

Seed Business Convention 2022 – That’s a wrap!

The ASF Seed Business Convention 2022 held from 17-18 August saw a strong attendance with 120 delegates representing 62 companies, and 7 exhibitors. Delegates met at the Hilton, Brisbane for three eventful days that included speaker sessions, networking, social events and post-convention field day.

The ASF also hosted the Seed Industry Training & Leadership Day on Tuesday 16 August for delegates to learn about seed industry topics and build their leadership skills.

Delegates were excited to catch up with each other face-to-face for the first time since 2019, with COVID forcing the event to be postponed/cancelled for 2020 & 2021. The common theme of the week was ‘Zoom events suck, how good is it being back in-person’!

Tuesday 16 August

Seed Industry Training & Leadership Day

It was great to see so many new faces at the Seed Industry Training & Leadership Day held on Tuesday before the convention opened. Attendance at the event was up 50% from previous training days, with seed companies sending their junior staff & up-and-coming leaders to brush up on their seed industry knowledge and further build on their leadership skills.

The morning ‘seed industry training’ session covered seed industry topics such as seed 101, through to import/export, seed production and more. These sessions were hosted by a range of industry experts and government speakers.

The afternoon ‘leadership’ session was delivered by Beau Robinson, business & leadership coach, former rugby league champion, and all-round good bloke. Beau challenged delegates in the session with a range of self-awareness activities, encouraged insights into themselves and provided references to his personal experiences. By the end of the session delegates had been taken on a journey of self-reflection and had the opportunity to build on their leadership skills that could be implemented in their day-to-day roles.

Welcome Drinks

Later that evening the welcome drinks were held at the Terrace Pool Bar at Hilton Brisbane with delegates enjoying a well deserved drink or two with each other, after not being able to catch up since the 2019 event. ASF President Tim Pepper welcomed all to the Convention.

Wednesday 17 August

Seed Business Convention Day 1

The convention was officially opened by Professor Matthew Morrell, Director of the Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation. Prof. Morrell discussed the importance of agriculture, food systems and minimising environmental impacts.

The morning session included talks on carbon farming, genebanks, and biosecurity. It was great to have a back-to-back session on seed health & biosecurity, locally and international considerations, delivered by Dr Gabrielle Vivian Smith (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) and Dr Rose Souza Richards (International Seed Federation).

The afternoon session on capacity building started with Dr Lauren duFall, ARC Future Crops Training Centre, providing an introduction to the centre opening. This was followed up by Osman Mewett & Fergus Brown at ASF, proudly launching the Seed Industry Professional program.

Closing the day was the AGM with ASF President Tim Pepper and ASF CEO Osman Mewett sharing the wins of the ASF over the past 18 months and vision for the next 12 months and beyond. As it was an election year, a new Board was elected with the first ever female president to be voted in, Rowena Petrie of Royston Petrie Seeds. Joining Rowena, vice presidents Tim March (Rijk Zwaan) & Barry Croker (Pacific Seeds/Advanta) were voted in, and Tim Pepper (Barenbrug) as immediate past president.

ASF Women in Seed Luncheon

The inaugural ASF Women in Seed Luncheon was held on Wednesday 17 August 2022 at the Hilton Brisbane. It was a huge success with a sold-out event in having over 30 attendees. Guest speaker Maree Crawford from Elders gave some insightful and inspirational views on the challenges women face in the agricultural industry and shared experiences she has faced in her career in the agriculture sector. 30 women from all parts of the seed supply chain gathered to enjoy a 2-course meal, some wine, and share experiences and network with each other.

Thank you to AgEtal for sponsoring this event. Luanne from AgEtal finished the luncheon off nicely with a short speech and encouragement for women in the seed industry. The ASF looks forward to continuing this event next year.

Gala Dinner

The gala dinner is the highlight social event in the calendar for members and the 2022 event did not disappoint. Held at the beautiful Customs House Brisbane on the river front, guests were treated to drinks, great food and the opportunity to hear from Michael Milton, Australian paralympic skier. Michael shared his experiences as an athlete and business owner, talking about his need for speed and his competitive spirit.

A highlight of the night was Nick Gardner being awarded life membership of the ASF. Nick has served the Australian seed and agriculture industry for over 30 years and it was an honour for Barry Croker, on behalf of the ASF and its membership, to award Nick with Life Membership to the Federation. Congratulations Nick!

Thursday 18 August

Seed Business Convention Day 2

Backing up a packed program from day 1, day 2 of the Seed Business Convention began with sessions on freight challenges and international aid programs. This was followed up with speakers discussing industry programs; bagMUSTER, bulk seed packaging, Pasture Metrics and also the future of plant breeder's rights in Australia. The day was closed with guest speaker Dave Mason, superintendent of the Brisbane Golf Club sharing his experiences in the industry, and challenges he faced with flooding after starting his current role.

Horticulture Stream

For 2022 the 'horticulture stream' was added to the program, replacing the working group meetings historically held at seed business. This session was open to all members with a focus on horticulture related topics and discussion.

Guests had the opportunity to discuss current topics and issues with Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry officials who provided insights and updates to members. Guests in the session were also able to hear from Dr Fiona Constable and Dr Rieks van Klinken on current projects they are working on.

Friday 19 August

Graintech sponsored and hosted the post-convention field day taking delegates to two of their clients sites in Toowoomba. Guests were given the opportunity to see Graintech equipment in action at the Pacific Seeds and Barenbrug sites. Attendance was high with close to 40 delegates taking part in this all-day field trip. Everyone enjoyed the day and most caught up for a drink afterwards back at the Hilton Brisbane.

Sponsors & Exhibitors

The ASF would like to say a big thank you to the event sponsors and exhibitors, without their support the seed business event could not be delivered to the standard it is. Thank you to the following sponsors for their support:

- Aurora (Handbook sponsor & advertising)
- Enza Zaden (Training & Leadership day sponsor)
- Barenbrug (Lanyards, handbook advertising)
- Graintech (Notebook and pens, field day)
- AgEtal (Women in seed luncheon)
- GRDC (Guest speaker)
- Australian Seeds Labs (Handbook advertising)
- Centor Oceania (Handbook advertising)

It was great to have a range of exhibitors showcasing their products and services to delegates. The ASF thank; AgEtal, AgSafe, Australian Seed Labs, Colquhouns, Graintech, ICT International, and Polesy.

Feedback and what's next?

Now that the dust has settled on the 2022 event, the ASF secretariat are already looking to the 2023 event. Members would have received a post-convention survey and are encouraged to complete it when possible. This feedback is critical to delivering successful events that meet members needs.

If members have any direct feedback, suggestions for next years event, or would like to discuss sponsorship and event involvement please contact Alysha Lockley – alockley@asf.asn.au