

## Communications Summit

- **Introductions-** Shannon Latham
- **National Association of Farm Broadcasting-** Tom Brand
  - Programs Overview
  - Opportunities for Allied Industry Membership
  - Research Overview
- **Communications Committee Objectives-** Janice Walters
  - Greg Gerard suggested a paper on “ASTA Interview Charges”
- **Overview and Discussion of ASTA Three-Year Communications & Advocacy Project-** Lilly & Rick
  - Showing everyone benefit of seeds and representing the entire industry on all issues
  - Unification
  - Objectives
    - Elevate the conversation about seed by recruiting advocates
  - Identifying Stakeholders
    - Producers
    - Technology People
    - Range of seed users (people who benefit from seed)
    - Consumers
    - Regulatory
    - Government
  - Discussion
    - Concern about broadness of messages and making sure they identify with members and the intended audiences
    - There should be a separation between GMO and non GMO producers
    - Make sure the members stories are being told
    - Andy LaVigne- The platform of the project is seed. We are looking at the basics and stepping away from biotech only messages because we want to include entire membership and not duplicate efforts by CLA, BIO, etc. We are working towards complimentary messaging that the entire industry and grower groups can use.
    - Janice Walters- The focus will be on the topline/shared value messages first and then starting development of secondary messages like GMO for instance.
- **Molitor-** The complementary intent needs to be clearly defined.

- Rick Thaemert- These overarching messages can be used to build relationships and act as a shield so that we as an industry are not just defensive and responding to the negative conversations.
- Janice Walters- We are building proactive messaging and approaches versus reactive ones.
- Issues we face (from research)
  - Lack of understanding/technology
  - Misinformation of pollinators and neonicotinoids
  - Unbalanced voices around biotech
  - Protecting freedom to innovate
  - Need for education
  - Consumers lack personal experience with seed
- Shared Values
  - Moms, Millennials, Food-Minded individuals audiences
  - Choice
  - Accessibility- efficiency, more food on fewer acres? Will access to seed be a question in messaging? More about the multiple choices at grocery store.
  - Safety (Health, Security)
  - Transparency- How do you show it and also keep proprietary information safe? Position it as a secret recipe to protect IP issues.
    - Use women as messengers and have a connection with the mom audience.
  - Stewardship- Should this be sustainability? Regenerative techniques?
- Materials Communications Committee Members Want:
  - Powerpoint presentations
  - Videos- educational
  - Photos
- **Seed Innovation and Protection Alliance-** James Weatherly
- **DataFarm Presentation-** Ted Bellamy and Robert Powell
  - Explanation of features
  - Monthly reports to be distributed to Communications Committee
  - Added search parameters:
    - Pollinators
    - Neonicotinoids
- **Biofortified Blog Presentation-** Karl Haro von Mogel
  - Karl founded BioFortified.org, a blog/website focused on strengthening the public discussion of scientific issues.
  - Discussion on how to change the online conversation using social media.

- Scientifically based comments and discussion
- **Best Practices Workshop: Capitalizing on Resource Sharing-** Shannon Latham, Communications Committee Chair
  - Breakout groups, each with a different alarming headline
    - Determined reaction strategy
    - Identified partner organizations to leverage industry and outside resources
- **State and Federal Legislative Update-** Jane DeMarchi and Pat Miller
  - State Affairs “Watch List”
    - State law consistencies
    - GMO labeling and anti-technology
    - Neonics
    - Noxious weeds/invasive species
    - Hemp regulations
    - Funding enabling state infrastructure
    - Crop specific issues
- **ASTA Website Feedback**
  - Pro’s
    - Easy to read homepage
    - Colors
  - Con’s
    - Not mobile responsive
    - Scrolling distracting
    - Navigation difficult
    - Convention schedule hard to read
    - Text heavy
    - List formatting
  - Suggested Improvements
    - Easier navigation
    - Members Only Forum where members can have a community, share ideas/resources and comment on things
  - ASTA to distribute Members Only login information
- **Roundtable Discussion: How You Can Support the Committee’s Objectives-** Lily Maxwell and Rick Thaemert, Global Prairie
  - Determining the 1 in 10 who will influence the other 9
    - Credible, respected, good communicators
    - Share a positive point of view
    - Has reach, clout and effective platforms

- Magnify our voice/reach
  - Use those identified to distribute messages
  - Gain influencers in environmental, economics and health and wellness areas
- Strategy
  - Profile, engage, train and mobilize
    - Mobilize with our messages
    - Develop training for how to deal with opposition
    - Network with influencers and their audiences to develop an advocacy network
    - Increasing interaction with people we already have relationships with and eliminate the cold calling affect
- Who or What Type of Influencer?
  - Who might these people be?
    - Bloggers
    - Journalists
    - Students
    - Informed Consumers
  - Divide influencers by topic and match up with seed segment
    - Economic
    - Health
    - Wellbeing
    - Consumer Issues
  - Committee Ideas:
    - Danielle Stuart to connect ASTA with Monsanto's Director of Millennial Engagement
    - Turf Producers International
      - Connect with grass seed people
- Message Alignment and Training
  - Training for:
    - Members
    - Influencers
    - First-the Seed Ambassadors
    - State/Regional Associations
  - Purpose is to bring the seed story into the three segments
    - Align with grower groups and ag industry association
- Content Management Strategies

- Figure out how to use the data from survey
- Leveraging time of year with seed connection
  - June
    - Telling the story of the bride and her bouquet because of seed improvement
  - Back to School- August/September
    - Healthier snacks, longer shelf life with vegetables
  - Harvest/Thanksgiving
  - NFL
    - Turf grass
  - Eat Vegetable Day
  - World Food Day
  - Farmers Market Season
  - Cold and Flu Season?
    - Honey pollinators
  - State and County Fairs
  - Cinco De Mayo
  - World Watermelon Day
- Tie messages to what already exists
  - Where did your pumpkin spice latte come from?
- Tie in with natural news cycles that exist with meetings
  - Cover all industry segments
  - Add seed story
- “Mini Blitzes” Distribution
  - Content creation
    - Push to members for dissemination
      - Push to traditional media
- Existing Collateral
  - Build a database of shared resources
    - Janice to send out email asking for materials
- Understanding Communications Committee Role
  - ASTA/G.P. to develop tools and resources
    - Committee Members to push out
  - Add to Membership
    - Peterson Seeds and other independent companies
    - Younger people
  - Meeting frequency

- It was decided to host two summits a year
    - One in between WSA and NAFB meetings
    - Other in spring
      - Possibly in conjunction with Blogger conference?
      - Member hosted event?
  - Shorter update meetings at ASTA's Annual Convention, CSS and Vegetable and Flower Conferences
  - Committee Training held around April Exec Committee Meeting April 15-17
- **Meeting Preparation: CSS 2014 & Seed Expo, Vegetable and Flower Seed Conference, 132nd Annual Convention-** Janice Walters
  - CSS- setting the stage
    - Media Event, field survey, setting up need
    - "Seed Industry Relaunch"
    - BASF Sponsored Media Room
    - 180 media reached targeted
      - Scheduling interviews
      - Hosting Press conference
    - Additional times for member media briefings and press conferences available
      - Janice to distribute media room schedule and press release once completed.
  - V&F- Soft launch/introduction for vegetable and flower seed companies
  - Annual Convention- Formal Rollout
- **Closing and Adjourn-** Janice Walters

