

# ASIAN SEED

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ASIA & PACIFIC SEED ASSOCIATION

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## ISF's New Vision

Michael Keller outlines  
a new strategy at  
WSC in Poland

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## IPR Workshop

Meeting discusses  
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## The Kyrgyz Seed Industry

Central Asian  
nation in the  
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## Seed For Thought

GNIS' Francois  
Burgaud on his lifelong  
passion for seeds

VOL.21 NO.3  
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## IPR Workshop







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Access to Genetic Resources

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# APSA's Half-Year Report

**APSA's Executive Committee held its first meeting of 2015 in Bangkok on 10-11 June. The EC considered a packed agenda which included the General Assembly in Macau, financial reports, a report by the Office Bearers' Committee on their meeting in Goa in January, along with a Congress update, and a detailed report on the progress made by the association's Activity and Crop groups.**

Last month, APSA held a two-day workshop to consider a draft paper on Intellectual Property Rights. The workshop was very well attended and by all accounts was a great success. The draft paper is now being considered by EC members and it will be uploaded onto the

APSA website on 19 June and will be available until 28 August for members to read and comment on. I urge all of you to read this important document and give us your comments, which can then be added to the paper before it is presented to the General Assembly in November.

Registration for the 2016 Asian Seed Congress (ASC) is now underway, and the secretariat reports that bookings have been coming in quickly. A detailed report on the progress made on the Congress was presented by Events Organiser Ms. Duangchai Pancom at the EC meeting. She told us that a site survey was made in May by secretariat staff, who checked out the Congress venue and hotel, as

well as the nearby hotels that are booked for APSA members. The facilities are first-class; I'm sure our members will enjoy the relaxed atmosphere and natural beauty of the Congress venue.

Also in May, I travelled to the International Seed Federation's World Seed Congress (WSC) in Krakow, Poland. Many APSA members, including EC members, attended the event. The setting for the WSC was impressive as Krakow is a very beautiful city. The event brought together seed people from around the globe, so we took the opportunity to network and reconnect with many of our important seed contacts. In addition to joining various group meetings we also joined the seed associations' meeting to work on issues of common interest.

There is a lot of work to be done before we open ASC 2016 in Goa in November; for instance, members will have the opportunity to join the China Hybrid Rice Study Tour in August, a phytosanitary study tour to the Netherlands in September and a hybrid rice tour to India in October. Study tours are becoming a popular way for APSA's members to get general information on a country's seed industry, as well as detailed information on how the phytosanitary system works or what possibilities there are for doing business there. The last study tour we made to New Zealand proved a great success and I hope that the next one to China will offer the same exciting possibilities. 🌱



Photo by John Clewley



Hybrid rice production in China




## APSA Seed Technology Study Tour to the Netherlands

### 20-26 September 2015

Jointly organised with Plantum NL, the Dutch Seed Association, this study tour offers APSA members the chance to learn about the latest advances in seed technology and seed quality assurance from visits to leading seed technology companies, seed tech labs of major Dutch seed companies, seed tech equipment makers, agricultural universities and field trials.


The tour will participate in a major seed technology industry meeting, 'Seed Meets Technology', held on 22-25 September in Seed Valley and participants will enjoy access to innovative new seed treatments, coatings and germination systems, and the latest technology for seed processing, drying, storage, hydroponics, ERP software and sustainable crop protection.

Interested? Contact Dr. N.K. Dadlani, Technical Affairs Director at [dadlani@apsaseed.org](mailto:dadlani@apsaseed.org)


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# At APSA, We Welcome All Sizes

“Progress is impossible without change,  
and those who cannot change their minds  
cannot change anything.”

George Bernard Shaw

It is now just over a year since Asian Seed was redesigned and relaunched. For everyone involved, it has been a hectic time but now after having received seven issues since the change I hope that you can see how and why we have changed APSA's flagship publication.

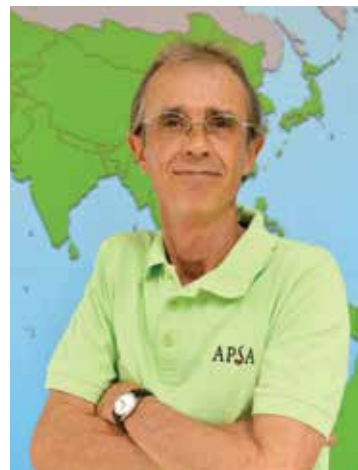
I've been in the publishing business in one form or another for 30 years, and the media landscape in that time has changed dramatically. Print publications such as newspapers have disappeared, particularly in industrialised countries, and have been replaced by electronic texts of various kinds. My son, who has just graduated from college, turns to a screen for information, while I would naturally turn to a book.

Trade associations like APSA, which for many years produced a trade magazine, are not immune to the winds of change howling through the world of media. More and more, you can see newsletter-style trade publications sprucing up their design to look more like a business magazine; sometimes, they do this so that an association

can increase its income by offering some advertising to its members and sponsors.

One of the key ideas that drove the redesign process of Asian Seed was

to try to highlight and talk to some of the characters and personalities involved in the seed business in this region. We try to do this on the writing side by letting people speak for themselves and on the visual side by showing you who they are and what they do. APSA has such a varied membership, perhaps more than any other regional seed association, which runs from sole traders to huge transnational corporations, that we must reflect this diversity of membership in our communications.



With your help and support, I hope that we can add greater depth and detail to our coverage of the seed industry. We need to make sure that the seed industry of the country in which APSA will hold its annual Congress is always featured in the run-up to that event. As editor, I need to make sure I talk to more of the key seed people as well because they are the ones who know the seed sector and all of its challenges and possibilities.

Then there are those seed markets in Asia that are little known, such as Kyrgyzstan, which features in this issue, thanks to Abduhakim Islamov and Dr. Michael Turner. We need more of these kinds of stories, as well as regular updates and features from seed associations. Every year at Congress we hold a meeting with seed associations where each association gives a summary of their work. We report the details in Asian Seed but it would be even better if we could feature several

associations in the magazine throughout the year, as we did with the 50th anniversary of the Korean Seed Association in the last issue of the magazine. Get your association in the magazine or on the APSA web site by letting us know what you are doing. If you have seed-related events like field days then let us know and we'll try to cover the event, write it up in the magazine and we'll let other members know, too.

As we have returned to producing a magazine on a regular basis, APSA's long-term advertisers have returned to support what we do and get their marketing messages out to APSA's diverse membership. We welcome new advertisers and offer generous discounts for one-year contracts; recently, we reintroduced quarter-page advertisements to cater to different kinds of seed enterprises and offered both right and left page positioning. At APSA, we welcome all sizes! 🌱





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## Sakata Seed Corp Expands Indian Operation

One of the oldest Japanese seed companies, the Sakata Seed Corporation, is the latest international seed company to announce plans to expand operations in India, in this case by investing \$15.7 million in its operations there. Japan's largest listed seed wholesaler reportedly said that the funds earmarked for investment would be used to boost its research and development activities in the country.

Chief Executive Officer Hiroshi Sakata told Bloomberg in 2010 that Sakata accounted for around 1-3 per cent of the market in Indian for hybrid F1 and open pollinated (OP) seeds but that he expected Sakata's market share to increase to 10 per cent by 2018 as demand for Sakata's hybrid seeds grows as more Indian farmers switch from OP to hybrid seeds on the back of India's fast-growing economy.

Sakata Seed, which was founded in 1913 and listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange in 1987, set up an Indian subsidiary in New Delhi in 2008, and a research centre in Bangalore in 2009. Sakata Seed India, which has around 100 employees, is headed by CEO Dr. Jai Singh; Sakata Seed India operates farmland, a research centre with over 50 employees and sales divisions across the country. An industry source said in May that four hectares of land had been acquired in Doddaballapur and would be used for seed-related R&D activities.

Sakata Seed Corporation posted earnings of \$440 million in 2014, up from \$410 million in 2013. Despite the rise in revenues, new income fell due to increased income tax expenses. The company operates three farm verticals: production and sales of vegetable seeds, flower seeds, grass seeds, vegetable and flower seedlings; bulbs and agricultural/gardening materials; and the publication of gardening literature. Sakata sells seeds to 130 countries and has a network of research, production and sales activities in 16 countries. 🌱

Sources: Bloomberg, Deccan Herald, TSE

[www.sakata.co.in](http://www.sakata.co.in)

## East-West Seed Names New CEO



The East-West Seed Group has announced the appointment of Bert van der Feltz as President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Group, effective 1 July 2015.

East-West Seed, which was founded in 1982 by Dutch seedsman Simon Groot, is one of the leading seed companies in Southeast Asia, where it has focused on serving Asian smallholder vegetable growers. The company employs 4,000 staff and operates 12 R&D stations in seven countries. In recent years, the company has expanded its operations in India, Vietnam, Myanmar and Africa.

Mr. Feltz has been with East-West Seed since 2000 and has been on the East-West Board of Management for several years. He has been part of the team that has spearheaded the internationalisation drive of the Group. Currently, East-West exports to 60 countries worldwide. 🌱

## Monsanto-Syngenta M&A Saga Rumbles On

Global seed leader Monsanto continues its attempt to court Syngenta with the offer of a "constructive engagement with Syngenta" (read: merger), which according to a statement released by Monsanto after it had sent a second letter to propose a merger.

The second letter included a \$2 billion reverse break-up fee, which Monsanto said would be paid if Monsanto failed to get the required global regulatory approvals for the two giant corporations to merge. Media reports suggested that Syngenta's response was to reject the new offer and statements from the company said that the price and regulatory undertakings offered by Monsanto remained 'inadequate.'

In a new twist to the long-running saga, the US National Farmers Union (NFU) released to the public a resolution from its board of directors which opposed the possible merge as it would combine the world's top seed company with the top pesticide producer, thereby raising issues of higher prices for seeds and lessened competition in the seed market. NFU President Roger Johnson told news agencies that such an entity would further concentrate economic power and reduce choice, which was a problem that farmers have had to deal with more and more in recent years. 🌱

Source: Agencies

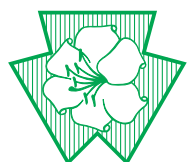
## Bayer CropScience Buys SeedWorks

Bayer CropScience has announced its purchase of SeedWorks India, a seed company that specialises in breeding, production and marketing of hybrid seeds of tomatoes, hot peppers, okra and gourds. The purchase price was not divulged but in 2012-13 SeedWorks posted sales of \$13.5 million. According to Bayer, the acquisition will enable the company to continue its market leading position in okra, hot peppers and tomatoes. The deal will be formally completed in July and after the operations of SeedWorks are integrated into Bayer, all SeedWorks' varieties will be marketed under the Nunhems brand. 🌱

Source: Agencies



Dr. Jai Singh, CEO of Sakata Seed India



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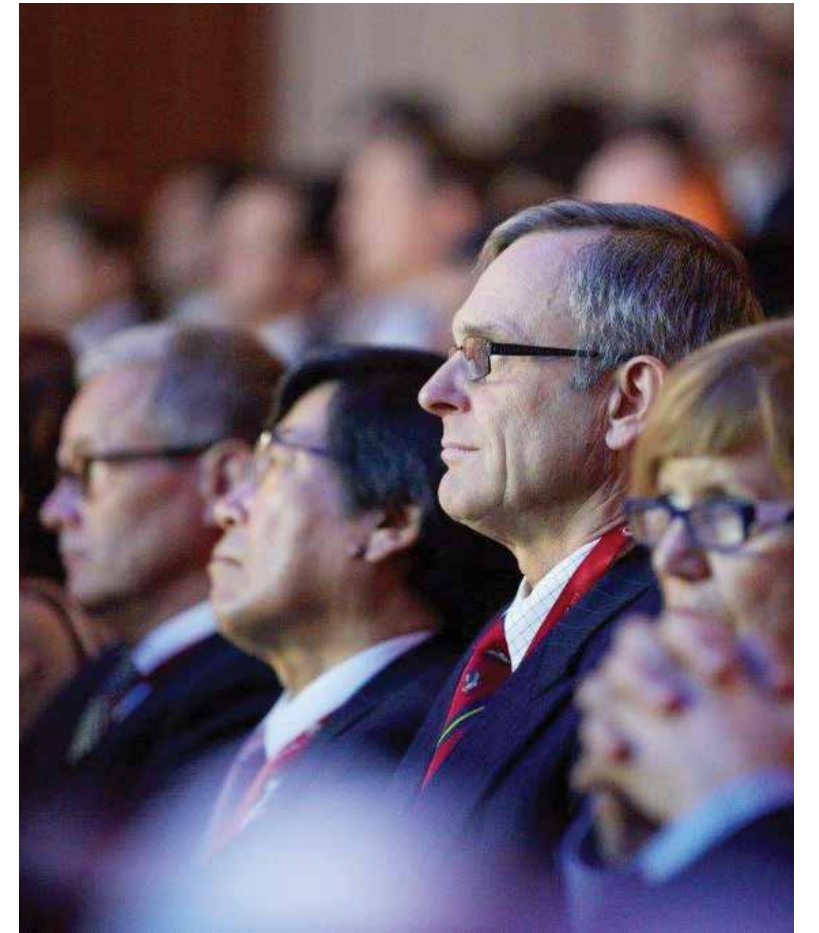




Photo by John Clewley



ISF's Michael Keller at ASC 2014



# ISF's New Vision for the Global Seed Industry

**The 2015 International Seed World Seed Congress, held on 25-27 May in Krakow, Poland, this year attracted 1,600 delegates from some 64 countries, which was the highest number of attendees in its 66-year history.**



At the colourful opening ceremony, the new ISF Secretary General Michael Keller revealed the ISF's revised vision, mission and values, which he said would form the basis of the federation's five-year strategic plan.

He added that ISF's vision was to make sure that the best quality seed is available to all to support sustainability and food security; its mission was to create the best environment for the global movement of seed (and therefore promote plant breeding and innovation); and its values were rooted in collaboration, integrity, innovation and sustainability.

"ISF is changing – the environment in which we operate is not the same as it was 50, 20 or even 10 years ago," noted Mr. Keller. He said that this presented the federation and the seed industry with a "lot of challenges" but he was confident that they could be changed into opportunities.

Since he was appointed Secretary General in June 2014, he has implemented a more strategic approach to ISF's work, including action plans across the ISF's committees and groups in order to tackle critical issues such as plant breeding and innovation, harmonisation of phytosanitary measures, intellectual property protection and seed applied technologies. He underlined the importance of global collaboration and building alliances with stakeholders worldwide, adding that the ISF must also work to collaborate with national and regional associations.

The ISF President Alvaro Eyzaguirre, the ISF's first from South America, revealed to delegates the Congress theme of 'Sharing Passion for Nature', which he said described the shared passion, pride and purpose across the diverse seed sector.

The final keynote speaker at the WSC opening ceremony and

representing the host nation, was Boguslaw Rzeznicki who welcomed all delegates to the event by saying that he was certain that the Congress would help to establish and strengthen relationships between global representatives of the seed sector and the Polish seed industry. He noted that Poland had, in comparison to other Northern European countries, quite a large percentage (12 per cent) of the working population involved in agriculture. He said that Poland had to produce more food and bring more varieties to the marketplace that are better adapted to climatic and environmental changes and are IPR protected. To this end, he said that work is under way to improve the access and benefit sharing of genetic resources as part of Poland's commitment to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources.

*The ISF World Seed Congress 2016 will be held in Uruguay between 15-18 May 2016. For more information: [www.worldseed.org](http://www.worldseed.org)*





Photos by John Clewley

# APSA IPR Workshop

**A** APSA convened an important workshop on intellectual property rights (IPR) on 18-19 May in Bangkok to discuss in detail APSA's draft position paper on IPR. Members of the Activity Group on Intellectual Property Rights & Biodiversity (AG-IPR&BD), the Intellectual Property Rights Working Group (IPRWG) and Executive Committee (EC) attended the event and they were joined by 25 delegates from national seed associations, as well as international and regional seed industry group representatives.

The two-day workshop was structured in such a way that the first day was spent on providing the

necessary information and background on IPR and related agreements, conventions, treaties and policies, in addition to considering and discussing the views of international and regional seed industry groups.

On Day 2 APSA's representatives, mainly NSA delegates, discussed the draft position paper in breakout groups to consider all the issues raised in the presentations and discussions in Day 1. The two-day sessions were completed after a set of recommendations on the IPR paper was presented to the meeting.

Dr. Francois Burgaud, Chair of the AG-IPR&BD made the opening remarks to the plenary session in which he explained some of the work the committee had done in developing the draft position paper. He also told attendees that it was important that they "try to take into account the reality of the seed sector in Asia." He added a word of advice for meeting participants: "Does the [position] paper answer the questions that members may have on IP and biodiversity?"

Dr. N. Anand, a member of the IPRWG, then explained the genesis of the IPR position paper. "APSA has continuously worked on IPR issues," he said. He also noted that the IPR working group was set up by former APSA President Uday Singh in 2012; the draft paper had emerged from the work this group had done. He proposed a schedule for the draft paper (see page

17), with the final aim of presenting it at the General Assembly meeting at ASC 2015 in Goa in November.

The next speaker, Vice Secretary General of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) Peter Button, introduced himself and the role of the agency by saying that the "UPOV system is suitable for the whole world." His colleague, Mr. Jun Koide, UPOV's Regional Technical Officer for Asia, then outlined the work of the UPOV, how the system operated, and the situation for Asian countries in terms of IPR.

Dr. Nguyen Thanh Minh of the Vietnam Seed Trade Association then gave an example of UPOV implementation in Asia by recounting Vietnam's experience of implementing the UPOV 1991 Act





Dr. Francois Burgaud



Ms. Anke van den Hurk



Dr. Stephen Smith



Break out group



Mr. Huib Ghijsen



Ms. Akiko Nagano



Mr. Jun Koide



Dr. Marcel Bruins

provisions. He said that the major benefit was that as PVP applications increased farmers had access to the latest varieties that fetched a high price in the market, so they were able to raise their incomes.

Following a video presentation on the access and benefit sharing of genetic resources from the International Treaty of Plant Genetic Resources for Food & Agriculture (ITPGRFA), Ms. Anke van den Hurk of Plantum NL looked at the implications of the Nagoya Protocol for the seed industry and APSA's IPR policy. She urged those in the Asian seed industry to take the issue of IPR seriously. "Do you want others to decide IPR issues or do you want to have some input, some say in the discussion on IPR?" she said.

ISF Consultant Mr. Huib Ghijsen, a legal expert on IPR issues related to seeds, outlined a broad picture of the global seed industry, while regional views were presented on Europe by Dr. Carlos Godinho (Community Plant Variety Office), and on Asia by Ms. Akiko Nagano (East Asia Plant Variety Protection Forum).

Dr. Marcel Bruins, representing CropLife Asia, considered the seed industry and IPR from a company perspective. As a former Secretary General of the International Seed Federation, he noted that discussions

have been held between ISF and UPOV over the creation of an international system of cooperation. He believed that "if we wish to safeguard access for all Asian farmers ... UPOV 91 should be adopted by Asian countries."

Dr. Stephen Smith completed the Day 1 presentations with his on the seed industry and IPR. A round table discussion featuring all the speakers on Day 1 was then held with questions from the other participants.



## Getting Down to Business

On Day 2, Dr. Arvind Kapur went through the draft policy paper with participants and he explained that in his view the seed industry in the Asia-Pacific region was unique, "not many companies know about IPR issues ... and the market [in Asia] is unique in that there are small, medium and large companies." He added that the demographics were different in Asia when compared to Europe or the USA, so that some 60 per cent of the population in India was involved with agriculture, many at the subsistence level. But he cautioned that there were contentious issues such as farmers' exemption that needed to be discussed and considered carefully.

The workshop was then divided into two breakout groups: one under the title PVP, UPOV and Other Forms

of Protection (convened by Dr. Anand); and the other under the title Intellectual Property Rights of Plant Genetic Resources, Plant Breeders' Rights, Farmers' Rights & Patents (convened by Ms. Hurk). Each group made a set of recommendations, which were presented to the workshop and incorporated into the overall recommendations. Dr. Kapur summarised the presentations for the workshop, while Dr. N.K. Dadlani made closing remarks in which he said that great effort had already gone into the IPR position paper and that he was looking forward to the paper being presented at the General Assembly at ASC 2015 in Goa, India in November.

## Timeline for Adoption of Draft IPR Position Paper

11 June	Consideration of draft by EC
19 June	Draft uploaded on APSA website for members consultation
28 August	End of consultation period
11 September	Consideration of members' feedback and comments by IPRWG
25 September	EC approves draft for circulation among APSA's members
7 October	Draft included in GAM documents circulated to members
19 November	Paper considered by General Assembly for adoption
30 November	Following adoption, paper displayed in public domain

*The IPR Workshop was organised with the financial assistance of the Groupement National Interprofessionnel des Semences et Plants (GNIS)*



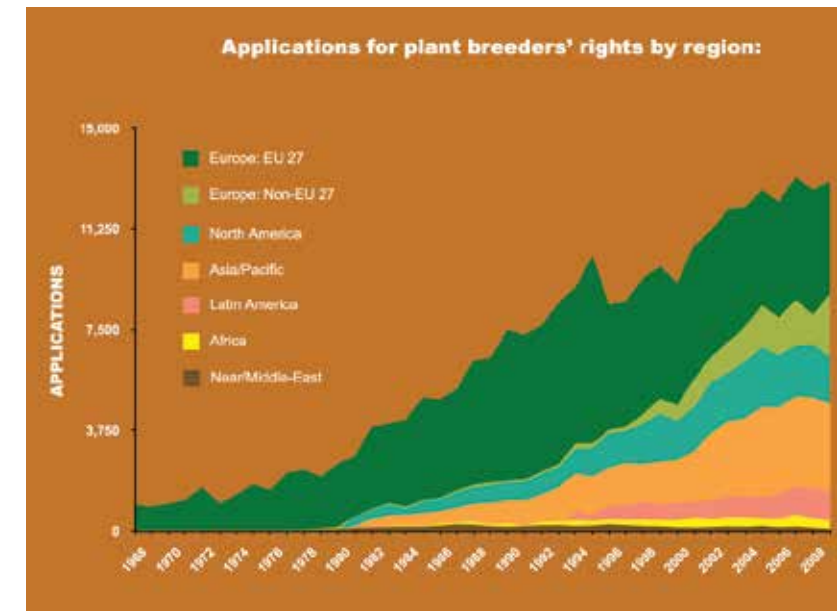


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## UPOV Explained



Source: UPOV



Mr. Peter Button

The International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) is an intergovernmental organisation based in Geneva, Switzerland. UPOV was established in 1961 by the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (i.e. the "UPOV Convention").

UPOV's Vice Secretary-General Peter Button explained to Asian Seed magazine that UPOV operates "an international system providing protection for breeders so that they can invest in new varieties." The aim he said was to encourage plant breeding by granting breeders of new plant varieties an intellectual property right: the breeder's right. Mr. Button also stressed that UPOV in effect supported innovation. "The breeder has protection across countries that have joined UPOV and access to foreign markets."

He did, however, caution that for a company to benefit from UPOV, the country in which it operates needs to be a UPOV member. He said that 72 countries have signed up as UPOV members; from APSA's region, China, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore are full UPOV members. Of the 17 countries currently implementing UPOV, countries from the region include India, Malaysia and some Central Asian countries like Tajikistan and Kazakhstan. The

final category was of those countries that have requested assistance to develop laws based on UPOV, which included Thailand, Indonesia, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos and the Seychelles. "There are still a lot of countries [in the APSA region] that are not yet members of UPOV," he said. "So, I think these countries need to decide for themselves what to do." He added that the benefits of UPOV membership are manifold and they included:

- Increased breeding activities;
- Greater availability of improved varieties;
- Increased number of new varieties;
- Diversification of types of breeders (private breeders, researchers)
- Increased number of foreign new varieties, encouraging the development of a new industry competitiveness on foreign markets; and
- Improved access to foreign plant varieties and enhanced domestic breeding programmes.

UPOV Mission Statement: "To provide and promote an effective system of plant variety protection, with the aim of encouraging the development of new varieties of plants, for the benefit of society."

More information from: [www.upov.int](http://www.upov.int)



# How to Protect Your Seeds

Jack Metzelaar, APSA Treasurer and VP Sales Asia, HM Clause



Photo by John Clewley

**W**hat is the definition of stealing? If you look it up in a dictionary it is defined simply as: to take another person's property without permission or legal right and without intending to return it. So if I go to a shop and take a bag of rice and leave without paying, this is clearly stealing and the shopkeeper has every right to call the police.

But how does this situation compare to the seed industry? If I go to a seed production area and I visit the seed production field of one of my competitors, can I just take samples of the parent plants there and use them for myself? Well, no I can't. Why? Because the company with the seed production field did not protect its material; in fact, in most cases the contract binding the farmer to the seed company stipulates that the material (seed) can't be given to anyone except the company that provided it.

The situation is particularly problematic in Asia, where we are only beginning to realise that serious breeding companies are being followed by shadows. These shadows have found a way to make a quick profit without investing any major resources. Seed breeders generally invest between 10 to 18 per cent of their income in research, which represents a huge investment, because as we all know too well, a new variety takes many years to breed and develop.

## Lessons from the Software Industry

In fact, the seed industry is very similar to the software industry. The little seeds we breed and produce are very similar to the hard-disk of a computer. Each one contains the result of innovations and hard work and provides a profit to the users. As with the seed industry, the software industry is followed by shadows, but the software sector is well ahead of the seed sector. Software companies protect their ideas and unite to fight against illegal copiers. They make sure that they have the tools through proper legislation and government support to at least be able to force the users of illegal software into avoiding using pirated software.

The Business Software Alliance (BSA) administers anti-piracy enforcement and educational programmes in over 60 countries worldwide, helping its members protect their intellectual property and driving innovation in the market by taking legal action against commercial end-user license infringement. In 2012 alone, the BSA investigated over 15,000 reports of software piracy across the globe. The BSA investigates such reports through a combination of internal resources, and an extensive network of over 80 law firms around the world. Through its education and advocacy programmes, BSA empowers end-users to take action by reporting software piracy directly and confidentially to the BSA.



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# Anti-Infringement Bureau for IPR on Plant Material

It has taken time but the seed industry is starting to fight back. At the Asian Seed Congress in Macau in November 2014, the Anti-Infringement Bureau (AIB) for IPR on Plant Material made a presentation about its work, which began in 2011 when the bureau was set up with the mission “to prevent and fight infringements of the Intellectual Property Rights of our members.” The bureau has links with national seed associations and IP authorities in several countries.

The bureau has so far mainly been active for its US and European members, although the ASC presentation

indicates that the bureau sees the APSA region as important. One of the most celebrated recent piracy cases that the AIB fought and won in the (Italian) courts concerned Rijk Zwaan’s lettuce variety Ballerina, which the company suspected had been copied by Agriseeds, an Italian seed company, and marketed as the Criolla variety. DNA tests showed that the Criolla was indeed copied from Rijk Zwaan’s Ballerina variety and so the company began legal proceedings against Agriseeds in the Italian courts. After some time, the courts ruled in favour of Rijk Zwaan and awarded damages and costs as well.

## AIB’s Definition of Infringement or Piracy

Infringement or piracy, is the (re)production and selling of seeds/plants of protected varieties or the use of protected product names and logos or packaging material and variety pictures without the explicit authorisation of the rights holder.

## What to Do Next?

So what can seed breeders do? Obviously, we don’t have the enormous resources of a software giant like Microsoft or Apple but we can protect as a first action, so that breeders rights are enforced, although you need to make sure that your material is properly protected. We have to make all players aware that it is wrong to illegally reproduce seed (advocacy and education). In some cases, even the importance of improving genetics is not really appreciated by traders and farmers. Why would I buy expensive seed, if I can buy the same seed for one third of the price? They do not realise that the seed equivalent of a cheap hard disk might be stolen, empty or faulty.

Finally, we have to find ways to enforce our IP rights. Now here we have a challenge. Asia is huge and a very diverse continent. Nearly every country has a different approach to plant variety protection and there are different levels of understanding of the importance of breeder’s rights in the process of improving the availability of food for their populations.

I believe that one of the main concerns of members of APSA in the coming years will be how to unite through National Seed Associations to create awareness in government circles and consumers about the importance of Intellectual Property protection and the existence of breeding companies that contribute strongly to feeding Asian populations with ever healthier and readily available food.

The APSA IPR workshop that was held in Bangkok is one way forward on the road to create a united voice for the seed industry in the region. The results of this type of meeting, combined with the support that APSA can give its members are major steps forward in keeping the seed industry viable, profitable and sustainable in the long term. After all, we should not forget that the software captured in our small seed feeds an ever-growing population. Not only in Asia, but in the whole world. 🌱



## Kyrgyz Seed Industry

By Abduhakim Islamov and Dr. Michael Turner

**K**yrgyzstan is located in Central Asia, bordering Kazakhstan in the north, China in the east, Tajikistan in the south and Uzbekistan in the west. The country is located in a mountainous region, with some 70 per cent of the land area situated at more at than 2,000 metres above sea level. The continental climate of the country brings both hot, dry summers and cold, snowy winters.

The country’s land area is close to 20 million ha, of which about 1.2 million ha is arable land and 800,000 ha is irrigated. Nearly 10 million ha is used as natural grazing land. The main crops in Kyrgyzstan are cereals (520 thousand ha), forage crops like alfalfa and sainfoin (300 thousand ha), corn (100 thousand ha), potato (80 thousand ha) and cotton, oilseeds, sugar beet, vegetables and fruit. The agricultural sector provides employment for over half the population, and contributes about 15 per cent to the GDP.

In 1992, following independence from the USSR, a land reform programme was introduced to re-distribute the arable land and assets of 400 collective farms (or *kolkhoz*) and state farms (or *sovkhoz*), accounting for 75 per cent of the arable land, to the private sector. As a result, over 300,000 farms, various associations and cooperatives were established. The remaining 25 per cent of the arable land, previously connected to state farms, was retained as ‘reserve’ land for seed production and livestock breeding. Some of this land is now being farmed on long-term leases by agricultural enterprises and some of it is part of a Land Redistribution Fund, which offers annual leasing to farmers.

The loss of traditional economic links with other regions of the former USSR, the deterioration in the business environment of the country, as well as land and agrarian reform, is reflected in the changing structure of agriculture and the seed sector, in particular, as new cropping patterns emerge that support the food security of the Republic.





Photo by Abduhakim Islamov

# Challenges After the Soviet Era

The story of the seed sector in Kyrgyzstan is typical for a post-soviet country; before the collapse of the Soviet Union a seed production system, based on the principles of public contracts and sufficient funding, already existed, and the country was a major seed producer in the USSR due to its favourable climate and geographic location. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, the production and availability of quality certified seed has declined so much that the domestic seed market has to rely on imports.

To meet the challenge of a changing seed market, over the past 20 years the government has enacted a new regulatory and legal framework that conforms to international standards in the field of the protection of plant breeders' rights, crop variety testing, certification and seed quality control, and improved (logistical base) regulatory organisations. However, seed production itself has not kept pace nor developed sufficiently; as a result, export-oriented seed crops have declined dramatically.

There are about 150 agricultural enterprises registered as seed production farms, of which 22 are state seed enterprises. Of course, there are some enterprises outside the formal list of seed farms that also produce seeds and the government is being urged to clarify the rules and procedures to provide a complete list of quality seed producers that is open and transparent.

About a third of all farmers use their own saved seeds, get them from friends or relatives, or buy them from informal sources, which means that the seeds are of unknown variety and of poor quality. Seed shops in towns and cities distribute seed from private companies, while production farms sell directly to farmers, although the latter are often far from commercial centres from which seeds can be marketed to farmers; however, the public profile of these producers is low, meaning that farmers are often unaware of what is available. Field days and related events are one way to overcome this knowledge gap in the market; some events have been set up by international organisations working on market development, and after training, local seed producers, perhaps with private sector support, could run these events themselves and thereby offer farmers their products directly.

Over the past decade, private foreign seed companies have begun to distribute hybrid seeds in Kyrgyzstan, and their involvement has spurred growth in cultivation as well as interest in contract seed production for re-export. While there have been a number of seed initiatives by organisations like the FAO, the involvement of the private sector in the domestic market and in seed production for re-export offers the most potential.

# International Seed Trade

In the past Kyrgyzstan was a major producer and supplier of seed to the former Soviet Republics. Annually, it supplied about 5,000 to 5,500 tons of hybrid corn seed to Central Asia and Caucasian Republics, 5,000 to 6,000 tons of alfalfa seed to former Soviet Republics, and 10,000 to 12,000 tons of sugar beet seed to Belorussia, Russia and Kazakhstan. However, seed production levels rationalised and declined gradually due to the lack of external markets.

At present the seed imports exceed exports. About 80 per cent of vegetable seed is annually imported from European or other countries. At the same time only 500 tons of alfalfa seed is sold annually to Tajikistan, Azerbaijan and Russia.

In Kyrgyzstan, seed exports and imports are duty free according to the legislation. Most seed trade is carried out by the seed farms, which sell their stock to other farmers interested in buying seeds. The export of seeds from Kyrgyzstan is largely unregulated.



## Important Seed-Related Development Projects in Kyrgyzstan

The World Bank funded 'Agricultural Support Services Project' (ASSP, 1998-2008) for which it provided investment support to plant breeding, variety testing and seed quality control as well as financial support to the operations of the Seed Association of Kyrgyzstan (SAK) and the establishment of the Community Seed Fund as a mechanism for low-cost seed supply at the community level.

The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA, 2004-2011) supported the development of the Kyrgyz seed industry. Prior to this, the European Union provided technical assistance during 2000-2003 complementary to investment support provided by the World Bank's ASSP.

The USAID funded Seed Sector Support Program (2011-2013) provided 14 selected seed farms with agricultural equipment, technical and business assistance and training.

The FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation) has also supported a number of new of projects, including one to provide high quality seeds of superior varieties and hybrids of different crops to small-scale farmers. It also assisted in creating national concepts for the development of the seed sector.

The JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2013-2018) has implemented its Project for Promotion of Exportable Vegetable Seed Production, which aims to strengthen the capacity of vegetable seed producers by improving production skills and the capacity for the seed industry to meet international demand.





This illustration is Shin Yun-bok's 'Dan-opungjeong' which is Korean genre painting in the second half of the 18th Century.

## Beyond Seeds Share the World

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## Legislation and Key Seed Institutions

### Legislation:

Over past 20 years, a new regulatory and legal framework has been established that conforms to international standards in terms of plant breeders' rights, crop variety testing, certification and seed quality control, and improved logistical base regulatory organisations.

Plant breeding, seed production and seed trade are regulated by:

- Seed Law, #7, adopted 17 June 1997 (with amendments on 4 June 2005; 8 January 2007).
- Article 6 states that everyone has the right to produce seeds, as long as the producers have an agreement with the owners of the variety and acknowledge the breeder's rights.
- Law "On the Legal Protection of Selection

Achievements" (UPOV Convention 1991) enacted in 1998; every other year amendments have been made to the law.

- Law on Plant Quarantine (1998) and Regulations (2000).
- Law on Pesticides and Plant Protection (2003).
- 5) Regulation on "Seed farms of Kyrgyz Republic" enacted by government decree (#697, 2006).

According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Management (MoAWR), until 1997, the production of seed and planting crop materials was licensed. In 2005, the licensing requirement was removed to avoid restrictions on seed sector development. MoAWR has jurisdiction over all key institutions responsible for the seed sector's operations.

### Key Institutions Include:

- MoAWR's Seed Production Unit
- Republican State Seed Inspectorate (RSSI)
- State Center for Plant Variety Testing and Genetic Resources (SCPVTGR)
- State Inspection Service on Phytosanitary Security (the only authorised body for quarantine issues; note that all seed lots for either import or export must undergo phytosanitary procedures)
- State Department for Chemistry and Plant Protection
- The Republican State Seed Inspectorate (RSSI) is responsible for seed quality control and certification
- The Central Seed Laboratory in Bishkek is ISTA accredited (since 2005)
- Kyrgyzstan is a member of the OECD seed scheme for cereals, sugar and fodder beets, legumes and grasses

The State Center for Plant Variety Testing and Genetic Resources has 14 variety testing stations and plots in all crop production zones.

The National Genebank for agricultural crops is responsible for variety testing and registration, based on VCU and DUS trials.

Seed-related research is undertaken by two institutes under the Kyrgyz National Agrarian University: Crop Research Institute (cereals, maize and sugar beet); and the Research Institute of Livestock and Pastures (legumes and grasses). Despite funding scarcity, local breeding work is carried out to develop new varieties of grain and forage crops, but breeding development is hindered by the absence of royalty collection for protected varieties despite the enactment of a favourable legal framework.

The Seed Association of Kyrgyzstan (SAK) was established in 1999. Today, SAK has 67 members. SAK's main task is to represent the interests of its members and to strengthen the technical base and knowledge of its members. One important role is to provide an 'international window' for the Kyrgyz seed industry and facilitate contacts with overseas suppliers, for example, in making bulk purchases.

[www.sak.kg](http://www.sak.kg)

### National Seed Organisations and International Membership

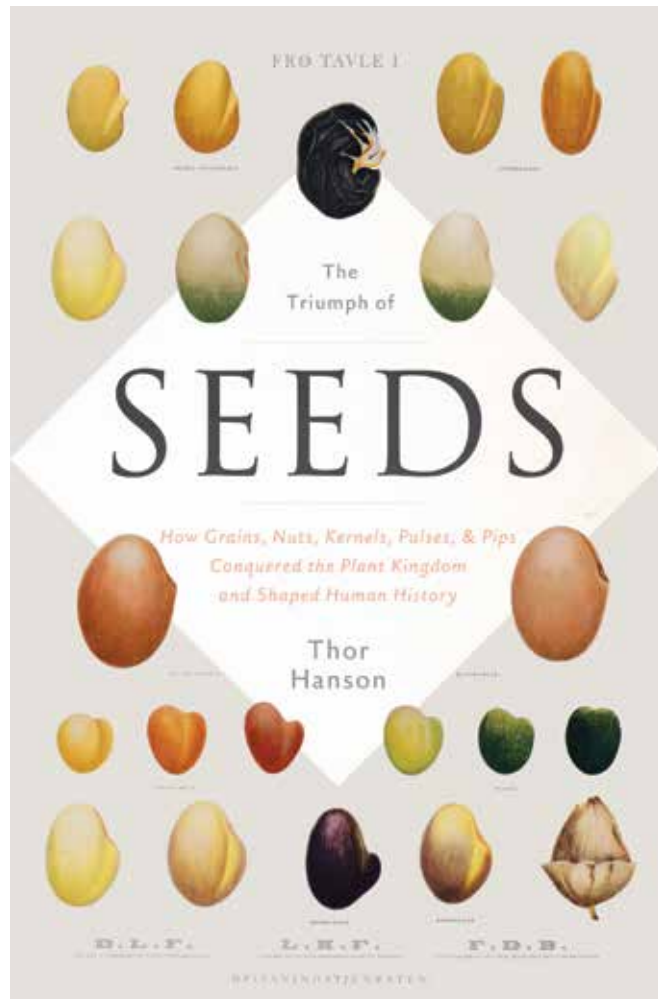
Kyrgyzstan is a member of major international organisations including the International Seed Testing Association (ISTA), International Union for Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) seed schemes.

Kyrgyzstan has been a member of EPPO (European Plant Protection Organisation) since 2000 and ratified the IPPC (International Plant Protection Convention) on 11 December 2003.

Kyrgyzstan is a member of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), based in Tehran and of the ECO Seed Association (ECOSA); the latter is also promoting the goal of regional harmonisation. Commercial contacts with Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan are limited and it is the CIS countries which provide the most promising commercial potential because of the historical connection and the ease of working in Russian. Hence, harmonisation and trade promotion within the CIS community is likely to have better prospects, and benefits, in the short term. 🌱



# Triumph of the Seeds



almendro, an important rain-forest tree species that is found in Central America. He describes the surfeit of seeds from the tree that are basically very desirable packages of food that are covered by a shell almost as hard as tempered steel. He notes those attracted to the almendro tree, from seed-eating animals (led by lots of rodents), to predators like jaguars (and humans), to birds and bats – all of them drawn to the tree’s seeds.

One aspect of this tree’s abundant seed production is to disperse seeds away from the parent tree (falling under the shade of a parent offers no future for a potential offspring as there will be no space to grow) by enticing potential distributors to pick up seeds and carry them off. Tree seeds like this are cannily designed with layers of carbohydrates, sweet fleshy pulp and different kinds of aromatic and sugary gum on the seed but the pit (the seed inside) is hard and indigestible so that the seed feeders must carry them away from the parent plant to a safe place to eat without being eaten by a predator.

Hanson cites several interesting examples to make his point; for instance, the Kalahari Desert tamma (ancestor to the watermelon) uses its high water content to attract animals to act as seed vendors but it makes sure they don’t eat anything until the seeds are ready by making the young flesh very bitter.

The author explores the origins of seed evolution, the variety of shapes, colours and sizes and the strategies seeds employ to survive, along the way noting that seed plants make up 90 per cent of the world’s flora, that those two breakfast staples, coffee and bread, come from seeds. If you fried an egg with your bread you probably used oil derived from the energy stored in a seed (sunflower, rape or olive, for example) to cook it. He investigates why chili peppers are hot, what caffeine does for coffee beans (hint: it drives away unwanted animals and pests) and why fruit tastes so good.

Along the way on his journey to the heart (or pit) of the seed, he talks to experts about desiccation, dormancy and delayed germination, and visits heirloom seed farms and seed banks.

So, the next time you open a packet of seeds, take a moment to ponder the little specs sitting in your hand, because each one is an elegant self-contained genetic package, designed to survive and prosper. Without them, our world would look very different, as would the food on our dinner plates.

The Triumph of Seeds is published by Basic Books of the USA and is available on line. Visit: [www.basicbooks.com](http://www.basicbooks.com) 🍌

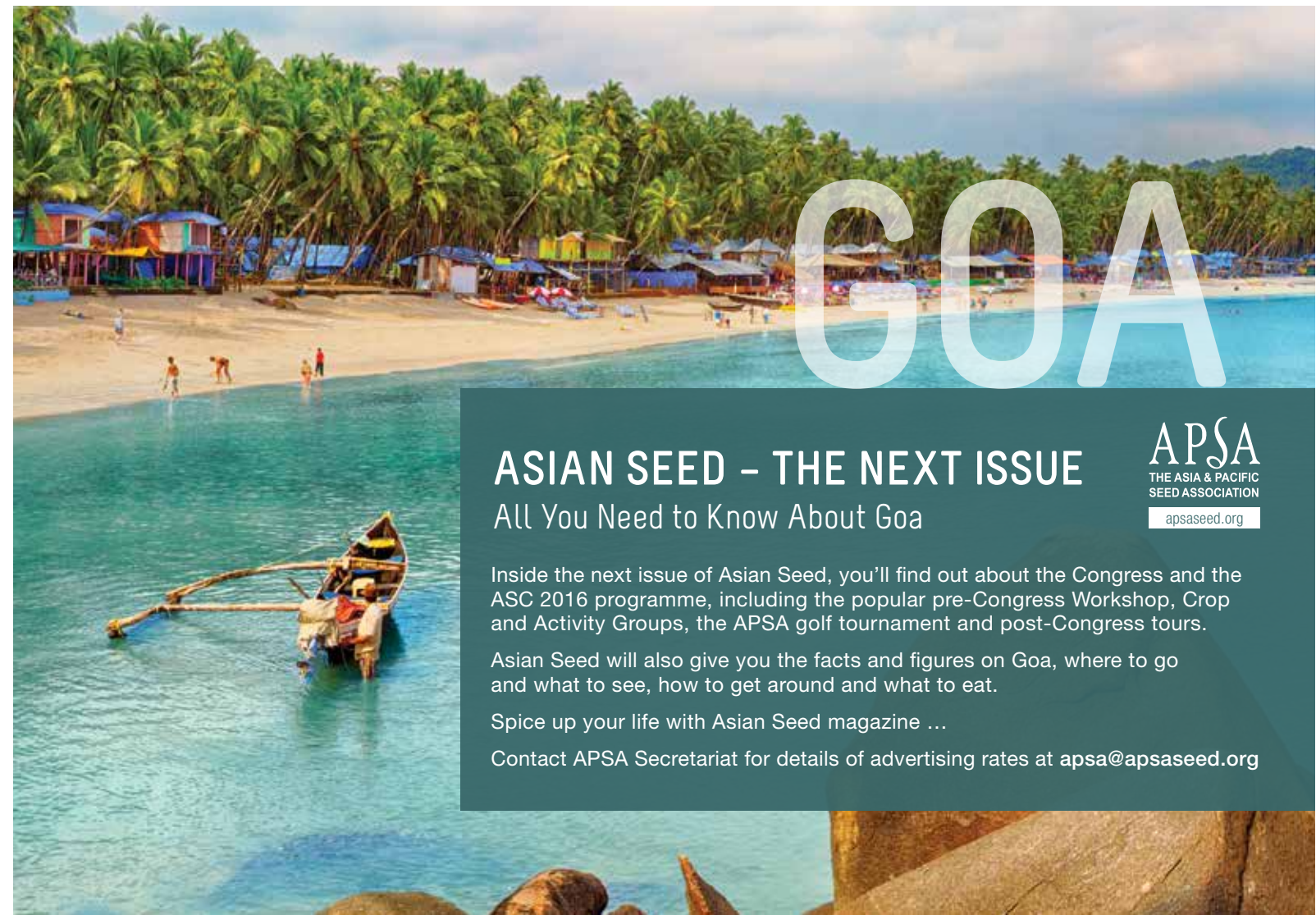
**S**eeds are an essential part of our lives, from the coffee we drink to the cotton clothes we wear, to the spices in our food to the cosmetics people wear on their faces. They are, as author Thor Hanson enthuses in his highly enjoyable book, “Quite literally the stuff of life ... [and] the basis of diets, economies and lifestyles around the globe.”

Like Jonathan Silvertown, who wrote the excellent natural history of seeds, ‘The Invisible Orchard’ (reviewed in Volume 20, issue 2 of Asian Seed), Hanson has the gift of making complex biological processes easy to understand and he writes in an engaging prose style, apart from over-cutsy asides with his seed-crazy son, Noah, that suits his obvious enthusiasm for all things related to seeds.

But what energises Hanson’s prose and takes it above a typical pop science book is the way he is able to link the ways plants and humans (and lots of other interesting critters) use seeds in their lives. He has the experience, too, of doing his graduate research on the

## Triumph of the Seeds Fact Box

- The word ‘seed’ appears in more than 300 English words and phrases, from the obvious and well-known seed-corn (grain saved for planting) to the less well-known hag-seeds (the children of a witch).
- About 352,000 kinds of plants use seeds to reproduce; seed plants make up 90 per cent of the world’s flora.
- Grains make up more than half of all the calories consumed by humans and cover 70 per cent of all cultivated land on the planet, while seeds in the form of peas, beans and nuts provide over 45 per cent of the global protein consumption.
- Wheat, descended from wild native grasses in the Middle East, now covers more cultivated land than any other crop.
- Poisons found in seeds include some of the world’s deadliest compounds, including hemlock (from which the Greek philosopher Socrates died) and hellebore (which may have poisoned Alexander the Great).
- The record for the oldest viable seed is held by a Judean palm, nicknamed ‘Methuselah’, which lay dormant for 2,000 years before germinating and growing into a healthy tree.
- A single double-coconut from a coco de mare tree can weigh more than 30kgs, 11 orders of magnitude larger than the seed of an orchid.
- Coffee beans are the second-most traded commodity (only oil generates more annual revenue).
- The single-wing design of the Javan cucumber seed inspired early aviators and led ultimately to the development of the B-2 stealth bomber.



## ASIAN SEED – THE NEXT ISSUE

All You Need to Know About Goa

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THE ASIA & PACIFIC  
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Inside the next issue of Asian Seed, you’ll find out about the Congress and the ASC 2016 programme, including the popular pre-Congress Workshop, Crop and Activity Groups, the APSA golf tournament and post-Congress tours.

Asian Seed will also give you the facts and figures on Goa, where to go and what to see, how to get around and what to eat.

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# Asian Seed Congress 2015 – Goa Update

**A team from APSA's Secretariat, led by Events Organiser Duangchai Pancom, visited the site of this year's Congress in early May to meet with staff from the Congress hotel venue, The Grand Hyatt, Goa\* and to inspect all the facilities to ensure they meet the expectations of APSA's members.**

On 4 May, the APSA team was shown the main areas of the Grand Hyatt to be used for exhibition booths, private trading tables and private meeting rooms (including deluxe suites to be used as private meeting rooms) by Ms. Savneet Sachdev, Hyatt's Senior Events Manager. The different room categories available for members at the Grand Hyatt were surveyed; and as the hotel is low rise and features different buildings, it was noted that everyone staying there would have easy access to the garden and beach.

The team also inspected other areas of the hotel to be given over to the Congress, including the ballroom and Secretariat facilities, as well as the rest-points for tea and coffee, and the lunch area. During the inspections of the Hyatt's facilities, the APSA team checked out all the facilities, including the seven restaurants and bars in the hotel, the sailing school and the garden and beachfront. The hotel has a reputation for fine dining at outlets such as the Indian restaurant Chulha, a patisserie called Confeitaria and the centerpiece of the Grand Lobby, the Bay View Lounge with its spectacular view over Bambolim Bay.

The hotel garden will be the venue for the Cocktail Night and the Inaugural Ceremony. The setting of these eagerly-anticipated APSA social events

will certainly be picturesque and relaxing for all participants.

On 5 May, the team visited the three alternative hotels that have blocked bookings for APSA members: Bambolim Beach Resort, Chances Resort & Casino and Cidade de Goa Resort. Bambolim Beach Resort is a 10-minute walk down the beach in front of the Grand Hyatt, while Cidade de Goa is further down the coast. All the hotels will connect to the venue site by shuttle bus/car and are close by.

The following day, the APSA team went on a half-day tour of Panjim, the nearest city to the ASC 2015 site to view the local market (famous for fruit and spices) and to visit the various religious buildings and the Latin quarter, with its old-style Portuguese homes, and to try out the delicious local Goan cuisine.

The tour was completed with a visit to the Lalit Golf and Spa Resort, which is located about 60km away from the Grand Hyatt Goa and is reached via a scenic drive through lush mountains and valleys. The course is spectacularly located right by the sea, and is popular with Indian film directors who have made at least 15 'Bollywood' hit films at the resort.

*Hotel bookings can be made from a link on the APSA website: [www.apsaseed.org](http://www.apsaseed.org).*

*\*Note: There are two Grand Hyatt Hotels in Goa (one north and one south). ASC 2015 will be held in North Goa in Bambolim Bay at the Grand Hyatt, Goa (near the Goa University).*





# EC Meets in Bangkok

**The 63rd APSA Executive Committee (EC) Meeting was held in Bangkok at the Anantara Siam Hotel on 10-11 June 2015. A full two days was required by the committee, in order to complete what was a packed agenda. Of particular attention for the EC were the motions and action points from the General Assembly, which was held in Macau at ASC 2014 in November last year, and also resolutions from the two EC meetings held at Congress.**

EC members also considered the issues that had arisen following the Office Bearers' (OB) and OB/ National Organising Committee (for ASC 2015) meetings in Goa, India, which will be the location for this year's Congress.

Minutes and motions from EC meetings 41 and 42 (November 2014), as well as those from OB meeting 41 (January 2015) were considered and approved.

The Director made a presentation of the financial reports, which included

the Auditor's report for 2014, financial report for 2014 (including the 2014 Asian Seed Congress 2014), budget updates for 2015 and 2016, and a financial statement for the 1st quarter of 2015.

The membership report was made by Sompis Likhitapisit, who told the EC that APSA had 591 members as of 31 May 2015. China had the most members (119 members), followed by India (99 members), Japan (43 members), Pakistan (41 members) and the USA (32 members). She showed membership by country and by category. A discussion ensued on the procedure to approve new member applications, how to equalise the membership period (so that it runs 1 January to 31 December and on whether a joining fee should be charged. The meeting was also informed that the OB meeting in January had instructed the Secretariat to conduct a membership drive concentrating on those seed organisations from the region that are not members of APSA and those countries that do not have seed associations.

The judicial review which upheld the controversial Indonesian Horticulture Law was discussed in detail as was the debt owed to APSA by the Indonesian NOC from ASC 2012 in Bali.

An update regarding re-registering APSA as an association in Thailand was presented by Executive Assistant Ms. Siwaporn Sittisart.

The composition of the EC in 2016 and the General Assembly meeting were considered as a few members of the current EC would step down and would need to be replaced; three EC members would have to be replaced at the General Assembly at ASC 2015 in Goa.

The Director of Technical Affairs, Dr. N.K. Dadlani made a in-depth presentation of the current status of the Activity and Crop Groups, which he said had been very active since ASC 2014. He said that he had completed the Terms of Reference for the groups.



He also gave details of the upcoming hybrid rice study tours to China (in August) and India (in October) and made a short presentation on the recent APSA IPR Workshop held in Bangkok in May. He then updated members on the status of the planned Pre-Congress Workshop on the seed business in India.

Events Organiser Ms. Duangchai Pancom gave an update on the status of the preparations for ASC 2015 in Goa following a site inspection tour by Secretariat staff in May, which included the budget, the venue and arrangements, proposed revenue sharing arrangements and the programme. Ms. Pancom said that bookings for

Congress had been open since 1 June.

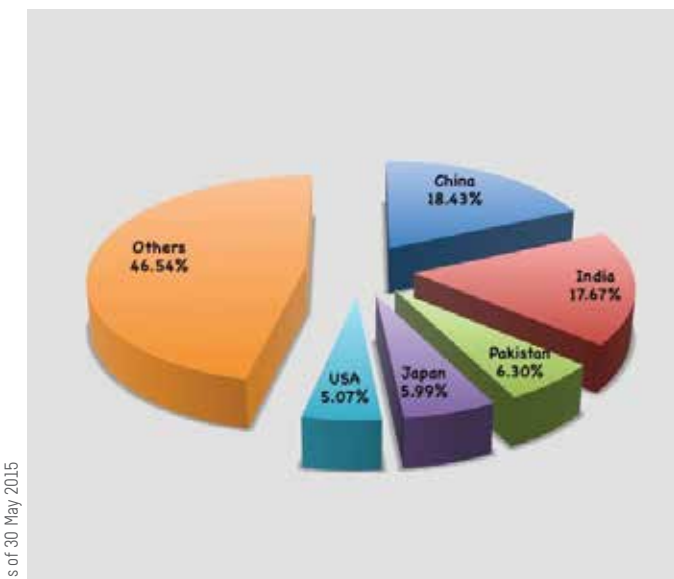
Brief updates were also given on the progress made on ASC 2016 in South Korea and the proposal from the Philippine Seed Trade Association to host ASC 2017. 🗳️



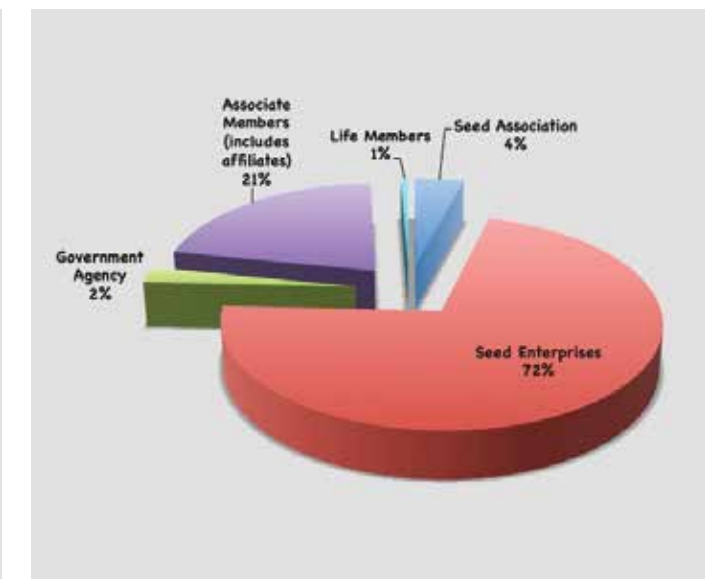
Photos by John Clewley

## APSA Membership Update

Members by Country



Members by Category



as of 30 May 2015





## Agro-Input Retailers' Network Visits APSA HQ

**On 14 May 2015, a delegation of members of the Agro-Input Retailers Network (AIRN) from Bangladesh visited APSA's headquarters at Kasetsart University in Bangkok. The delegation was led by Mr. Syed Mahmudul Huq, Senior Training Officer for USAID's Agro-Inputs Project (AIP), under which the AIRN has been implemented.**

In a presentation to APSA Mr. Huq explained the background to the AIP (which will run until 2022) and the AIP's main focus of improving the availability and use of safe, high-quality agricultural inputs to farmers in Southern Bangladesh. He added that increasing agro-retailers' access to market information (via a Monthly Price Outlook Bulletin) and the marketing of safe, high-quality agricultural inputs, were vital to improving smallholder farmers' yields, incomes and food security. AIP is also aimed at establishing quality standards for the supply chain and an improved regulatory environment.

Key AIRN programme partners include private sector companies, the Bangladesh Seed Association (BSA), the Bangladesh Fertilizer Association (BFA) and the Bangladesh Crop Protection Association (BCPA).

Mr. Huq said that AIRN's business training programmes helped

agricultural input retailers to enhance their business practices, increased their technical skills and improved linkages with major input suppliers. The services of AIRN were designed to help retailers generate higher sales, advocate for a better business environment, improve nutrition and elevate farmers' productivity in the fields.



Amongst the anticipated 3,000 AIRN retailers, at least 300 were expected to be women-owned businesses, supported by AIP grants. AIRN also provides training to help women retailers provide nutrition-focused embedded services within their shops.

Mr. Huq was keen to stress the need to promote access to and the distribution of quality seeds in Bangladesh, as access to quality seeds is a major issue in the country. He noted that the AIP had formalised a working relationship with the Bangladesh Seed Association (BSA) through an MOU in order to improve the supply of and access to quality seeds.

Mr. Huq also said that the Bangladesh Seed Association, a member of APSA, was also a member of AIRN and a supporter of the project. He said that AIRN could play a central role in the development of the seed industry in Bangladesh as those involved in the network form a key link between seed companies and the farmer.

APSA and the visiting delegates then discussed the opportunities that joining APSA would afford the network, including access to the seed industry and, of course, high quality seed. 🌱

*More information on AIRN's activities at: [www.aipdbi.org](http://www.aipdbi.org)*

## Seed-related Courses and Conferences for APSA Members

Date 2015	Event
5 – 8 July	<b>ISSS Workshop on Seed Longevity</b> Gatersleben, Germany <a href="http://meetings.ipk-gatersleben.de/ISSS_Longevity_2015/">http://meetings.ipk-gatersleben.de/ISSS_Longevity_2015/</a>
23 August – 1 September	<b>APSA Hybrid Rice Study Tour to China</b>
21 – 23 August	<b>The 15th China (Xinjiang) International Agricultural Fair</b> Xinjiang, China <a href="http://www.cxiaf.com.cn">www.cxiaf.com.cn</a>
14 September – 4 December	<b>AVRDC East and Southeast Asia Research and Training Station</b> Kamphaeng Saen, Thailand Module I: From Seed to Harvest (14 Sept. – 9 Oct.) Module II: From Harvest to Table (12 Oct. – 6 Nov.) Module III: Sustainable Development (9 Nov. – 4 Dec.) <a href="http://www.avrdc.org/34th-international-vegetable-training-course/">www.avrdc.org/34th-international-vegetable-training-course/</a>
17 – 19 September	<b>The 8th China Seed Expo and 13th National Seed Information Exchange and Products Fair</b> Beijing, China <a href="http://www.chinaseedexpo.com.cn">www.chinaseedexpo.com.cn</a>
28 – 29 September	<b>Working Out ABS: An ICC Conference on Access and Benefit Sharing</b> Paris, France Two-day conference and workshops on compliance with new European Union Rules on Access and Benefit Sharing – hosted by the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) <a href="http://www.iccwbo.org/training-and-events/all-events/events/2015/icc-conference-on-access-and-benefit-sharing-working-out-abs-2015">www.iccwbo.org/training-and-events/all-events/events/2015/icc-conference-on-access-and-benefit-sharing-working-out-abs-2015</a>
28 – 29 September	<b>The 8th China Seed Expo and 13th National Seed Information Exchange and Products Fair</b> Beijing, China <a href="http://www.chinaseedexpo.com.cn">www.chinaseedexpo.com.cn</a>
19 – 22 October	<b>ISF: Mid-term meetings</b> Budapest <a href="http://www.worldseed.org">www.worldseed.org</a>
26 – 30 October	<b>UPOV 49th Council meeting</b> Geneva <a href="http://www.upov.int/meetings/en/details.jsp?meeting_id=36742">www.upov.int/meetings/en/details.jsp?meeting_id=36742</a>
3 – 5 November	<b>Univ of California, Davis Plant Breeding Academy's 1st open enrollment Advance Module Course</b> <a href="http://www.pba.ucdavis.edu/PBA_Advanced_Module/">www.pba.ucdavis.edu/PBA_Advanced_Module/</a>
16 – 19 November	<b>The 2015 Asian Seed Congress</b> Goa, India

## New APSA Members

<b>Rizwan Seed Co.</b> Lal Bazar, Malerkotla 148023 (Punjab) Malerkotla, India Email: rizwanseed@gmail.com	<b>Trung Nong Seed Co.,Ltd.</b> 45 Duong So 23, Phuong 10, Quan 6, Ho Chi Min City, Vietnam Email: Trade@trungnong.com	<b>Ministry of Agriculture Sigatoka Research Station</b> P.O. Box 24, Sigatoka, Fiji Email: shindrprasad@yahoo.com	<b>Nowen Hi-Tech Co.,Ltd.</b> No. 200 Lianliang Road, Nanchang, Jiangxi Province China Email: 593242534@qq.com	<b>Chhipa Crop Sciences (Pvt) Ltd.</b> A-18, Auto Bhan Road, S.1.TE Hyderabad, Sind Pakistan Email: chhipaseeds@gmail.com	<b>Delta Agrigenetics Private Ltd.</b> Plot No 99-100, Green Park Avenue, Nandanvan Road, Raipur (Chhattisgarh) PIN 492001, India Email: asn.reddy@icloud.com	<b>Aditya Biotech Lab and Research Pvt. Ltd.</b> Chandanidih, Nandanvan Road, Raipur (Chhattisgarh) PIN 492001, India Email: shailendrajain@abl.co.in
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# Born From A Seed

By Francois Burgaud, APSA's Chair of the Activity Group Committee for IPR and Biodiversity, and Director, External Relations at GNIS (Groupement national interprofessionnel des semences et plants)

**I was born from a seed. I know it doesn't seem so unique but actually it is. I started to work for the French seed sector in 1971 during my university studies, as a student job. I was in charge of finances because I studied economics, along with political science and history.**

But the seed bug got to me and I found the seed sector fascinating - the passion of seed men (and women, but not a lot then), and the fundamental role played by seeds in nutrition and food security fed my passion for seeds. I wanted to stay in the seed business and I did: for 44 years and counting.

When APSA was launched in 1994, I had been working on international relations for GNIS for three years. During this period, I went on study missions to Vietnam, China and India where we developed cooperation with China on breeders' rights and with Vietnam on soybean and vegetable seeds, and also breeders' rights. So, when I heard about the creation of a new regional association with 25 members from 10 countries, it was not difficult to persuade GNIS and the French Ministry of Agriculture to support APSA.

During the past 20 years, I have tried and I continue to try to help develop the private seed industry in the Asia-Pacific to grow and prosper, and to become more influential globally in terms of trade and the politics of seeds.

From the very beginning I participated in the Standing Committee on IPR (now renamed as the Activity group on IPR and Biodiversity). Indeed my experience in France convinced me that intellectual property rights and the way you balance the remuneration of breeders and access to varieties as

compared to the importance of the region's agriculture sector. The top Asian country for seed exports is China, which generated \$250 million, and is ranked in 10th position worldwide. At the global level, the seed trade is growing, while at the same time, the seed sector is being restructured as merger and acquisition deals increase and the sector inevitably consolidates.

I'm completely convinced that the future of the seed industry in Asia and the Pacific depends totally on the choices made by governments in this, the world's most populous region, on the crucial issues of plant breeders' rights, patents, and farmers' rights.

a genetic resource are key factors in the development of the seed sector.

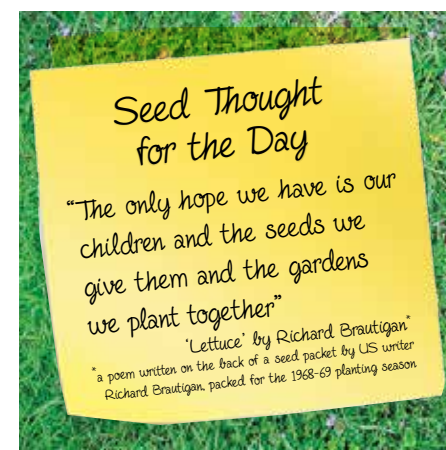
France is the top seed producer in Europe and the top exporter worldwide, mainly because there are still 73 breeding companies in France and out of that total some 53 companies are wholly French-owned. The seed sector in France develops around 600 new varieties each year because there is some money generated for breeders from certified seeds, of course, but also from farm saved seeds as well.

It is for these reasons that I'm closely following how the international Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Nagoya Protocol are being received and implemented.

The seed trade in the Asia-Pacific region has, for now, played only a small role in agribusiness trade



Photo by John Clewley



## asian seed congress 2015

16–20 November 2015  
Goa, India



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