



2024 Pennsylvania Agricultural Law Symposium

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



Rusty Rumley

Staff Attorney, National Agricultural Law Center

Rusty was born and raised on a family farm in Cogar, Oklahoma. He graduated magna cum laude from Oklahoma State University in 2004 with a B.S. in AgriBusiness and in 2007 earned his juris doctor from the University of Oklahoma. After law school, Rusty earned his LL.M in Agricultural Law at the University of Arkansas. He is licensed to practice law in the states of Oklahoma and Michigan.

Rusty has published law review articles discussing the future application of special use valuation for inherited farmland, “right to farm” statutes, and the enforcement of animal cruelty statutes by private organizations. He has also written on landowner liability, agritourism, food labeling, local food production, business organizations, crop insurance, estate planning, leasing, and other land use topics in his work at the Center. Further, Rusty presents around the country to producer, consumer, extension, industry and legal groups on an array of topics. His primary areas of interest are in estate planning, taxation, business organizations, landowner liability, leasing and agritourism.



Martin R. Siegel

Attorney, Barley Snyder

Mr. Siegel is a member of Barley Snyder’s Real Estate and Environment & Energy groups and spent more than two decades as a litigator at the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. In his time at the DEP, he litigated more than 250 appeals in state and federal courts and in front of the Pennsylvania Environmental Hearing Board in cases involving litigation of solid waste, clean water, environmental remediation and sewage planning.

In the private sector, Mr. Siegel has worked with businesses on both environmental and energy issues. He’s helped companies in real estate transactions navigate environmental issues, worked with municipalities on stormwater and sewage issues and has assisted companies and other entities in addressing DEP and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency enforcement actions. Mr. Siegel has presented and written on numerous environmental topics, including Pennsylvania’s Environmental Rights Amendment, Pennsylvania’s voluntary cleanup program, PFAS contamination issues, Chesapeake Bay and clean water issues, and municipal stormwater requirements.



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Brook Duer

Staff Attorney, Penn State Center for Agricultural and Shale Law

Brook joined Penn State Law's Center for Agricultural and Shale Law as a staff attorney in 2019. Prior to that, he was an attorney with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture for 12 years, serving 8 of those years as Chief Counsel to the agency and supervising the agency's legal office. Prior to that, Brook practiced law in Lancaster County for 18 years. Brook received a B.S. in Communications from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and a J.D. from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law.



Mike Traxinger

Senior Vice President and General Counsel, Agtegra Cooperative

Mike serves as SVP and General Counsel of Agtegra Cooperative. Agtegra Cooperative is one of the top 10 largest agricultural cooperatives in the United States. Traxinger received a J.D. from Drake University Law School with a focus in agricultural law and a B.A. from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. He is also a fifth-generation South Dakota farmer.

Traxinger currently serves as president of the South Dakota Association of Cooperatives and as a director on the Northern Electric Cooperative board. He is a past president of the American Agricultural Law Association.



Chloe Marie

Research Specialist, Penn State Center for Agricultural and Shale Law

Chloe has worked with the Center for Agricultural and Shale Law since 2015 where she provides expert research and analysis on a wide variety of legal issues of relevance to the agricultural and energy sectors. Chloe is a regular speaker at and contributor to the Center's Quarterly Dairy Legal Webinar series and has provided presentations at the Pennsylvania Farm Show. She is also the main contributor to the Center's Agricultural Law and Shale Law issue trackers.

Chloe earned a Bachelor of Law and Master of Law with a focus on construction and urban planning law from the University of Paris XI in France and a LL.M degree in American Law from the Pennsylvania State University, Dickinson School of Law, where she focused her studies on Energy and Natural Resources Law and Policy.





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Audry Thompson

Staff Attorney, Penn State Center for Agricultural and Shale Law

Audry is a 2022 graduate of Penn State Law and has worked with the Center for Agricultural and Shale Law since 2019, writing the Agricultural Law Weekly Review and hosting the Agricultural Law Podcast. After teaching in public schools in Missouri's southeastern "bootheel" region for seven years, Audry came to Penn State in 2016 to pursue graduate studies and then enrolled in Penn State Law after completing her Master's degree in 2018. Before teaching, Audry spent nine years working in restaurants and kitchens, where she gained firsthand insight into the food industry and an appreciation of the numerous efforts—from farm to skillet—that go into each plate. As a law student, Audry served as an articles editor for the Penn State Journal of Law & International Affairs, a research assistant with the Center for Agricultural and Shale Law, and has completed the coursework requirements for a joint Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and policy studies.



Kimberly Clarke

Partner, Varnum Law

Kim maintains a specialty practice of consultation with agricultural clients and handles various agricultural labor and employment issues such as compliance with migrant labor laws, H-2A worker issues, wage and hour laws and anti-discrimination laws. In partnership with the Michigan Farm Bureau, Kim developed the Agricultural Employment Compliance Guide, an easy-to-use on-line guide for farm employers trying to keep up with sometimes overwhelmingly complex federal and state employment laws.



Sarah Straub

Associate Attorney, Hazen Law Group

Sarah focuses her practice serving clients in the agricultural sector, providing legal representation to farmers and agricultural businesses across the state. Her practice encompasses various legal matters, with a primary focus on succession and farm transfer planning. Beyond agricultural law, Sarah extends her legal expertise to assist individuals in estate planning and administration, real estate transactions, and litigation matters affecting the farm community.

Sarah graduated from Penn State Law in University Park, State College where she began serving the agricultural community as a research assistant at the Penn State Center for Agricultural and Shale Law.



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Gary Heim

Attorney, Hazen Law Group

Gary J. Heim has dedicated over 40 years of his legal career to the realm of agricultural law. Gary grew up on a farm in Schuylkill County and now devotes his practice to providing legal counsel to the agricultural community. His expertise in tax, estate, business and real estate law has helped thousands of Pennsylvania family farms transition from one operating generation to the next.

Gary has served on the Board of the Agricultural Law Center of The Dickinson School of Law / The Pennsylvania State University. He has also chaired the Agricultural Law Committee of the Pennsylvania Bar Association.

Previously, Gary has served as a guest speaker at programs sponsored by various institutions, including the Pennsylvania State University's College of Agriculture, the Pennsylvania Bar Institute, the Cooperative Extension Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and numerous businesses, banks, and organizations.

Gary earned his Juris Doctor from the Pennsylvania State University – Dickinson School of Law, cum laude, showcasing his commitment to academic excellence. He also graduated summa cum laude from Elizabethtown College with a major in Economics.

The Center for Agricultural and Shale Law is a partner of the National Agricultural Law Center (NALC) at the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, which serves as the nation's leading source of agricultural and food law research and information. This material is provided as part of that partnership and is based upon work supported by the National Agricultural Library, Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

