

2018 ASTA Strategic Plan

1. Domestic Policy

Objective: 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 does ASTA lead, support or monitor.

Goal #1: Enhance ASTA's relationship with strategic legislators. Identify key legislation that either directly or indirectly impacts the seed industry.

- Develop policy statements/action plans for key issues. Distribute plans to appropriate members and associations.
- Identify key decision makers in the House of Representatives and the Senate – members and staff – that can potentially impact the seed industry. Develop a plan to outreach to key Members/staff on a regular basis – develop and enhance relationships.
- Identify ASTA members in the districts/states of the key Members – engage them in the relationship building.
- Organize annual lobbying day for ASTA members and targeted lobbying days for specific issues.
- Increase awareness and support of industry led SeedFirst PAC

Goal #2: Identify key regulations and policies that either directly or indirectly impact the seed industry. Drive science-based and efficient regulatory policies, and determine action on active issues.

- Identify key decision makers in the applicable administrative departments and agencies. Develop and maintain relationships with those decision makers.
- Place ASTA members on strategic advisory committees with Federal agencies and departments.
- Key Issue areas:
 - Monitor/address specific regulations related to the Federal Seed Act, the Plant Variety Protection Act and state seed laws;
 - Monitor/address the implementation of USDA conservation programs;
 - Address issues related to the Bureau of Land Management seed procurement policies and programs;
 - Provide information to USDA and EPA on the role of seed treatment in all seed industry sectors;
 - Provide input on seed issues to the National Organic Standards Board and the USDA National Organic Program.

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Goal #3: Advocate for agricultural program funding to support the advancement of the seed industry.

- Increase support for USDA research programs including the National Plant Germplasm System and the Germplasm Enhancement of Maize program.
- Increase support for the USDA Cooperator Programs that fund ASTA's international activities.
- Increase support for USDA's Plant Materials Centers

Goal #4: Continue to enhance partnerships with academia, organizations and other associations key to ASTA's member companies.

- Enhance dialog/relationship between ASTA and allied organizations such as the Independent Professional Seed Association, BIO, Crop Life America, and the Agricultural Retailers Association.
- Enhance cooperation with grower organizations such as the American Farm Bureau Federation, National Corn Growers Association, American Soybean Association, United Fresh Produce Association, Western Growers, etc.
- Increase cooperation with organizations in the agriculture and food value chain, such as the Tri-Societies, Produce Marketing Association, Grocery Manufacturers Association, Food Marketing Institute, National Grain and Feed Association, etc.
- Increase coordination with universities, academics, NAPB, etc.

Key Areas of Strategic Activities

- Plant Breeding Innovation
- Seed Treatment
- Sustainability, Soil Health, and Conservation/Reclamation Cover Crops
- Environmental and Conservation Seed
- Support expansion of seed testing laboratory personnel training and methodologies specifically for native seeds

Goal #5: Assure ASTA is a primary resource and, where appropriate, a primary point of contact as an information source on the state and local levels.

Goal #6: Gather and distribute policy information among stakeholders to ensure consistent messaging of seed industry positions and policies.

Goal #7: Aggressively address state and local issues that may confront the seed industry.

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2. Innovation

Objective: Strive to develop a domestic and international environment that facilitates innovation throughout the seed industry.

Goal #1: Establish a domestic policy environment that fosters innovation and ensures broad access to innovative tools for the seed sector.

- Strive for consistency across regulatory agencies;
- Support strategic, international engagement by regulatory agencies;
- Facilitate strong Capitol Hill understanding of policy goals;
- Incorporate value chain alignment in support of policy goals.

Goal #2: Facilitate alignment among countries on science-based, consistent policies.

- Work toward alignment opportunities of regulatory oversight and harmonized procedures;
- Develop strong partnerships with other agriculture sectors, food industry and academia.

Goal #3: Enhance proactive outreach, engagement and transparency activities to build consumer trust of new seed industry innovation.

- Develop common messages among all stakeholders and value chain participants;
- Enhance active engagement with media and the public;
- See additional Communication Objectives below.

Goal #4: Increase outreach and understanding of seed industry IPR and innovation, including emerging technologies.

- Develop a framework that allows companies to understand seed intellectual property rights available, including those related to emerging technologies;
- Make IP communications part of larger communication efforts around innovation.

3. Communications

Objective: Establish ASTA as the leading voice for the US 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.

Goal #1: Establish ASTA Brand Awareness

- Increase awareness of ASTA among the seed industry and other key stakeholder groups, including members, member organizations, legislators, regulators and the media.

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Goal #2 – Implement a Strategic Issues Management Plan

- Develop reactive and proactive communications resources that will be utilized by members, and state and regional associations for outreach activities.
- Coordinate industry messaging on the wide variety of issues impacting the seed industry.

Goal #3 – Coordinate messaging around seed innovation and industry issues

- Promote and provide communications tools to ASTA members and key stakeholders.
- Train and empower members to use the available tools.
- Collaborate and build coalitions with other industry associations and stakeholder groups to ensure message alignment whenever possible.

4. Intellectual Property Rights

Objective: Advance the use and respect of intellectual property rights (IPR) protection for the seed sector globally.

Goal #1: Promote the adoption and enforcement of intellectual property rights laws and regulations for the seed sector globally.

- Broaden the adoption of UPOV 91 globally and support the adherence to UPOV 91 through effective implementation, including enforcement- with an emphasis on ASTA's key markets.
- Advocate the value of all forms of IPR protection, domestically and internationally, through coordination and alignment with organizations and stakeholders involved in similar advocacy and education.
- Maintain leadership in IPR policy development globally, such as with the ISF, Regional Seed Associations and governmental organizations, UPOV, Agreements on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

Goal #2: Facilitate policy development regarding access to technologies and germplasm for the seed industry.

- Support ASTA policy regarding placing protected material in the public domain when the period of protection expires.
- Work within the CBD and the ITPGR-FA to better define the mechanisms for access and benefit sharing.
- Advocate for a more effective NPGS and other public seed repositories to create access to a wide range of public seed materials.

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Goal #3: Advocate for improved processes and additional capacity within the existing US intellectual property rights programs for the seed industry.

- Advocate for an on-line and automated PVP application process that allows for secured management and access for applicants for all crops.
- Push for continued improvement in responsiveness within the U.S. PVP Office and PTO.
- Advocate for expansion of PVP rights for asexually reproduced plants and for a more proactive and leading role of the US PVP office in the UPOV proceedings.
- Support implementation of the use of molecular markers for determining distinctness to obtain PVP protection.

Goal #4: Develop and deliver effective education materials on the value and mechanisms of intellectual property rights protection in the seed industry.

- Continue to expand programs and efforts to educate stakeholder groups and governments on the value to farmers and society of strong and equitable IPR protection in the seed industry. Continue to support efforts of SIPA.
- Increase awareness of avenues through which IP can be compromised, including labeling.

5. International

Objective: Improve the opportunities for ASTA member companies to do business in international markets.

Goal #1: Improve the business environment for ASTA member companies in key markets.

- Identify key markets and critical issues that need to be addressed to enhance ASTA member companies' ability to develop viable opportunities in those markets.
- Successfully leverage USDA agricultural cooperator program funding to advance the US seed trade international business.
- Demonstrate successes in improving the business environments in key markets.

Goal #2: Address operational issues affecting the global movement of seed.

- In conjunction with the USG and relevant organizations, advocate the use of science-based regulations and standards for phytosanitary concerns for the international movement of seeds and plant materials.
- Provide issues management support to members related to international seed movement.

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Goal #3: Promote the development and global alignment of policies among governments and stakeholders.

- Advocate international alignment around science and risk-based policies for plant breeding innovation.
- Promote regional and international seed phytosanitary standards that allow for rational movement of seed between geographies.
- Utilize domestic policy as a platform for advocating consistent policies internationally.

Goal #4: Through strong member engagement, represent the US seed industry at international and regional seed and intergovernmental organizations.

- Ensure strong participation in policy and position development with the ISF, SAA, and other regional and country seed associations.
- Monitor activities in the OECD, CBD, FAO, TRIPS, ITPGRFA, UPOV, ISTA, IPPC, NAPPO and use ASTA's influence to further key seed industry positions.
- Provide technical and practical advice to the US government and relevant organizations to support international negotiations on issues important to the seed industry.

6. ASTA Membership & Internal Matters

Objective: 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.

Goal #1: Membership – Recruit, retain, engage and grow ASTA membership – providing the highest standard of industry support to effectively represent the seed industry at the state, national and international levels.

- Maintain and update the ASTA member retention and recruitment plan.
- Increase and enhance the utilization of the ASTA member database.
- Develop targeted messages and collateral to match individual and organizational needs regarding ASTA's accomplishments and ROI in collaboration with the Director of Communications.
- Expand and diversify membership type – include companies throughout the food chain.
- Increase member engagement; identify ways to encourage regional company involvement.
- Provide education and leadership opportunities to members.

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- Identify “segments of members” and how ASTA can meet their specific needs.

Goal #2: Meeting Activities

- Utilize strategic meetings management principles to increase the value of ASTA events for its members and grow participation and engagement in those events. Develop strategies within the meetings to increase education and leadership opportunities.
- Continue to conduct a thorough needs assessment on meetings content and format.
- Support and promote sponsorship opportunities to regional companies.
- Use the ASTA meetings committee to develop and enhance the meeting structure and content.
- Ensure that meetings support the financial health of the Association.
- Form alliances and partnership with like organizations. IPSA, NAPB, Tri-Sociteis, etc.
- Encourage global participation.

Goal #3: Human & Financial Resources

- Develop strategies and systems to emphasize strong, consistent staff and financial resource management.
- Review job descriptions and parameters for each of the current ASTA employees to track industry comparables and analyze staff structure at least every three years.
- Develop a succession management plan to ensure a talented ASTA team. Review and evaluate the plan at least every three years.
- Continue transparent budgeting process.
- Convene Visionary Committee to review and adjust dues structure.
- Evaluate impact of mergers, acquisitions and consolidations in the industry.
- Identify and develop non-dues and non-registration revenue for ASTA.
- Evaluate the appropriate level of association reserves necessary for use during uncertain industry times.
- Evaluate alternative revenue enhancing measures and sources.