

The Agriculturalist Lawyer



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From the Chair: Welcome to the Agriculture Law Section

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As the new section chairman, I would like to welcome you back to the State Bar's Agriculture Law Section. The section has been fairly inactive for the past several years, but with your help, I believe we can jumpstart it and make it a useful organization for Georgia lawyers with agricultural law interests.

I ask that you contact me at aolson@mcdcr-law.com or 229.888.3338 with any ideas you may have for section activities. I also hope that you will encourage your colleagues to join. We are now the smallest Bar section with less than 50 members. Our goal should be to double the membership within a year. Agriculture is Georgia's largest industry, and the lawyers who take on its legal issues should have an organization that addresses their professional interests.

I would like to propose tentatively the following section activities for 2006. Sometime in February or March, I would like to see the section sponsor a half-day CLE program on agricultural law to be held at the Bar's South Georgia office in Tifton. The program would cover four selected agricultural law topics. I would speak on federal farm program payment limitations and NAD appeals. Topics to be covered by other speakers might include water law issues, Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act litigation, regulation of concentrated animal feeding operations, agricultural lending issues, or ag tax issues. Please let me know if you would like to be part of the program or if there are other topics that you would like to see covered.

I believe we will need to have a business meeting sometime during the summer, probably at the State Bar's annual meeting, held this year at the Westin Hilton Head in South Carolina the first week of June. We may have a speaker in conjunction with that meeting.

On Oct. 13 and 14, 2006 the American Agricultural Law Association (AALA) will hold its annual educational conference in Savannah. The AALA's conferences are always worthwhile. Experts from all over the country make presentations on every aspect of ag law, and CLE credit is

available for virtually the entire conference. I am working with AALA to schedule one or more Georgia Ag Law Section sessions within the conference. These sessions will focus on ag law issues of particular interest to practitioners in Georgia and the southeast. Every section member should make plans to attend this conference. The AALA doesn't have its conference on the east coast very often, and you can't get more ag law in one package anywhere else.

I would also like to make this newsletter the first of many. Hopefully, we can publish it quarterly and increase its size to at least four pages. The newsletter will address both current ag law developments and selected topics. I invite all of you to submit information and articles for future issues.

Beth Crocker and Chip Parker, my two opponents in the election for section chair, have both graciously offered to serve on an interim executive committee for the section. Beth is general counsel for the South Carolina Department of Agriculture, and Chip is an Atlanta attorney and part-time farmer who is currently working on a B.S. in agriculture. Both are dedicated to agriculture and ag law. I welcome their assistance in getting this section going.

Agricultural Law Resources

Agricultural law is a broad subject covering both specialized laws applicable only to agriculture, such as federal farm programs, and general laws as applied to agriculture's special circumstances. For those of you who would like to read up on the many facets of ag law, I would refer you to the following Web sites, which contain much valuable information.

National Agricultural Law Center:

www.nationalaglawcenter.org

USDA: www.usda.gov

Georgia Department of Agriculture:

www.agr.georgia.gov

American Agricultural Law Association:

www.aglawassn.org