

The cover features a dark green background with a large, light blue circular graphic. Inside this circle, a white rectangular area contains the main text. The word 'GROW' is written in large, bold, blue capital letters. Below it, the 'asta' logo is in a lowercase, bold, black font, with a small green leaf icon above the 'a'. To the right of the logo is the text '2023-24' in bold black, followed by 'ANNUAL REPORT' in bold red. The design is decorated with various green and yellow leaf shapes and a blue vine-like graphic that curves around the right side of the white area. Two thin red vertical lines are positioned on either side of the white text area.

GROW

asta | 2023-24
ANNUAL REPORT



Table of Contents

Message to the ASTA Membership	1
Strategic Goals & Key Focus Areas	2
FY 2023-24 Leadership	3
State & Local Issues	4
Federal Legislative & Regulatory Affairs	5
Plant Breeding Innovation	8
International Programs and Policy	9
Global Seed Movement	12
Communications	14
Membership Engagement	16
Intellectual Property	17
ASTA Affiliates & Partners	18
ASTA Honors Seed Industry Leaders	19
Conventions & Meetings	20
Membership Breakdown	21
Financial Position	22
ASTA Staff	23
Organizational Chart	24

Message to the ASTA Membership

On behalf of the ASTA Board of Directors, Advisory Council, and staff, we are pleased to present you the American Seed Trade Association's FY 2023-24 Annual Report.

Over the last 12 months, with strong support from the Board and Advisory Council, the ASTA team has been engaged and focused on creative solutions to the challenges the seed industry is facing. Whether it be mobilizing our network to support legislative issues at the state or federal level or solving a problem at a port of entry holding up hundreds of thousands of dollars in vegetable seed, we pride ourselves on being a phone call away for our members.

Let's preview what is in this report that highlights the association's accomplishments over the last year. The theme of this year's Annual Report is **GROW**, which may sound familiar from the 2024 Leadership Summit in Nashville. How have we collectively **GROWN** as an industry over the last year? What has ASTA done for the industry that has supported your company's **GROWTH** in the last 12 months, and as we look to FY 2024-25, how are you contributing to the broader seed industry's **GROWTH**? What roots will you plant **TO GROW** in ASTA?

Keeping a watchful eye on state and federal policy, ASTA organized grassroots efforts with member companies and allies to impact legislation across the country. These efforts included participation in critical value chain coalitions, which have led to new federal programs and policies with a direct impact on the seed industry. ASTA remained engaged on Capitol Hill to drive seed industry priorities.

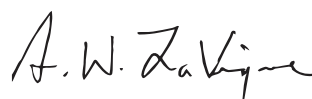
ASTA's engagement went beyond the political arena this year. ASTA supported the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association (FFVA) in hosting social media influencers at a member company's research facility in Southwest Florida. We participated in the Celebration of Modern Agriculture on the National Mall, a massive event that spanned the length of three football fields, telling the story of the future of food and farming to over 13,000 visitors. We brought EPA officials to members' facilities for a tour to two seed treatment facilities, educating them on the process of producing treated seed.

We are incredibly proud to continue supporting the future of the seed industry through our special student membership program, giving this year's 112 student members access to scholarship and networking opportunities, complimentary registration for ASTA meetings, as well as inside access to the latest industry news. Over the last five years, we have hosted over 200 students at ASTA's signature meetings and hope to continue increasing those numbers in the future.

This is only a snapshot of what your ASTA team has done over the last year, and we are excited to share more in the following pages. As a member-driven organization, we truly cannot do this without your support and your involvement, and we're grateful to you for lending your generous time and knowledge to ASTA's committees and working groups. We always welcome your feedback as to how we can improve and better serve you and your organization, so please don't ever hesitate to pick up the phone. We look forward to working with you in the future.




David Armstrong
Sakata Seed America
ASTA Chair FY 2023-24

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 2023-24 Leadership



Chair
David Armstrong
 Sakata Seed America



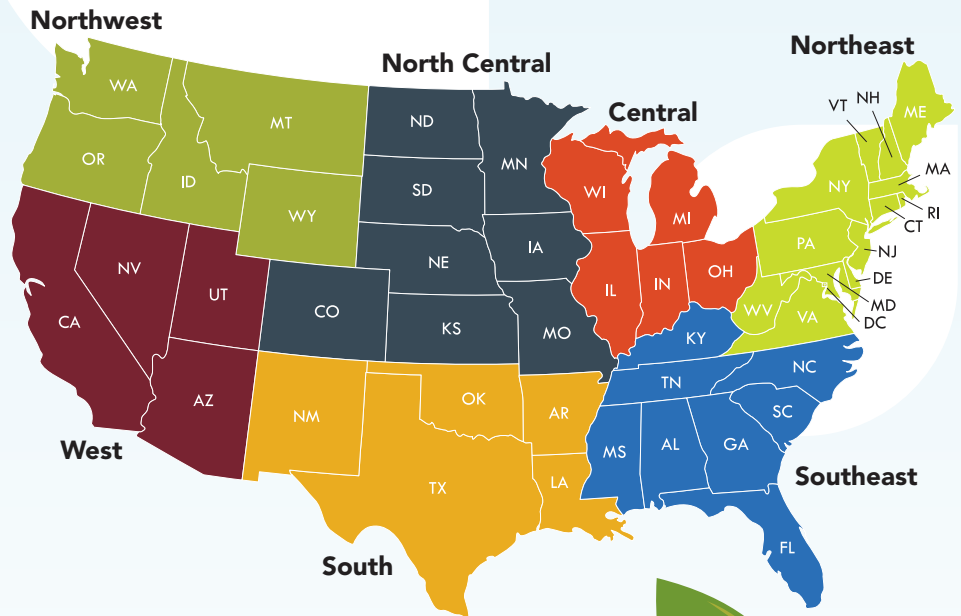
First Vice Chair
Dan Foor
 DLF North America



Second Vice Chair
Dave Treinen
 Syngenta

REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS

- Northwest** Crystal Fricker, *Pure Seed*
- North Central** Eric Woolfer, *Star Seed, Inc.*
- Central** Bryan Gerard, *JoMar Seeds*
- Northeast** John Bozeman, *Seedway LLC*
- Southeast** John Seymour, *Roundstone Seeds*
- South** Luke Turner, *Turner Seed Company*
- West** John Marchese, *The Kraft Heinz Company*
- Representative to AMSAC** Juan Labastida, *Enza Zaden North America*



DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

- Matthew Brandt, *Bayer Crop Science*
- Kendall Palmer, *Corteva Agriscience*
- Garth Hodges, *BASF*
- Rick Winn, *HM Clause*

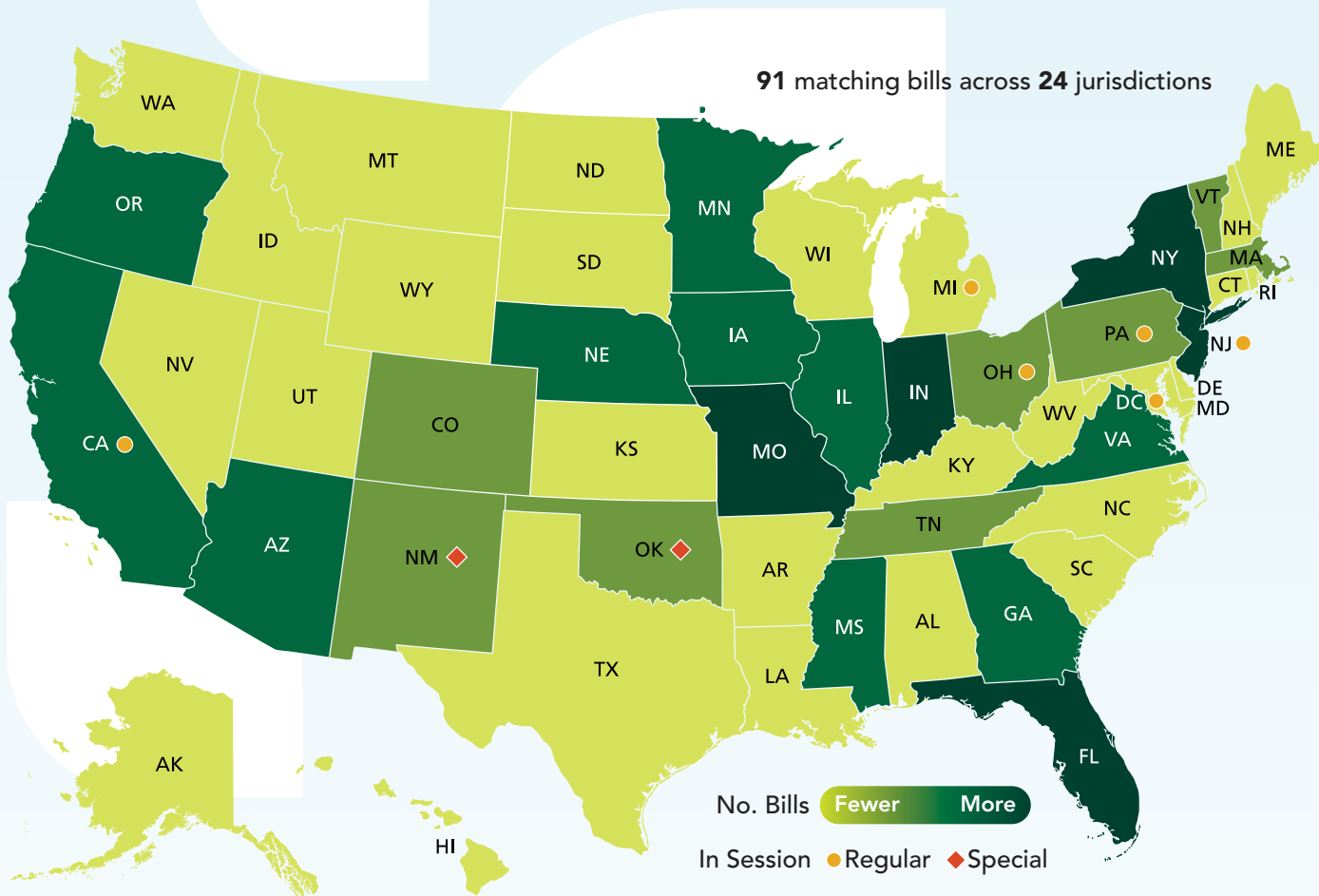
IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIRS

- Jim Schweigert, *Gro Alliance*
- John Latham, *Latham Hi-Tech Seeds, Inc.*



State & Local Issues

ASTA continues to utilize its vast grassroots network to impact state legislative affairs. This year, 91 bills were actively targeted for action. The map below shows the breakdown in bill location by state.



Key trends in the states included:

1. Partial or total bans of neonicotinoid products used to treat seeds.
2. "Right-to-Farm" which includes language on the right to save and sell seed.
3. Preventing foreign ownership of agricultural lands, except in the case of specific agricultural crop research.
4. Creating or editing state invasive species lists.

State and local issues often evolve into federal issues. With an average bill passage rate of 30 percent by state legislatures, it is critical to maximize ASTA's grassroots network and involvement. At times, it is just as significant what doesn't happen as what does happen. And it is important to realize that victories can be large or small, but often, the small victories add up to huge successes later.

To sustain that important network, ASTA member-representatives and staff attended multiple state and regional seed association meetings, participated in meetings hosted by the state ag commissioners/secretaries/directors, and attended many state and national grower organization conferences.

Federal Legislative & Regulatory Affairs

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

Farm Bill Reauthorization:

Facing expiration of the 2018 Farm Bill on September 30, 2023, lawmakers were left with limited options: pass a new Farm Bill or extend the current one to allow authorized programs to continue to operate. Congress voted for the latter, which allowed the current 2018 Farm Bill to continue through September 30, 2024. In May of 2024, House Agriculture Committee Chairman Glenn “GT” Thompson held a markup of the House version of

H.R. 8467¹, The Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2024, in Committee. After nearly 14 hours of debate, the legislation, which included a number of ASTA priorities, ultimately passed with a vote of 33-21.

The ASTA Government Affairs team has continued to engage with House and Senate Agriculture Committee members, emphasizing seed industry priorities. ASTA has remained engaged in the crafting and implementation of legislative activity in a variety of areas.



Fix Our Forests Act:

H.R. 8790², the Fix Our Forests Act, introduced by Rep. Scott Peters (D-CA-50) and Rep. Bruce Westerman (R-AR-04) in late June, is a comprehensive and bipartisan piece of legislation that aims to restore forest health, increase resiliency to wildfires, and improve management activities on public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management. The Bill includes provisions that seek to enhance the domestic supply chain of seeds. ASTA has developed strong relationships with the House Committee on Natural Resources and was consulted as this legislation was drafted. Seed is an integral part in the rapid response, rebuilding, and restoration post-wildfires, and ASTA will continue to support efforts to provide the Bureau of Land Management oversight and to strengthen the native seed sector.

Farm Workforce Modernization Act:

ASTA was pleased to endorse H.R. 4319, the Farm Workforce Modernization Act of 2023, introduced by Zoe Lofgren (D-CA-19), and co-sponsored by 17 additional Members of Congress, Republicans and Democrats alike. After nearly nine months of negotiations and input from farmers, agricultural stakeholders and trade organizations, the bipartisan legislation was introduced to address visas for farmworkers, including provisions establishing a certified agricultural worker (CAW) status and changing the H-2A temporary worker program to address labor challenges. Since its introduction in June of 2023, a bipartisan coalition of Members have been working to move the bill through the legislative process.

¹ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/8467?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22farm+food+and+national+security%22%7D&s=1&r=1>

² <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/8790?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22fix+our+forests%22%7D&s=2&r=1>

Continuous Improvement and Accountability in Organic Standards Act:

In the 118th Congress, Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-WA-03), alongside 11 other Republicans and Democrats, introduced H.R. 5973, the Continuous Improvement and Accountability in Organic Standards Act. ASTA lent its support to this piece of legislation, as it establishes a five-year reporting process where USDA, its advisory board, and stakeholders work together to ensure evolving market data is included in modern organics practices.

Coalition Engagement

ASTA continued membership and active involvement in a variety of industry coalitions, including the Agriculture Biotech Alliance, Pesticide Policy Coalition, Farm Bill for America’s Families, and the Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance (FACA), to name a few. As part of ASTA’s work in FACA, ASTA led on critical policy objectives to lawmakers as part of a diverse coalition that represents farmers, ranchers, forest owners, agribusinesses, manufacturers, the food and innovation sector, state governments, higher education associations, environmental advocates, and more.

Agency Activity

The Association maintained close working relationships with the federal agencies, including the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), to ensure there are open pathways for dialogue, information sharing, and education.

Regulatory Input and Engagement on Key Issues:

ASTA regularly provided comments on policies and various initiatives impacting the seed industry. ASTA submitted comments in response to the following requests for information:

- Practices that have the potential to mitigate GHG emissions and/or sequester carbon, and

quantification, reporting, and verification approaches for the GHG outcomes associated with domestic agricultural commodities used as biofuel feedstocks³

- Improving and advancing measurement, monitoring, reporting, and verification of carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas emissions reductions from agriculture and forestry and working across federal agencies and with non-governmental partners, companies and state and local government⁴
- Review of the requirements applicable to treated seed and treated paint products⁵
- Proposed exemption and movement of organisms modified or produced through genetic engineering⁶

ASTA continues to engage with the USDA Federal Seed Office on key issues, including announced actions related to the monitoring of varietal labeling requirements. Staff continues outreach with USDA officials and Federal Seed Office employees to provide ASTA members with the best available information related to Federal Seed Act compliance.

Educational Opportunities:

In May, ASTA hosted a webinar with USDA-NRCS to outline opportunities for seed company involvement in Regional Conservation Partnerships Program projects and Conservation Innovation Grant projects.

In July, ASTA organized a seed treatment tour aimed at educating and engaging staff from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The purpose of the tour was to facilitate open discussions about treated seed, which involves seeds that have been coated with protective chemicals to enhance growth and prevent diseases or pests. During the discussions, key points highlighted included different equipment and scenarios for different seeds and EPA Worker Protection Standards. The tour

³ <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/USDA-2024-0003-0222>

⁴ <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/USDA-2023-0009-0054>

⁵ <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/EPA-HQ-OPP-2023-0420-0016>

⁶ <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/APHIS-2023-0022-5558>

was meant to foster understanding between regulatory staff and the seed industry regarding the specifics of seed treatment processes and the impact of safety regulations.



At the start of the new year, ASTA's Senior Vice President of Scientific Affairs and Policy Fan-Li Chou presented on a panel during a briefing for Congressional staff on the importance of agriculture biotechnology, hosted jointly by Rep. Jim Baird (R-IN-04), Chair of the Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation, Research, and Biotechnology, and Rep. Frank Lucas (R-OK-03), Chair of the Science, Space, and Technology committee.

Along with the American Society of Plant Biologists, ASTA sponsored a Lunch and Learn briefing with the National Coalition for Food and Agriculture Research (NCFAR) on the 2018 Farm bill authorized Agricultural Genome to Phenome Initiative (AG2PI). The briefing highlighted the important mission of the program in addressing stressors affecting agriculture production through a better understanding of how genotype and environment influence phenotype for the complex traits of crops and livestock.



Plant Breeding Innovation



FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized a rule that codifies two new Plant-incorporated Protectant (PIP) categories that are exempted from tolerance under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA) and registration under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). The exemptions are disappointingly limited, inconsistent with international best practices, and will add unnecessary cost for breeders using genome editing to develop plants with disease resistance. To mitigate the impact to plant breeders, ASTA spearheaded extensive outreach to key legislative offices, rallied its widespread network of allies, and successfully lobbied for a legislative solution to limit the scope of EPA regulatory authority over new plant varieties. The Committee passed Farm Bill in the House includes text that clarifies the definition of plant regulator under FIFRA and EPA's regulatory scope with regards to plant-incorporated protectants. This was an important step towards addressing concerns related to the rule, and ASTA is continuing to pursue further legislative and regulatory measures to incentivize plant innovation using the latest breeding tools, such as genome editing.

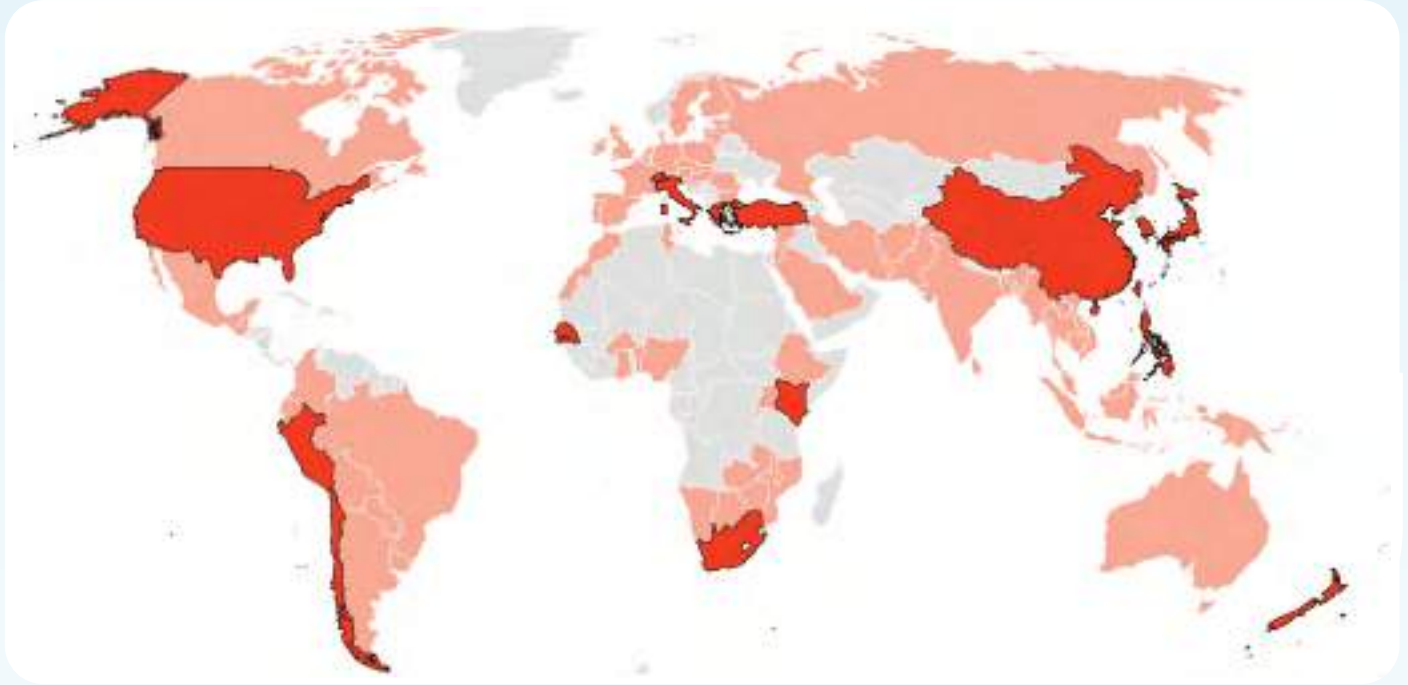
Under the 2020 revised regulation, the USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Biotechnology Regulatory Services (BRS) continues to grant exemption confirmations and complete regulatory status reviews (RSR). However, BRS continues to be unable to meet the regulatory timelines specified in the rule. In November 2023, ASTA provided comment to the BRS proposal of an additional five exemptions. While the proposal was a positive step, the proposed exemptions were, from a scientific perspective, unnecessarily complex. Regardless, BRS has been unable to finalize these exemptions. Therefore, plant breeders limited to with either the slow RSR process or using permits to keep product development on track. ASTA continues to advocate for (1) improvements in the permitting process to improve consistency and decrease unnecessary requirements, (2) finalization of additional exemptions, and (3) increase transparency in the RSR process.

In February 2024, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) published the long-awaited *Guidance for Industry: Food Derived from Plants Produced Using Genome Editing*. The guidance reaffirmed the safety record of food and feed derived from new plant varieties (NPVs) produced through traditional breeding practices and articulated the applicability of the principles in its 1992 Policy Statement to food and feed from genome edited NPVs. FDA's guidance described two processes through which developers may voluntarily inform FDA of the steps taken to ensure the safety of food and feed from genome edited NPVs: maintaining or continuing the existing or participating in the new, voluntary premarket meeting. Furthermore, FDA provided examples of instances where pre-market consultation is recommended. While the guidance is a positive step forward and ASTA agrees that the option of voluntary pre-market meetings can be an efficiency mechanism for developers to provide awareness of genome edited NPVs to FDA in an efficient manner, ASTA provided recommendations in comments to FDA to enhance its clarity and functionality and to reduce ambiguities and uncertainty.

International Programs and Policy

ASTA's international programs are supported in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Market Access Program (MAP), Foreign Market Development (FMD) Program, and Agricultural Trade Promotion (ATP) program. Over the course of the 2023 calendar year, ASTA leveraged its cooperator funds to

host or participate directly in in-person meetings across 16 countries (dark orange). ASTA's advocacy campaigns reached government, industry, and non-governmental stakeholders from nearly 100 countries (light orange). The following activities represent a subset of ASTA's engagement over the past fiscal year.



U.S. SEED INDUSTRY REPRESENTATION AT THE INTERNATIONAL SEED FEDERATION

ASTA's participation within the International Seed Federation (ISF) allows ASTA to help shape global policies and support the success of the U.S. seed industry. From 2023 to 2024, ASTA's global advocacy and in-person participation through ISF reached new heights. ASTA staff and members increased the number of participants in ISF meetings, advocated at in-person meetings for the needs and positions of the U.S. seed industry in a wide range of conferences and workshops, and amplified the documents and negotiating positions established at ISF through key international fora.

During the February 2024 nomination cycle to renew leadership positions within ISF's key policy committees,

ASTA secured seats on all its requested committees, effective April 2024 through March 2026. ASTA's total representation includes: 31 ASTA representatives (27 ASTA member companies, 4 ASTA staff) across 10 Coordination Groups, 3 Advisory Groups, 2 Expert Groups, and an ASTA seat on ISF's Board of Directors. Additionally, an additional 12 U.S.-based individuals within ASTA member companies secured independent seats representing their company directly. In total, the U.S. seed sector is well represented on major topics, including: Plant Breeding Innovation (PBI); Seed Related Innovation, including seed treatments; Intellectual Property; Genetic Resources; Phytosanitary; Seed Health; Seed Marketing; Value Chain; Illegal Seed Practices; and Environmental and Social Responsibility.

Coordinated Advocacy between U.S. and Japanese Seed Industry

ASTA's multi-year support of an in-country representative in Japan demonstrates the importance of sustained engagement in key markets. ASTA's in-country representative has developed partnerships with the Japanese Seed Trade Association, USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) post in Japan, U.S. Grains Council, CropLife International, and Council for Biotechnology Information Japan. More importantly, ASTA's in-country representative has become a trusted partner for key Japanese regulators and reviewers.

While an increasing number of countries are adopting plant breeding innovation (PBI) policies consistent with ASTA's policy position, progress on these topics in the Asia Pacific region remains limited. ASTA's in-country representative plays a pivotal role in facilitating Japan's involvement in international PBI discussions and has helped solidify Japan as an important regional leader. Having Japan as an example of progressive PBI policy implementation is an important addition to the numerous countries in the Americas that have successful outcomes.

ASTA, SAA, AND IICA PARTNER ON WESTERN HEMISPHERE REGULATOR-INDUSTRY ROUNDTABLE FOR GENOME EDITED CROPS

Working closely with industry partners, the Seed Association of the Americas (SAA), and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), ASTA successfully cosponsored a day-long meeting in September 2023 between regulators and industry representatives from approximately 20 countries from across the region, in order to discuss how biotech regulations need to facilitate commercialization of innovative genome-edited products. During this regulator-industry roundtable, government officials committed to continue meeting with industry partners to discuss the use of common terminologies in regulations, opportunities to collaborate and minimize asynchrony in review processes, exchange information on potential trade disruptions, and improve the understanding of the process of plant breeding to better inform regulatory approaches.

The novel partnership, which brings together regional leaders from across the government and private sector, serves as a model for regulatory exchanges on a range of topics in the Western Hemisphere – the largest export market for U.S. seeds, valued at approximately \$777 million in 2023 alone.

ASTA SUPPORTS U.S.-EU POLICY ALIGNMENT ON PBI

The U.S.-EU bilateral trade relationship on seed issues remains very strong – the United States and EU are the top two markets for seed trade in the world and the trans-Atlantic seed market and industry are highly integrated. Years of ASTA engagement supported the European Parliament's recent decision to adopt a forward-looking policy approach that creates a more streamlined pathway to market for genome-edited crops.

In meetings with key stakeholders and policymakers over multiple years, ASTA supported the EU's progress on a multiyear legislative initiative that assessed how innovative products like plant breeding innovations (PBI) will be regulated in the European market. ASTA partnered with Euroseeds to meet with key Members of the EU Parliament; host Chatham House trans-Atlantic dialogues; and develop webinars and social media materials that promoted the role of PBI in addressing shared EU-U.S. policy objectives, including agricultural sustainability and food security. Further, ASTA engaged in the EU's public consultative process by providing comments, meeting with representatives within the EU Parliament, and discussing opportunities for regulatory streamlining with the European Court during bilateral government-to-government meetings, such as the U.S.-EU Trade and Technology Council and Cooperation Platform for Agriculture.

Looking ahead, ASTA will continue to invest in advocacy in the European Union. In June 2024, ASTA organized a webinar with stakeholders from across the seed value chain to discuss how PBI and new genomic techniques (NGTs) could revolutionize European agriculture. The webinar reached over 80 participants and is viewable on ASTA's YouTube channel.

ASTA AND USDA ADVANCE SEED SECTOR PRIORITIES DURING SUCCESSFUL U.S. HOST YEAR FOR THE ASIA PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION FORUM

The Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum provides an important venue to socialize economies on key policies that the seed industry must navigate in order to commercialize seed and increase U.S. seed exports. During the 2023 U.S. host year for APEC economies, ASTA and USDA FAS partnered to raise the visibility of the U.S. seed sector in two key venues responsible for APEC policy engagement: the High-Level Policy Dialogue for Agricultural Biotechnology (HLPDAB) and Policy Partnership on Food Security (PPFS) groups. Through field trips to seed plots and receptions with government officials, ASTA hosted discussions with global regulatory authorities, academics, and representatives from non-profit organizations to advocate for more streamlined policies for seed trade. Stakeholders agreed on the importance of regulatory cooperation and were particularly interested in further dialog on the future of genome-edited crops.

ASTA PEST DATABASE FOR SEEDS (PEDS)

The Pest Database for Seeds (PeDS) houses over 400 pests, focused on plant pathogens and phytosanitary policies that impact global seed trade. For the past several years, ASTA has retained an expert consultant who conducts research on each pest and host interaction to determine whether seed is a pathway for transmission; establish the geographical distribution; and summarize the diagnostic methods, risk mitigation, and other relevant information related to the pest in question. Pests are added from government (National Plant Protection Organizations) notifications, pest risk analysis (PRAs), import permits, rejections, and WTO notifications. This information is used as a resource for industry to navigate potential phytosanitary challenges in specific regions or with particular pests. ASTA works with USDA and other partners to encourage countries to remove regulations that are not technically justified. ASTA adds approximately thirty-six new pests per year and reviews all pests every three years. The database underwent a thorough overhaul in the fall of 2023 to improve performance, enhance usability, and align information with other industry resources. We encourage you to explore the database at: <https://phytodatabase.org/>.



Global Seed Movement

This past year, the global movement of seeds faced escalating challenges due to increasingly restrictive phytosanitary measures adopted by National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs). These measures led to greater difficulties for seed companies in obtaining phytosanitary certificates, a rise in shipment rejections upon re-testing at entry ports, and significant disruptions in seed re-exports. In response to these emerging challenges, ASTA is committed to fostering and enhancing science-based communication with NPPOs and other governmental agencies domestically and overseas. This includes working directly with regional plant protection organizations and international bodies like FAO-International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), in collaboration with other National Seed Associations (NSAs), and regional seed associations. The aim is to address and resolve immediate issues while pursuing sustainable, long-term policy solutions to prevent their recurrence.

I. TOMATO AND PEPPER SEEDS

Domestic Status in the U.S.:

In 2023, ASTA provided comments to USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) through a Federal Registry Announcement, advocating for the reclassification of *Tomato brown rugose fruit virus* (ToBRFV) as a regulated non-quarantine pest (RNQP) for plant propagative material, including seeds. In June 2024, APHIS rescinded the import requirements for tomato and pepper fruit for consumption from all countries. ASTA continues to engage with APHIS to relax the regulatory status of this virus for seed importation into the U.S. to minimize economic impacts on the seed industry.

Re-export of Tomato Seeds to the European Union (EU):

ToBRFV is not listed as a quarantine pest in the EU, but under temporary measures is regulated as one. The strict traceability requirements under the new Regulation 2023/1032, aimed at preventing the introduction of ToBRFV in Europe, significantly impacted the U.S. seed industry, which struggled to comply with these requirements. For nearly six months, APHIS restricted the issuance of re-export phytosanitary certificates due to this issue. ASTA staff worked relentlessly with APHIS, and other governmental agencies domestically and in Europe to address this challenge. In March 2024, ASTA successfully persuaded APHIS to resume issuing re-export phytosanitary certificates for tomato seeds destined for Italy, Portugal, Spain, and the Netherlands. ASTA continues to work with the USDA and other NSAs towards a long-term solution.

Amendments to Federal Order on Entry Requirements for Tomato and Pepper Seeds:

In 2023, APHIS amended the entry requirements for tomato and pepper seeds imported into the U.S., resulting in several shipments from China being unable to comply with the new pospiviroid requirements. ASTA intervened and worked with APHIS and secured a six-week extension for compliance, resuming the importation of tomato seeds from China to the U.S.

II. CORN SEED EXPORTS TO CHILE

In 2023, Chile's Agricultural and Livestock Service (SAG) proposed amendments to corn seed import requirements, adding 16 new pests to the entry criteria. ASTA, in coordination with APHIS and other NSAs, emphasized that some of these pests have not been reported to infect corn naturally or are not seed-transmitted, and that grain and seed should be differentiated in risk assessments. Additionally, ASTA argued that seeds produced for research and development should be exempt from regulation due to the degree of manual attention involved in their production. ASTA's advocacy efforts led to a one-year deferral of the amendment's implementation, from May 2024 to May 2025, and the association is continuing to advocate for a further delay until 2026. Furthermore, SAG is removing the phytosanitary

requirements for corn seed used in research and development. ASTA's science-based advocacy successfully resulted in the removal of 12 out of the 16 pests originally classified as regulated by the Chilean government.

III. TRUE POTATO SEED (TPS) MARKET ACCESS REQUEST (MAR)

In 2020, APHIS published a pest risk assessment (PRA) for True Potato Seed (TPS) from the Netherlands and requested comments from stakeholders. ASTA provided supportive comments highlighting the benefits of safely importing TPS from the Netherlands for the U.S. potato industry. However, APHIS did not move forward with this Market Access Request (MAR) at that time. In 2024, ASTA's efforts helped progress the MAR from step 2 (draft PRA published) to step 4 (approval of the regulatory dossier). ASTA is actively working to move it to step 5 (initial notice and publication) and continues to collaborate with APHIS to advocate for this MAR.

IV. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND INITIATIVES

USDA-ARS Seed Pathology Lab:

In 2024, ASTA collaborated with USDA-ARS to advocate for more research on phytosanitary issues affecting seed movement. Research needs include faster development of new diagnostic tests, the accurate assessment of plant health risks based on biological relevance, the identification of real mechanistic pathways for disease transmission, among other topics. This led to the approval of the first seed pathology lab in ARS, which will be located in Frederick, Maryland.

American Phytopathological Society (APS) Partnership:

In 2023, ASTA partnered with APS, Washington State University, and Iowa State University to design and present a Seed Pathology 101 virtual course. This 12-week course aimed to build plant and seed pathology capacity in the industry and regulatory community. Several technical experts from the seed industry and ASTA staff presented chapters dealing with global seed movements, disease management, molecular seed health testing, seed conditioning and processing, seed as a pathway, and international phytosanitary regulations. The course reached over 500 participants from 20 countries and was highlighted as one of APS's most successful outreach activities of the year.

V. OTHER KEY UPDATES

Shipment Retention and Value Recovery:

In 2024, ASTA successfully collaborated with APHIS to release \$2.5M worth of tomato, pepper, and spinach seed shipments held at various ports due to unjustified phytosanitary issues, preventing the return or destruction of these seeds.

Opposing Jordan's New Phytosanitary Requirements:

ASTA successfully opposed Jordan's proposed amendment to introduce new phytosanitary requirements for importing various vegetable seeds, including pepper, tomato, onion, eggplant, beet, radish, turnip, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, cucumber, muskmelon, watermelon, squash (zucchini), pumpkin, lettuce, carrot, and alfalfa. ASTA highlighted several pathogens listed on the notification are not transmitted through seeds. As a result, Jordan postponed the implementation of these requirements indefinitely.

Communications

At the start of the fiscal year, ASTA President and CEO Andy LaVigne joined International Fresh Produce Association CEO Cathy Burns in co-authoring an op-ed for Agri-Pulse, sounding the alarm on a recent final rule from the EPA on Plant Incorporated Protectants (PIPs) and the danger the ruling has on innovation in the American agricultural and biotechnical economies. As the leaders of two organizations heavily impacted by this ruling, LaVigne and Burns' op-ed made waves in Washington, D.C. and in the agricultural sector; since its publication, the seed industry has made progress on a positive resolution on this PIPs ruling.

Opinion: Once a world leader in innovation, the US is now falling behind

By Cathy Burns and Andy LaVigne

TREATED SEED

ASTA launched its annual treated seed stewardship campaign in both digital and traditional media. Through the National Association of Farm Broadcasters (NAFB), ASTA ran a month-long PSA campaign on farm radio, reminding farmers about the importance of the safe handling and disposal of treated seed at the end of harvest. The association also issued a press release and conducted traditional outreach to trade media. Finally, we supported our grower groups and the grain industry by sharing a communications toolkit for their publications. All of this was done while a social media campaign was running on ASTA's social media channels, reaching farmers engaging on the hashtag **#Harvest24**.

FINDING NEW AUDIENCES AND NEW METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

This year, ASTA explored opportunities to achieve novel methods of engagement and discover new audiences the seed industry would not typically reach.

ASTA partnered with the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association (FFVA) for their annual farm tour in April 2024. This year's tour took place in Southwest Florida and hosted seven Florida-based social media influencers in the food, nutrition, and family lifestyle spaces. The goal of this engagement was to reach audiences interested in making healthier and more informed choices for themselves and their families when in the produce aisle. In addition to visiting four family-owned farm operations to learn about the true meaning of "farm to table," ASTA hosted the group at Sakata Seed America's Fort Myers research facility and farm.





ASTA joined more than 50 agricultural trade and grower groups and equipment manufacturers in participating in A Modern Celebration of Agriculture on the National Mall, May 13-15, 2024. In its second occurrence, this biennial event convenes groups from across the agricultural value chain to tell the story of the future of food and farming on the steps of the U.S. Capitol, USDA, EPA and the White House. Over the course of three days, the event hosted over 15,000 visitors of the general public, engaged with more than 60 members of Congress and a dozen senior administration officials, and gave tours to more than 100 congressional staff. But most importantly, we had the tireless support of 10 member companies who made ASTA's participation as the largest trade group at the event possible: Beck's Hybrids, Corteva, GO Seed, BASF, Pairwise, Rijk Zwaan, Roundstone Native Seed, Sakata Seed America, Seedway, and Tozer Seeds.



MEMBER ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION

The Association continued to host its popular Seed Ambassador Leadership Team (SALT) training at its meetings, educating participants on advocacy and messaging through full-day workshops in both Orlando and Monterey. To further engage participants beyond the one-day training, continuing education webinars are hosted on a variety of topics, inviting participants to present and learn from each other about what works, or doesn't, when it comes to communicating and advocating for the seed industry. Other topics have included crisis communications and student and youth engagement.



INTERNATIONAL SEED FEDERATION INVOLVEMENT

ASTA remains engaged in the International Seed Federation (ISF) Communications Working Group, collaborating on global messaging and communications resources. In FY 23-24, the Working Group has been tracking its progress on its prior year's Work Plan, while beginning to craft ISF's four-year Communications Strategy.

Membership Engagement

The needs of the association’s members are first and foremost. ASTA strives to be sure its member companies of all sizes and sectors are receiving the maximum return on their investment through their active participation. Over the past year, ASTA has deliberately engaged its membership with networking opportunities, professional development, advocacy, representation, and other exclusive member benefits.

First and foremost, being part of ASTA means having a collective voice that advocates for the interests and concerns of its members. Association staff work with and on behalf of its members to influence policy decisions, promote industry standards, and protect professional interests. This representation is crucial in shaping the future of the seed industry.

Another significant benefit of membership is access to a network of like-minded individuals. ASTA’s conferences and seminars have allowed members to connect, share ideas, and collaborate. Being part of ASTA allows individuals to share experiences, seek advice, and support each other. This camaraderie can be invaluable, especially in challenging times.

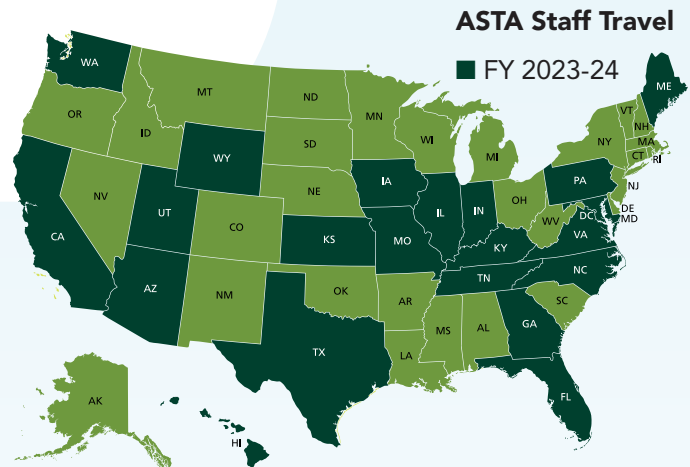
ASTA continually provides resources for ongoing education and professional growth. Members have access to members-only content and can access workshops and seminars that help them stay updated on the latest trends and advancements in their field, enhancing expertise and knowledge.

The value of membership in ASTA lies in the rich tapestry of opportunities, resources, and connections it provides.

ASTA OUT AND ABOUT

This fiscal year was very busy regarding domestic travel for the ASTA team. Each year, ASTA looks at the issues popping up in the states and crafts a strategy to ensure the seed industry’s voice is heard. The team interacted with many member companies and partners across the ag value chain in 21 states. During these trips, the ASTA

team was able to emphasize the importance of the seed industry and the many resources available to all stakeholders. ASTA finds these face-to-face interactions extremely beneficial in building strong relationships, not only with association members, but also with state legislators and industry partners. The ASTA team greatly appreciates the strong collaboration with the state and regional seed and agribusiness associations who are instrumental in addressing issues through the U.S., and will continue to be strategic with domestic travel in the coming fiscal year.



STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

ASTA is pleased to cultivate the future of the seed industry through its student membership with more than 100 active members ranging from FFA students to PhD candidates. Partner universities are helping to promote the 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 openings.

Intellectual Property

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



FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT

After the publication of the USDA report on competition in the seed sector, USDA established the Farmer Seed Liaison Initiative (Seed Liaison). The Seed Liaison is intended to be a point of contact to help stakeholders navigate the seed marketplace and to provide IP transparency. ASTA continues to engage with the Seed Liaison, as well as U.S. PVP office and USPTO with regards to follow up on actions from the USDA seed report. ASTA continues to monitor the biweekly *Seed Sower* newsletter.



INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY

ASTA was instrumental in garnering support for the successful UPOV adoption of the revised explanatory note (EXN) regarding the protection for essentially derived varieties (EDV), a significant and positive step for the seed industry. While the EXN is not treaty text and is not legally binding, it does provide guidance in judicial and arbitration cases. The ISF arbitration guide has been updated to reflect the new EDV EXN. Through its USDA cooperator funds, ASTA retained an expert consultant who helped define the U.S. seed sectors position on these issues and advocate to secure this outcome.

ASTA worked closely with USPTO leading up to the May 2024 adoption by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) of the new *Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge*. One of the key provisions of this treaty mandates new disclosure requirement for parent applicants whose inventions are based on genetic resources and/or associated traditional knowledge. The treaty is set to enter into force after ratification by at least 15 countries. ASTA's engagement with USPTO ensured that the treaty stayed focused and mitigated deviation that would severely damage IP protection.

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, 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 | 3. Seed Production and Technology | 5. Digital Agriculture |
| 2. Seed Quality | 4. Seed Health and Pathology | 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 include:

Tomatosphere™

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.

13,314
participating
classrooms

320,214
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.

73
participating
classrooms

2,226
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.

15
participating
classrooms

262
students served

Innovate

This program allows students to learn about the history and future of plant breeding. Interactive modules will take a look at the latest innovations, 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?

108
participating
classrooms

4,517
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.

110
participating
classrooms

3,117
students served

ASTA Honors Seed Industry Leaders

ASTA honored past and present seed industry groundbreakers during the 2024 ASTA Leadership Summit in June in Nashville, Tennessee. The slate of honors included: Distinguished Service Award, Honorary Lifetime Member Award, and Heritage Awards. For more information on these awards, including past recipients, visit betterseed.org/seed-industry-honors.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Dr. Stephanie Bloem served as NAPPO's Executive Director from July 2015 to June 2024. Prior to that, she served as a risk analyst and training specialist for USDA APHIS focusing on conducting pest risk assessments for import/export of various agricultural commodities plus organizing/delivering domestic and international workshops on pest risk analysis processes and procedures.



Dr. Stephanie Bloem
North American Plant
Protection Organization

HONORARY LIFETIME MEMBER AWARD

Jim Radtke is the Senior Vice President of Product Development at Cibus. Jim has over 30 years of seed industry experience. He has been involved with ASTA for over 15 years, actively contributing to ASTA policy developments by lending his expertise to several ASTA committees and working groups.

Norm Poppe is the CEO of Applewood Seed Company in Arvada, CO. He has held this position since September 2019. He was promoted to this role by Applewood's founder Gene Milstein, whose leadership and dedication to quality and environmental stewardship set an exceptional standard that Norm has carried forward.



Jim Radtke
Cibus, Inc.



Norm Poppe
Applewood Seed Co.

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.

John Gerard has been a dedicated leader in the seed industry most of his career. Soon after completing a degree in Ag Education from Purdue University, he accepted the position of General Manager with the Indiana Crop Improvement Association (ICIA). Later, he helped start VR Seeds, which later sold to AgriGenetics. Always the entrepreneur, he left AgriGenetics and founded JGL, Inc., Seed Genetics, Inc., and JoMar Seeds.



John Gerard



Dr. Harold Loden

After serving in WWII, **Dr. Harold Loden** was assigned to manage the Agriculture Experiment Station in South Korea. He then earned a PhD in Plant Genetics at Texas A&M in 1949. He worked first as a cotton breeder for Anderson, Clayton & Company, eventually being named General Manager. He served as President of ASTA in 1968 and was named an Honorary Life Member in 1971. Dr. Loden served ASTA as Executive Vice President of ASTA from 1973-1983. For more information about the award and this year's recipients, visit betterseed.org/astas-seed-industry-heritage-award/.

Conventions & Meetings

The 2023-24 year marked the new beginning of ASTA's Field Crop Seed Convention (previously the CSS & Seed Expo) in Orlando, Florida. The association also saw continued growth for its other standing meetings, including a revamp of the Forage, Turf, & Conservation Seed Conference, formerly called the Farm & Lawn Seed Conference.

2023 FORAGE, TURF, & CONSERVATION SEED CONFERENCE

ASTA's newly named Forage, Turf, & Conservation Seed Conference was again held in conjunction with the Western Seed Association Conference in Kansas City, Missouri. The event featured experts in conservation policy, agency professionals from USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and panel discussions focusing on pressing issues facing seed companies. Speakers presented on topics ranging from the Farm Bill to hot topics in seed testing and ways the seed industry can broaden its reach.



2023 FIELD CROP SEED CONVENTION

ASTA's CSS & Seed Expo saw a major change this year, rebranding to the Field Crop Seed Convention, and moving from Chicago to Orlando. The new name and location demonstrates member company and attendee interest to expand the topics and commodities featured at the December meeting, as well as interest to move locations. The move saw an increase in exhibitors and first-time attendees. The streamlined convention schedule featured Dan Basse's 2023 agricultural economy forecast, a panel discussion with top industry executives on what lies ahead for the seed business, and sessions on climate smart ag partnerships, geopolitical impacts on U.S. growers, the Farm Bill, and more.



63RD VEGETABLE & FLOWER SEED CONFERENCE

In 2024, ASTA's Vegetable & Flower Seed Conference was held at the Monterey Convention Center in Monterey, California. The event set a new attendance record of over 1,000 registrations from more than 30 countries. This conference is consistently a favorite for international delegates, with the global attendance comprising over 20 percent of the attendance. The Trading Room saw excellent participation and networking, and the conference programming included sessions on navigating different perspectives, sustainability and regenerative agriculture, creating advocacy through intentional communication, policy, and more.



2024 LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

The June Leadership Summit was held in Nashville, Tennessee, and saw a large contingent of student participants and the highest post-pandemic attendance of ASTA members, showcasing the diversity of the industry. The conference, with a theme of "GROW," featured a series of sessions, including leadership within the seed industry, phytosanitary changes, and more. The ASTA Annual Meeting, where ASTA officers for the year were elected, included a keynote presentation by Fred Kofman from Conscious Business Center on optimizing team performance. The event included popular networking events from the Welcome Reception, the Awards Reception where ASTA's Distinguished Service, Honorary Member, and Heritage Awards were presented, and concluded with a Closing Reception that highlighted the 2025 destination – Washington, D.C.



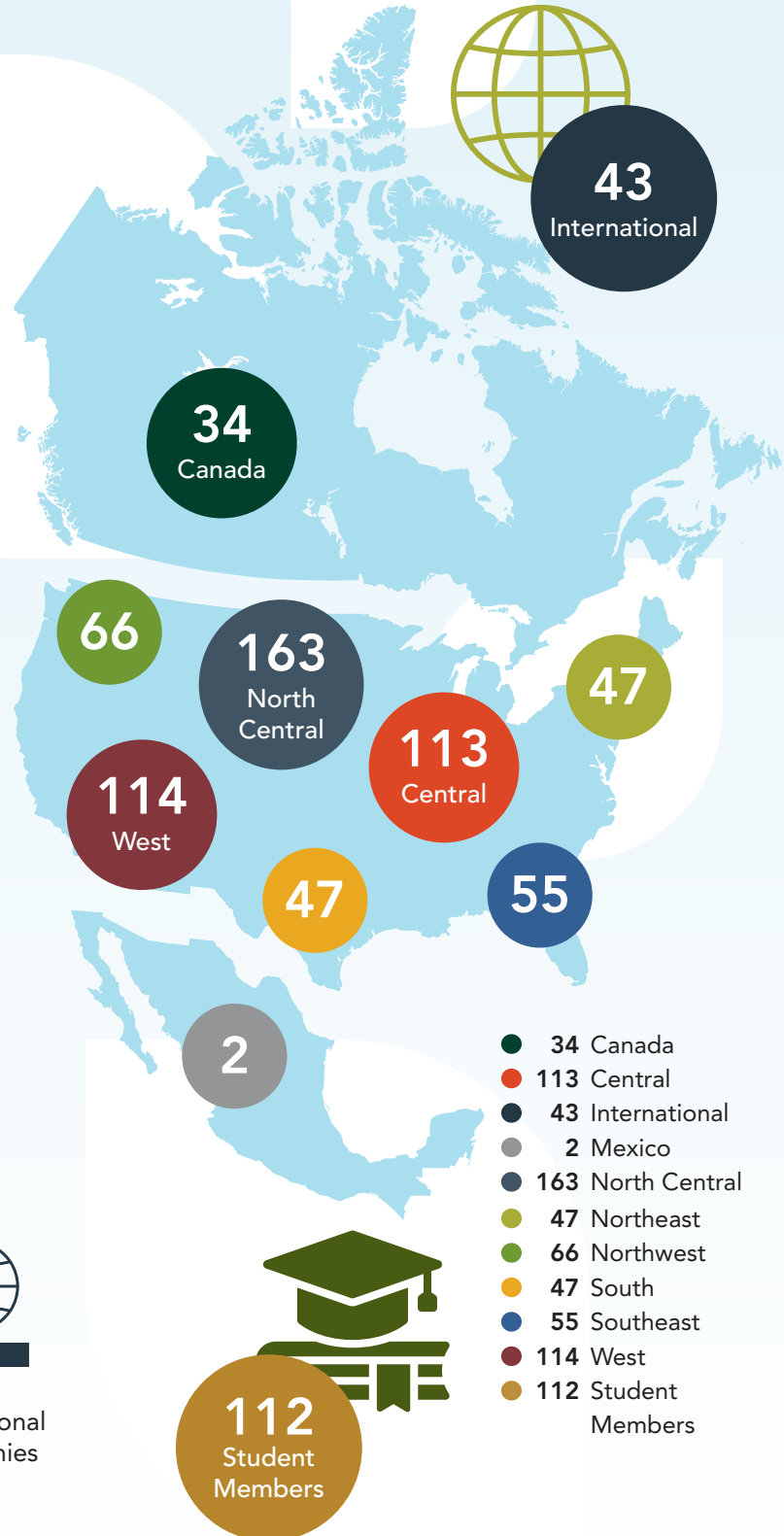
Membership Breakdown

MEMBERSHIP BY TYPE

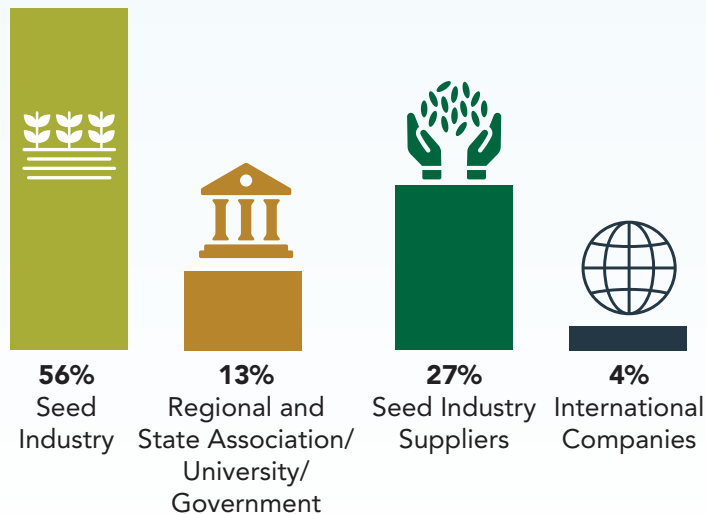


- 384 Active Members
- 50 Affiliate Members
- 182 Associate Members
- 28 Corresponding International Members
- 40 Reciprocal Members
- 684 Total Members**

MEMBERSHIP BY REGION



MEMBERSHIP BY CATEGORY



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 reviews and approves 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 2022-23 audit confirmed the financial health of the association, which ended its fiscal year with \$4,710,533 in net assets. In addition, it calculated in-kind contributions from member companies at \$13,204,892. This includes promotion, travel, research and professional services that the audit firm included in the FY 2022-23 audit.

INVESTMENT AND RESERVE POLICY

The Advisory Council 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, and Global and U.S. Large Caps. \$500,000 is maintained in an operating reserve. 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	\$13,204,892
Membership dues	\$4,223,299
Registration fees	\$851,342
Government grants and contracts	\$869,313
Exhibit fees	\$414,310
Contributions and sponsorships.	\$367,668
Administrative service fees	\$10,000
Other income.	\$91,282
Total Operating Revenue	\$20,032,106
and Support	

Operating Expenses

Program Services

International initiatives	\$14,511,675
Meetings	\$1,126,242
Policy	\$1,419,664
Legislation	\$732,397
Membership.	\$284,251
Other	\$341,948
Total Program Services	\$18,416,177

Supporting Service

General and administrative	\$2,047,314
Total Operating Expenses	\$20,463,491
Change in Net Assets from Operations . .	\$(431,385)

Non-operating Activities

Investment income, net	\$503,367
Change in net assets	\$71,982
Net assets, beginning of year	\$4,638,551
Net assets, end of year	\$4,710,533

ASTA Staff

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Andrew W. LaVigne

President and CEO

Libby Hogen-Heath

Executive Assistant

DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL POLICY

Fan-Li Chou, Ph.D.

Senior Vice President, Scientific Affairs & Policy

Janae Brady

Vice President, Government Affairs

Ric Dunkle, Ph.D.

Senior Director, Seed Health and Trade

Martha Malapi, Ph.D.

Director, Seed Health and Trade

Sam Crowell, Ph.D.

Senior Director, International Programs and Policy

Pat Miller

Senior Director, Special Projects

Payton Englert

Director, Government Affairs

Jordan Gregory

Director, State Government Affairs

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

Ann Jorss

Chief Operating Officer

Ann Ward

Assistant to the COO

COMMUNICATIONS

Bethany Shively

Vice President, Strategic Communications

Katrina Bishop

Senior Director, Strategic Communications

Kaitlin Crawford

Director, Marketing and Communications

MEETINGS & SERVICES

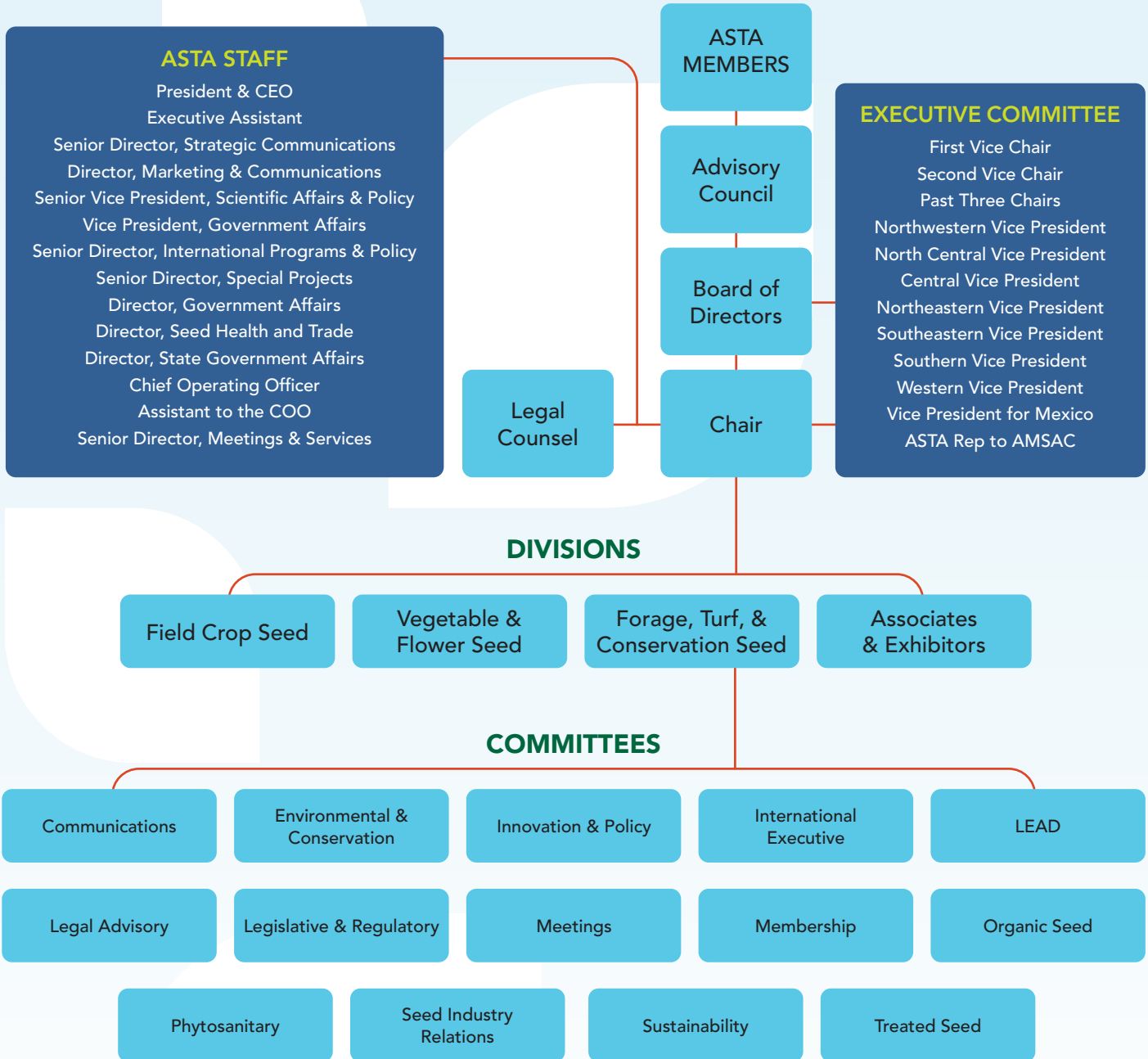
Jennifer Crouse

Senior Director, Meetings & Services



american
seed trade
association

Organizational Chart



asta

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