

National Association of State Departments of Agriculture Strategic Plan 2020-2025



Produced in Coordination with





March 2020

NASDA Members:

American agriculture is the backbone of rural communities, and feeds, fuels and nourishes people worldwide. Through the enclosed plan, NASDA has a roadmap for engaging others in this story.

At its core, strategic planning is about answering three basic questions: Where are we now as an organization? Where do we want to be? And — most importantly — how are we going to get there? To answer these questions, NASDA engaged Nuffer, Smith, Tucker to carefully design a strategic planning process.

In recent years, NASDA improved its financial stability, established a solid framework for governance, grew in-house staff expertise and gained significant traction in positively impacting food and agricultural policy.

The current plan will further establish NASDA as the nonpartisan, credible eyes, ears and voice of its members in Washington, provide even more member value, engage with others to support our vision and help elevate the importance of American agriculture.

The plan you see here is ambitious — but we're up for the challenge. Thank you for your continued investment and support of NASDA, and for your ongoing leadership in your individual states.

Regards,

Doug Goehring
Commissioner,
North Dakota Department of Agriculture
President, NASDA

Ryan Quarles, Ph.D.
Commissioner,
Kentucky Department of Agriculture
Vice President, NASDA

Barb Glenn
Chief Executive Officer, NASDA

February 2022

NASDA Members:

When I joined NASDA, I was inspired by the great work done on the development of the strategic plan. Through your input and the work of the NASDA strategic planning task force and NASDA staff, the strategic plan is comprehensive, clear and compelling. That said, NASDA — along with every facet of society at large — was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, in December 2021, we embarked on an effort to revisit the plan and ensure its continued relevancy.

We did not start from scratch. Rather, the strategic planning update was done with an eye on preserving the foundation of the plan while looking at the world around us today and considering how it may impact our work. To accomplish this, the NASDA staff held a day-long retreat that engaged the staff, many of whom are new to the organization, on the plan. The result is a slightly updated mission, a strengthened value related to science, and evolved action items and SMART objectives that account for work already complete and that better align with the environment we are operating in today.

I look forward to continuing to build upon the good work already done at NASDA, and helping the organization fulfill its mission of enhancing American food and agricultural communities through policy, partnerships and public engagement.

Regards,

Ted McKinney
Chief Executive Officer, NASDA

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The NASDA strategic plan represents inputs from a variety of stakeholders, and careful consideration was given to member input. Members offered direction via telephone interviews, a carefully selected strategic planning working group, and an electronic survey that went out to the entire membership. Specifically, the strategic planning process included:

1. INTERVIEWS WITH WORKING GROUP, INFLUENCERS AND SELECT PARTNERS

NASDA developed a strategic planning working group designed to represent the diversity of the NASDA membership and types of American agriculture. These men and women — along with trade association and elected official influencers, and select partners — were interviewed about opportunities and threats, and to gather input on key elements of the plan, including the values, mission, vision and purpose of the organization to guide us forward.

2. ELECTRONIC SURVEY OF NASDA MEMBERSHIP AND STAFF

NASDA sought to have all of its members' voices heard. For that reason, an electronic survey was developed and distributed to the entire membership and state staff. NASDA staff also received a similar survey.

3. STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING WITH WORKING GROUP

Input from the above two steps was used at the planning meeting to provide direction on plan development. Working together, the group laid out a draft plan, including values, mission, vision, purpose and key areas of focus for NASDA.

4. STAFF MEETINGS AND SMALL GROUP SESSIONS

Following the meeting, an all-staff session was held in which they were briefed on the outcomes from the above steps. Using direction from the working group, staff then held smaller group sessions to finalize actions and SMART objectives for each priority. Staff involvement is an important step in this process, as the internal team will drive implementation of the plan.

5. PLAN FINALIZED AND APPROVED BY NASDA WORKING GROUP AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The plan was then fine-tuned and presented back to the working group and board for final approval.

While these five steps represent key elements of strategic plan development, strategic planning is never done. Rather, the plan should continually be referenced to ensure all NASDA activities seek to achieve the objectives of the plan. In addition, key plan elements — values, mission, purpose, vision — should remain intact for the duration of the plan (2020-2025) while actions may be updated annually.

Members of the Strategic Planning Working Group

Blayne Arthur

Secretary
Oklahoma Department of
Agriculture, Food & Forestry

Richard Ball

Commissioner
New York State Department of
Agriculture and Markets

Jewel Bronaugh

Commissioner
Virginia Department of Agriculture
& Consumer Services

Doug Goehring

Commissioner
North Dakota Department
of Agriculture

Bruce Kettler

Director
Indiana State Department
of Agriculture

John Lebeaux

Commissioner
Massachusetts Department
of Agricultural Resources

Doug Miyamoto

Director
Wyoming Department of Agriculture

Mike Naig

Secretary
Iowa Department of Agriculture
and Land Stewardship

Ryan Quarles, Ph.D. (Chair)

Commissioner
Kentucky Department of Agriculture

Karen Ross

Secretary
California Department of
Food and Agriculture

Alexis Taylor

Director
Oregon Department of Agriculture

Anson Tebbetts

Secretary
Vermont Agency of Agriculture,
Food & Markets

Wes Ward

Secretary
Arkansas Agriculture Department

Jeff Witte

Secretary
New Mexico Department
of Agriculture

STRATEGIC PLAN AT A GLANCE

Core Values

State departments of agriculture provide public services and NASDA is their nonpartisan, united voice. Together we believe in:

- Advocating for American agriculture, food systems and rural communities.
- Engaging in dialogue and collaborating with a diverse set of stakeholders.
- Making decisions informed by sound, evidence-based science.
- Earning trust by acting with integrity and transparency.

Mission

Enhance American food and agricultural communities through policy, partnerships and public engagement.

Vision

Agriculture leads the way toward a healthy and resilient world.

Purpose

To nourish people and communities while serving as stewards of the environment and public trust.

Strategic Priorities

1. Government affairs: representing ag on Capitol Hill and with government entities.
2. Enhancing member engagement and education: convening members for information sharing, peer networking and consensus building.
3. Growing partnerships: working with stakeholders on key agricultural issues.
4. Conducting and facilitating strategic public engagement: Expand the reach of NASDA's influence and shine a positive light on the important work done by state departments of agriculture.

Important Definitions

Values:

Principles that drive decisions.

Mission:

NASDA's core business.

Vision:

The destination we are working toward.

Purpose:

The end benefit of agriculture to people or society at large.

Strategic Priorities:

Areas of focus to achieve the vision.

SMART

Objectives:

Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound measures of success.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY #1

Government affairs: representing ag on Capitol Hill and with government entities.

Goals:

- Federal agencies and representatives on Capitol Hill turn to NASDA as a trusted source for information.
- NASDA is shaping policies affecting American agriculture.

Actions:

- Formalize, communicate, and implement the processes for policy priority development, including clearly outlining roles for the committees – which are fundamental in developing policy priorities – and identifying mechanisms for ongoing committee engagement with members serving as a resource for information and perspectives.
- Be the eyes, ears and voice of NASDA and its members on the Hill, including House and Senate Ag Committees, and with federal agencies such as USDA, FDA, EPA, USTR, etc. Monitor legislation and regulations, advocate on behalf of policy priorities and provide information to members in a timely manner. NASDA should also consider the following input from the strategic planning process:
 - Build and maintain a relationship database to ensure strong networks are in place with members of Congress, the administration and appropriate legislative and regulatory staff.
 - Work with states to build off their knowledge, including the knowledge and network of affiliates.
 - Develop relationships with groups, including but not limited to the Department of Transportation, Department of Homeland Security, Department of the Interior, Department of Energy, Centers for Disease Control, Office of Personnel Management, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, etc.
 - Enhance NASDA member visibility in D.C. via panels, Hill hearings, briefings, etc.
 - Enhance appropriations process to ensure funds are allocated to policy priority areas and areas in which NASDA or the NASDA Foundation provide programmatic support.

SMART Objectives:

In conjunction with this strategic priority, NASDA will:

- Engage with 500 influencers (members of Congress, the administration, representatives of federal agencies) annually, including 90% of new members on Capitol Hill.
 - As part of this objective, establish deeper and substantive relationships with 10 of the top influencers most likely to impact our policy priority areas; reach out to these influencers at least quarterly.
- Positively impact 15 pieces of proposed or enacted legislation annually.
- Establish a vote tracker for members of Congress, and ensure the majority align with the perspective advocated for by NASDA at least 60% of the time over a Congressional session.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY #2

Member engagement and education: convening members for information sharing, peer networking and consensus building.

Goals:

- Members are engaged and find value in NASDA.

Actions:

- Evaluate all meetings — national and regional — for ways to provide added value, including fostering networking and information sharing among members, which were identified as primary interests of the membership. Implement a plan of action. The strategic planning process suggests that NASDA, working in conjunction with regional Presidents, should explore new approaches and implement a plan that considers:
 - Having collaborative, regional meetings where members can get together more frequently.
 - Expanding the presence of NASDA at regional meetings, including the addition of more NASDA staff participating in those meetings.
 - Organizing roundtable meetings around particular topics of interest, such as livestock, forestry, hemp, etc.
 - Hosting receptions or dinners for relationship building.
 - Virtual approaches that provide value to members.
- With input from the executive committee, reevaluate and revamp new member onboarding and mentorship program with an aim on increasing the understanding of NASDA, and long-term engagement with the organization. New member orientation should be expanded to include senior staff within the states.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY #2

- Foster greater connectivity between NASDA and its members by enhancing the member database and adding a member index whereby members can connect with one another and find subject-matter experts. Emphasis should be placed on adding staff from each state to the database, in order to build deeper relationships beyond single members; outreach can be conducted via one-on-one phone calls, events and more.
- Enhance member positioning and messaging strategy by clearly defining benefits of membership, including networking, information sharing, meetings and resources, cooperative agreements and more; use this as basis for all communications as outlined below. Expand positioning and messaging to include the international reach of NASDA.
- Provide ongoing and consistent communication to members via multiple touchpoints on areas of interest, particularly on happenings at the federal government level related to policy priorities, other issue areas of importance and issues impacting particular states. NASDA should also consider the following input from the planning process:
 - Provide research and background, arming members with informational tools that are relevant, accurate, timely and useful.
 - Get in front of issues that matter with proactive communication to the membership.
 - Clearly communicate policy priorities and the process by which priorities are identified, and share successes where NASDA is making an impact.
 - Demonstrate value of cooperative agreements and other partnerships.
 - Present grant opportunities to the states as a value-added benefit of membership.
- Audit current communication vehicles that go from NASDA to its members with a focus on ensuring consistent communication about benefits of membership, demonstrating value and providing tiered ways to consume information, e.g. "quick reads" versus "in-depth" analysis. Included in the analysis should be a review of the NASDA website and its navigation, social media strategy and annual reports.

SMART Objectives:

In conjunction with this strategic priority, NASDA will:

- Obtain an average 35% open rate and 8% click-through rate for Member Update annually.
- Attract 100 new participants per meeting per year, including 50 state staff and 50 external supporters from at least 25 different organizations.
- 65% of members will become mentors by 2023 Winter Policy Conference.
- Maintain at least 95% of members who indicate they would refer a colleague to a NASDA event, as determined by post-event surveys.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY #3

Growing partnerships: working with partners – nongovernmental organizations, philanthropic entities, private sector companies, federal or state agencies or universities – on key agricultural issues.

Goals:

- Grow partnerships that aid in supporting NASDA's vision and policy priorities and provide member value.

Actions:

Cooperative Agreements:

- Grow current and new cooperative agreements with federal partners that support continued or new funding and provide added value to membership. Engage members in those agreements whenever possible, and communicate value of those partners to members, as identified in Strategic Priority #2.
- Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS): Increase Market Access Program (MAP) allocation, expand booth space across trade shows, grow relationships between buyers and suppliers, and facilitate relationship-building with international agriculture counterparts.
- National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS): Increase partnerships across the labor market and strengthen technology system to meet the needs of a modernized NASS enumerator program.

Other Partners:

- Working in conjunction with the executive committee, identify goals for new partners and identify focus areas for new partner development; consider partners that can provide monetary and other value. Potential niche areas to consider include ag-tech, logistics, food, conservation, and university partners. Pursue partners in alignment with direction set by executive committee.
- Develop the Stakeholders Futures Council – This group will be made up of NASDA members and stakeholders and meet regularly to discuss opportunities for collective action across public, private, and academic policy or programs. This commitment is framed as a way to deepen relationships with key partners, expand partner benefits and unite resources across the NASDA network.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY #3

- Evaluate resources used to seek and engage partners. As part of this effort, NASDA should:
 - Review benefits of partnership for all partner types, including federal and private partners to ensure optimal value is achieved on both ends.
 - Evaluate ways to communicate partnerships; consider the role of digital resources, such as the NASDA website, social media support and webinars.
 - Develop a partner agreement, clearly outlining the ways in which NASDA engages partners, specifying NASDA policy priorities remain independent of and without influence from partners.
 - Review and refine welcome package outlining how partners can make the most out of their partnership with NASDA.
 - Develop an annual plan for connecting partners and members, when doing so provides value for all. Connections may include stakeholder roundtable meetings, sponsored breakfast receptions at NASDA meetings and more.
- Collaborate with the NASDA Foundation in identifying partners that best fit the foundation mission.

SMART Objectives:

In conjunction with this strategic priority, NASDA will:

- Secure \$1 million in funding annually from new and existing national partners.
- Secure one partner with shared policy interests in each of the following areas by the end of 2022. Evaluate this objective and re-set annually as needed.
 - Small business
 - Supply chain
 - Value-added
 - Ag-tech
 - Conservation



STRATEGIC PRIORITY #4

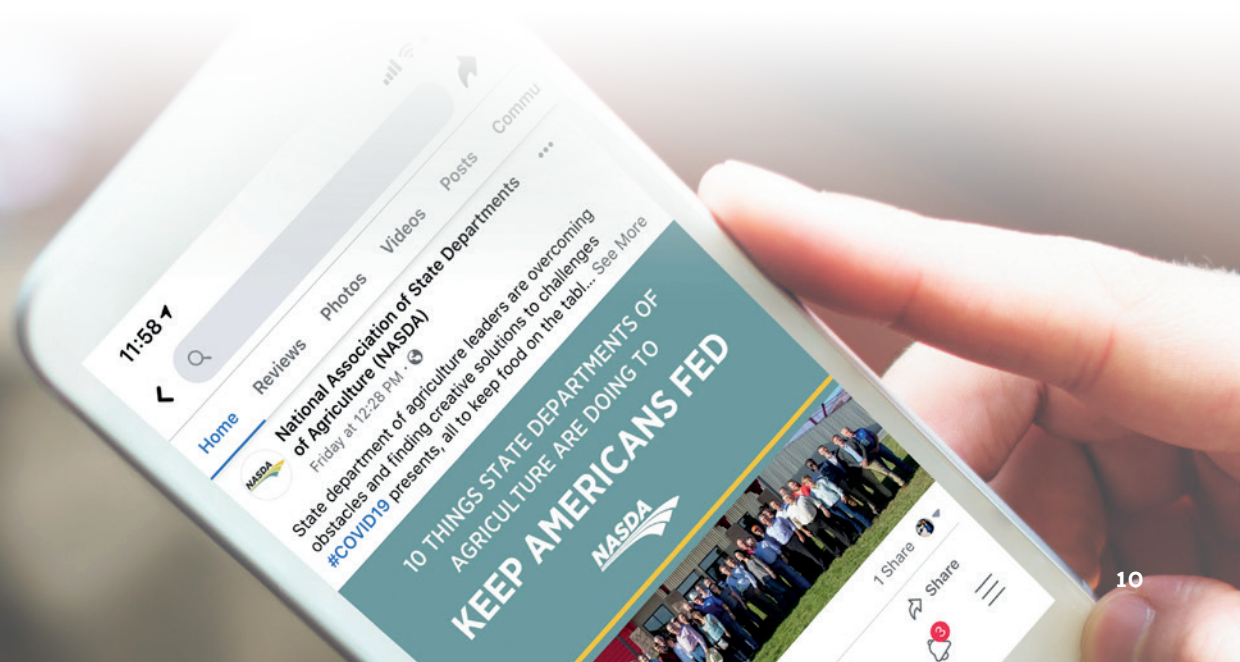
Conducting and facilitating strategic public engagement: Expand the reach of NASDA's influence and shine a positive light on the important work done by state departments of agriculture.

Goals:

- Increase understanding of and support for American agriculture.
- Increase awareness of NASDA.

Actions:

- Sustain NASDA's brand positioning and messaging strategy, which highlights areas where state departments of agriculture demonstrate a significant role supporting a thriving agriculture industry, food system and environment.
 - Develop a tagline in line with NASDA's messaging strategy.
 - Update NASDA's website to reflect NASDA's messaging strategy and support goals identified here.
- Regularly update members and partners, arming them with information to leverage their outreach capabilities; coordinate outreach efforts with NASDA Foundation.
- Develop an ongoing news bureau of activities — including op-ed placement and outreach to mainstream media that serve NASDA's target audience — pursuing proactive, earned media coverage in alignment with a quarterly content calendar.
- Use NASDA's social media presence to communicate NASDA's brand positioning and messaging, and support the quarterly content calendar.
- Seek speaking engagements for NASDA's chief executive officer, positioning him and NASDA as a credible voice on agricultural and food issues.
- Engage FFA, AFA, 4-H and other student leadership groups in NASDA's Next Generation program. Consider other programs focused on the next generation as means to facilitate agricultural policy education, enhance future leaders in public service for agriculture and provide member value.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY #4

SMART Objectives:

In conjunction with this strategic priority, NASDA will:

- Secure 1,500 mentions of NASDA annually in media outlets.
- Secure quarterly speaking engagement for CEO with organizations relevant to NASDA stakeholders.
- Secure 10,000 engagements across all social media platforms annually, and grow following by 2,000 followers across platforms in 2022.
- Grow subscribers of NASDA News by 150 new subscribers annually and maintain an open rate of 24% annually.

