

Quick-Reference Guide to ASTA Meetings

Vegetable & Flower Seed Conference

This conference is the first of the calendar year and is held in late January/early February. Currently in its 51st year.

Duration/Pattern: 4 days, Saturday through Tuesday. Wednesday is reserved for the ASTA Board meeting (invitation only).

Average Attendance: Approximately 700

Who attends: Mostly vegetable seed producers and some service providers.

What Happens: The conference features cutting-edge industry and government speakers focusing on vegetable & flower industry issues, plus a networking reception and committee meetings covering a full range of topics from organic to biotechnology. The Trading Room, which is the focal point of this conference, is constantly filled to capacity with constant, all-day networking and business appointments.

Exhibitors/Sponsorships: Approximately 25 are present and cater directly to the vegetable and flower seed producers. The exhibits are part of the heavily-attended Trading Room area. The adjacent Reserved Appointment Table room allows companies to reserve a table for their exclusive use throughout the days of the conference. A full sponsorship menu is available.

Special Notes: This meeting is compact in its layout, making it a hotbed of business activity with all the key players visible in the same area constantly. It also provides an opportunity to meet with a variety of seed companies due to the ASTA Board's meeting at the end of the week.

Annual Convention

This convention is typically held in mid to late June. Currently in its 129th year.

Duration/Pattern: 5 days, Saturday through Wednesday. Thursday is reserved for the ASTA Board meeting (invitation only).

Average Attendance: 450

Who attends: All types of seed companies and service providers.

What Happens: Plenary sessions feature prominent speakers, both within and outside the seed industry, which complement a new streamlined schedule of every ASTA standing committee and division, addressing topics such as organic, international, phytosanitary, biotechnology, and more, and covering all seed commodities. There are also a number of special events, such as the Welcome Reception, Opening Breakfast, and Gala Banquet that provide an opportunity to mingle and meet members and their families.

Exhibitors/Sponsorships: Approximately 25, located in the Trading Room, mainly service providers to the seed industry. This convention has the most comprehensive sponsorship program of the three, typically featuring up to 100 different sponsoring companies.

Special Notes: This convention is the ceremonial event in which the ASTA officers rotate their positions, part of which is the installation of the new Chairman of the Board. Participants are encouraged to bring their families to enjoy the hospitality of the host city.

Farm and Lawn Seed Conference

This is a joint convention with the Western Seed Association's Annual Convention. It is held in Kansas City the first week of November and draws seed producers mainly from the Midwest who focus on turf, forage and farm seeds. The ASTA conference is in its 57th year.

Duration/Pattern: 4 days for the Western Seed's convention, 2 days for ASTA programming (Sunday/Monday).

Average Attendance: 600, 250 from ASTA membership

Who attends: Executives, sales teams, purchasers

What Happens: This convention is almost entirely trading and business appointments. ASTA events include meetings of the Farm Seed Division, Lawn Seed Division, Invasive Species Working Group, and Environmental and Conservation Seed Committee, featuring timely and relevant speakers in various industry, government and regulatory roles. Updates on activities from several regional associations are given.

Exhibitors/Sponsorships: Typically none.

Corn & Sorghum and Soybean Seed Research Conference (CSS) & Seed Expo

This is the largest ASTA event and is also the largest seed industry convention in the world. It has been located at the Hyatt Regency Chicago for over 30 years and begins in early December. This is the 66th year for the Corn & Sorghum Conference, 41st year for the Soybean Seed Research Conference, and 35th year for the Seed Expo.

Duration/Pattern: 4 days, Tuesday through Friday (registration opens one day prior). Seed Expo: 2.5 days.

Average Attendance: 2300-2600

Who attends: Executives, agronomists, researchers, sales and marketing teams, operational/logistical employees, and service providers.

What Happens: The convention comprises three elements: The Soybean Seed Research Conference, the Corn & Sorghum Seed Research Conference, and the Seed Expo. The two research conferences feature a series of industry and university presentations on contemporary issues related to the corn, sorghum and soybean trade, including biotechnology, management and production, breeding and genetics, pest management, and many more.

Exhibitors/Sponsorships: The Seed Expo features approximately 115 exhibitors and also includes several other features and services, including an Exhibitor MarketPlace where exhibitors are afforded unincumbered time with attendees and access to the hall is unrestricted, Meeting Suites for business appointments (which can be reserved by the hour or for the two days of the Seed Expo), complimentary wireless Internet access and computer stations, and a reception. Sponsorships were added in 2005 and have since been expanded.

Special Notes: This event is fast-paced and offers a tremendous opportunity to meet with customers. Many repeat attendees each year.