



## 2021-2022 ASTA Committees & Working Groups

Most issues addressed by the American Seed Trade Association (ASTA) are bottom-up, driven from member representatives on ASTA committees or divisions. ASTA members determine the future of the seed industry through active participation in the association's committees and working groups. Our success depends on your involvement in grassroots efforts, in-depth policy discussions, and implementation and action on the association's strategic goals that are the cornerstone of ASTA's ability to advocate for the industry.

Below is a list of ASTA committees and working groups. Please review and determine which one(s) will be most beneficial for you to participate in - because when you benefit, the industry benefits.

### COMMITTEES:

**Communications Committee (COMM):** Committee members support both ASTA specific and industrywide initiatives. These efforts include, but are not limited to: coordinating industry messaging (as appropriate) to support advocacy goals and to drive public opinion; participating in the development and implementation of ASTA's comprehensive communications plan; helping generate and respond to media coverage; amplifying ASTA social media content; apprising each other of emerging issues and media interests; sharing communications research & resources; and supporting industry communications efforts including Better Seed, Better Life public-facing initiatives, the Seed Ambassador Leadership Team (SALT), the Seed Treatment Stewardship Guide, student engagement activities, and more. Contact: Bethany Shively [bshively@betterseed.org](mailto:bshively@betterseed.org).

**CSS Program Planning Committee (C&SCONF):** Committee members are responsible for selecting speakers and topics for the CSS (Corn, Sorghum and Soybean) conference session programming. The committee offers a variety of perspectives from experts working in the private sector to academia. Contact Jennifer Crouse at [jcrouse@betterseed.org](mailto:jcrouse@betterseed.org).

**Environmental & Conservation Seed Committee (ENVCON):** This committee represents the interests of ASTA members who provide quality seed for land restoration, rehabilitation, and reclamation. The primary focus of the committee is to promote native seeds, introduced and released plant materials in projects on private and public lands. A basis for all aspects of the committee is the need for sound, science-based principles, and efficiency in government programs. Committee members meet regularly with policymakers from the USDA and Department of Interior on issues directly impacting the environmental and conservation seed industry. Contact Payton Englert at [penglert@betterseed.org](mailto:penglert@betterseed.org) or Janae Brady at [jbrady@betterseed.org](mailto:jbrady@betterseed.org).

**First The Seed Foundation (FTSF):** First the Seed Foundation (FTSF) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization created to inform today's consumers and tomorrow's workforce about the importance of the seed industry. This foundation works to conduct education, outreach, and communication on the value of crops and food produced from seed. This is a separate organization from ASTA and requires a separate membership. Contact Ann Jorss at [ajorss@betterseed.org](mailto:ajorss@betterseed.org).

**Innovation and Policy Committee (IPC):** This committee covers policy and regulatory issues in the areas of new plant breeding and seed applied innovations and research. The focus is on those policy and regulatory issues that have an impact across the seed industry. Examples of topics addressed by the committee are regulatory policies for seed products developed through innovative breeding technologies and U.S. policies related to breeding and seed research. Advocacy and development of ASTA positions are initially developed through ad hoc topic specific as well as standing working groups that report back to the committee, such as the Plant Breeding Innovation working Group. Contact Fan-Li Chou at [flchou@betterseed.org](mailto:flchou@betterseed.org).

**Intellectual Property Rights Committee (IPR):** This committee develops and recommends policy positions on matters related to intellectual property protection at the domestic and international levels. The committee works with the U.S. Plant Variety Protection Office, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and other parties regarding rules and procedures related to the administration of the U.S. Plant Variety Protection and Patent Acts. At a global level, the committee also advises ASTA representatives to the International Seed Federation's (ISF) Intellectual Property Committee, as well as the International Union for the Protection of New Plant Varieties (UPOV), and International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. This committee conducts many activities through the emerging issues ad hoc working group as the need arises. Contact Abigail Struxness at [astruxness@betterseed.org](mailto:astruxness@betterseed.org) and Fan-Li Chou at [flchou@betterseed.org](mailto:flchou@betterseed.org).

**International Executive Committee (IEC) (By invitation):** This committee plays a vital role in developing ASTA's global agricultural policy development and international programs. It is comprised of the chairs of the Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation & Policy, Phytosanitary, and Seed Industry Relations committees; ASTA's representatives to the International Seed Federation (ISF) and other regional and international organizations; the chairs of ASTA's Country Working Groups; and the chair of ASTA's Board of Directors. The committee sets global and country priorities, develops strategies for ASTA representatives to ISF, and designs strategies for ASTA's participation in USDA Cooperator Programs, including the Foreign Market Development program, Market Access Program and Agriculture Trade Promotion program. It conveys ASTA's message and policy priorities to U.S. government and other stakeholders. Contact Abigail Struxness at [astruxness@betterseed.org](mailto:astruxness@betterseed.org) and Lainey Wolf at [lwolf@betterseed.org](mailto:lwolf@betterseed.org).

**Legislative Committee (LEGIS):** This committee is responsible for setting and communicating legislative priorities and policy positions that are representative of ASTA's diverse membership. Primary to ASTA's legislative agenda is to ensure that state and federal regulations relating to the seed industry remain consistent and practical. This committee hosts ASTA's annual Advocacy Day lobbying event. Contact Janae Brady at [jbrady@betterseed.org](mailto:jbrady@betterseed.org) or Payton Englert at [penglert@betterseed.org](mailto:penglert@betterseed.org).

**Leadership, Education and Development Committee (LEAD):** This committee is responsible for providing ASTA members with opportunities to expand their 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 is focused on building leadership skills by involving those new to the industry up to those that are advanced in their careers. Contact Kaitlin Crawford at [kcrawford@betterseed.org](mailto:kcrawford@betterseed.org).

**Meetings Committee (MEETING):** The ASTA Meetings Committee continually monitors, evaluates, and seeks to enhance ASTA meetings to maintain and increase the value of ASTA events for its members and grow participation and engagement in those events. Contact Jennifer Crouse at [jcrouse@betterseed.org](mailto:jcrouse@betterseed.org).

**Organic Seed Committee (ORGANIC):** The committee works to resolve technical issues relevant to organic seed production, treatment, use and marketing. Open to all ASTA members interested in the development of the organic seed industry, the committee formulates policy recommendations to be submitted to the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) and National Organic Standards Board. The committee supports the organic seed industry for all commodities and interfaces with the USDA-NOP and the National Organic Standards Board. Contact Fan-Li Chou at [flchou@betterseed.org](mailto:flchou@betterseed.org) and Jordan Gregory at [jgregory@betterseed.org](mailto:jgregory@betterseed.org).

**Phytosanitary Committee (PHYTO):** Representing ASTA in all national and international regulatory matters dealing with seed health, this committee focuses on the phytosanitary aspects of seed movement. It maintains a close relationship with USDA's APHIS and foreign government plant quarantine bodies including the International Plant Protection Convention, the North American Plant Protection Organization, and other regional organizations, including national and regional seed associations. Through this network, the committee monitors plant quarantine developments that might affect the movement of seed. Contact Ric Dunkle at [rdunkle@betterseed.org](mailto:rdunkle@betterseed.org).

**Seed Industry Relations Committee (INDSTRY):** Serving as a liaison with related industry associations, the Seed Industry Relations Committee fosters communication and cooperation on issues of mutual concern. The committee keeps abreast of domestic and international developments in seed testing methods, regulations, and policy. Contact Jordan Gregory at [jgregory@betterseed.org](mailto:jgregory@betterseed.org).

**Seed Science Foundation (SSF):** This foundation is a proactive and integrated source of plant science expertise for the U.S. seed industry. Its central mission 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 will also continue existing efforts to fund public research programs in basic seed science and to explore opportunities for public and private research organizations to further knowledge about how seeds work. This is a separate organization from ASTA and requires a separate membership. Contact Ann Jorss at [ajorss@betterseed.org](mailto:ajorss@betterseed.org).

**Seed Treatment and Environmental Committee (STEC):** The STEC committee serves as a source of information to the industry on issues relating to the regulation and labeling of seed treated with pesticides and biologicals, as well as how treatments relate to the environment, health, safety and well-being of employees and consumers. The committee promotes product stewardship, uniformity in labeling, and provides advice to ASTA on issues regarding the safety of the seed industry's workers, and environmental implications of laws or regulations as they relate to the seed industry. A biologicals working group has been created under STEC to address specific issues for that subset of products. Contact Janae Brady at [jbrady@betterseed.org](mailto:jbrady@betterseed.org) and Pat Miller at [pmiller@betterseed.org](mailto:pmiller@betterseed.org).

**Vegetable & Flower Permanent Research Fund Committee (VFPERM):** The committee determines the need for basic research relating to the vegetable and flower sector. Meeting once a year at the Vegetable and Flower Seed Conference, committee members vote on and fund research projects. A 3-year financial commitment is required, which entitles committee members access to all previous and current research results. This committee is managed by the Seed Science Foundation. Contact Ann Jorss at [ajorss@betterseed.org](mailto:ajorss@betterseed.org).

**Vegetable Technical Subcommittee (VEGTECH):** A sub-committee of the Phytosanitary Committee, this subcommittee focuses on phytosanitary issues of concern to the vegetable industry. Comprised primarily of plant pathologists, seed scientists, and lab technicians from vegetable seed companies, the Veg Tech Committee addresses technical issues concerning pests and pathogens of concern. Contact Ric Dunkle at [rdunkle@betterseed.org](mailto:rdunkle@betterseed.org).

## **WORKING GROUPS:**

**Cover Crop Working Group:** The working group discusses Federal, state and privately funded programs for cover crops. Agronomic and other research on cover crops is shared as well as supported by the working group. Contact Payton Englert at [penglert@betterseed.org](mailto:penglert@betterseed.org) or Janae Brady at [jbrady@betterseed.org](mailto:jbrady@betterseed.org).

**Corn, Sorghum, and Soybean Emerging Issue Working Group:** This working group is designed to handle the issues that face the corn, sorghum, and soybean seed companies. The group will delve into ongoing issues and identify issues on the horizon. Contact Janae Brady at [jbrady@betterseed.org](mailto:jbrady@betterseed.org) or Payton Englert at [penglert@betterseed.org](mailto:penglert@betterseed.org).

**Emerging Diseases Working Group (EMERGING D):** This ad hoc working group was first formed under the Phytosanitary Committee in response to Watermelon Fruit Blotch. It has since expanded its role to include other emerging diseases of concern. This group provides in-depth analysis of target diseases, recommends research, coordinates with research scientists in the seed industry and public research institutions, and develops communication mechanisms to aid the seed industry in prevention and responses to seed diseases. It meets as needed at conferences and via conference calls. Contact Ric Dunkle at [rdunkle@betterseed.org](mailto:rdunkle@betterseed.org).

**Hemp Seed Working Group:** As a result of the U.S. decriminalization of hemp production and products in the 2018 Farm Bill, the ASTA leadership responded with the creation of the Hemp Seed Working Group. This group's focus is to address the issues facing the hemp seed industry, with a priority for consumer protection.

This working group also profiles the primary issues and concerns for anyone considering entry into this marketplace. Contact Jordan Gregory at [jgregory@betterseed.org](mailto:jgregory@betterseed.org), Pat Miller at [pmiller@betterseed.org](mailto:pmiller@betterseed.org), or Janae Brady at [jbrady@betterseed.org](mailto:jbrady@betterseed.org).

**Molecular Marker Working Group (MOLEMARKSC):** This working group is focused on the technical aspects of utilizing molecular markers for variety identification and as part of the process of showing distinctness for Plant Variety Protection. Projects are conducted jointly with the U.S. Plant Variety Protection Office and are on a crop-specific basis. The subcommittee meets on an as-needed basis. Contact Abigail Struxness at [astruxness@betterseed.org](mailto:astruxness@betterseed.org) and Fan-Li Chou at [flchou@betterseed.org](mailto:flchou@betterseed.org).

**Noxious Weed Working Group:** The working group focuses on the need to identify, monitor and, when necessary, control or eradicate plant species that significantly adversely affect the environment, production agriculture, conservation efforts, or otherwise cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health in an economically viable manner. Contact Pat Miller at [pmiller@betterseed.org](mailto:pmiller@betterseed.org).

**Plant Breeding Innovation Working Group (PBIWG):** Formed under the Innovation and Policy Committee, the working group develops and recommends positions related to regulatory and policy issues for seed products developed through innovative breeding technologies. Background materials on these technologies and plant breeding are also developed by the working group which meets regularly through both in-person meetings and webinars. Contact Fan-Li Chou at [flchou@betterseed.org](mailto:flchou@betterseed.org).

**Intellectual Property Rights Emerging Issues Working Group (IPREmergWG):** Formed under the IPR Committee, the IPR Emerging Issues Working Group identifies key emerging IPR issues and develops draft positions and recommendations for consideration by the IPR Committee. The working group meets on an as needed basis. Contact Abigail Struxness at [astruxness@betterseed.org](mailto:astruxness@betterseed.org) and Fan-Li Chou at [flchou@betterseed.org](mailto:flchou@betterseed.org).

**Food Safety Working Group (FOOD SAFE):** Formed in 2008 in response to California's E. coli outbreak, the group is responsible for developing and maintaining a database of research findings on food safety pathogens concerning the seed industry. In addition, the group developed ASTA's statement on testing seed for human pathogens and periodically reviews and proposes changes or amendments to the statement based on new scientific information. Members also monitor food safety incidents for potential impacts on the seed industry. Contact Ric Dunkle at [rdunkle@betterseed.org](mailto:rdunkle@betterseed.org).

**Sustainability Working Group (By invitation):** This working group, formed in 2021, represents a diverse cross-section of ASTA membership and provides input to the activities surrounding implementation of ASTA's strategic plan pillar on sustainability. The group focuses on amplifying seed sector engagement on sustainability to policy makers and the value chain at the state, federal and international levels. Contact Abigail Struxness at [astruxness@betterseed.org](mailto:astruxness@betterseed.org) and Janae Brady at [jbrady@betterseed.org](mailto:jbrady@betterseed.org).

**State Governmental Affairs Working Group (SGAWG):** The ASTA State Governmental Affairs Working Group's purpose is to 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 develops and implements strategies to ensure that the seed industry's policy positions are fully addressed and communicated. The group also explores opportunities for proactive partnerships and coalitions. Contact Pat Miller at [pmiller@betterseed.org](mailto:pmiller@betterseed.org) and Jordan Gregory at [jgregory@betterseed.org](mailto:jgregory@betterseed.org).

**Vegetable and Flower Emerging Issues Working Group (V&F EIWG):** This working group is a working group under the Vegetable and Flower Division. The V&F EIWG identifies emerging issues to the vegetable and flower sector to ensure these issues are being addressed in the appropriate ASTA committees or working groups. The EIWG reports to the V&F Division. Contact Fan-Li Chou at [flchou@betterseed.org](mailto:flchou@betterseed.org).

## COUNTRY WORKING GROUPS:

These groups provide an interactive forum for ASTA members, staff, and regional contacts in each country to discuss specific issues, identify international program goals, and implement activities specific to each of ASTA's priority markets. These include Brazil, China, India, Peru, Seed Association of the Americas, and Mexico. The groups meet via conference call throughout the year. Contact Abigail Struxness at [astruxness@betterseed.org](mailto:astruxness@betterseed.org) and Lainey Wolf at [lwolf@betterseed.org](mailto:lwolf@betterseed.org).

**Brazil Working Group (BRAZIL WG):** Phytosanitary trade barriers, re-export issues, pest lists, intellectual property rights, and emerging risks to trade are topics of special interest to this working group. Current work includes facilitating government to government and industry meetings in Brazil with the Brazilian Seed Association to develop a systems approach. Contact Lainey Wolf at [lwolf@betterseed.org](mailto:lwolf@betterseed.org).

**China Working Group (CHINA WG):** Intellectual property rights, plant variety protection, variety registration, plant breeding innovation, trade expansion and enhancement, phytosanitary measures, the Corn Seed Pilot project, and seed quality management are topics of interest to the China Working Group. Current work includes outreach with Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and Chinese seed associations, and U.S. delegation visits, and participation in China seed expos and summits. Contact Lainey Wolf at [lwolf@betterseed.org](mailto:lwolf@betterseed.org).

**India Working Group (INDIA WG):** Intellectual property rights, plant variety protection, phytosanitary issues, emerging risks to trade, trade expansion and enhancement, and seed quality management are topics of special interest to the India Working Group. Current work includes building relationships with Indian seed associations and government agencies. Contact Lainey Wolf at [lwolf@betterseed.org](mailto:lwolf@betterseed.org).

**Mexico Working Group (MEXICO WG):** Phytosanitary trade barriers, re-export issues, pest lists, and emerging risks to trade are topics of special interest to the Mexico Working Group. Current work includes hosting workshops with AMSAC (Mexican Seed Association) on phytosanitary issues, harmonization of testing methods, and promotion of UPOV 91. Contact Lainey Wolf at [lwolf@betterseed.org](mailto:lwolf@betterseed.org).

**Peru Working Group:** Phytosanitary trade barriers and ensuring Peru remains a viable seed production location for ASTA members are key priorities. Current work includes engagement with the Peru NPPO and local seed associations. Contact Lainey Wolf at [lwolf@betterseed.org](mailto:lwolf@betterseed.org).

**Seed Association of the Americas Working Group:** Phytosanitary trade barriers, intellectual property right protection, seed treatment, and plant breeding innovation are topics of special interest to the SAA Working Group, the countries of which comprise membership in the Seed Association of the Americas. Current work includes discussion of SAA priorities and participation in working groups and alignment at regional Plant Protection Organizations. Contact Lainey Wolf at [lwolf@betterseed.org](mailto:lwolf@betterseed.org).

**WTO Working Group:** This working group monitors notifications from the World Trade Organization. Most countries submit changes to their regulations and/or laws through the WTO. These changes can be critical to seed trade and associated phytosanitary requirements. The group reviews notifications related to seed, provides comments, and gives staff guidance to work with USDA APHIS and their counterparts in other countries to ensure science-based rules and regulations. Contact Ric Dunkle or Lainey Wolf at [rdunkle@betterseed.org](mailto:rdunkle@betterseed.org) or [lwolf@betterseed.org](mailto:lwolf@betterseed.org).