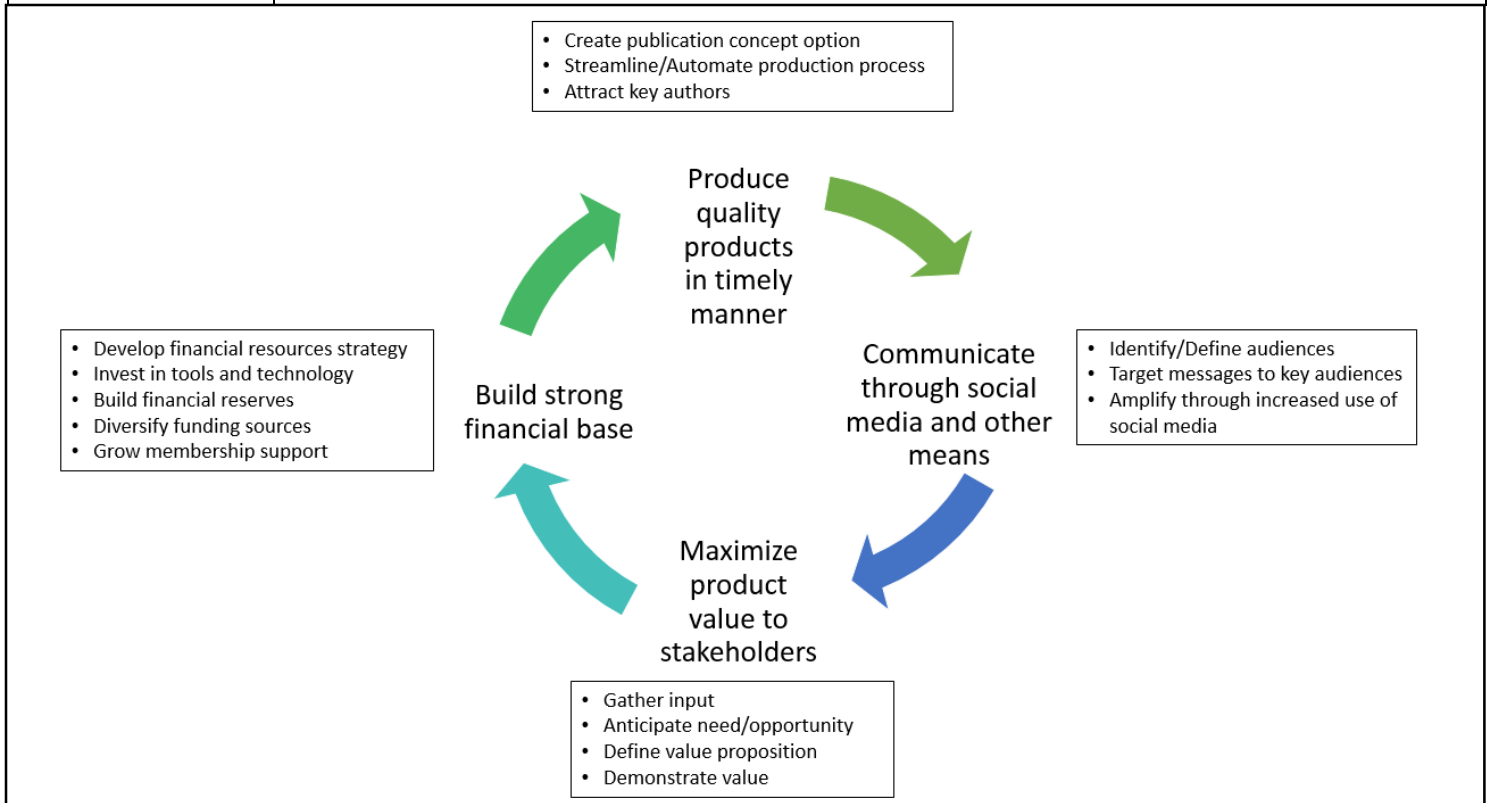


Council for Agricultural Science and Technology Strategic Plan 2016–2020

Our Mission	CAST, through its network of experts, assembles, interprets, and communicates credible, balanced, science-based information to policymakers, the media, the private sector, and the public.
Our Vision	A world where decision making related to agriculture and natural resources is based on credible information developed through reason, science, and consensus building.
Who We Are	CAST is a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) organization composed of scientific societies and many individual, student, company, nonprofit, and associate society members. CAST's Board of Representatives is composed of representatives of the scientific societies, commercial companies, and nonprofit or trade organizations.
Who We Serve	CAST serves policymakers, the media, the private sector, and the general public through its delivery of credible, balanced, science-based information related to agricultural science and technology.
Our Program and Services	<p>CAST fulfills its mission through publications, projects, and sponsored activities designed to communicate the latest scientific research on food and agricultural issues to the nonscientist.</p> <p>The primary work of CAST is the publication of papers highly regarded as a source of science-based information written and reviewed by scientists and subject experts from many disciplines.</p> <p>CAST distributes this information widely through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free online resources—website, blog, videos, and social media • <i>Friday Notes</i>—CAST's weekly e-newsletter for members featuring lead articles on timely ag topics and live links to current ag news items • Briefings to legislative and government personnel in Washington, D.C.
Our Goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase our production of quality products in a timely manner for our stakeholders. 2. Strengthen our communication with stakeholders through social media and other means. 3. Maximize the value of our products to our stakeholders. 4. Build a strong financial base for the long-term stability of CAST.



Background and Context

Early in 2015, CAST created a Strategic Planning Committee chaired by the president-elect with two representatives from each CAST work group. The process began with a thorough analysis of significant industry, global, and agriculture changes, as well as analysis of key assumptions that should drive CAST's strategy. Input from CAST members and stakeholders was included using information gathered through surveys. The committee defined three major initiatives as core areas of focus for strategic planning. This was presented to and further developed by the CAST Board of Representatives during a special session of the 2015 annual meeting held in October. Strategies to achieve these goals, plus work assignments, timelines, and measurement methods, were further defined and refined through the CAST work groups in early 2016. The final draft of the 2016–2020 CAST Strategic Plan was presented and approved by the Board of Directors during their spring meeting in April 2016.

CAST's Organizational Competencies:

- CAST is an Independent, balanced, and credible science-based source of agricultural information.
- Membership in CAST represents multiple disciplines within the food and agriculture sector.
- Members and contributing authors are passionate about the importance of communicating science-based information.
- CAST is still solidly rooted in the same founding principles envisioned by its founders more than 40 years ago.
- The mission and vision of CAST are closely connected with the legacy of Dr. Norman Borlaug.

Our Goals: 2016–2020

Goal 1: Produce Products Continue to produce quality products and recruit premier authors. Improve timeliness and efficiency in production process.

Strategies:

- **Create Publication Concept Option**
 - Establish portal for “publication concept” on the CAST website to be used to solicit ideas from outside the work group process.
 - Solicit ideas from outside the work groups into the portal.
 - Evaluate “publication concepts” in work groups and feed into internal process.
- **Streamline/Automate Production Process**
 - Maintain current work group-driven proposal process and enhance by automation.
 - Streamline and automate CAST's publication production process phases: (1) proposal creation and approval, (2) task force creation, (3) writing/editing, (4) publication, and (5) follow-up.
- **Attract Key Authors**

Goal 2: Communication/Social Media Deliver focused messages on the science of food, agriculture, and the environment that are highly accessible to various influential audiences.

Develop the ability to share information and shape opinion in the social space by leveraging our science in focused messages that are highly accessible to specific sectors/audiences that can be multiplied on different social media sites.

Strategies:

- **Identify/Define Audiences**
 - Identify and create a better understanding of relevant influential audiences and how each of them consumes scientific information.
- **Target Messages to Key Audiences**
 - Identify all channels of communication and determine how to leverage them for focused message delivery.
- **Amplify through Increased Use of Social Media**
 - Characterize the current impact of CAST communication/messaging efforts and evaluate alternate routes for improved delivery of focused messages.

Goal 3: Maximize Product Value to Stakeholders Increase the impact our products have on policymakers, to our stakeholders, and to public- and private-sector customers and consumers.

Strategies:

- **Gather Input from Key Stakeholders**
 - Develop tools and processes to make regular contact with key stakeholders to gather information about what they hold valuable in having a relationship with CAST.
- **Anticipate Publications Desired/Needed by Stakeholders**
 - Develop formal processes to obtain input from key stakeholders, industry leaders, futurists, etc., on topics of potential importance for the next 2–5 years.
 - Survey social media for trending topics.
 - Survey leaders of CAST Board of Representatives, Board of Trustees, Education Program Members, Nonprofit Members, etc.
- **Define Value Proposition**
 - Identify real and perceived benefits received by stakeholders due to the products produced and activities sponsored by CAST.
 - Identify Key Performance Indicators and collect metric data that demonstrate impacts of products produced and activities sponsored by CAST.
- **Demonstrate Value**
 - Develop tools and processes to communicate impact from CAST products and activities.
 - Borlaug CAST Communication Award
 - Publications
 - Contacts/networking with policymakers, decision makers, etc.
 - Value to authors

Goal 4: Build a Strong Financial Base Develop a financially sustainable plan that supports the strategic direction and focus of CAST by growing and diversifying funding sources.

Strategies:

- **Develop a financial resources strategy** that aligns with and supports the action items in the strategic plan.
- **Invest in tools and technology** that increase the productivity and efficiency of CAST staff and volunteers.
- **Build financial reserves** that could lead toward the creation of an endowment fund.
- **Diversify funding sources** by achieving a sustainable balance of financial resources between membership and special project support.
- **Grow membership support** across all categories, and expand in the areas of food and value-added companies, societies, and nonprofit organizations.