

GROWERTALKS

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Seed Companies Form Seed Innovation and Protection Alliance

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Responding to an increasing need to promote the importance and understanding of seed innovation, members of the American seed industry have come together to form the Seed Innovation and Protection Alliance (SIPA). The goal of SIPA is to create a unified and consistent voice for education and best practices around intellectual property protection and its value to our society.

SIPA will strive to communicate the following:

- The value of seed innovations
- The need for on-going investments in seed research and improvement
- The critical importance of protecting new discoveries, so plant breeders and companies can continue to focus on developing seed improvements that benefit all

“Seed innovation is necessary to help address many of the economic, environmental and health challenges our global society faces,” said Ton Van der Velden, SIPA chairman. “It is extremely important that the agricultural community is able to continue to reinvest in new and better seeds so that we can help meet those challenges. Just like new technologies and discoveries associated with other industries—from music to medicine to consumer electronics—that are often protected by intellectual property rights, it is essential that seed companies are supported by intellectual property rights so that they are able to continue their investments in R&D.”

“SIPA was created to provide a harmonious and united voice from the seed industry on the benefits of innovation—why we as an industry need to continue to invest and drive innovation, as well as respect intellectual property protection,” said James Weatherly, Executive Director of SIPA. “SIPA also serves as a resource for questions or concerns around compliance with intellectual property rights.”

Innovations from the seed industry are helping to address many of the economic, environmental and health issues we face as a global society. Seed improvements allow us to produce more food from the same land, which is essential to feed our growing population, and to grow produce and grains that are healthier and more nutritious. Seed improvements also mean less food waste because new varieties create produce and grains

that stay fresh longer and have more consistent quality.

SIPA is working to inform the seed industry of the importance of intellectual property protection. All parts of the research, production and distribution chain have a stake in continued investment in research that produces the new seed varieties that contribute to a healthy agricultural industry and abundant food supply. Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) support this effort and are important not only for seed companies and academic research institutions, but for all parts of the food production system, especially consumers. The integrity of the innovation pipeline is critical for everyone's benefit, and this starts with education.

Currently, SIPA is developing educational materials for outreach to seed companies, public and private researchers and others, as well as best practices for breeders to consider when evaluating IPR needs. SIPA will conduct educational workshops, which are open to the seed industry, with topics relevant to leadership, sales and marketing, and research and development personnel. Two of these workshops are scheduled this year, one in Monterey, California on October 1, 2015 and one in Chicago, Illinois on December 8, 2015.

SIPA's membership currently includes ASTA, American Takii, Anti-Infringement Bureau, Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies, Bayer CropScience, Bejo Seeds, Inc., California Leafy Greens Research Board, Cochran Freund & Young, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratories, Cotton Incorporated, Dow AgroSciences, DuPont Pioneer, Enza Zaden USA, Inc., Germains, HM CLAUSE, Hush Blackwell, Independent Professional Seed Association, Limagrain Cereal Seeds, Monsanto, Morrison Foerster, Rijk Zwaan USA, Sakata Seed America, Seminis Vegetable Seed, Shamrock Seeds, Swanson & Bratshun and Thompson Coburn.

Learn more about SIPA at www.seedipalliance.com. **GT**