

# **STRATEGIC PLAN**

**OF THE**

**ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN PLANT  
FOOD CONTROL OFFICIALS**

August 4-5, 2011

Austin, Texas

# THE PLAN

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN PLANT FOOD CONTROL OFFICIALS

*(Responsibility of the Long Range Planning Committee, but ultimately accountable to the Association president.)*

# ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN PLANT FOOD CONTROL OFFICIALS

## MISSION STATEMENT

"The mission of the Association of American Plant Food Control Officials is to establish uniform standards that promote consumer protection, environmental stewardship, and provide a forum to achieve regulatory consensus."

## VISION STATEMENT

- Provide uniform fertilizer regulation.
- Protect consumers.
- Promote environmental stewardship.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- I. Improve the engagement of participants, states, and stakeholders (*agencies, industry, and trade associations*) in association activities.
- II. Become the national information resource (*data, training, uniform / model bill, etc.*), voice, and authority on challenges, issues, regulations, and nutrient stewardship.
- III. Improve communication throughout the stakeholder group.
- IV. Maintain a sound financial position for the organization.

# AAPFCO MISSION STATEMENT EXERCISE

## Purpose Statement

### **A. Protecting consumers**

- Economics (*product conforms to the label/consumer gets value*)
- Labeling (*standardization and uniformity in terms and definitions*)
- Samples (*surveillance and monitoring for conformance to labeling*)
- Facility inspections
- Safety (*anhydrous ammonia, ammonium nitrate, chemigation, etc.*)
- Developing new lab methodologies
- Standardized lab procedures and practices

### **B. Protecting the environment**

- Good stewardship
- Model bill containment and storage regulations
- Definitions and defined adulterants
- Application rates
- Required warning statements (*B, MO, BSE, etc.*)
- Nutrient management and use
- Applicator training and certification
- Consumer training for use (*urban vs. traditional ag*)

### **C. Promoting fair competition**

- Model bill regulations and labeling requirements
- Terms and definitions
- Lab analysis, methodologies and services
- Sampling and inspection
- Training

### **D. Promoting healthy/strong regulatory programs and communication/data sharing**

- Develop model annual compliance reporting and tonnage distribution for states
- Demonstrate fertilizer regulatory program value to consumers, industry, state and state agriculture secretaries/directors
- Communicate to other agencies (*through media and other sources*) i.e. EPA, DEQ, DEM, DER, etc. Invitations to attend AAPFCO meetings or attend their meetings and/or send newsletter.

### **E. Promoting uniformity and consistency**

- Model bill (*encourage adoption*)
- Terms and definitions
- Lab methodologies
- Inspections and sampling
- Training (*industry and regulators/bulk blend workshops and BMPs*)
- Tonnage and compliance reporting

**F. Providing leadership**

- Be the experts in guidance and knowledge
- Make science-based decisions
- Use of risk assessments
- Standardization
- Promotion of the expertise and knowledge of AAPFCO

# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

## I. Improve the engagement of participants, states, and stakeholders in association activities.

- A. Develop and distribute a new participant and new stakeholder information packet and pilot a first-timer orientation and reception (*highlight this on name badges*)...the board secretary by January 31, 2012.
- B. Develop a tiered "Magic 5" list of non-participating states in association events, then strategize the most effective methods to attract their presence, (*i.e. call them to emcee events, present a paper of national prominence, etc.*)...Jamey Johnson and Ben Jones update spreadsheet by September 1, 2011 and Brett Groves and officers select list by November 1, 2011.
- C. Explore methods to attract associations...
  - Agricultural retailers – Matt Kastner
  - Natural Resource Conservation Service – Matt Kastner
  - Ag industry associations – invite respective statewide association leaders where the next national AAPFCO meeting will be held.

And agencies...

- EPA – Kenny Naylor
  - National Association of State Departments of Agriculture – Joe Slater
  - Fertilizer Roundtable
  - American Society of Agronomy
  - University soil and crop sciences departments
1. Contacts need to be made three months prior to the event.
  2. By November 1, 2011, for the next mid-year meeting.

## II. Become the national information resource, voice, and authority on challenges, issues, regulations, and nutrient stewardship.

- A. Promote the necessity, concept, wording, and importance of the model / uniform bill...on-going.
  1. Via the Fertilizer Institute (*Matt Kastner*)
  2. Post on the web site (*Joe Slater*)
  3. Side-by-side comparisons by each state...initially by Kenny Naylor by November 1, 2011.
  4. Via state associations by the respective state regulators.

5. Via the National Ag Retailers Association (*the AAPFCO presidents, Jim Skillen and Matt Kastner*). (*Ultimate responsibility of the Model / Uniform Bill Committee.*)
- B. Retool the Association web site and make it more educationally useable, allow for the creation of a hub Best Management Practices (BMP) on fertilizer use, update at least semiannually, allow for online registrations by states, at least annually post accomplishments or talking points of association benefits, secure the site, allow for posting of state laws and add appropriate links...on-going. (*Responsibility of the Education and Communication Committee.*)
  - C. Explore and identify ways to play a more visible and prominent role in other stakeholder state and national functions...Review and rework the PowerPoint on the association...by February 1, 2012 (*Responsibility of the Long Range Planning Committee.*)
  - D. Streamline the term definition process via the Terms and Definition Committee and examine board and membership voting on this process by the Long Range Planning Committee...by February 1, 2012.

### III. Improve communication throughout the stakeholder group.

- A. Board establish committee expectations, charges, responsibility of vice chairs, term limits, and parameters and meet with chairs at least annually.
  1. By February 1, 2012.
  2. Steve McMurray make initial changes to the committees and it be prepared by February 1, 2012.
- B. Conduct a board conference call between each of the two national association meetings...in May and November and initiate in November 2011.
- C. Conduct a program evaluation of each association educational meeting...to begin with the 2012 mid-year meeting in San Antonio.
- D. At multiple opportunities (*newsletter editions, national meeting presentations, web site, etc.*) exploit the beneficial uses of the association's "List-Serve" and stay poised for the latest electronic technology methods...
  1. Determine what states are not on the List-Serve by Matt Haynes and Kenny Naylor by December 1, 2011.

2. Responsibility of the Education and Communication Committee.

- E. Establish methods to effectively promote the recent association long range planning survey...by Ben Jones to a one-page synopsis format by November 1, 2011 and the association long range planning effort (*i.e. pocket cards, national meetings, etc.*)...on-going.
- F. Pilot a closed session for state regulators at national meetings to discuss challenges of the profession...Ben Jones and Brett Groves to coordinate and initiate by February 1, 2012.
- G. When warranted, survey the needs of the association stakeholder groups (*federal agencies, industry groups, trade associations, etc.*).

**IV. Maintain a sound financial position for the organization.**

- A. Evaluate financial needs of the association (*dues, registration fees, book sales, possible new programs, hiring more labor, determining costs of select meetings, determining what is the new long range plan going to cost to activate*)...on-going, but the initial report due by February 1, 2012.



## CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

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  - 1) Contacts need to be made three months prior to the event.
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4. Promote the necessity, concept, wording, and importance of the model / uniform bill...on-going.
  - A. Via the Fertilizer Institute (*Matt Kastner*)
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  - C. Side-by-side comparisons by each state...initially by Kenny Naylor by November 1, 2011.
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*meetings, etc.*)...on-going.

6. At multiple opportunities (*newsletter editions, national meeting presentations, web site, etc.*) exploit the beneficial uses of the association's "List-Serve" and stay poised for the latest electronic technology methods...
  - A. Determine what states are not on the List-Serve by Matt Haynes and Kenny Naylor by December 1, 2011.
  - B. Responsibility of the Education and Communication Committee.
7. Develop and distribute a new participant and new stakeholder information packet and pilot a first-timer orientation and reception (*highlight this on name badges*)...the board secretary by January 31, 2012.
8. Explore and identify ways to play a more visible and prominent role in other stakeholder state and national functions...Review and rework the PowerPoint on the association...by February 1, 2012 (*Responsibility of the Long Range Planning Committee.*)
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  - A. By February 1, 2012.
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11. Pilot a closed session for state regulators at national meetings to discuss challenges of the profession...Ben Jones and Brett Groves to coordinate and initiate by February 1, 2012.
12. Evaluate financial needs of the association (*dues, registration fees, book sales, possible new programs, hiring more labor, determining costs of select meetings, determining what is the new long range plan going to cost to activate*)...on-going, but the initial report due by February 1, 2012.
13. Conduct a program evaluation of each association educational meeting...to begin with the 2012 mid-year meeting in San Antonio.

14. Retool the Association web site and make it more educationally useable, allow for the creation of a hub Best Management Practices (BMP) on fertilizer use, update at least semiannually, allow for online registrations by states, at least annually post accomplishments or talking points of association benefits, secure the site, allow for posting of state laws and add appropriate links...on-going. (*Responsibility of the Education and Communication Committee.*)
15. When warranted, survey the needs of the association stakeholder groups (*federal agencies, industry groups, trade associations, etc.*).

# **SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

**ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN PLANT  
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**I. The individuals on the association Long Range Planning Committee were each asked to write down three answers on an index card privately to the following question. "What does the AAPFCO organization do that is of value to you today?" Their streamlined answers follow but not in any form of priority order.**

- A. Stay current on technology and science.
- B. Help shape industry consensus and response.
- C. Opportunity to network with others.
- D. Gain personal enrichments.
- E. Helps to define terms.
- F. Attempts to promote uniformity of state laws.
- G. Opportunity to gain a national perspective.
- H. Ensures product quality for the consumer.
- I. A place to publish papers and documents (OP).

**II. The group was asked to write down two answers privately on an index card to the following question, then a priority ranking was determined. "What could AAPFCO organization do to enhance value to you in the future?"**

- A. To get more participants, states, and stakeholders involved in the organization.
- B. Better follow through on ideas initiated by committees, surveys and the long range plan.
- C. Continue to educate and defend fertilizer products and their use.
- D. Move out more information on issues, regulations and challenges.
- E. Increase influence as the "go-to" authority on fertilizer regulations.
- F. Actively promote the uniform / model bill.
- G. Conduct a closed session just for state regulators at national AAPFCO meetings.
- H. Increase the knowledge of environmental stewardship among the association leaders.

*(Other lesser ranked answers were)*

- I. Provide online registrations and resources for states.
- J. Provide more specific training opportunities.

**III. What are the greatest challenges facing the organization?**

- A. Gaining consistency and uniformity of state laws and regulations.
- B. Making do with tighter budgets.
- C. Finding alternative revenue streams for the association and our respective state agencies.
- D. Failure to have a voice or authority role on national issues.
- E. Lack of training for new inspectors.
- F. Excessive documentation and paperwork.
- G. Finding ways to standardize the regulatory industry.
- H. Lack of administrative speed or action on issues.
- I. Finding ways for all states and stakeholders to network.
- J. Lack of a national focus on our profession.
- K. Finding alternative approaches to engage stakeholders in our profession.
- L. Inconsistent signals from various jurisdictions regarding compliance.

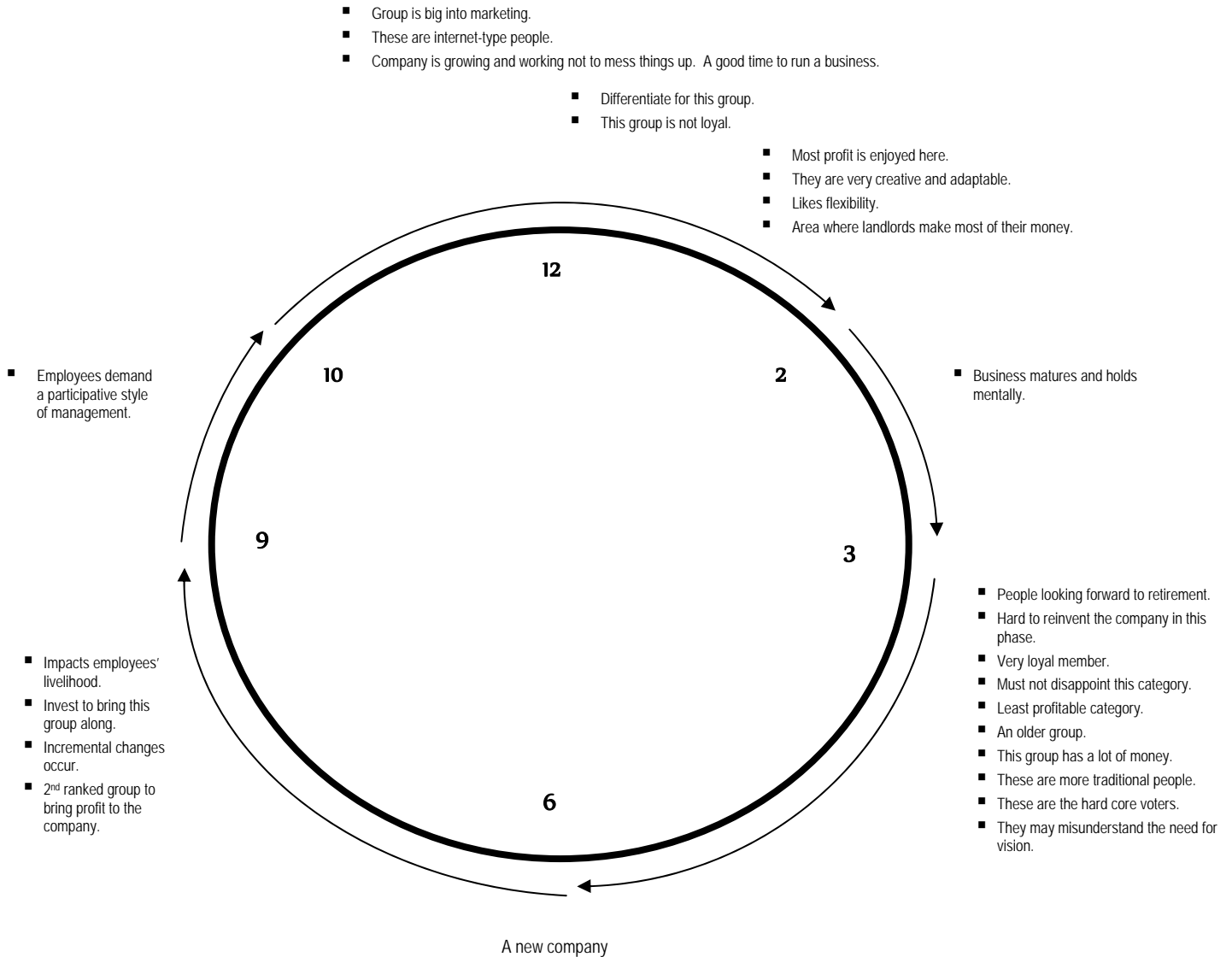
**IV. What are the RISKS associated with the association and the profession?**

- A. Active participation of participants, states and stakeholders.
- B. Financial resources.
- C. Long term future of fertilizer sales.
- D. Ensuring that fertilizer regulation stays with the states.
- E. Are we relevant to change?
- F. The ability to promote and communicate our cause.
- G. To maintain outside outreach to agencies, industry and trade associations.
- H. Our ability to continue to supply quality leaders and replacements as others retire.

**V. What do you want the association to be?**

- A. The standard.
- B. Dynamic.
- C. Respected.
- D. THE Authority.
- E. Consistent / Uniform.
- F. Accessible.
- G. Consumer Advocate.
- H. A resource.
- I. Efficient.
- J. Effective.
- K. Valuable.
- L. Progressive.
- M. Educational.

## VI. Company and Business Cycles



\* The association leaders were asked privately on a paper to write down what time they thought it was at the association based on the definitions of this "Business Clock". Their response was:

Noon – one person  
 2 p.m. – two people  
 3 p.m. – three people  
 4 p.m. – six people

The average was 3 p.m.

**VII. The following answers were to an exercise titled “Characteristics of the Model Nationwide Association of State Regulatory Officials”. A characteristic was given, the planning individuals gave the organization a score based on the ideal being a “10”. Then each one was asked, “What one thing would you suggest the organization do to move your score up to something closer to a “10”? What follows are the key characteristics of the model association, the average score given, low score, and high score and a list of ways they suggested to improve the organization.**

A. Where possible, consistency and uniformity in the interpretation of laws and regulations...*a low of 3, a high of 8, and an average of 5.6*

1. Find ways to attract those that don't traditionally attend national meetings of the association.
2. Encourage the review and establish side-by-side views of respective state laws versus the uniform / model bill.
3. Better sell the concept and WHY it is important to follow the model / uniform bill.
4. Encourage state regulators to engage more with respective state ag industry associations and other statewide agricultural commodity groups.
5. Engage “The Fertilizer Institute” in this uniformity message where possible.
6. On the association web site, post state fertilizer laws that are changing.
7. Actively promote the uniform / model bill and, in some cases, we must sell it first to our respective state administrators.

B. Strong and stable financial condition...*a low of 4, a high of 9, and an average of 8.6. (Received the highest score of all the ten key characteristics.)*

1. Explore the possibility of using federal grants.
2. Seek diversified sources of revenue.
3. Increase price on tonnage data variability reports to industry.
4. At some point, consider the hiring of some form of limited staff.
5. Consider raising dues on occasion.



C. Implement membership and leadership recruitment and engagement...  
*a low of 2, a high of 8 and an average of 4.7*

1. Develop a new participant and new member (*states*) recruitment program and packet.
2. Consider hosting a first-timer reception and newcomer orientation and place a note on the name badge of all such people.
3. Explore methods to attract state associations to the national meeting (*co-ops, ag retailers, statewide ag associations, state ag industry associations, etc.*) and restructure national meetings slightly to accommodate them.
4. The association should consider providing travel scholarships to first-timers to national meetings.
5. Early on in their membership, assign new participants to active roles in the association.
6. Consider the active development into social media roles such as Facebook.
7. The association should consider term limits on some of its leadership roles.

D. Superior communication throughout the industry...*a low of 2, a high of 7 and an average of 5.*

1. Make the web site more educationally useable.
2. For better engagement, possibly survey the needs of industry stakeholders.
3. Conduct more board meetings between the two national meetings of the association.
4. Produce more frequent e-mail newsletters.
5. Make the newsletter more educational and motivational in addition to its current informative format.
6. Allow industry stakeholders to attend more association events.
7. Establish committee expectations, charges and parameters.
8. Where possible, promote more webinars.
9. Explore the use of more variety of electronic news pieces.

E. An established reputation as the "go-to" authority for your particular regulated industry...*a low of 3, a high of 8, and an average of 5.5*

1. Our environmental presence is lacking as the "go-to" authority on fertilizer regulation.
2. We must expand our outreach to a greater variety of audiences and stakeholders.

3. Become a hub on "Best Management Practices" (BMP) on fertilizer use via the web site or provide links.
  4. Establish relationships with other state and federal agencies / stakeholders (USDA, EPA, NRCS, etc.)
- F. Technology-driven...*a low of 2, a high of 8, and an average of 4.3. (The lowest score of all the ten characteristics.)*
1. Make frequent enhancements to the web site.
  2. Better promote the benefits of the association "List-Serve".
  3. Establish a working group on this subject for the association.
  4. Survey the appropriate audiences to get a better handle on how to address this topic.
  5. Look at partnership opportunities in this area.
- G. Leadership excellence in administration of the association...*a low of 4, a high of 8, and an average of 6.3*
1. On the web site, list accomplishments or a talking points paper about the association.
  2. Engage better with members via phone calls and face to face more often.
  3. Do things so that meetings will be run more efficiently.
  4. Continue to educate the leadership on the proper ways of running committees.
  5. Possibly develop a mentoring program within the association.
  6. To encourage attendance at meetings, develop and include an effective talking points paper in the invitations.
- H. A solid program of industry outreach and engagement...*a low of 1, a high of 8, and an average of 5.3*
1. Invite industry and trade associations to attend association events...by using other methods than the simple written letter.
  2. Find ways for AAPFCO to get more visibly involved in other trade associations, industry and other state and federal agencies.
- I. A strong education component for the industry to stay current...*a low of 3, a high of 7, and an average of 5.3*
1. Don't lose the emphasis for training of field staff.
  2. The association should increase emphasis on the lab portion of training programs.

J. Having a vision with an intent on evaluation...*a low of 2, a high of 8, and an average of 5*

1. On occasion, conduct target surveys of the association's stakeholder groups.
2. Evaluate all events and projects of the association as appropriate.
3. Find ways to hold association leaders accountable.
4. Follow through on survey and strategic plan ideas, then evaluate the follow through.

*(In addition to paying attention to those areas receiving low scores, a special note should also be made on those characteristics that exhibited wide swings in opinion among the board members. More time should be spent on those areas to add clarity and definition among the leadership. The overall average score for the group was 55.6)*