

## President's Report

This past year was a time to measure how well ASTA is meeting member needs and to look to the future to ensure that in the long-term ASTA is able to serve the industry in a useful manner.



We conducted our needs assessment survey late last spring and the Board of Directors received the results in October. We had greater participation in this survey than previously, with 257 responses for a statistically valid response rate of 20.6%. The survey identified that the most important industry issues are food safety, FSMA and general regulatory compliance and pesticide residues. Survey respondents also indicated that their greatest need for information and education is in the areas of FSMA, food safety, pesticide residues, allergens and adulteration.

The Board of Directors used the survey results as the basis for our strategic planning session that was held in January and the new strategic plan follows my report and will be detailed at our Business Meeting in January. The results were also provided to various committees and work is underway to ensure the areas of greatest need identified by our members are addressed immediately, with some work already finalized:

- The Government Relations and Advocacy Committee finalized the ASTA FSMA Decision Tree to assist companies in understanding which FSMA laws they must comply with and provided two training sessions for members on how to use the decision tree.
- The Food Safety Committee finalized a FSMA Risk Assessment Guide and a guidance document on the Identification and Prevention of Adulteration.
- The Education Committee has planned the Pre-Conference Workshop for the 2017 Annual Meeting to address the issues of allergens.
- A number of efforts are underway to address the complex issue of pesticide residues and these will be detailed during the Business Meeting in April.

The survey also highlighted the importance of networking to ASTA members and a task force has been established to examine creation of additional networking opportunities. Two other task forces were established to look at enhancing the value of ASTA membership and to look at enhanced communication to ensure members are aware of the work ASTA is doing on behalf of the industry.

The survey also noted a need for ASTA to better anticipate issues that impact the industry and an Emerging Issues Task Force has been established to ensure the ASTA staff is aware of issues as they arise and then provide industry expertise to assist in the development ASTA's response.

All of this work depends on the expertise of ASTA's many volunteers and I would like to thank the dedicated committee members and my fellow Board members for the time they devote to ASTA on behalf of the entire industry. I believe ASTA plays an important role for industry in these rapidly changing times by ensuring we have information and resources to adapt to the changing regulatory environment and concerns of our customers. It has been an honor to serve as President of ASTA.



Vini Narain  
President

## ASTA Strategic Plan 2017 - 2020

**Advocacy** – Representing US industry interests and supporting regulatory compliance.

- A. **Domestic** - Maintain relationships with US agencies to collaborate and influence.
- B. **International** – Build relations and collaborate with international organizations.
- C. **Horizon Scanning** – Continuously scan to identify and position US spice industry issues.
- D. **Regulatory Compliance** – Enhance member understanding and support their compliance through ASTA’s benefits, education and resources.

**Food Safety** – Facilitating food safety through research and education.

- A. **Resources** – Provide the tools and resources to facilitate food safety understanding and compliance.
- B. **Horizon Scanning** – Maintain open channels to collect and be alert to food safety issues.
- C. **International** – Collaborate with international organizations to identify and address food safety issues.
- D. **Research** – Promote access to research and testing to support industry standards of excellence.

**Strong Association** – Maintaining a united industry membership.

- A. **Membership Value** – Enhance the membership experience and value to facilitate US and international recruitment.
- B. **Leadership** – Develop the leadership necessary to guide US spice industry and to take resolute positions.
- C. **Networking** – Facilitate robust networking opportunities for members.
- D. **Communications** – Strategically use all forms of media, improve industry awareness, and consider potential for consumer marketing initiatives.

