

## **Executive Director Report**

Another year, another move! Last year I reported on ASTA's move to Verto Solutions, our new association management company. And this year we made the move with our colleagues at Verto to brand new office space. Our new offices are just a couple blocks from the old space where Verto was housed for 25 years. ASTA is extremely comfortable in our beautiful new offices and we're really happy we now have conference rooms that can accommodate meetings and we look forward to hosting the Board of Directors in July.

International activities demanded a more prominent role for ASTA last year with two key initiatives at Codex. The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) was established in 1963 by the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to develop harmonized international food standards, guidelines and codes of practice. The International Organization of Spice Trade Associations (IOSTA) has non-governmental observer status at Codex and as the permanent secretariat of Codex, ASTA took a leadership role in two important areas concerning the spice industry.

The Codex Committee on Food Hygiene is recommending for final approval this summer a revision to the Codex Code of Hygienic Practice for Spices and Culinary Herbs. Representatives from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration led the revision and sought input from ASTA as work got underway and then we provided significant input leading IOSTA. This Code covers a range of items from activities at the farm to worker hygiene to transportation and should be a valuable tool once approved and implemented.

Last July, the CAC approved establishment of the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH) to develop quality standards for spices. ASTA originally opposed formation of the new commodity committee as it is our position that quality should be determined between buyer and seller, however, the CCSCH was overwhelmingly approved and ASTA represented IOSTA at the first CCSCH meeting in February in Kochi, India. India is hosting the CCSCH and the first meeting was devoted to the establishment of processes for how work will be conducted. The CCSCH also approved four proposals for new work that will go to the CAC in July for approval. If approved, work will begin later this year on quality standards for pepper (black, white and green), cumin, oregano and thyme. Electronic working groups will be established to develop the standards and IOSTA will participate with support from ASTA member volunteers. Codex operates on a lengthy timeline and the first quality standards would be approved in July 2017, if the process moves through all Codex steps with no problems.

ASTA has also joined Crop Life America (CLA) as an associate member to participate in CLA's new Food and Beverage Committee. CLA is the trade association representing major manufacturers, formulators and distributors of crop protection and pest control products. The new Food and Beverage Committee is made up of major food

manufacturers and other trade associations looking at options to address concerns related to pesticide residues and regulations.

Work has begun on the first stages of the next registration review for Ethylene Oxide (ETO) and Propylene Oxide (PPO) due in September 2021. Registration review is required every 15 years for all pesticides distributed in the U.S. to show they will not cause unreasonable risks to human health of the environment when used as labeled. And the process is intended to make sure registered pesticides meet that standard as the ability to assess risk evolves and policies and practices change. Discussions with EPA are underway to understand what the next registration review will entail and the anticipated costs to allow us to determine our next steps.

Margarita, Meegan and Kelley continue to provide essential support to ASTA members and to me as we have added new committees and undertaken a number of new initiatives this past year in an effort to implement our new strategic plan. WE look forward to continuing those efforts next year.

Cheryl Deem  
Executive Director