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2018-19

ANNUAL REPORT

NEW FRONTIERS

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2018-19 **ANNUAL REPORT**



MESSAGE TO THE ASTA MEMBERSHIP

To our Valued Members,

We are proud to present you with the American Seed Trade Association's (ASTA) Fiscal Year 2018-19 Annual Report. The report provides highlights of ASTA's key activities, successes and ongoing engagements in support of you, our valued members, over the past year.

On behalf of the ASTA Board of Directors and staff, we offer our sincerest thanks for your continued involvement and investments – of your time, energy and finances – in your national association. It is thanks to you that ASTA continues to reach **new frontiers** with each and every passing year – and FY2018-19 has no doubt seen this trend continue in some major ways!

From the Farm Bill paving the way for industrial hemp production, to a boom in investments around urban and indoor/vertical agriculture and even plant-based protein production, agriculture is seeing new – and in some cases, unexpected – market opportunities. In the past year, we've witnessed history by seeing the first agricultural products of gene editing enter the market. We have seen how our seeds can be used to re-establish native prairies in the aftermath of devastating wildfires. We have witnessed how innovations in cover crops, thanks to seed science, are supporting more sustainable farming practices.

We're proud of the accomplishments we've had this year in ASTA, and we're proud of the association's continued focus on being good stewards of its resources. We have done this by streamlining operations, utilizing the tremendous diversity of our members as subject-matter experts within the industry, and finding strategic collaborations to maximize value and return on investment.

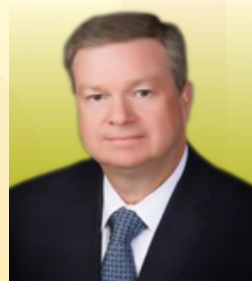
Our new collaboration with FFA is bringing rising talent into the seed industry. A record number of your professionals participated in ASTA-sponsored management skills webinars. ASTA's Seed Ambassador Leadership Team (SALT) is taking our advocacy to new heights. And ASTA's members are continuing to increase their footprint in Washington, D.C., making their voices heard on critical policy issues, with nearly 120 visits to Capitol Hill over the course of the year.

As you read this report and reflect upon the state of the seed industry, and your association, it is our hope that you too are filled with a tremendous sense of optimism about the future of this great industry. Together, we look forward to continuing to help drive the collective mission and values that have established the U.S. seed industry as the global leader it is today.

Sincerely,



Andy LaVigne
President & CEO



Jerry Flint
2018-19 Chair

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 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 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 U.S. 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.

LEADERSHIP



From left to right: John Latham, Jerry Flint, Wayne Gale

Chair

Jerry Flint
Corteva Agriscience

First Vice Chair

Wayne Gale
Stokes Seeds

Second Vice Chair

John Latham
Latham Hi-Tech Seeds Inc.

Regional Vice Presidents

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Northeastern Region Vice President,
Ernst Conservation Seeds

Rick Falconer

Western Region Vice President, Rijk Zwaan

Coby Kriegshauser

Southern Region Vice President, Scott Seed

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

John Romines

North Central Region Vice President,
WinField Solution

Angel Saavedra

Region Vice President Mexico, Corteva Agriscience

Jim Schweigert

Region Vice President Canada, Gro Alliance, LLC

Directors at Large

Kim Alberty, Agassi Seed & Supply

Dave Armstrong, Sakata Seed America, Inc.

Mike Lewis, Monsanto

Dave Treinen, Syngenta/GreenLeaf

Immediate Past Chairs

Tracy Tally, Justin Seed Co., Inc.

Mark Herrmann, AgReliant Genetics, LLC

Risa DeMasi, Grassland Oregon

Division Chairs

Jim Herr, Soybean, Wyffels Hybrids, Inc.

Bruce Howison, Corn & Sorghum, Wyffels Hybrids, Inc.

Matthew Koch, Farm & Lawn Seed,
The Scotts Company

Dale Krolikowski, Vegetable & Flower,
Germaines Seed Technology, Inc.

Jon Moreland, Associate Member, EES Companies

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

STATE AND LOCAL ISSUES

FY 2018-19 was an interesting and complex year for state legislative affairs. One of the top issues impacting states was the de-listing of hemp from federally restricted status. Passed as a provision within the U.S. Farm Bill, the legislation required states to determine an action plan for hemp management and required the plan to be approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prior to production. The change in law drove states and producers to draft regulations to allow for production starting in 2020. The ASTA Board of Directors created a Hemp Seed Working Group to work immediately to assist growers, regulators and its membership in production and management of quality hemp seed. Hemp is expected to continue to be a focus for ASTA and the agriculture community.

While hemp was a major topic for the year, it was just one of the seed-related issues monitored by the ASTA team at the state level.

During the year...

160,687 bills were filed in the states

More than **12,000** bills reviewed by ASTA

160 bills tracked on a daily basis

The Key Issues:

- Pollinator Protection
- Pesticides (*including seed treatments*)
- Noxious Weeds

Bills Passed:

1. **New York S5343:** Bans any use of chlorpyrifos after December 2021.
2. **Vermont S160:** Creates a Seed Trait Acceptance Committee to approve all new GMO seed traits before use in the state.

The ASTA State Governmental Affairs Working Group continues 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 composed of representatives from state and regional seed and agribusiness associations, member company governmental affairs professionals, and related national associations. Monthly conference calls facilitate the review of the legislative bills on the tracking list. The collective involvement cultivates deeper grassroots involvement and activated action toward the resolution of the legislative issue and enhanced communications with state policymakers.

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS

Federal Aid for Farmers

USDA has enacted several programs over the last year to address pressures faced by farmers due to reduced export demand, unstable trading environment and volatile weather conditions. ASTA is the leading voice of the seed industry as government agencies move to implement these programs and to provide up-to-date information for seed companies, particularly corn, soybean and cover crop companies, in a rapidly changing environment. The association has ensured that seed growers have full access to payment programs and were strong proponents of USDA's decision to extend the haying and grazing period for cover crops from November 1 to September 1.

Seed Treatment Issues

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) took comments on a 2017 petition from the Center for Food Safety (CFS) requesting that EPA either initiate a rulemaking or issue a formal agency interpretation that seeds treated with systemic insecticides should be considered pesticides. Comments were due March 26, 2019. ASTA strongly opposes the petition, which, if implemented, could create a substantial burden for farmers and seed treaters without a corresponding benefit to the environment. ASTA submitted joint comments with CropLife America and the Biological Products Industry Alliance. EPA received a significant number of letters from growers, seed companies and allied organizations opposing the petition. A response is expected from EPA soon.

ASTA continues to encourage outreach and education on seed treatment stewardship, reaching thousands of farmers through social media, newsletter articles and ads in collaboration with ASTA members, and state and national grower organizations.

Storm the Hill

A diverse group of seed industry leaders, representing companies of all sizes, sectors and geographies, gathered in Washington, D.C. for the annual Storm the Hill legislative fly-in on April 2-3. Topping the list of 2019 legislative priorities were innovation, trade policy and agriculture research funding. Thirty-five ASTA members representing 15 states participated in more than 80 meetings on Capitol Hill.



ASTA members meet with representatives during Storm the Hill



FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS CONTINUED

Farm Bill Implementation

The Farm Bill was signed into law on December 20, 2018, and in January 2019, USDA began work on implementing new programs authorized by the bill. Given the diversity of its membership and priority issues, ASTA advocated on six of the 12 Farm Bill titles. Below are the issues on which ASTA directly engaged, and which were included in the final bill. ASTA continues to engage with USDA as they draft rules and regulations that will affect the seed industry.



Conservation: Cost-share for seeds in the Conservation Reserve Program is capped at 50-percent in the new Farm Bill. The original House language capped it at 25-percent, which ASTA strongly opposed. ASTA has submitted comments to USDA sharing the concerns of the industry regarding seed mix calculations and the high cost of seed mixes recommended for conservation programs.



Cover Crops: The bill directs the Risk Management Agency (RMA) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to coordinate internally so farmers planting cover crops as part of USDA programs do not potentially put their crop insurance benefits at risk.



Trade: ASTA supported additional funding for the suite of market development programs funded through the Farm Bill. These programs are critical for ASTA's international programs and the continued success of the U.S. seed industry globally.



Research: ASTA supported language directing USDA to develop, publish, and implement a national strategic germplasm and cultivar collections assessment and utilization plan for the National Plant Germplasm System (NPGS). The plan will

help provide a rationale for future funding for the NPGS. The Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research, which augments USDA research programs in several ASTA priority areas, was funded at \$185 million.



Organic: The Farm Bill increased funding for organic research. It provided funds for organic sector data-collection for the purpose reducing the importation of fraudulent organic products.



Plant Variety Protection: The Farm Bill modifies the Plant Variety Protection Act and expands its scope to incorporate asexually propagated plants. USDA has proposed rules to implement this statutory change after consultation with ASTA.



Hemp: The bill contains language which authorizes states or tribes to regulate the production of industrial hemp. (See State Affairs section for more details)



Plant Biostimulants: The Farm Bill authorizes a joint report on plant biostimulants by USDA and EPA which is to include a recommended federal definition of biostimulant. ASTA has worked with allied organizations to provide input to USDA on the report content.

PLANT BREEDING INNOVATION POLICY

Throughout the year, ASTA engaged with the U.S. government to encourage a science-based and consistent policy for plant breeding innovation (PBI) across the government. Additionally, ASTA advocated for continued international engagement by the U.S. government. In May 2019, the USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) published, for public comment, a proposed rule to revise and update the agency's biotechnology regulations. In the proposed rule, APHIS proposed that "certain categories of modified plants would be exempted from the regulations because they could be produced through traditional breeding techniques, and thus are unlikely to pose a plant pest risk." ASTA, through its PBI Working Group, formed a sub-group to draft comments on the proposed rule.

In June 2019, the White House issued an Executive Order on Modernizing the Regulatory Framework for Agriculture Biotechnology Products. The Executive Order instructed the USDA, Food and Drug Administration, and EPA to review their current regulations and guidelines with an eye to streamline them, with the goal of removing undue regulatory burdens for smaller developers and public researchers developing genome edited plants.

ASTA continues to take a leadership role in working with members of the domestic agriculture value chain, as well as international partners, toward the goals of international alignment of science-based policies across countries and information-sharing across the value chain.

ASTA's Senior Vice President for Innovation Bernice Slutsky continues to serve as Chair of the International Seed Federation (ISF) PBI Working Group to work toward alignment across countries. To that end, ASTA has collaborated with ISF in hosting and participating in several international events. A second international roundtable discussing gene editing was held in Beijing, China in December 2018. ASTA and ISF participated in the Asia Pacific High Level Policy Dialogue on Biotechnology in Brisbane, Australia in August 2018; in meetings in Taiwan and Korea in October 2018; and in meetings with the Government of Japan in April 2019.

ISF also held a number of meetings and webinars with the International Grain Trade Coalition to discuss and develop guidance for their members on information sharing across the value chain.



INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURE POLICY



U.S. – China Trade Dispute

ASTA member companies producing/multiplying vegetable and flower seed

in China and shipping to the U.S. were impacted by 10-percent tariffs in September 2018 and 25-percent tariffs in May 2019. ASTA relayed concerns and impacts with the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), USDA, and the U.S. Embassy Beijing. Additionally, ASTA advised member companies on mitigation strategies and launched a process for ASTA members to file for a tariff exemption and retroactive duty refund with USTR.

ASTA applied for and received a \$1,375,000 grant from USDA's Agriculture Trade Promotion (ATP) program to improve policies in markets outside of China and explore alternative seed production locations. The programs began in 2019 and will conclude in 2021. A portion of the funding is dedicated to reducing phytosanitary, regulatory, and technical barriers for vegetable and flower seed production in Kenya, Peru, and Southeast Asia. The remaining portion is being focused on continuing ASTA's goal to align policies around plant breeding innovation in key markets, such as the European Union.

Despite the current challenges between the U.S. and China, ASTA maintains a strong relationship with the China Seed Association, renewing the Memorandum of Understanding for three more years.



U.S. – Mexico – Canada Agreement

ASTA has vocalized strong support for the new U.S. –

Mexico – Canada trade agreement. During Storm the Hill, ASTA members met with members of Congress and their staff to explain the benefits related to

phytosanitary policies, intellectual property rights, and regulatory cooperation that the agreement provides. ASTA staff continue to weigh in with congressional leadership and participates in industry coalitions dedicated to the success of this effort.



ASTA International Representation

ASTA staff were appointed to represent the U.S. seed industry

on two key trade advisory committees. President & CEO Andy LaVigne serves on the Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee for Trade, and Senior Director of International Trade Programs and Policy Abigail Struxness serves on the Agricultural Technical Advisory Committee for Trade in Grains, Feed, Oilseeds, and Planting Seeds. The Committees are jointly managed by the USDA and the USTR and work to ensure that U.S. agricultural trade policy objectives reflect public- and private-sector interests in global seed commerce.

ASTA continues to play a leadership role within the ISF, with members and staff representing ASTA on all committees, section boards, and working groups. ASTA also has executive committee positions on the Asia and Pacific Seed Association (APSA), the Seed Association of the Americas (SAA), and the African Seed Trade Association (AFSTA). ASTA members serve as industry observers at meetings of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Seed Schemes, International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), International Plant Protection Convention, Food Agriculture Organization (FAO) Farmer's Rights meetings, and International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

ASTA's participation and leadership at the regional and global level helps drive the policies that impact the U.S. seed industry.

GLOBAL SEED MOVEMENT

The lack of harmonization around international phytosanitary standards has resulted in an unpredictable trade environment for seed. Many countries have phytosanitary requirements which are not technically justified; and there is a growing trend to rely on molecular seed-health testing methods which are not only expensive, but often produce false positives or negatives. ASTA has been active at the global level to work toward harmonization of phytosanitary measures, by partnering with the ISF, SAA, APSA, APHIS, North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO), and other organizations to influence the development, adoption, and implementation of international phytosanitary standards and other programs to create a more predictable trading environment.

Systems Approach

Working with a coalition of industry and government phytosanitary experts from six countries, ASTA assisted in developing a proposal to create an annex to the new international seed standard (ISPM 38) that will provide guidance needed by NPPOs to utilize the systems approach as a phytosanitary measure in lieu of consignment-by-consignment phytosanitary certification. The project was ultimately accepted by the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), and an IPPC expert working group will be established to begin the drafting process. ASTA co-sponsored a NAPPO international hemispheric workshop on the implementation of ISPM 38 in Costa Rica March 2019 and supported and participated in several other ISPM 38 implementation workshops in conjunction with SAA and the Mexican Seed Trade Association (AMSAC).

The systems approach offers a potential alternative to consignment-by-consignment phytosanitary certification. Seed companies would become accredited by governments to move seed internationally based on the strength of their seed quality management practices in managing overall phytosanitary risk to acceptable levels. ASTA and USDA have partnered to develop a systems approach initiative called ReFreSH (Regulatory Framework for Seed Health) which represents the first effort to implement the systems approach for seeds. Significant progress has been made which includes the development of a concept paper, an accreditation standard, and a manual that will be used by seed companies to develop petitions for accreditation. The development of pilot projects to test this concept with APHIS and several interested NPPOs is underway. ReFreSH is being used by ISF (with ASTA as a contributor) as a model for the development of a global concept that will be used to help design the ISPM 38 annex.



GLOBAL SEED MOVEMENT CONTINUED

Pest Database

ASTA continues its efforts to contribute to the development of the ISF Regulated Pest Database (organized by commodity), as well as further expand its pest database (organized by pest species). These databases provide centralized repositories of essential technical information on pests that are used to help NPPOs with pest risk assessments that ultimately reduce the number of regulated pests. The database also serves as a ready resource of information to aid in the release of held or rejected shipments for pests which are not technically justified. Over the past year, ASTA has added over 200 pests to its database and has contracted for the development of new software that will increase its usefulness by its members.

National Seed Health System

ASTA continues to coordinate with APHIS to improve the National Seed Health System, and further develop the National Seed Health Accreditation Pilot Program (NSHAPP) for eliminating the threat of Cucumber Green Mottle Mosaic Virus (CGMMV) in California. In addition, the phytosanitary risk reduction model, originally designed for the management of bacterial canker of tomato under a systems approach, is being expanded to include CGMMV and two fungal pathogens – black leg of brassicas and gummy stem blight of cucurbits. This will increase the utility of the model for many other seed species as it will then include the major categories of pathogens: viral, bacterial, and fungal.

Seed Movement Challenges

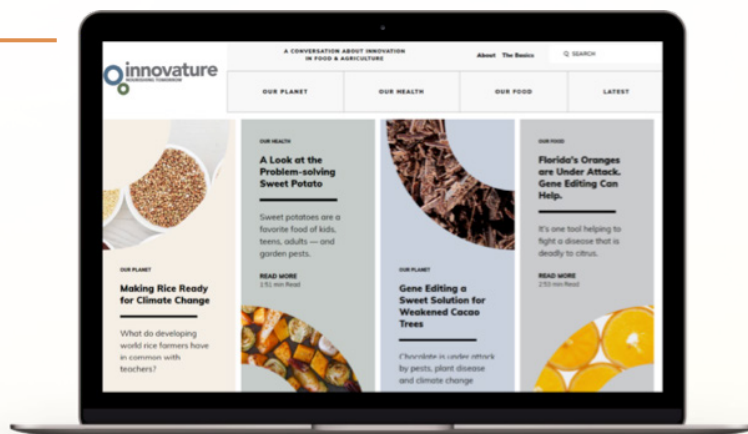
Several major challenges emerged that have significantly impacted seed movements in several seed sectors. In late 2018, a new virus of tomato, tomato brown rugose fruit virus (ToBRFV), emerged as an international issue. ASTA organized a special session at the 2019 Vegetable & Flower Seed Conference in Orlando to bring together industry and academic experts to develop a strategy to deal with the disease. A major outcome has been the development of two key research projects funded by ASTA members through ASRF that will focus on the development of a universal molecular test method and needed information on the epidemiology and management of this new virus.

ASTA established a mechanism to coordinate the development of official responses and comments to notice of changes in phytosanitary requirements that are published through the WTO and other sources. Over the past several years, there has been a rapid increase in the number of notices published and many directly impacted the seed trade of ASTA's members. ASTA now monitors the WTO website on a weekly basis, and a small working group of seed company experts and ASTA staff has been formed to help collect and evaluate information needed for these responses.

COMMUNICATIONS

Innovature: A Platform for a Dialogue about Innovation in Food & Agriculture

In January, ASTA and the Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO) officially launched Innovature – a platform to engage in a dialogue about innovation in food and agriculture, including evolving breeding methods like gene editing, and the benefits for our planet, our health, and our food. The effort builds on ASTA's long-term, ongoing efforts around plant breeding innovation policy, communications and stakeholder outreach at the domestic and international levels.



Through the content hub (**Innovature.com**), social properties, events and other forums, Innovature is engaging a diverse audience of key influencers in a conversation around shared values, with the goal of fully realizing the potential of plant breeding innovation to address society's most urgent and pressing challenges. The initiative saw strong success from its launch and continues to grow and build momentum.

Learn more at **www.innovature.com** and join the conversation by following **@InnovatureNow** on social media.

Seed Ambassador Leadership Team (SALT) Enters its Second Year

ASTA's SALT team continued to grow in size and strength. Forty members were added in 2018-19, bringing the total to over 80 since the program's launch in December 2017. New members had the opportunity to participate in a full-day advocacy training workshop held in conjunction with ASTA's CSS 2018 in Chicago or the 2019 Vegetable & Flower Conference in Orlando. A follow-up continuing-education session on "personal branding" was held during ASTA's 2019 Policy & Leadership Development Conference (PLDC) in Denver.

New program features include the launch of a Basecamp sharing platform and a monthly continuing education webinar series. Through Basecamp, SALT members received monthly challenges and social media content, in addition to other turn-key communications resources designed to help empower the sharing of the "Better Seed, Better Life" message through individual social networks. Team members received points for engagement throughout the year, and the most active SALT member was recognized during ASTA's PLDC with the first Better Seed, Better Life Ambassador Award. Monthly webinar topics featured expert speakers discussing communications and messaging around various hot-topic industry issues, including: gene editing, pesticides, GMOs and more.



SALT member Lileen Coulloudon, Texas Foundation Seed Service, is honored with ASTA's Better Seed, Better Life Ambassador Award

COMMUNICATIONS CONTINUED

"Rumor Has It": ASTA Holds Second Annual Student Video Contest

Kevin Falk, Iowa State University, was the grand prize winner of ASTA's second annual "Better Seed, Better Life" student video contest, held in conjunction with the National Association of Plant Breeders and the American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America and Soil Science Society of America. Falk was honored during ASTA's CSS 2018 in Chicago.

The 2018 contest theme was: "Rumor Has It." University students – graduate and undergraduate – were challenged to create videos to help set the record straight on a common misconception or myth associated with the seed industry and/or plant sciences. Second and third place winners were Kshitij Khatri, University of Florida and Nathalia Penna Cruzato, Texas A&M University. Winning videos are available on ASTA's YouTube channel.



Kevin Falk, Iowa State, was the winner of ASTA's 2nd Annual Student Video contest

ICYMI: ASTA Defends Industry in New York Times



The New York Times

The Seed Industry Favors Innovation

The American Seed Trade Association says its goal is to "meet the evolving needs of farmers and consumers."

In June, the New York Times published an anti-seed-industry opinion piece by celebrity chef Dan Barber. In response, ASTA President & CEO Andy LaVigne submitted a Letter to the Editor which ran in the NYT's web edition. ASTA Chair Wayne Gale penned a longer-form Op-ed which ran in Seed World. Let's continue to make our voices heard! We encourage you to show your support for the seed industry, and its many contributions to society, by becoming an every-day advocate in your local and on-line communities. Join the conversation on social media by following @Better_Seed and using #JustGrowIt. If you're not already a member of ASTA's SALT team, and you're interested in getting more information, please contact Kaity Crawford at kcrawford@betterseed.org.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

New Plant Variety Protection Regulations

ASTA petitioned Congress to include a provision for the plant variety protection (PVP) of asexually propagated plants in the 2018 Farm Bill and worked with the U.S. PVP office to draft implementation rules, which provide a new option for protection of asexually propagated materials.

ASTA also submitted comments on China's proposed revised PVP regulations. Favorable changes were made to these rules as a result of an ASTA-hosted delegation visit from China's PVP office in 2017.

The International Treaty for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

Negotiations on the revised Standard Material Transfer Agreement within the Treaty are nearing conclusion. An ASTA representative participated in three meetings of the Treaty working group developing the final material transfer agreement proposal – as part of an International Seed Federation (ISF) delegation.

In 2017, ASTA successfully lobbied Congress to ratify. As a result, the U.S. government has played a more active role in the Treaty negotiation process and ASTA works closely with the U.S. delegate to ensure seed industry priorities are heard.

Molecular Markers in Plant Variety Protection

ASTA's joint Molecular Marker Working Group, with participation from the U.S. PVP office, drafted a set of journal articles describing publicly available markers on a crop-by-crop basis, including technical components focused on soybeans. The papers have been submitted to a peer reviewed journal. ASTA members shared updates with the UPOV Biochemical and Molecular Techniques Working Group.

National Plant Germplasm System

At ASTA's 2019 Policy & Leadership Development Conference, attendees visited the USDA National Laboratory for Genetic Resources Preservation in Fort Collins, Colorado for a first-hand look at the importance of germplasm preservation and storage of some of the world's most precious resources.



ASTA AFFILIATES AND PARTNERS

Seed Science Foundation



Established in June 2018, the American Seed Research Foundation and the National Council of Commercial Plant Breeders combined efforts to create the Seed Science Foundation (SSF). Created as a 501(c)(3) organization, the foundation has three key goals: 1) address seed and plant science challenges; 2) encourage plant breeding education and seed research in support of the ever-changing needs of the global seed industry; and 3) provide insight and recommend solutions that enable the U.S. seed industry to function with global effectiveness. The foundation brings tremendous value to ASTA by providing a proactive and integrated source of plant science expertise for addressing integral issues facing the U.S. seed industry. Further, the SSF is an active facilitator of several student programs within ASTA's revitalized student connections efforts, encouraging future generations of talent to join the seed industry.

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 include:

A partnership with NASA that educates and inspires young students, building their capacity and understanding of scientific inquiry and opening the door to extended space exploration.

Tomatosphere™

8,397
Classrooms
203,827
Students

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; checklists; parent handouts; resources; and career profiles.

Grow A Seed

393
Classrooms
10,300
Students

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.

Planting the Seed

337
Classrooms
8,458
Students

Introduces students to people actively involved in the seed industry by providing a platform for seed professionals to share their experiences and successes.

Ambassador Program

10
Classrooms
230
Students

ASTA AFFILIATES AND PARTNERS CONTINUED

Leadership, Education and Development Committee (LEAD)

ASTA's LEAD committee is responsible for providing ASTA members with opportunities to expand their professional knowledge and gain experience in skills necessary to sustain and grow a career in the seed industry. This is delivered via distance learning, on-site tours of ASTA member companies and in-person at ASTA meetings. The committee focuses on building leadership skills and experience for individuals new to the seed industry up through those that are advanced in their careers. The committee develops programming by examining critical issues and development by creating opportunities to improve soft skills such as networking, peer-to-peer management, career growth and communication.

Future Seed Executives (FuSE)



ASTA's FuSE committee is focused on college students. 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. In 2018, ASTA established the student membership level, transitioning FuSE to focus on recruitment, outreach, and content for ASTA student members. The FuSE Committee organizes ASTA's educational opportunities for undergraduate to PhD students (previously ASRF Operation Student Connection and NCCPB Graduate Student awards) and works with a student committee to develop targeted meeting program materials.

ASTA Honors Seed Industry Leaders

ASTA presented its annual seed industry leadership awards during the 2019 Policy & Leadership Development Conference in Denver, Colorado.



Alan Galbreth

Alan Galbreth Receives ASTA's Distinguished Service Award

The ASTA Distinguished Service Award was presented to Alan Galbreth, Chief Executive Officer of Indiana Crop Improvement Association (ICIA). The award recognizes seed industry professionals whose efforts have made a significant contribution to the association and the U.S. seed industry.

2018-19 Student Connection Participants

- Pratibha Acharya
Texas A&M University
- Kiersten Bean
Iowa State University
- Mahendra Bhandari
Texas A&M University
- Costas Hatzipavlidis
Iowa State University
- Tommy Justison
University of Illinois
- Julianne Kellogg
Washington State University
- Aricka Roberson
University of Wisconsin – River Falls
- Blake Russell
Purdue University
- Darby Schmidt
Kansas State University
- Tavin Schneider
Washington State University



Roger Krueger Scholarship Winner:

Tavin Schneider
Washington State University

ASTA AFFILIATES AND PARTNERS CONTINUED

Alan spent his entire 43-year career in the seed industry working for ICIA. He started with ICIA in 1975 upon graduation from Purdue University as a Seed Certification field inspector and laboratory technician. He assumed further responsibility in 1978 as lab supervisor and became ICIA's Associate Director in 1985.

In 2011, Alan was appointed the Chief Executive Officer of ICIA. Alan serves as an APHIS accredited auditor for the National Seed Health System program and represents ASTA to the OECD Seed Schemes.

He serves on various committees within AOSA/SCST, AOSCA and ASTA. Previously, he served as Chair of the ASTA Seed Analyst Liaison Committee and recently completed a term as Chair of the ASTA Seed Industry Relations Committee. He also served on the AOSCA Board of Directors and served a term as AOSCA's President.

Blake Curtis and John H. Duesing, Ph.D Honored with the ASTA Lifetime Honorary Membership Award



Blake Curtis

Blake Curtis, Curtis & Curtis, Inc.

Blake Curtis was introduced to the seed industry in his early childhood as he traveled across the harvest fields and range with his dad. He came into the family seed business in 1979, where he served as Senior Vice President of Management and Sales. At the same time, he served in the New Mexico State Legislature from 1986 to 1995, in the roles of Minority Caucus Chairman, Minority Whip, and ultimately Minority Leader.

Blake has held leadership positions with ASTA since 2004, including Environmental and Conservation Seed Committee Chair, Southern Regional Vice President, and the 2012-13 ASTA Chair.



John Duesing

John H. Duesing, Ph.D, Corteva Agriscience

Dr. Duesing retired May 2019 from Corteva after a 35+ year career in the plant biotechnology and seed industry, most recently 4 ½ years leading the Intellectual Property Asset Protection group. His work included global plant variety protection, trade secret risk management, and monitoring research activities for compliance with commercial agreements.

John was a member of the ASTA IPR Committee, the Emerging Issues Working Group and the Joint ASTA-PVP Office Molecular Marker Working Group. He represented ASTA on the ISF Sustainable Agriculture Committee and the Illegal Seed Practices working group, while serving on the ASTA International Executive Committee.

During his time representing ASTA, John was an important contributor to ASTA and U.S. Trade and Development Agency outreach programs to the China Ministry of Agriculture on regulatory and intellectual property topics. He also collaborated with UPOV and the U.S. PTO. John served two terms as a member of USDA's PVP Board which advises on matters relating to the rules and regulations to facilitate the proper administration of the PVP Act.

CONVENTIONS AND MEETINGS



2018 Farm and Lawn Seed Conference

ASTA's 64th 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. An expanded exhibitor and reserved appointment table area produced a sold-out ballroom of company locations for networking. The conference included meetings of the ASTA Farm and Lawn Seed Division and the Environmental and Conservation Seed Committee, including a cover crops update. During the conference, Jesse and Susan Smart were honored for their leadership of the Western Seed Association and the Annual Meeting.

CSS 2018 & Seed Expo

ASTA's CSS 2018 & Seed Expo in Chicago gathered nearly 2,500 registrants and over 130 exhibitors. The general session set a ten-year record for attendance with the blockbuster "Majors After the Mergers" panel discussion featuring the top leaders from four major seed companies involved in recent mergers and acquisitions. Other conference topics included: plant breeding innovation, which featured USDA's Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Greg Ibach; digital agriculture; and the always popular demand global agricultural outlook presentation by economist Dan Basse of Ag Resource. A new "Seed Expo Educational Tour," a joint effort between the ASTA Associate Members Division and the ASTA Seed Treatment & Environment Committee, that provided an interactive tour of of nine exhibitor companies, each playing a role in the seed treatment process.



CONVENTIONS AND MEETINGS CONTINUED



58th Vegetable and Flower Seed Conference

In 2019, ASTA's Vegetable & Flower Seed Conference was held in Orlando, Florida. The conference gathered over 900 participants from 37 countries and featured 140 companies participating in the Trading Room. The General Session/Vegetable & Flower Seed Division meeting featured a full agenda with speakers on consumer trends, global trade and communications. A special workshop on Controlled-Environment Agriculture, a joint effort between ASTA and the U.S. Department's of Agriculture and Energy, offered a series of presentations from key players on the topic, as well as a networking period at the conclusion of the session. Conference sessions featured key topics including: phytosanitary issues, organic seed, communications, food safety, management skills, emerging diseases, innovation in plant breeding, seed treatment and intellectual property rights.

2019 Policy & Leadership Development Conference

In its second year, the ASTA Policy & Leadership Development Conference (PLDC), held in Denver, saw an increase in overall attendance and several new elements, including a more robust leadership development track, area company tours, and a redesigned banquet and recognition celebration.

Special programming and new registration categories brought together key audiences of both high-level seed industry executives and young professionals for collaborative learning and networking opportunities. In between sessions, "PL/DC Lightning Talks" offered quick learning opportunities on a wide variety of fresh and current industry topics. A delegation of newly-elected Colorado FFA Foundation officers participated in the conference and presented a Lightning Talk. In addition, a special Student Connection delegation, hosted by the Seed Science Foundation, brought an additional ten graduate and undergraduate students into this unique learning experience for the seed industry.

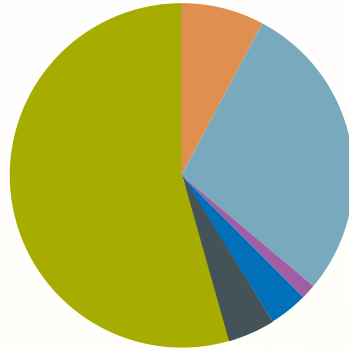


2018-19 MEMBERSHIP BREAKDOWN

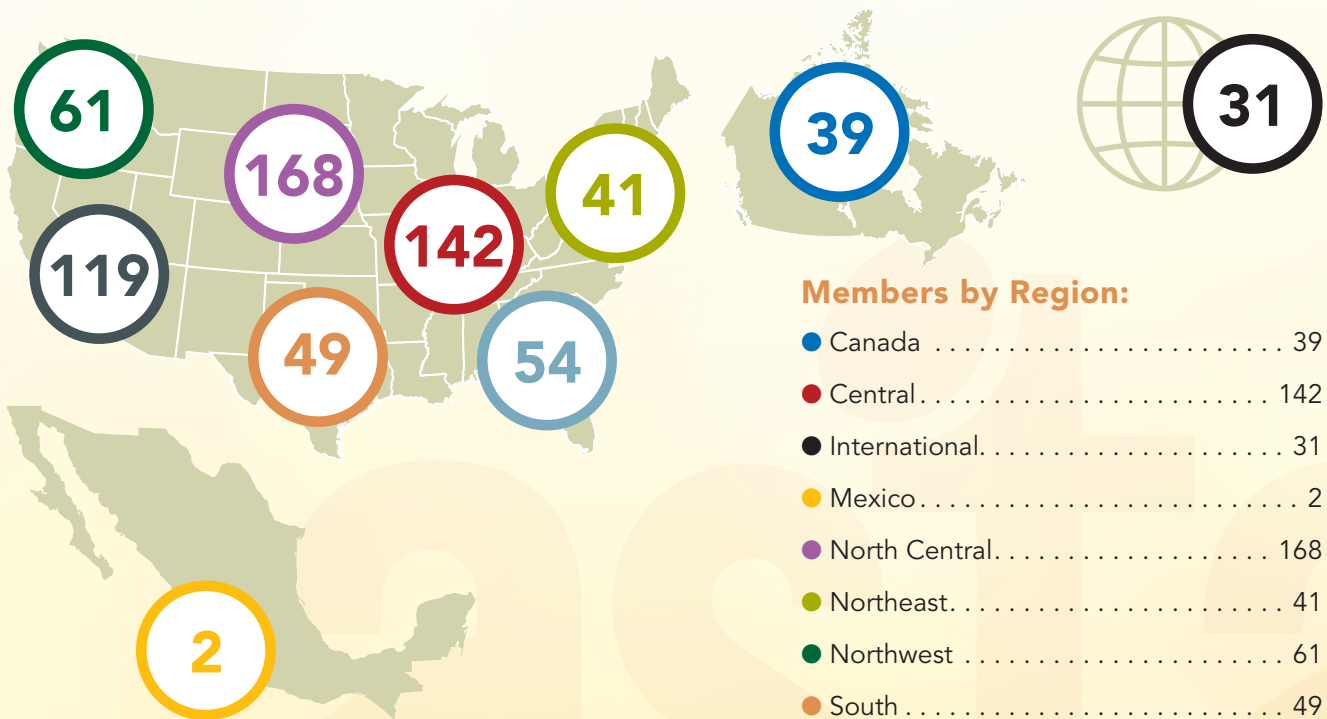
Members by Type:

Active	388
Affiliate	54
Associate	200
Broke-Agent	9
Corresponding International	25
Reciprocal	30

TOTAL: 706



Students



Members by Region:

Canada	39
Central	142
International	31
Mexico	2
North Central	168
Northeast	41
Northwest	61
South	49
Southeast	54
West	119

TOTAL: 706

Member Retention:

93%



MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

Overview

ASTA is a member-driven organization charged with a renewed focus on member engagement and advocacy. Following last year's adoption of the revised ASTA Strategic Plan, the Board of Directors agreed to developing a new position on the ASTA team – Director, Internal Communications and Member Engagement. ASTA is committed to increasing feedback from all its members to gain insight and knowledge about the needs of our member companies and their employees to align priorities, activities and industry engagement and advocacy opportunities.

Quick Replies

The “quick reply” question-of-the-month provides members with an easy way to provide feedback and input to ASTA on a regular basis. Launched in January 2019, a question is posed to the membership about different facets of programming within the association. These monthly questions give staff greater insight into the daily workings of members, issues facing the seed industry and ways that ASTA can continue to serve members. These routine questions are intentionally planned to garner input from members to assist in decision making and program design. Member feedback is crucial to ASTA's success and is one of the many ways in which members can engage with their association.

Member Visits

Understanding the work our members do is fundamental to ASTA's success. As ASTA staff strive to advance the seed industry and provide valuable benefits to members, hearing directly from those in the field is crucial. ASTA staff has visited member companies at their facilities to hear firsthand their concerns, learn about their operations and better understand their goals for the future of their businesses. These continued efforts better inform the work that ASTA is doing and help ensure our efforts meet the growing needs of the industry.



ASTA's Director, Internal Communications & Member Engagement Ellen S. Zimmerman visits with Jerry Flint and Marc Cool, Corteva

Student Membership

ASTA is pleased to cultivate the future of the seed industry through its new student membership. In its first year, the student membership program recruited 25 members interested in entering the seed industry following college graduation. Student members range from high school FFA students to PhD candidates with a focus in plant breeding.

With student membership came the creation of a dedicated student newsletter that includes industry news and updates, company and student spotlights, scholarship programs, and internship and full-time career openings. Additionally, students are invited to join ASTA meetings to gain industry knowledge and expand their network. The FuSE Committee continues to work on developing recruitment strategies and educational and professional development opportunities for students.

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 ASTA Strategic Plan. ASTA strives to maintain transparency with the membership regarding the association's budget and financial status. The Board of Directors approves and reviews the financial status quarterly, 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 2017-18 audit confirmed the financial health of the association. ASTA ended its fiscal year with \$4,944,860 in net assets, an increase of almost \$200,000. ASTA has calculated in-kind contributions from member companies related to the international activities of the association of \$13,335,040. This includes promotion, travel, research and professional services that the audit firm included in the FY 2017-18 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, 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	\$13,335,040
Membership dues	\$4,102,260
Registration fees	\$1,006,135
Government grants and contracts	\$533,689
Contributions and sponsorships	\$457,193
Exhibit fees	\$467,451
Administrative service fees	\$20,000
Assessments	
Other income	\$1,896

Net assets released from restrictions:
Satisfaction of program restrictions

**Total Operating
Revenue and Support \$19,923,664**

Operating Expenses

Program Services:	
International initiatives	\$14,176,562
Policy	\$1,451,611
Meetings	\$1,408,848
Legislation	\$733,259
Membership	\$180,030
Other	\$61,965

Total Program Services \$18,012,275

Supporting Service
General and administrative \$2,083,988

Total Operating Expenses \$20,096,263

Change in Net Assets
from Operations (\$172,599)

Non-operating Activities

Investment income, net	\$372,834
Branding Expenses	(\$10,620)
Change in net asses	\$189,615
Net assets, beginning of year	\$4,755,245
Net assets, end of year	\$4,944,860

ASTA STAFF



**american
seed trade
association**

Executive Office

Andrew W. LaVigne

President and CEO

Brenda Rowe

Executive Assistant

Domestic and International Policy

Bernice Slutsky

Senior Vice President, Innovation

Jane DeMarchi

Vice President, Government and Regulatory Affairs

Ric Dunkle

Senior Director, Seed Health and Trade

Abigail Struxness

Senior Director, International Programs and Policy

Pat Miller

Director, State Affairs

Virginia Houston

Director, Government Relations

Mary Scott

Coordinator, Domestic and International Programs

Finance & Administration

Ann Jorss

Chief Operating Officer

Barbara Surian

Director, Administrative Services

Communications

Bethany Shively

Vice President, Strategic Communications

Ellen Zimmerman

Director, Internal Communications & Member Engagement

Kaitlin Crawford

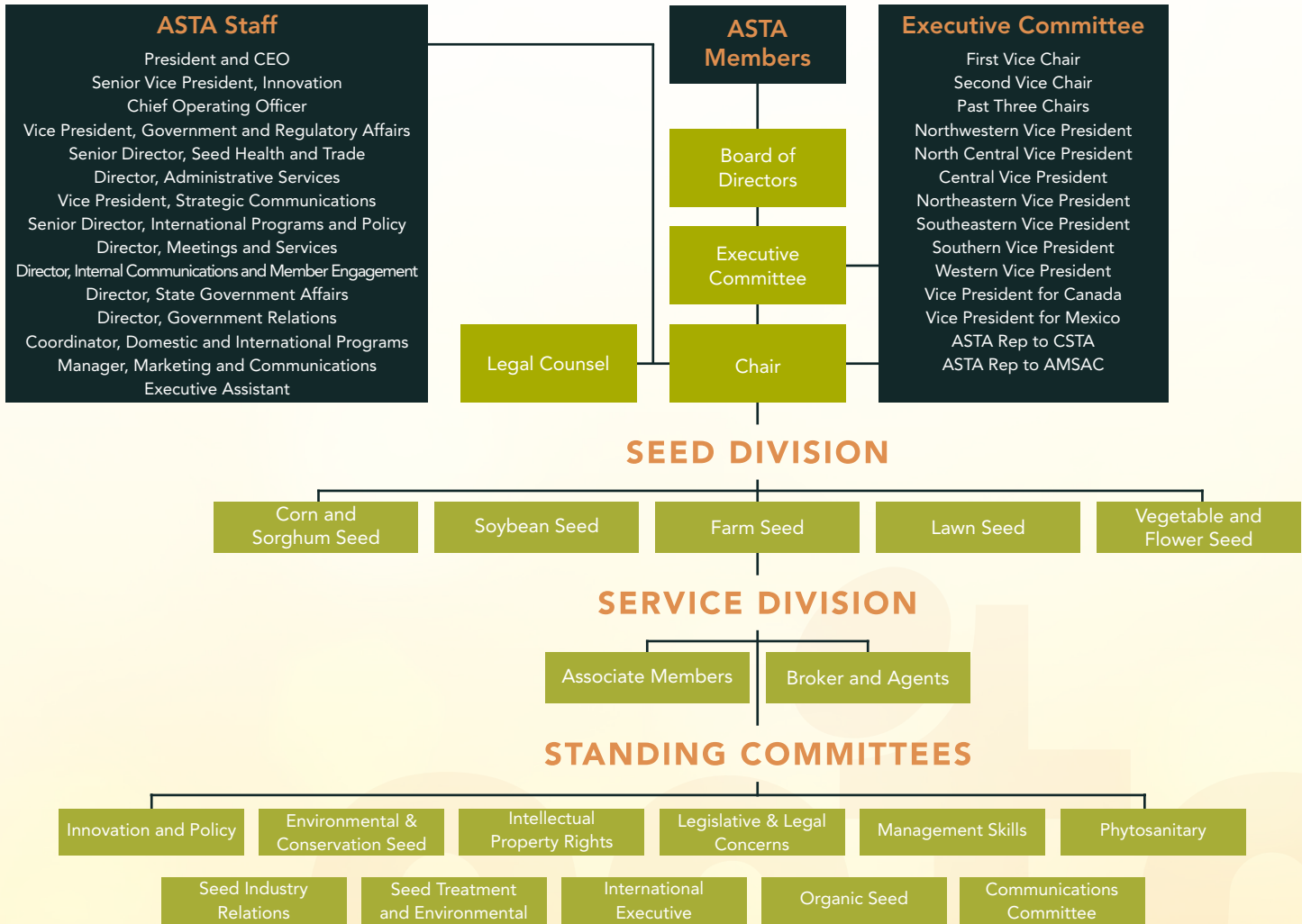
Manager, Marketing and Communications

Meetings & Services

Jennifer Crouse

Director, Meetings & Services

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART





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