

Seed TODAY

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**ASTA CSS
Conference
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Issue**

Company Profiles

Richardson Seeds, Ltd., Vega, TX

Warner Seeds, Inc., Hereford, TX

AgReliant Genetics, Westfield, IN

Supplier Profile

KSi, Sabetha, KS

Case Study

Profile Industries, Rogers, MN



Governance and Ethics in the Seed Industry

Society of Commercial Seed Technologists
Association of Official Seed Analysts



Recently I have attended meetings of the AOSA, SCST, AASCO, AOSCA, and ASTA.

Governance has been a topic in each of those settings.

The Founding Fathers had an enlightened view of governance.

“The whole art of government consists in the art of being honest.” (Thomas Jefferson, A Summary View of the Rights of British America).

John Adams said, “Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

In their view, people had to choose to be governed and held accountable.

All acts, laws and regulations enacted by the legislative bodies in our country are appendages to that Constitution and government.

Rules For Seed Testing

Most states recognize the “AOSA Rules for Testing Seeds” and either reference them or create legislation based upon them.

The “Rules for Testing Seeds” represents the best scientific knowledge of those that spend their life’s energy working with seeds and determining how they germinate and perform.

As stated in the introduction to the Rules (2017), “It is desirable to have definitions and fundamental procedures agreed upon that are based on a thorough knowledge of the principles involved.

“The following rules attempt to summarize and make useful the accumulated experience of seed analysts, and must be followed as a matter of routine.”

All registered and certified SCST members have sworn to abide by those Rules.

“When conducting service tests or any tests which shall be used for the marketing and labeling of seed, registered and certified members are required to follow official rules as established by the Association of Official Seed Analysts, the Federal Seed Act, Agriculture Canada, the International Seed Testing Association, or specific rules pertaining to the country where seed is to be offered for sale, and to report test results according to the appropriate recommended procedures, including, a statement of which rules were used” (SCST C&B V.1).

It is therefore, incumbent upon members of the Association (AOSA) and the Society (SCST), and

specifically, the presidents of each, to live by those Rules and uphold them.

When ethics violations occur and evidence/documentation provided, action must be and is taken to uphold these principles.

This is the essence of integrity among seed technologists and analysts and is for the betterment of the seed industry in general.

Whenever participants in the seed industry, whether companies or individuals, seek to subvert or deprecate those Rules, it is unethical, immoral, and, in many cases, illegal.

A conspiracy whose intent is the establishment of a supposed “Industry Standard” by a small number of those involved in the industry and promoting or even imposing “it” as a replacement for the “Rules” has no precedent nor place in our Industry.

This attack could be considered collusion and holds the rest of the industry hostage.

It intimidates colleagues and competitors into submission.

How the Industry Can Take a Stand

Therefore, I call upon all participants in the seed industry to stand against such behavior:

- Seed analysts and technologists, improve upon the Rules and uphold them; change the “Rules” in the described manner;
- State Departments of Agriculture and Seed Control Officials, enforce seed laws and “Rules” equally within your states whether those seeds are produced within your states or imported from other states;
- Seed trade, hold each other accountable; don’t look the other way; provide evidence to the SCST Ethics Committee;
- All players, if the Rules are inadequate or are being applied inappropriately, sponsor rule change proposals that support your sector of the Industry.

The success of our Industry depends on our reputation. It is the pure reflection of our ethics.

We must maintain it at the highest levels at all costs. If damaged, our reputation must be repaired.

Let us recommit to ethical behavior by stepping up and resolving our problems and holding each other accountable.

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