AOSA / SCST RULE VOTING PROCEDURE STUDY COMMITTEE REPORT

Wayne Guerke, Chairman

The AOSA – SCST Rule Voting Procedure Study Committee was formed in November, 2003 to objectively evaluate all factors relating to whether SCST should be given voting status for AOSA Rule proposals and to provide a recommendation for resolving this long standing issue. The committee was a joint initiative by the leadership of the Association of Official Seed Analysts (AOSA), the Society of Commercial Seed Technologists (SCST) and the Association of American Seed Control Officials (AASCO). Members of the committee were 1) Sharon Davidson, 2) Joe Garvey, 3) Wayne Guerke (Chair), 4) Deborah Meyer, 5) Larry Nees and 6) Larry Prentice. The basic operating principle for the committee was that any position(s) taken should be objective, factually based and, if necessary, supported by documentation.

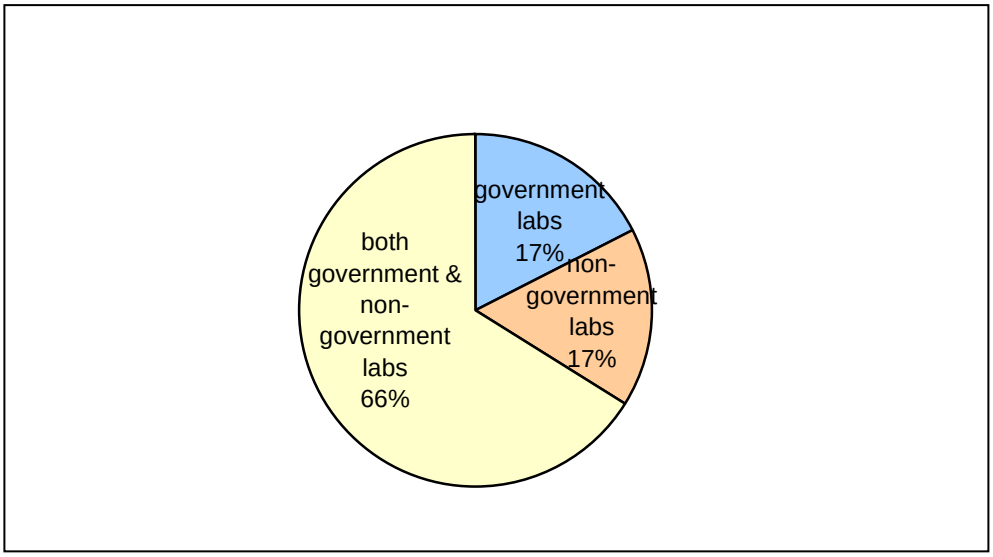
A question and answer format with background readings was used by the committee to evaluate each aspect of this issue; therefore, the same approach will be used for this report so readers may come to their own conclusions. The information presented here, in large part, comes from committee member contributions and readings compiled during the review of this issue. Regrettably, this report is lengthy, but it is highly recommended reading since it provides an in depth study of this issue, which may be pivotal to the future of our associations.

Question #1: *Considering the attrition in state seed programs, does AOSA have the capacity to independently generate relevant methods standardization and Rule proposals for traditional seed testing, as well as new technologies in today's changing agriculture?*

Discussion and background information: The committee unanimously recognized that over the last decade or more there have been widespread reductions in state seed laboratory testing programs. This includes loss of staff or cross utilization among programs, privatization and, in some cases, closing of laboratories. During this same period, workloads have been increased and compressed by the addition of new seed technologies, expanded markets and electronic high speed communication.

Most AOSA member laboratories have little time or funding to independently develop standardized methods. During the last five years, 19 proposals were submitted from governmental laboratories, 18 proposals were from non-governmental laboratories, and 72 proposals were developed collaboratively by both governmental and non-governmental laboratories. Figure 1 shows that AOSA and SCST each individually submitted 17% (19 and 18 proposals, respectively) of AOSA Rule change proposals over the past 5 years. Sixty-six percent of Rule change proposals (72) were joint efforts by representatives from industry and government. These data indicate that no single organization is an island, especially during these complex times.

Figure 1. Five-Year summary of the source for AOSA Rule change proposals.



Question #2: *If AOSA does not appear able to meet future needs of seed technology on its own, is there justification to examine a closer working relationship with SCST to pool resources to assure a dynamic and healthy seed trade that is able to meet challenges of new technologies and a global economy?*

Discussion and background information: Most AOSA member laboratories have little time or funding to independently develop standardized methods. Only 17% of proposed Rules over the last 5 years were done singly by AOSA laboratories and no Rule proposals for new technologies were developed independently by government laboratories over the same period. Even the traditional proposals were only made by relatively few AOSA laboratories compared to the entire membership. Therefore, it would appear that the combined resources of both organizations are necessary to keep pace with current needs.

Question #3: *Do you perceive the published AOSA Rules exist solely to support seed control? If so please reference documentation to support this position.*

Discussion and background information: The objectives of AOSA from their By-Laws, last amended on June 10, 2003, are stated as follows:

ARTICLE III – OBJECT

The object of this Association shall be to improve seed testing in all its branches and to make it more useful to agriculture and society. The object shall be obtained through cooperative effort by:

1. Promoting uniform laboratory methods and practices through seed research.

2. Conducting referee tests among seed analysts of the Association for the purpose of developing uniform techniques.

3. Furthering the exchange of ideas among laboratories and among individual workers.

4. Fostering effective workable seed control legislation and regulation.

5. Improve seed testing in all its branches, to make it more useful to agriculture and society and any other lawful purposes. (1999)

Seed control is listed among the 5 objectives, but this is just one element integral to the overall mission. Certainly, regulation would not withstand a legal test if laboratory work were not based on valid, standardized, contemporary scientific methods.

Some seed control officials have stated that AOSA was founded by and for regulation; however, AOSA was founded much earlier than AASCO for the purpose of promoting standardized seed testing methods. According to the “History of the Association of Official Seed Analysts” published in 1941 by the Association, sixteen states, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Agriculture of Canada met in December, 1908 as an outgrowth of seed analysts from the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations that had been meeting since the mid 1890s to form an “organization of those officially interested in seed testing.” It was to be known as "The Association of Official Seed Analysts of North America." Prior to this development, the first committee to compile a set of Rules in the United States was appointed in 1896 and consisted of E.H. Jenkins (Connecticut), G.H. Hicks (USDA), G. McCarthy (North Carolina), F.W. Card (Nebraska), and W.R. Lazenby (Ohio). As a result, the Association of Experiment Stations adopted Circular No. 34, "Rules and Apparatus for Seed Testing" in 1897. This served as the precursor to the present day “Rules” until the AOSA adopted its first set of "Rules for Testing Seeds” in 1917. On the other hand, AASCO was not founded until 1949 from the merger of several regionalized meetings of seed control officials.

For many seed control officials, involvement of SCST in voting on Rule proposals appears to be a highly controversial issue. Some control officials have been known to claim that SCST involvement in Rule voting would be in conflict with their state seed statutes. If this is the case, it would indeed be a major deciding factor whether it is appropriate for SCST members to have Rule voting privileges; however, examination of a sister agricultural laboratory association appears to indicate otherwise. The AOAC International is the Rule standardizing association for chemical laboratory procedures and is uniformly accepted by states, the USDA and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for Official testing protocol used for regulation of feed, fertilizer, pesticides and food commodities, yet this association has evolved from a strictly governmental entity to a multi-discipline organization composed of government, university and industry members with appropriate checks and balances. More background on AOAC International will be provided in answer to the next question.

Question #4: *Is there any other laboratory association involved in methods standardization and testing protocols that may be utilized in regulatory programs, which has experienced a parallel evolution of industry participation in voting on Rule proposals?*

Discussion and background information: The AOAC International is a prime example of a laboratory methods standardization organization whose testing protocol is used by states throughout the United States for regulation of feed, fertilizer, pesticides, foods and many other agricultural commodities. The AOAC International has had a very similar experience to our seed laboratory associations, so it is valuable to take a closer look. The following history of the AOAC International was taken, in part, from their website: www.aoac.org.

The AOAC was founded in 1884 as the Association of Official Agricultural Chemists, under the auspices of the USDA, to adopt uniform methods of analysis for fertilizers. In 1885, a convention establishing AOAC as an independent organization was held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and membership was restricted to analytical chemists in state and federal government positions only—a membership requirement that remained for nearly 100 years.

The early years of AOAC were strongly influenced by Dr. Harvey W. Wiley, a founder of the Association who served as President and Secretary. In 1885, Dr. Wiley oversaw the publication of the AOAC Methods of Analysis, a 49-page bulletin of methods for analysis of fertilizers and precursor to the Official Methods of Analysis of AOAC International. By 1887, the publication had grown to include methods for feeds and dairy products, as well as fertilizers.

As in the 1890s, AOAC was in the forefront of methods development and validation during the 20th century. Sponsorship of the Association passed to the FDA when it was separated from the USDA in 1927 to keep AOAC methods aligned with federal regulations. The 1950s were an exciting era of rapid expansion for AOAC. New food legislation was passed and the need for new methods and techniques for regulatory purposes spurred rapid expansion of government laboratory facilities and participation in AOAC. In 1965, to recognize the expansion of AOAC's scope of interest beyond agricultural topics, the Association's name was changed to the Association of Official Analytical Chemists. The Association also began looking towards independence from the FDA. With funding secured from federal, state, and industry sources, AOAC became a truly independent organization in 1979.

The 1970s also brought about provisions for membership by scientists from outside the United States. Another significant change was the increased participation and acceptance of non-official (non-government) scientists. Although they had always been allowed and encouraged to participate in collaborative studies, and to hold methods development positions, it was 1987 before full voting membership was extended to industry scientists. Today, over 60% of AOAC International members are working in industry laboratories.

By 1991, the Association had long ceased to be limited to regulatory ("Official") analytical chemists in the United States. During the 1980s and 1990s, the attention of the analytical community, particularly the segment focused on foods, had changed dramatically from chemical to microbiological food contaminants. Additionally, as a result of expansion of international trade, there was increasing demand for quality control of laboratories and international laboratory accreditation.

Consequently, in that year, the name of the Association was changed to AOAC International. The new name retained the initials by which the Association had been known for over 100 years, while eliminating reference to a specific scientific discipline or profession, and reflecting the expanding international membership and focus of AOAC as the "Association of Analytical Communities."

Question #5: *What are some of the checks and balances utilized in the AOAC International to assure neutrality and to prevent any undue influence from special interests?*

Discussion and background information: In addition to the obvious checks and balances inherent to large membership size and diversity, professional credentials of members and accreditation of laboratories, the AOAC International By-Laws restrict membership on their

Board of Directors to a majority employed by or most recently retired from government, regulatory or academic organizations. Furthermore, their Official Methods Board is composed of the chair and members who are chairs of the various methods committees and membership shall be composed of members representing a balance of government, industry and academia as appropriate to the scope of the group and shall not be dominated by any single interest. The AOAC model may not be directly applicable for AOSA and SCST, but it demonstrates a process where the industry matured to a point characterized by diversity, professionalism and membership size and they were making significant contributions to the development of standardized methods. Furthermore, the AOAC International methods are referenced throughout the United States and the world as the Official testing protocol for feed, fertilizer, pesticides and other chemical analytical procedures. This means that these methods are accepted under state statutes for these commodities just as the AOSA Rules are accepted for Official testing of seed. In the late 1990s, the AOSA – SCST Collaboration Committee recommended that the AOAC International model be studied to help resolve the AOSA – SCST Rule voting issue.

Question #6: *What other organizations involved in testing and regulation of agricultural commodities permit some form of industry involvement?*

Discussion and background information: The Federal Seed Act (FSA), the American Oil Chemists Society's (AOCS) Feed Microscopy Division, the National Seed Health System (NSHS) and the International Seed Testing Association (ISTA) (in part) permit industry involvement in the Rule making process or development of laboratory testing protocol. Following is a brief synopsis of the voting process for each organization.

- FSA. Proposed changes to the FSA may be submitted by anyone to the Seed Regulatory and Testing Branch staff. If the proposal is supported through a review process, it is published in the Federal Register where anybody can comment on proposed changes and, barring any major objections, it becomes law after a set number of days.

- AOCS. The AOCS's Feed Microscopy Methods Committee is composed of government, industry and academic members and adoption of methods is by consensus.

- NSHS. The NSHS reviews proposed protocols rated by their technical review panels, which may include industry members, as either Class A (Acceptable as a Standard Test Method - to be published in Reference Manual B and required to be used for phytosanitary testing in conjunction with the issuance of a phytosanitary certificate), Class B (Acceptable as a Temporary Standard Test Method, pending further research that would make the method acceptable as a Standard Test Method. The Class B methods are only published and used when no acceptable Class A Method is available), and Class C (not approved for use). The Seed Technical Working Group (STWG), which is composed of representatives from the National Plant Board (1), the AASCO (1), the Association of Seed Certifying Agencies (1), the American Seed Trade Association (3), the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (1) and the NSHS administration (1), takes the technical panel's recommendation into consideration when making the final decision on rating and publication of methods. The STWG may choose to follow the technical panel's recommendation or may reject the recommendation. The literature review is done by the NSHS administrative unit (AU), which presently is located at Iowa State University.

- ISTA. Although ISTA originated in 1924 as an intergovernmental organization, it opened membership to all seed testing laboratories after the trade diversified and matured and some government agencies privatized laboratory testing. In 1999, ISTA began allowing private laboratories to issue ISTA certificates. This trend has greatly expanded membership in ISTA and a significant portion of their activities and finances come from industry participation. Therefore, ISTA is currently considering whether private laboratories should have voting privileges. If this should occur, AOSA would be the only Official seed laboratory Rules association remaining that excludes direct industry participation. As was stated in a recent newsletter article written by the ISTA Secretary General, Michael Muschick, "no rights without duties, but also no duties without rights."

Question #7: *Since state seed laws specify labeling requirements and the seed quality requirements cited in state statutes must be based on a report from a qualified seed laboratory, would it be objectionable to include standardized methods in the AOSA Rules other than those required by statutes? That is, the various statutes reference the Rules as pertaining to their requirements, but not everything in the Rules is required by all states and newer technologies are also going to require standardized testing protocol.*

Discussion and background information: As stated in the AOSA By-Laws, the objective of the Association is to "Improve seed testing in all its branches, to make it more useful to agriculture and society and any other lawful purposes (1999)." To do so requires that the AOSA Rules remain current and contemporary. Many aspects of the Rules are not used by all states in regulation or some may use portions of the Rules only for service testing. Management of seed quality is a primary function of seed testing protocol, yet not all laboratory assays would be applicable to regulation. Furthermore, testing procedures for new technologies must be developed to maintain quality. To stay relevant, the AOSA Rules must keep pace with requirements of the industry.

Question #8: *Since the SCST has been conducting straw votes over the last 5 years, have there been any significant differences in the voting record?*

Discussion and background information: Based on available data from the AOSA Rules Committee over the last four years, the pass/fail rate is essentially the same for both organizations. The two organizations have been in agreement 99% of the time. Of 82 Rule proposals considered by both organizations during this time period, there was only a single instance where SCST passed a proposal by a very slim majority that AOSA rejected. However, if SCST and AOSA had combined votes on an equivalent basis, the vote would have clearly failed.

Tables 1 and 2 compare the Rule voting records of AOSA and SCST for 2002 and 2003, respectively. Please note that abstentions are non-votes (i.e., a vote was not cast) and are not considered when calculating the percentages of affirmative and negative votes. SCST members routinely abstain on issues that do not concern them or with which they are not familiar. This speaks well for their professionalism.

Table 1. Voting record of AOSA and SCST for Rule change proposals in 2003.

Proposal #	AOSA VOTE COUNT				SCST VOTE COUNT			
	# of yes votes	# of no votes	# of abstentions	Total # of votes	# of yes votes	# of no votes	# of abstentions	Total # of votes
1	27	0	0	27	94	0	4	94
2	26	0	1	26	94	0	4	94
3	28	0	0	28	75	0	19	75
4	28	0	0	28	87	5	5	92
5	15	14	0	29	69	28	3	97
6	2	26	0	28	34	45	19	79
7	2	26	0	28	34	45	19	79
8	2	26	0	28	34	45	19	79
9	2	26	0	28	34	45	19	79
10	28	0	0	28	90	2	8	92
11	28	0	0	28	71	11	16	82
12	26	2	0	28	82	2	15	84

Table 2. Voting record of AOSA and SCST for Rule change proposals in 2002.

Proposal #	AOSA VOTE COUNT				SCST VOTE COUNT			
	# of yes votes	# of no votes	# of abstentions	Total # of votes	# of yes votes	# of no votes	# of abstentions	Total # of votes
1	30	0	0	30	58	0	13	58
2	24	4	1	28	38	22	9	60
3	30	0	0	30	59	0	12	59
4	30	0	0	30	58	0	11	58
5	30	0	0	30	57	1	10	58
6	12	18	0	30	23	43	5	66
7	30	0	0	30	62	0	9	62
8	30	0	0	30	52	0	18	52
9	28	1	1	29	65	1	5	66
10	27	2	1	29	58	5	6	63
11	26	3	1	29	57	5	7	62
12	20	8	2	28	39	9	23	48
13	20	8	2	28	39	9	23	48
14	21	8	1	29	39	9	23	48
15	28	2	0	30	45	8	16	53
16	6	22	1	28	35	27	9	62
17	4	23	3	27	15	46	10	61
18	15	13	2	28	31	22	18	53

In 2000 and 2001, both associations voted unanimously to pass all proposed Rules.

Question #9: *Does the SCST membership appear to have matured to show diversity such that it is not dominated by any single segment of the trade, e.g., member affiliation, laboratory/company size, emphasis on seed kind, regional affiliation, independent vs. company laboratories, size of membership (each member with a vote), etc.? Are some aspects of this same diversity also reflected by AOSA member laboratories, e.g., regional affiliation, production vs. consuming areas, emphasis on crop kinds, etc.? Would this serve as a check and balance on any bias should joint voting be approved?*

Discussion and background information: SCST has both size and diversity among its individual members, which functions as an inherent characteristic of the organization. Table 3 shows 237 total individual members in six membership types, which reflect diversity of applied and academic career disciplines within seed biology and technology. Furthermore, Figure 2 reflects the added dimension of regional diversity among the SCST membership. Clearly the Midwest region is most prominent, but some balance may be achieved between the grain and corn/soybean belts of the Midwest, plus influence from the other 5 regions. Therefore, each region would add diversity of different crop kinds and production areas. Figure 3 shows the percentage of individual SCST members categorized by affiliation. This is also diverse with 25% from universities, USDA, crop improvement associations and AOSA and the remaining 24% and 44% are independent and company members, respectively. Seven percent of the SCST membership is Canadian, which includes both industry and government members.

Table 3. SCST 2003 membership categorized by type.

MEMBERSHIP TYPE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Associate members	63	27
Certified Genetic Technologist	11	4
Registered Genetic Technologist	10	4
Research	12	5
Registered Seed Technologist	135	57
RST and RGT/CGT	6	3
TOTAL	237	100

Figure 2. Percentage of SCST members categorized by region.

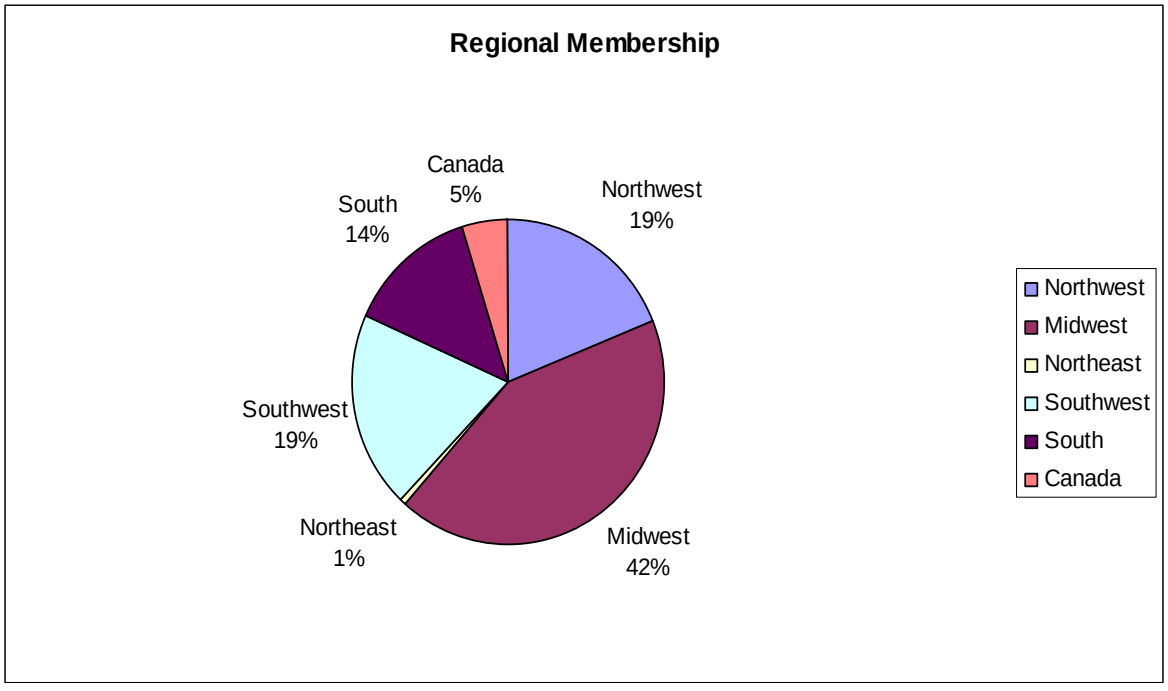


Figure 3. Percentage of individual SCST members categorized by affiliation.

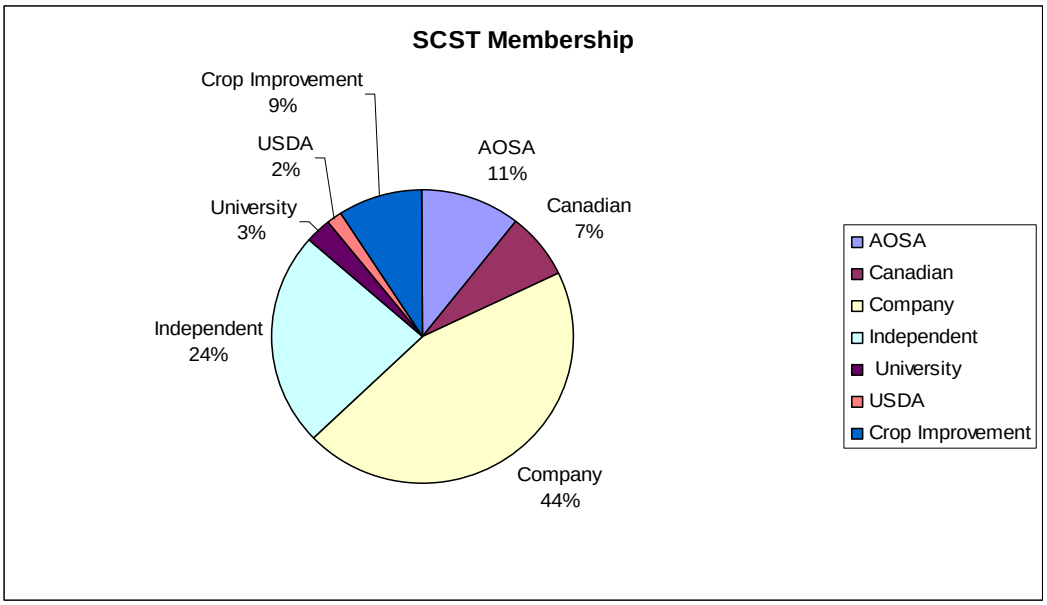


Table 4 shows the number of individual laboratories with SCST members and the affiliation of those laboratories, plus the number of laboratories with multiple voting members. Twenty-seven of those laboratories with SCST members are affiliated with AOSA, universities, USDA or crop improvement associations. Only 30% of those laboratories have multiple members and many of the managers of these laboratories have stated that their employees' voting record definitely reflects that they vote according to their own convictions.

Table 4. Number and type of laboratories with SCST members and laboratories with multiple SCST members.

Type	Laboratories with SCST members	Laboratories with multiple voting SCST members
AOSA	12	7
Canadian	8	0
Company	49	12
Independent	26	8
University	3	1
USDA	2	1
Crop Improvement	10	4
Total	110	33 (30% of laboratories with SCST members)

Comparison of the AOSA laboratory membership and the SCST individual membership, as shown in Table 5, indicates that each has relatively balanced representation by region if the two different systems (laboratory vs. individual membership) were reconciled on an equivalent basis. Figures 4 and 5 further confirm that the percentage of regional individual and laboratory membership for SCST and AOSA, respectively, is very similar.

Table 5. Combined and individual AOSA and SCST members categorized by region.

Region	# AOSA Voting Members	# SCST Voting Members	Total Combined Voting Members
Northwest	6	33	39
Midwest	13	74	87
Northeast	7	1	8
Southwest	11	34	45
South	9	24	33
Canada	2	8	10
Totals	48	174	222

Figure 4. Percentage of SCST individual members categorized by region.

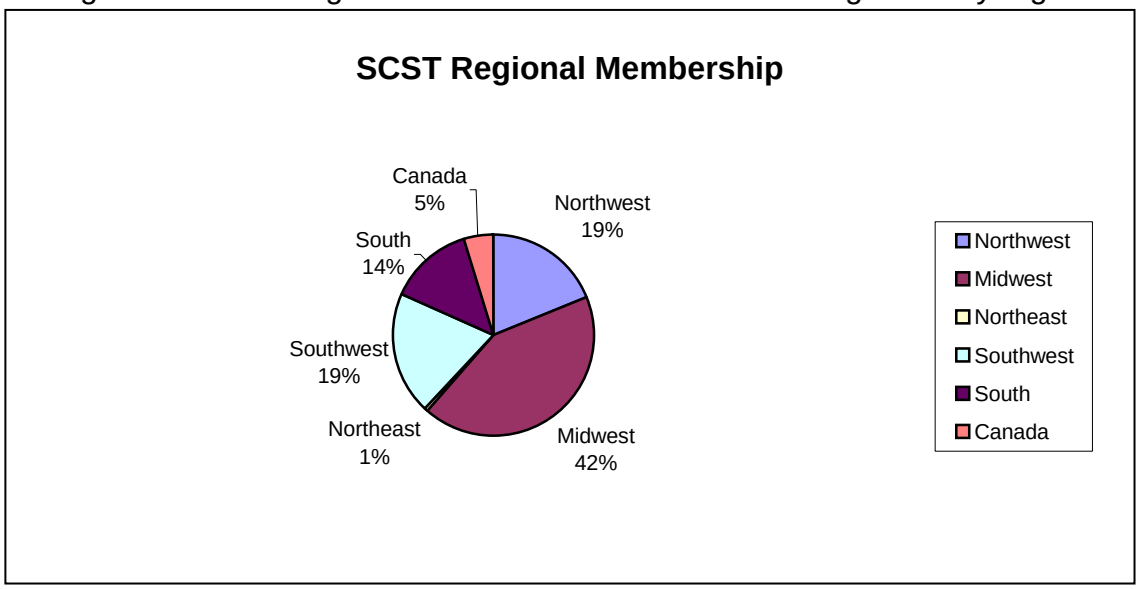
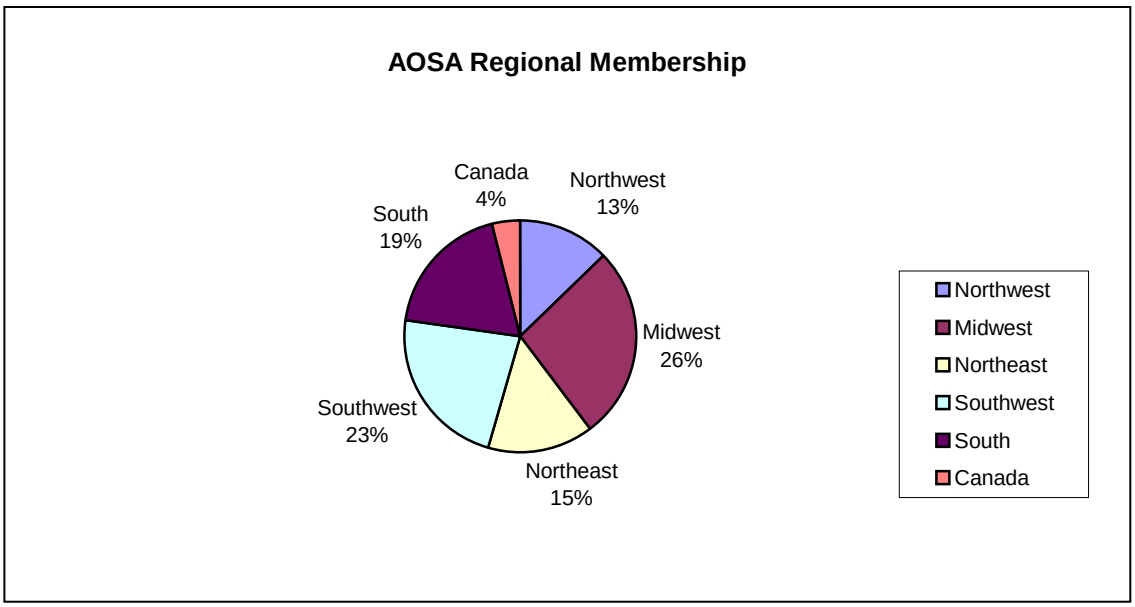
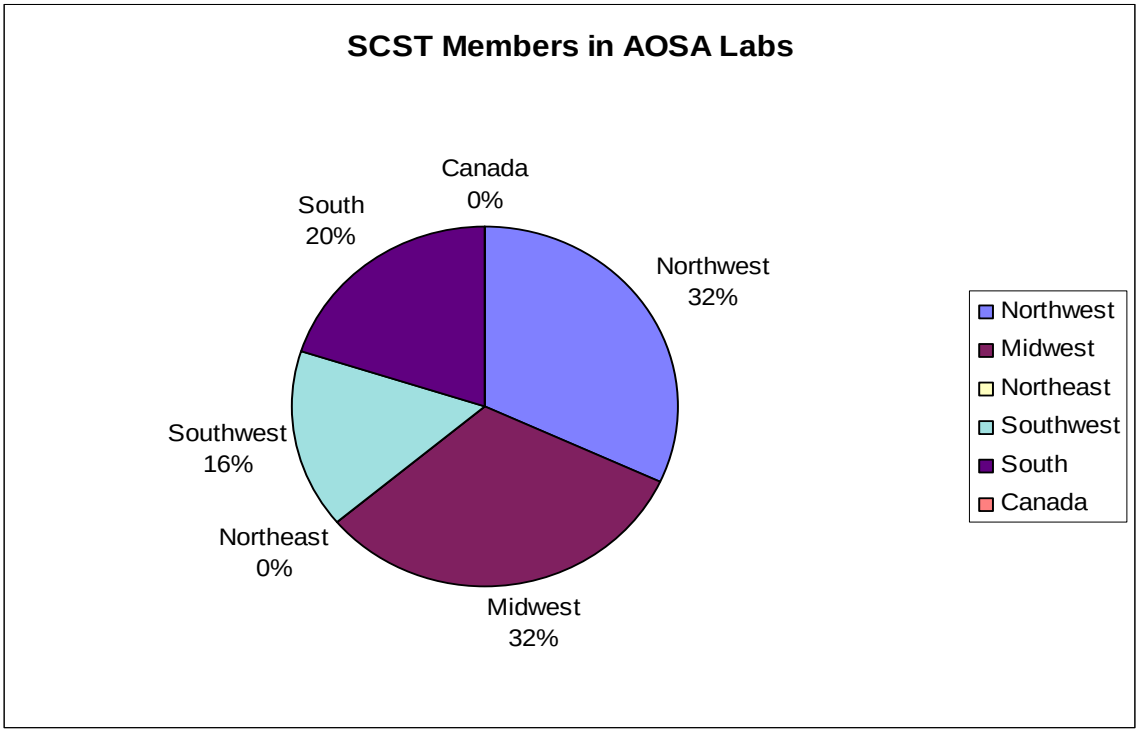


Figure 5. Percentage of AOSA laboratories categorized by region.



There are 25 members of SCST employed at 12 AOSA laboratories, consisting of 22 Registered Seed Technologists, 1 Research member and 2 Certified Genetic Technologists. Figure 6 shows that the regional distribution of these SCST members affiliated with AOSA laboratories is relatively even throughout the United States. This crossover membership serves to balance representation between the two associations.

Figure 6. SCST members employed at AOSA laboratories by region.



Question #10: *If SCST members are given voting privileges, should those holding membership in both organizations be allowed to vote twice?*

Discussion and background information: Initially, the reaction to this question would likely be negative; however, after closer examination, there may be merit in allowing it. On controversial issues, AOSA representatives may be expected to vote according to what is "politically correct" for their state or region; however, when voting within SCST, they are voting as individuals and may well take a different position on an issue. Allowing dual voting would permit them to exercise their right as an individual member of SCST, yet this is not likely to impact close votes because of the few members that hold dual membership and the implementation of other checks and balances that would prevent passing of a Rule by a marginal vote. Furthermore, some of these members may not be the Official voting representative for their AOSA laboratory and would not actually be voting with both organizations. If dual voting privileges may be of any concern, it would appear to have a slight bias toward AOSA, since the primary job of these SCST members is with AOSA laboratories.

Question #11: *If voting were broadened to include the SCST membership and keeping in mind the diversity represented in their membership, what additional checks and balances might be necessary to assure no single entity gains undue influence in the voting process?*

Discussion and background information: The committee unanimously recommended that a 2/3 "super majority" vote should be required to pass a proposed Rule. Most of proposed Rules are passed with an overwhelming majority. This is appropriate once a proposal makes it through the full review process. Indeed, if a proposed Rule is entirely justified as standardized testing protocol, it would seem that there should be more than a simple majority in support of it. If there is such controversy over a proposal, it would appear that more study is in order before implementing it as a standardized Rule for all to follow. Furthermore, if we install joint organizational voting, the diversity of the broad membership (AOSA & SCST combined) would give sufficient representation to justify a 2/3 super majority vote for passing a Rule. This would be part of the checks and balances gained by joint membership voting; i.e., voting representation by the diverse membership body, but checked by requiring two-thirds of the membership to vote for passage of a Rule proposal. Rule making should be a very thoughtful and conservative process supported by sound justification since it may carry broad impact.

An intrinsic benefit to having a broader base of qualified representation in the voting process is that the effects and validity of a proposed Rule will gain more consideration and input. Also, the actual voting process would likely reflect a better assessment of the proposal by including a broader, more diverse voting population. The majority of committee members described voting experiences over the last two and half decades where Rules were rushed and poorly considered, where representatives appeared fatigued at the end of the very intensive annual meeting or a 50:50 tie vote was broken by the single vote of the President on a controversial proposal that might have benefited by more study.

Another trend that would undoubtedly influence the professionalism of the joint membership is the broad implementation of quality management systems and laboratory accreditation. Increased discipline and precision among laboratories would inevitably give a secondary benefit of uniting our greater community of seed laboratories.

Question #12: *Since AOSA is an organization of laboratory members and SCST is an organization of individual registered members, how might voting be configured for joint membership participation?*

Discussion and background information: Once the Rule voting study committee discussed and reviewed all background information, the main goal was to work out an acceptable approach to the joint voting process. It was recognized that each organization needed to remain independent, yet have equality in the voting process. Following are the three approaches proposed by committee members and possible advantages and disadvantages for each.

PROPOSAL #1

Allow each organization to vote on Rule proposals as they see fit. Currently, SCST allows individual members to vote. In AOSA, each member laboratory is allowed one vote. If a Rule proposal is passed independently by each organization, it is formally adopted. If a Rule proposal is passed by only one organization, it is officially rejected. If a Rule proposal is failed by both organizations, it is officially rejected. With this method, each organization remains independent and has the ability to adjust its voting practices as it sees fit. The final result is still dependent on the majority approval by both organizations. If a super majority vote is adopted within each association, an increased measure of affirmation would be realized.

Advantages:
1) Each association remains totally independent in the process.
2) No major changes in By-Laws would be required.
3) The voting process is simple.

Disadvantages:
1) There is potential for conflict between the two organizations on sensitive issues. Such conflict detracts from achieving the long term mission of each association and the objectives of the annual meeting.
2) The member votes would be condensed into a single vote for each organization. Therefore, the "black or white" voting process representing each association would exclude much of the diversity as votes are condensed to a single vote for each organization. This would exclude the diversity within the joint membership, which would otherwise function as checks and balances on the system; although, use of a super majority vote by each association would give an added dimension to assure affirmation of a proposal.

PROPOSAL #2

Allow each organization to vote independently. Then take the percentages from both votes and add them together, e.g., AOSA votes 80% "Yes" and 20% "No". SCST votes 70% "Yes" and 30% "No". This totals 150 in favor and 50 against the proposal. Hence, each organization would be treated equally regardless of the number of members in each association. Of course, implementation of a super majority would add another check to the process.

Advantages:
1) Each association remains totally independent in the process.
2) The voting procedure incorporates the diversity within each organization.
3) There is equality in compiling votes for each organization.
4) Voting is by the memberships, not the organizations.
5) There is less likelihood of conflict between the associations over a voting issue.
6) The voting process is simple.

Disadvantages:
1) More significant changes may be needed for the By-Laws.
2) Vote totals would need to be converted to percentages.
3) Converting votes to percentages and the addition of percentages for a joint total does not show voting count or tally, which may be valuable for long term records.

PROPOSAL #3

Allow each organization to vote independently. Then divide the total number of AOSA members voting into the total number of SCST members voting to derive a factor. Divide this factor into the SCST "Yes" and "No" votes to convert them to equivalency with the AOSA member votes. For example, of 160 SCST members voting, 30 vote "Yes" and 130 vote "No". There are 20 AOSA members voting in their business session, so the AOSA total (20) is divided into the SCST total (160) to derive a factor (= 8). This factor is then divided into the 30 "Yes" SCST votes (= 3.75) and the 130 SCST "No" votes (= 16.25). These "Yes" and "No" votes would have an equivalent basis with AOSA and the votes of each organization could be combined for a total result. Rule passage could be further checked by implementation of a super majority vote.

Advantages:
1) Each association remains totally independent in the process.
2) Voting procedure incorporates the diversity within each organization.
3) There is equity in compiling votes for each organization.
4) There is voting by the memberships, not the organizations.
5) There is less likelihood of conflict between the associations over a vote.
6) The voting count would remain in numerical form for data processing and long term records.

Disadvantages:
1) More significant changes may be needed in the By-Laws.
2) The conversion formula may be somewhat more involved compared to proposal #2 above, but this could be facilitated with use of a computer.

After careful consideration of each proposal, the committee voted unanimously in support of proposal #2, which adopts individual voting within each organization and conversion of those votes to percentages that are then added to determine whether a Rule passes or fails. This allows each organization to be treated equally as organizations regardless of the number of members in each association and it provides for equitable conversion of individual votes, which capitalizes on the membership diversity as a check and balance. The committee also favors adopting a 2/3 super majority for passing a Rule proposal. This approach would incorporate the multi-dimensional diversity from each association in the voting process and requiring a 2/3 vote would certainly prevent control of any special interests within the joint membership. The 2/3 vote would also work to ensure that only well justified proposals are adopted. Hence, sufficient checks and balances would be fully in place. All members expressed interest in maintaining voting records.

Summary and committee recommendation: After careful review and discussion of all factors, the committee recommends the following:

1) Implementation of changes to include the SCST voting membership in voting on proposed AOSA Rule changes, with appropriate checks and balances.
2) Adoption of a joint voting scheme for equivalency between the two membership types, i.e., individual members *vs*. laboratory members. The Rule voting study committee recommends proposal #2. That is, allow each organization to vote independently and convert both organizations' "yes" and "no" votes to percentages and add them together for a final tally.
3) Adoption of a two-thirds super majority vote to pass a proposed Rule.
4) RSTs holding dual membership may vote as individual members with SCST and as laboratory representatives with AOSA. Employees of AOSA laboratories holding membership in SCST that are not acting as the Official representative for their AOSA laboratory, may vote as members of SCST.