



The National Agricultural Law Center
Quarterly Newsletter
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Third Quarter 2026



The Nation's Leading Source of
Agricultural and Food Law
Research and Information

NationalAgLawCenter.org

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Greetings,

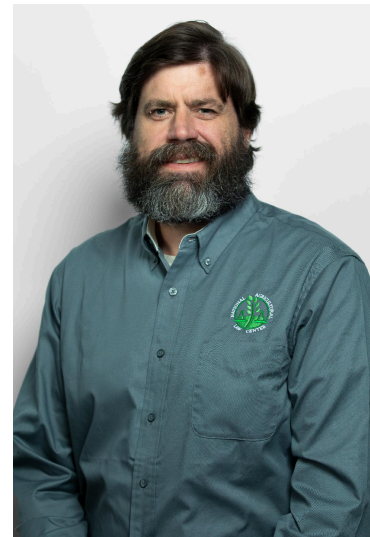
I hope everyone is having a great start to the fall! Thank you for taking a moment to keep up with a few key highlights from the NALC.

We have had a busy few months at the NALC, with several new initiatives and resources underway. This summer, we launched our new "NALC Explains" video series, which provides short, accessible explanations of complex agricultural and food law issues.

Recent topics have included **Monsanto v. Durnell**, **SNAP waivers in court**, and **business entities and Farm Bill programs**. We hope you'll take a moment to check out the series and share these resources with anyone who may find them useful.

I hope you'll join us at the 47th Annual Agricultural Law Association Educational Symposium in Dallas, Texas between November 5th and 7th. NALC is proud to co-host this year's meeting with AALA, and we're looking forward to bringing together agricultural law professionals from across the country for three days of education, discussion, and networking. This year's program includes four educational tracks, ethics programming, and a new Career Pathways Panel for students and young professionals interested in agricultural law. The symposium will also feature timely programming on issues ranging from farm policy and agricultural finance to food law, environmental policy, land use, and emerging issues such as AI and data governance. We hope to see some of you there!

We also recently launched the **Data on Economic and Bankruptcy Trends in Agriculture (DEBT) Project**, a collaboration between NALC and the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture. In August, we traveled to DC to share information about the project with Congressional staff, USDA personnel, and others. The project compiles data on agricultural Chapter 11 and Chapter 12 bankruptcy filings and provides a broader look at economic and bankruptcy trends affecting agriculture. We appreciate NASDA's partnership on this important project.



- **Ag Law Reporter**
- **General Resources**

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the NALC?
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The NALC has also continued to expand its written resources on emerging issues in agricultural and food law. Recent publications have covered foreign ownership and AFIDA, agricultural data privacy, food regulation, tariffs, and environmental law, among others. And finally, we are particularly pleased to welcome Mary Eichenberger to a new NALC role as a Staff Attorney focusing on finance and credit issues. Mary previously served as a NALC Research Fellow and brings valuable experience and knowledge to our growing team.

Thanks again for taking a few minutes to keep up with recent and upcoming NALC activities.

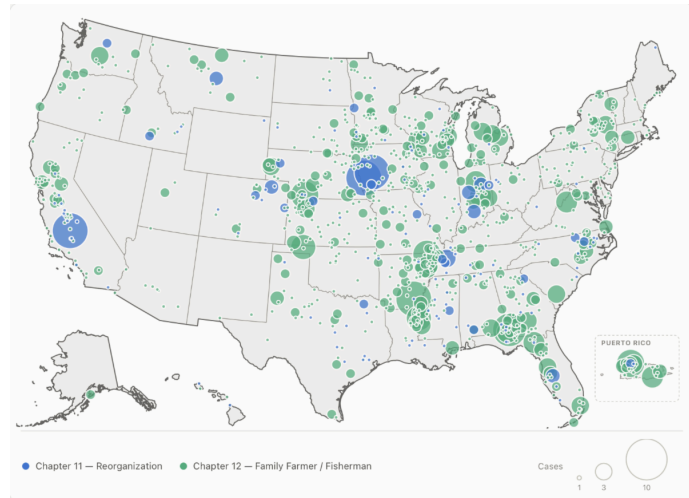
Respectfully,

Harrison M. Pittman, NALC Director

Data on Economic and Bankruptcy Trends (DEBT) Project

The NALC, in partnership with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, recently launched the *Data on Economic and Bankruptcy Trends in Agriculture (DEBT) Project*, a new resource designed to provide a more complete picture of agricultural financial stress in the United States.

The project compiles agricultural bankruptcy filings under both Chapter 11 and Chapter 12. While Chapter 12 is specifically designed for eligible family farmers and family fishermen, agricultural businesses may also file under Chapter 11 depending on factors such as their size, organizational structure, and debt levels. Until now, the number of farms filing under Chapter 11 has been unknown.



The DEBT Project features an interactive map that allows users to explore ag related Chapter 11 & 12 bankruptcy filings between January 2021 and June 2026. Information can be filtered and viewed by bankruptcy chapter, year, and quarter, allowing users to examine where and when agricultural bankruptcy filings have occurred and identify trends over time. Users can select locations on the map to view individual cases and access additional information, including links to corresponding federal court records. The page also includes access to the underlying dataset.

Through this project, 1,401 agricultural bankruptcies were identified. The majority of those- 1,200- were filed under Chapter 12. However, 201 additional bankruptcies with an agricultural connection were filed under the requirements of Chapter 11. In other words, agricultural bankruptcies over the past 5 years are at least 16% higher than previously realized.

While this project does not solve the problems of farm financial stress, it provides a more comprehensive view of trends across the agricultural sector. When considered more broadly, these filings offer valuable information for farmers, attorneys, policymakers, researchers, lenders, and others seeking to understand the economic conditions affecting agriculture. Explore the map and data set [here](#).

Mary Eichenberger and Phillip Powell Join NALC

The National Agricultural Law Center has recently welcomed two new staff members. We are excited to work with Mary Eichenberger and Phillip Powell as we continue on our mission to be the nation's leading source of agriculture and food law research and information.

In August, Mary Eichenberger joined us as a Staff Attorney. She brings with her a strong background in agriculture, law, and policy to the Center, along with deep connections to the Arkansas agricultural community.

Her work will focus on legal issues involving agricultural finance and credit, including lending, secured transactions, and bankruptcy. She will research, analyze and create resources to help agricultural stakeholders understand and navigate the legal issues surrounding access to credit and financial concerns. Her first article- *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: A Roadmap for Distressed Agricultural Borrowers*- is available [here](#).

Mary grew up in Clarksville, Arkansas, on her family's cow-calf operation. Her experiences growing up around agriculture helped spark her interest in agricultural law and policy and in serving the farmers and ranchers who make up Arkansas's agricultural community. She earned her bachelor's degree in Agricultural Business with a pre-law concentration from the University of Arkansas, graduating *summa cum laude*. During her undergraduate studies, she was active in student government and interned with Arkansas Farm Bureau. She also published an honors thesis examining foreign ownership of agricultural land.

Mary continued her education at the University of Arkansas School of Law, where she graduated with her J.D. in May 2026. While in law school, she served as both a Staff Editor and Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Food Law & Policy and completed a clerkship with Farm Credit of Western Arkansas. Her Washington, D.C. experience includes an internship at the House Committee on Natural Resources, and both internship and clerkship roles with the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry. She is licensed to practice law in Arkansas.

Mary is not entirely new to the Center, however. She has worked as a Research Fellow since her second year of law school, contributing to projects (including **The Feed**) involving environmental law and food law. She is building on her experience through her current work, while also pursuing an LL.M. in Agricultural and Food Law at the University of Arkansas School of Law.



Phillip Powell joined the NALC in June 2026 as Communications Coordinator, bringing a background in journalism, communications, and environmental reporting to the Center's communications team.

Before joining NALC, Powell worked as an environmental reporter for the Arkansas Times through Report for America, where he covered environmental policy, climate change, development, and other issues affecting Arkansas communities. His reporting combined traditional journalism with data analysis and multimedia storytelling, and his work earned recognition from both the Arkansas chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists and Report for America. Powell earned a Master of Science in Journalism from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism and a bachelor's degree from Hendrix College, where he served as editor-in-chief of *The Aonian* literary magazine.

At NALC, Powell supports the NALC's communications efforts, including newsletters, social media, webinars, media relations, website content, and other initiatives designed to make agricultural law research accessible to a broad audience.

NALC: Explains Video Series



The National Agricultural Law Center's "Explains Agricultural Law" video series breaks down complex agricultural and food law issues into clear, accessible explanations. Designed for farmers, ranchers, agricultural professionals, policymakers, attorneys, students, journalists, and anyone interested in the laws shaping agriculture, the series connects legal concepts to the real-world issues affecting the agricultural sector.

Each brief video features NALC attorneys and legal experts explaining a specific topic in agricultural law, from emerging regulations and environmental issues to land use, farm policy, animal agriculture, water rights, and other legal questions affecting producers and rural communities. Rather than assuming viewers have a legal background, the series emphasizes straightforward explanations of what the law says, why it matters, and how changes in law and policy can affect agriculture.

The series reflects the NALC's broader mission of providing objective, research-based information about agricultural and food law. Videos are intended as educational resources and do not provide legal advice or advocate for particular policy outcomes.

[Subscribe to our YouTube Channel](#)

Agricultural Law Contact List

At the NALC, we receive frequent requests for the names of attorneys with experience in various areas of agricultural law. Year over year, those requests continue to increase. While we often refer people to bar associations or other similar organizations, we recognize those resources don't fully reflect the range of legal professionals working in agriculture.

To better serve stakeholders, we are compiling a contact list of private practice attorneys who have professional experience or a practice focus in areas of law affecting agriculture. Attorneys or firms who wish to be included can enter their information [here](#).

We hope that this resource will make it easier for producers, landowners, and industry professionals to connect with legal professionals who understand the unique challenges of agriculture. Please note that inclusion on the list does



Webinar Series

Our webinar series offers a variety of presentations relating to agricultural law and policy. All webinars are recorded and archived on **our website**. See below for a list of recent and upcoming webinars.

Recent Webinars

Foreign Ownership of Ag Land:

Federal & State Legislative and Litigation Update

During our July 15th webinar, NALC Director Harrison Pittman discussed the evolution in scope and enforcement authority of state laws on foreign ownership, as well as previewing major changes at the federal level along with discussing its evolution from America's colonial period through the current year.



[Watch the Recording](#)



Minors Working on the Farm:

Child Labor Laws for Agricultural Employers

In an August webinar hosted by the National Agricultural Law Center, Audry Thompson, staff attorney at the Penn State Center for Agricultural and Shale Law, discussed federal child labor requirements for minors working in agriculture. Thompson explained age-based restrictions, hazardous job limitations and the parental exemption under the Fair Labor Standards Act, while emphasizing that agricultural employers should also be aware of state-specific child labor laws.

[Watch the Recording](#)

2026 Update:

USDA's Payment Limitations, Eligibility, & Ag Tax Considerations

In a September webinar hosted by the National Agricultural Law Center, Grant Ballard, partner at Ark Ag Law, PLLC, and Kristine Tidgren, director of Iowa State University's Center for Agricultural Law and Taxation, discussed recent changes to federal farm programs and agricultural tax law. The presenters covered updated USDA payment limitations and eligibility requirements, federal tax changes under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, and the practical implications of the new rules for agricultural producers and operations.



[Watch the Recording](#)



NALC-AALA Agricultural Law Careers Panel:

For students interested in careers in agricultural and environmental law

In a September webinar hosted by the National Agricultural Law Center in partnership with the American Agricultural Law Association, professionals from across the agricultural and food law field shared their career paths and advice for students interested in the profession. Panelists Brigit Rollins, Zach Gihorski, Phyllis J. Marquitz and Caleb Pearson discussed opportunities in private industry, government, public policy and agricultural law research and outreach.

[Watch the Recording](#)

Upcoming Webinars

Agricultural Data Rights:

A New State Law Landscape

This webinar will be presented by **ArentFox Schiff Privacy Group** Chair **D. Reed Freeman** and **Agriculture & AgTech** Chair **Karen Ellis Carr** and will focus on the new state law landscape on how agricultural data ownership and monetization rights are being allocated among the various market participants, including producers, landowners, lessees, original equipment manufacturers, seed companies, aggregators, and technology providers.



[Click to Register](#)



What's in a Food?

A 2026 Snapshot of Food Ingredient Changes at the State and Federal Levels

This webinar will provide an end-of-year overview of the changing federal and state laws governing food ingredients. The presentation will survey state laws restricting or requiring labeling of certain food ingredients, related litigation, and recent FDA actions, including proposed reforms to the "Generally Recognized as Safe" pathway, changes involving color additives, and development of a post-market chemical review process. The webinar will highlight key developments from 2026 and look ahead to potential changes in food ingredient regulation in 2027.

[Click to Register](#)

Publication Highlights

As part of its mission, the NALC continues to deliver webinars, articles, fact sheets, and state compilations on numerous agricultural and food law topics. These resources are free to the public and serve as a research tool for both attorneys and non-attorneys.

The NALC publishes weekly posts about current issues in agricultural and environmental law. Posts from the past quarter are outlined below.

**July
2026**

Blog posts:

- ***Court Rules SNAP Waivers Violate APA***
- ***Supreme Court Approves Texas, New Mexico Consent Decree for Rio Grande***
- ***New H-2A Guidance for Dairy Operations***
- ***Food Law in the States: 2026 Update Part 2***
- ***Services Rescind ESA "Harm" Definition, Environmental Groups File Suit***
- ***Disease Tracing***

The Feed:

- ***Volume 4, Issue 13***
- ***Volume 4, Issue 14***

**August
2026**

Blog posts:

- ***Food Foundations: Seafood Regulation***
- ***AFIDA Updates Explained: Background and Proposed Definitions (Part 1)***
- ***Reclamation Releases Final EIS for Colorado River***
- ***Deere Agrees to Settle FTC Lawsuit***
- ***AFIDA Updates Explained: USDA Proposes Substantial Revisions to AFIDA Regulations (Part 2)***
- ***HHS Proposes Reforms to the "Generally Recognized As Safe" Pathway***
- ***Lawsuit Challenges Joint USDA-DOI Grazing Action Plan***
- ***Section 301 Tariffs Challenged***

Publications:

- ***Agricultural Dealer Laws state compilation***
- ***Data in Economic and Bankruptcy Trends (DEBT): Agricultural Filings in Chapter 11 and Chapter 12***

Videos:

- ***NALC Explains: Monsanto v. Durnell***

- *NALC Explains: SNAP Waivers in Court*
- *NALC Explains: Business Entities and Farm Bill Programs*
- *NALC Explains: DEBT Project*

The Feed:

- *Volume 4, Issue 15*
- *Volume 4, Issue 16*

**Sept.
2026**

Blog posts:

- *Seventh Circuit Reinstates Chobani "Zero Sugar" Case*
- *Policy and Legislative Update on Hemp*
- *Food Foundations: Livestock & Poultry Slaughter and Processing*
- *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: A Roadmap for Distressed Agricultural Borrowers*
- *WOTUS Update: EPA Seeks Comment on Supplemental Proposal*
- *2025 AEWR Ruled Unlawful*
- *Regulating Competition through the Packers and Stockyards Act: History and Recent Changes*
- *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Defaulting on FSA Loans*

The Feed:

- *Volume 4, Issue 17*
- *Volume 4, Issue 18*

Outreach

NALC attorneys speak and present at events in order to provide agricultural and food law research and information to the public. If you are interested in having an attorney from the NALC speak to a group, either in person or virtually, please do not hesitate to contact us. Learn more about the NALC staff and find our contact information [here](#).

Below are some outreach activities from the past quarter.

July 2026

- *Harrison Pittman, NALC Director*
 - July 24-25 - In-person presentation/meetings at the Southern Crop Production Association's Board Meeting in Ponte Verde Beach, FL
- *Rusty Rumley, Senior Staff Attorney*
 - July 22 - In-person presentation on 'Business Entities' at the Center for Arkansas Farms and Food on the University of Arkansas Agricultural Extension Center in Fayetteville, AR
 - July 29 - Online presentation on 'Ag Leasing' for the Center for Arkansas Farms and Food on the University of Arkansas Agricultural Extension Center in Fayetteville, AR
 - July 29 - In-person presentation on business entities/structures following the changes in payment limits, pass-through entity treatment and more after the OBBBA for the Georgia Cotton Commission's Mid-Year Meeting in Statesboro, GA
 - July 30 - In-person presentation on business entities/structures following the changes in payment limits, pass-through entity treatment and more after the OBBBA for the Farm Financial Standards meeting in Knoxville, TN

For the full July Monthly Roundup, click [here](#).

August 2026

- *Harrison Pittman, NALC Director*
 - August 8 - Two in-person presentations on 'Current & Emerging Ag Law Issues,' and 'Grain Indemnity Funds Discussion' at the Alabama Farm & Land Conference 2026 in Mobile, AL
 - August 17-18 - Joint presentation with NASDA on the launch of the DEBT project at NASDA's office in Arlington, VA
 - August 21 - Online webinar discussion on 'Washington Watch: Federal Ag Law and Policy Update' with Robert Moore at the Ohio State University Extension's Agricultural and Resource Law Program

- *Elizabeth Rumley, Senior Staff Attorney*
 - August 17-18 - Joint presentation with NASDA on the launch of the DEBT project at NASDA's office in Arlington, VA
- *Rusty Rumley, Senior Staff Attorney*
 - August 5 - In-person presentation on 'Farm Transition Resources for Your Clients' at the Cultivating Connections Conference in Columbus, OH
 - August 12 - In-person presentation on 'Ag Leasing' at the Center for Arkansas Farms and Food on the University of Arkansas Agricultural Extension Center in Fayetteville, AR
 - August 17-18 - Joint presentation with NASDA on the launch of the DEBT project at NASDA's office in Arlington, VA
 - August 26 - Online presentation on 'Agricultural Law Writ Large,' taking questions on any agricultural law policies for Land at Home via Zoom
- *Brigit Rollins, Staff Attorney*
 - August 12 - Online presentation on water law to Land at Home via Zoom
- *Mary Eichenberger, Staff Attorney*
 - August 17-18 - Joint presentation with NASDA on the launch of the DEBT project at NASDA's office in Arlington, VA

For the full August Monthly Roundup, click [here](#).

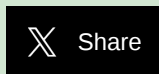
September 2026

- *Harrison Pittman, NALC Director*
 - September 8-9 - In-person presentation on 'Legal Updates & Challenges: Expect the Unexpected' at the "Out of Focus" American Agribusiness Association's 2026 meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico
 - September 14 - In-person group presentation 'National Agricultural Law Center Update' during plenary session at the 2026 NASDA Annual Meeting in Portland, ME
 - September 21 - Online interview on 'Foreign Ownership of Ag Land' for the NAFB News Service via Zoom
- *Elizabeth Rumley, Senior Staff Attorney*
 - September 13 - In-person group presentation on issues and careers in agricultural law to NASDA Foundation Next Generation students at 2026 NASDA Annual Meeting in Portland, ME
 - September 14 - In-person group presentation 'National Agricultural Law Center Update' during plenary session at the 2026 NASDA Annual Meeting in Portland, ME
 - September 15 - In-person presentation on 'Legal Challenges in Animal Agriculture: Implications for the Poultry Industry' at the 61st National Meeting on Poultry Health, Processing, and Live Production in Ocean City, MD
- *Rusty Rumley, Senior Staff Attorney*
 - September 13 - In-person group presentation on issues and careers in agricultural law to NASDA Foundation Next Generation students at 2026 NASDA Annual Meeting in Portland, ME
 - September 14 - In-person group presentation 'National Agricultural Law Center Update' during plenary session at the 2026 NASDA Annual Meeting in Portland, ME
 - September 19 - In-person presentation on 'Rooted Connections for Community Food Makers' at the Association for Rural and Small Libraries 2026 Rooted in Community Conference in Montgomery, AL
 - September 29 - In-person presentation on business structures and liabilities for farms at the Armed to Farm event in Hattiesburg, MS
- *Brigit Rollins, Staff Attorney*
 - September 3 - In-person presentation on 'Failure to Warn? Pesticide Labeling Updates' at the 2026 Pennsylvania Agricultural Law Symposium in Carlisle, PA
 - September 14 - In-person group presentation 'National Agricultural Law Center Update' during plenary session at the 2026 NASDA Annual Meeting in Portland, ME
 - September 16 - In-person panel presentation before the Plant Agriculture and Pesticides Committee at the 2026 NASDA Annual Meeting in Portland, ME
 - September 17 - In-person presentation on 'Pesticide Liability Bills in State Legislature (Failure to Warn Bills)' at the 2026 National Roadside Vegetation Management Association's Annual Conference in Chattanooga, TN
 - September 23 - In-person presentation on 'Pesticide Use & Litigation Update' at the Ag & Natural Resources Law Summit in Shepherdstown, WV
- *Mary Eichenberger, Staff Attorney*

- September 13 - In-person group presentation on issues and careers in agricultural law to NASDA Foundation Next Generation students at 2026 NASDA Annual Meeting in Portland, ME

For the full September Monthly Roundup, click [here](#).

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