

## Report on ASTA Working group on New Breeding Technologies visit to Government bodies, Washington DC November 16 and 17, 2015

Purpose of the initiative is:

- to increase understanding of novel breeding techniques (NBT) in government bodies.
- to limit the probability for regulation for breeding if products are equivalent plant products that are generated through breeding .

Representatives at the meeting in the ASTA working group were from Monsanto, Syngenta, Bayer, Dupont, BASF, Vilmorin-Clause, and Rijk Zwaan (two vegetable seed companies) and NAPB.

### 1. Meeting with OSTP, Office of Science Technology Policy at the White House, November 16

The meeting started with a longer discussion around what is meant with NBT's. Initially the discussion centers on use of NBT's to develop transgenic traits. Finally we clarify that we are talking specifically about the use of NBT to develop products that could be also derived by conventional breeding. Example: Targeted introgression of a resistance gene from wild tomato into commercial germplasm on 2 years vs. 6-7 years without linkage drag. This creates a better understanding with OSTP. OSTP talks about risk assessment and that risk of technology need to be considered in any government decision. Also view from OSTP that there is no overarching regulatory policy on the government but that each agency, EPA, FDA, USDA develops its own regulatory framework for its own area of jurisdiction.

### 2. Meeting with USDA, November 17

USDA talks about its new draft of its regulatory framework. Goal is to move quickly and have a final draft by Q3 2016. USDA expressed open ears to limited regulation in NBT's based on products that could be derived through conventional plant breeding, mutation etc. Discussion centered on the potential risk that all plant breeding might be regulated at some point, especially if definitions are not clear from the beginning. Cost of regulation prohibits use of NBT's in the future if they are regulated. There is also a need to use NBT's in public institutions for non-row crops and non-seed propagated species (i.e. trees). Also consider the mandate of public institutions to educate and their need to practice cutting edge technology. USDA expressed interest post-meeting to get NAPB input on these questions.

### 3. Meeting on the hill with senator aides from IN, IA, MO, November 17.

Visited with senate aides for ½ hour in each office. In general good understanding and ability to explain in a small group setting (only three reps from ASTA group present at each Senate office ). Depending on political background of senator more discussion around public opinions (or less) and discussion new labeling law. Aides are receptive to the arguments as indicated above. MO senator talks about a negative 'Monsanto effect' in this discussion. Meeting outcomes were less clear at the Senate meetings.

#### 4. Follow-up for NABP

The question to our group is at what level will NAPB support ASTA effort on NBT's? How can we engage the key universities or PBCC to support? What are the key issues that need to be addressed to enable above support?

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