarship programs and internship and full-time career opportunities.

MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT, CONTINUED

COMMITTEE RESTRUCTURE

As a member-driven association, ASTA's diverse memberships plays an active role in guiding the future of the seed industry through active participation in committees and working groups. For this reason, the association and its members were supportive of revising the structure to allow for maximum productivity, efficiency, clarity and ease. While a company's participation on committees won't be greatly impacted by the restructuring, the hope is that participation on committees is more seamless for new and existing members with the changes approved by ASTA's Board of Directors.



INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

ASTA advocates for member priorities related to intellectual property rights (IPR) at both the national and international levels.



FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT

ASTA frequently engages with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Plant Variety Protection Office (PVPO) and the U.S. Patent and Trade Office (USPTO) to advocate on behalf of the seed industry, to ensure the effective and efficient use of IPR for seed innovation. One priority is to alleviate USPTO concerns and to build support for strong protection for essentially derived varieties (EDV) under UPOV.

Following the release of USDA's report on competition and innovation in seeds and other agricultural inputs, ASTA supported its members by providing responsive industry messaging along with internal educational webinars. ASTA facilitated two member webinars, with more than 250 registrants each. The first webinar, featuring speakers from ASTA's legal counsel, Hogan Lovells, provided an overview of the report, with an emphasis on potential impacts on IPR policies; the second webinar included speakers from USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) who provided clarification around varietal labeling requirements and fielded general questions about the Federal Seed Law.

ASTA continues to monitor, participate, and actively reach out to USDA leadership to gain insight as USDA works to implement the recommendations from the report.



INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

ASTA continues to work with USPTO and the industry-based EDV Task Force to advocate for recognition of at UPOV for strong plant breeders' rights with regards to EDV. The failure of UPOV to adopt new EDV Explanatory notes (UPOV/EXN/EDV/3) in 2022 re-opened the discussion. ASTA worked with the Task Force in strategic outreach to key UPOV members, in hosting an EDV seminar for UPOV members, in supporting a speaker to the UPOV seminar on plant breeding innovation and PVP, and in engagement with the POV Working Group EDV as they draft a new EDV Explanatory notes.

While the new EDV Explanatory notes developed by the UPOV Working EDV are not as strong as the October 2022 version, it addresses the majority of the key concerns identified by the Task Force. The new EXN is expected to be up for adoption by delegates at the October 2023 UPOV Council meeting. Beyond engagement at UPOV, ASTA also supported the seed industry's representation in key meetings and negotiations related to work under the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and The Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing of Genetic Resources. ASTA played an important role in these meetings, which will shape future policies impacting access to genetic resources, genetic sequence data, and digital sequence information that are critical for plant breeding pipelines globally.

ASTA AFFILIATES & PARTNERS

SEED SCIENCE FOUNDATION

The mission of the Seed Science Foundation (SSF) is to address seed and plant science challenges and to encourage plant breeding education and seed research in support of the ever-changing needs of the global seed industry. The foundation seeks to solve scientific challenges while supporting research and identifying funding mechanisms and creating technical information. It fosters networking and external agreements, recognizes professional and student achievement, and supports ASTA student programs.



The SSF has identified six subject matter areas of priority:

1. Breeding Systems
2. Seed Quality
3. Seed Production and Technology
4. Seed Health and Pathology
5. Digital Agriculture
6. Seed Applied Technology

FIRST THE SEED FOUNDATION

The First the Seed Foundation (FTSF) is a not-for-profit organization established by ASTA in 2008 to inform today's consumers and tomorrow's workforce about the importance of the seed industry. Its mission is to conduct education, outreach, and communication on the value of crops and food produced from seed.



Key programs for FY 2022-23 include:

TOMATOSPHERE™

A program that uses the excitement of space exploration to teach the skills and processes of scientific experimentation and inquiry. Students investigate the effects of the space environment on the growth of food that will inevitably support long-term human space travel.

6,800
participating
classrooms

152,635
students
served

GROW A SEED

A free career education program developed to help students explore their talents and become successful in the workplace by providing participants with a career handbook including: career opportunities and profiles; checklists; parent handouts; and other resources.

8
participating
classrooms

297
students
served

PLANTING THE SEED

This curriculum was developed to assist teachers in growing the next generation of seed scientists and environmental innovators by letting students explore how tiny seeds can solve some of the planet's biggest problems.

44
participating
classrooms

4,874
students
served

BACK TO EARTH

This program allows students to learn about the Space Station and the importance of studying plant growth for long-term space travel to constructing their own greenhouse.

33
participating
classrooms

4,045
students
served

INNOVATE

This curriculum explores the latest innovations in plant breeding, including CRISPR gene editing, and answer questions including: what is it; is it safe; and how will it impact the future of our planet, health and food. It is based on the Innovature program.

41
participating
classrooms

3,722
students
served

ASTA HONORS SEED INDUSTRY LEADERS

ASTA honored past and present seed industry groundbreakers during the 2023 ASTA Leadership Summit in June in Sacramento. The slate of honors included: Distinguished Service Award; Honorary Lifetime Member Award; Heritage Awards; and Seed Science Foundation's Excellence in Science Award. For more information on these awards, including past recipients, visit betterseed.org/seed-industry-honors.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

During his 30-year career with Pfizer Genetics, DeKalb and Monsanto, Dr. Donn Cummings was a highly successful corn breeder, Station Manager and Area Research Director. Donn became Monsanto's Global Breeder Sourcing Lead in 2007, where he provided overall leadership and global strategic planning to build and maintain a Ph.D. and M.S. level plant breeder talent pipeline for Monsanto until his retirement in 2015.



Dr. Donn Cummings

HONORARY LIFETIME MEMBER AWARD

Craig Newman, former President & CEO of AgReliant Genetics. His career began with seven years at Proctor & Gamble in Ohio. He then entered the seed industry at Akin Seed Company in 1979 in St. Francisville, Illinois, and spent over 40 years in various positions at Akin Seed and AgriGold Hybrids, including General Manager. Craig served as the 2013-14 Board Chair.



Craig Newman

HERITAGE AWARDS

The Heritage Award was created to preserve and build history and to honor and recognize individuals who have significantly impacted ASTA and the seed industry. It seeks to inspire the next generation of leaders and instill a sense of pride in the rich history of the seed industry and ASTA. In 2023, ASTA recognized Bill Latham and Dick Crowder at the Heritage Award recipients. For more information about these two outstanding industry leaders, visit betterseed.org/astas-seed-industry-heritage-award.



Dr. Richard "Dick" Crowder



Bill Latham

CONVENTIONS & MEETINGS

The 2022–23 year brought about several changes to the ASTA slate of conventions and meetings. Two large events were re-named, and ASTA's CSS & Seed Expo announced Orlando as its new location, starting in 2023, after 77 years of being held in Chicago. Each ASTA event enjoyed incremental increases in participation as business events continued to recover from the after-effects of the pandemic.

ASTA's 68th Farm and Lawn Seed Conference

was held in conjunction with the Western Seed Association Conference. The program included policy updates provided by ASTA staff, government officials, and key partner organizations; along with a special Sorghum Session, meetings of the ASTA Environmental and Conservation Seed Committee, and the Cover Crop Working Group. In order to provide clarity and consistency with the naming of other ASTA events, ASTA unveiled the new name of this event beginning in Fall 2023 would be the "Forage, Turf & Conservation Seed Conference."



ASTA's CSS & Seed Expo 2022 was back to a full in-person format, post-pandemic, for the first time since 2019, with roughly 77 percent of the usual overall attendance. ASTA commemorated the last year for this event in Chicago with a "Farewell Chicago" theme, including a historical display, a "Legacy Walk" honoring companies who have participated for several years, and a special Closing Reception where a memory book filled with dedications and signatures from attendees was presented to the Hyatt Regency Chicago management. The Seed Expo featured 96 exhibiting companies and Expo showcase events included exhibitor presentations on ag tech innovations and seed treatment. Excitement was built around the announcement of the conference's new name and new location—the ASTA Field Crop Seed Convention, in Orlando—starting in 2023!

CONVENTIONS & MEETINGS, CONTINUED



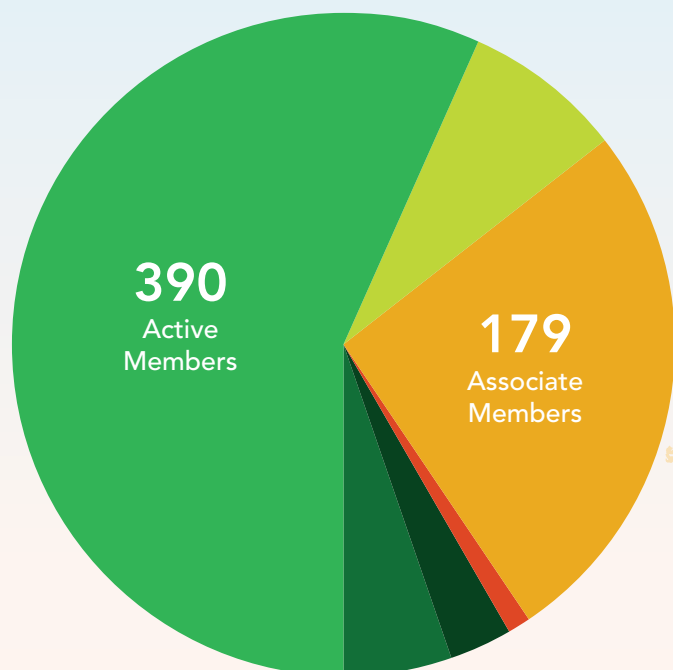
The **2023 ASTA Vegetable & Flower Seed Conference** was held in Orlando at the Omni Resort at Champions Gate. An impressive 855 registrants participated from over 30 countries, with over 100 companies participating in the Trading Room. The general session focused on “Fads vs. Trends” for the vegetable seed industry and included interactive elements, facilitated by keynote speaker Randy Riley of Golden Sun Insights, where attendees worked in small groups to provide crowd-sourced input from member companies on the priority areas that ASTA should focus on. Sessions were well-attended, including Phytosanitary, Organic, Women in Seed and a combined session between the Communications and Innovation and Policy Committees focusing on consumer perceptions of gene edited products. During the event, ASTA hosted a Listening Session with U.S. government representatives on regulatory clarity and efficiency around plant breeding policy.

The **ASTA Leadership Summit** held its second annual event in Sacramento, setting a number of new records, including the highest vegetable seed sector attendance and the highest student attendance at an ASTA June meeting. The conference gathered 265 registrants, making it the highest attended ASTA June event since 2018. Continuing its interactive, educational session format and program design, the conference agenda focused on various aspects of “Resiliency” for the seed industry, including its workforce, its companies and agriculture overall. The conference ended with a final closing reception with a Nashville theme, promoting the 2024 location of the conference.



MEMBERSHIP BREAKDOWN

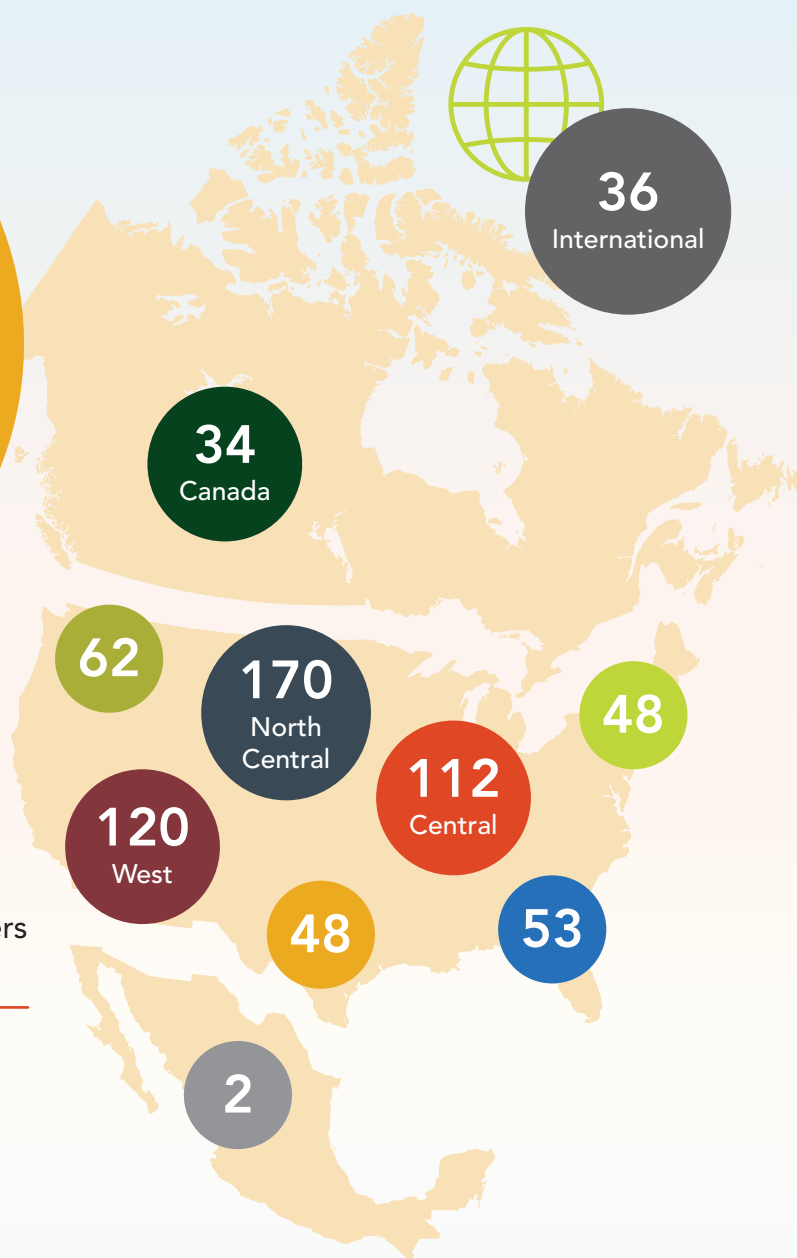
MEMBERSHIP BY TYPE



- 390 Active Members
- 52 Affiliate Members
- 179 Associate Members
- 7 Broker-Agent Members
- 21 Corresponding International Members
- 36 Reciprocal Members

685 Total Members

MEMBERSHIP BY REGION



STUDENT MEMBERS



- 34 Canada
- 112 Central
- 36 International
- 2 Mexico
- 170 North Central
- 48 Northeast
- 62 Northwest
- 48 South
- 53 Southeast
- 120 West

FINANCIAL POSITION

ASTA'S 2022-23 BUDGET

The ASTA 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 its membership regarding the association's budget and financial status. The Board of Directors approves and reviews the financial status, which enables the association to maintain a strong and focused direction. The annual audit was conducted by ASTA's auditors, MARCUM, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, GAAP. The FY22 audit confirmed the financial health of the association, which ended its fiscal year with \$4,638,551 in net assets. In addition, it calculated in-kind contributions from member companies related to the international activities of the association of \$11,740,838. This includes promotion, travel, research and professional services that the audit firm included in the FY22 audit.

INVESTMENT AND RESERVE POLICY

The Board of Directors has established guidelines for ASTA's 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, the target allocation for the balance is 40% in fixed income and 60% in equity which includes U.S. Small and Mid-Caps, Global and U.S. Large Caps. An operating reserve maintains a balance of \$500,000. Expenditures from those reserves are vetted through the Finance Committee and approved by the Board of Directors or the Executive Committee. 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	\$11,740,838
Membership dues	\$4,065,172
Registration fees	\$740,573
Government grants and contracts.....	\$932,992
Exhibit fees	\$397,136
Contributions and sponsorships	\$495,940
Administrative service fees	\$10,000
Other income	\$28,182
Total Operating Revenue	\$18,410,833
and Support	

OPERATING EXPENSES

Program Services

International initiatives.....	\$13,048,702
Meetings	\$1,414,613
Policy	\$1,512,654
Legislation	\$765,311
Membership	\$267,559
Other	\$166,126
Total Program Services	\$17,174,965

Supporting Service

General and administrative.....	\$2,030,661
Total Operating Expenses.....	\$19,205,626
Change in Net Assets	\$(794,793)
from Operations	

NON-OPERATING ACTIVITIES

Investment income, net	\$(736,781)
Change in net assets.....	\$(1,531,574)
Net assets, beginning of year.....	\$6,170,125
Net assets, end of year.....	\$4,638,551

ASTA STAFF



american
seed trade
association

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Andrew W. LaVigne
President and CEO

Libby Hogen-Heath
Executive Assistant

DOMESTIC & INTERNATIONAL POLICY

Fan-Li Chou, Ph.D.
Vice President, Scientific Affairs & Policy

Janae Brady
Vice President, Government Affairs

Ric Dunkle, Ph.D
Senior Director, Seed Health and Trade

Sam Crowell, Ph.D.
*Senior Director, International Programs
and Policy*

Pat Miller
Director, State Government Affairs

Payton Englert
Director, Government Affairs

Lainey Wolf
Manager, International Programs

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

Ann Jorss
Chief Operating Officer

Ann Ward
Assistant to the COO

COMMUNICATIONS

Bethany Shively
Vice President, Strategic Communications

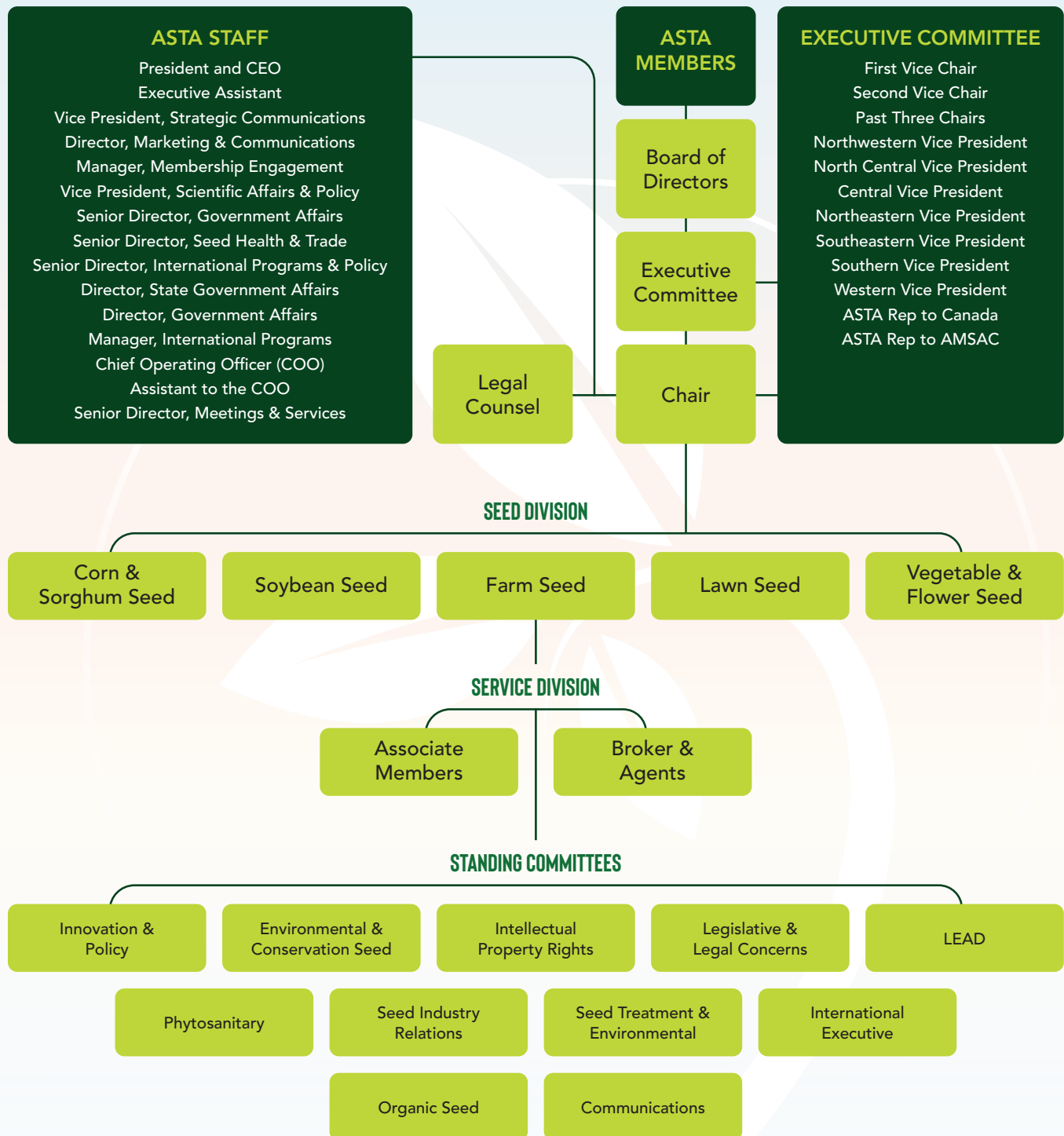
Kaitlin Crawford
Director, Marketing and Communications

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Jennifer Crouse
Senior Director, Meetings & Services

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