



## 12th Annual Mid-South Agricultural & Environmental Law Conference Speaker Biographies

**Grant Ballard** is a partner with the firm of Ark Ag Law, PLLC, which maintains a nationwide practice focused on the representation of agricultural producers and other rural businesses. Ballard focuses his practice on the representation of farmers and ranchers in areas including Federal Farm Programs, Crop Insurance litigation, contract law, environmental law, and governmental compliance investigations. Ballard has extensive experience in crop insurance and farm program payment litigation where he has represented producers in litigation before private arbitrators, State and Federal Courts, and the USDA National Appeals Division. He has also regularly defended individuals charged with violating federal program requirements and Federal Criminal Laws. Ballard practices across the Nation and is currently admitted to practice before multiple Federal District Courts, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals, and the Supreme Court of the United States. Ballard regularly speaks to agricultural groups across the Country, including at events such as the Beltwide Cotton Conference, and he has written on legal issues facing today's agricultural producers for various publications including the Drake Journal of Agricultural Law, The Delta Farm Press, The Southwest Farm Press, and The Arkansas Lawyer. His Practitioners Guide to the Litigation of Federally Reinsured Crop Insurance Claims, previously published in the Drake Journal of Agricultural Law, has received wide recognition.

**John Dillard** is a principal at OFW Law. He provides regulatory counsel, general counsel, and litigation services to clients in the agriculture and food industries.

In his regulatory practice, John provides advice to companies and trade associations on diverse topics affecting clients in the food and agriculture industries. This includes food labeling and food safety matters before USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). John advises meat packers, poultry processors, restaurant chains, and animal food manufacturers on food safety and labeling matters. He also regularly advises clients on compliance with the Packers and Stockyards Act, the National Bioengineered Foods Disclosure Standard, and the National Organic Program. John is also a Preventive Controls Qualified Individual (PCQI) for human and animal foods and has completed the FSPCA PCQI Lead Instructor training for animal food facilities.

John also provides general counsel services to several food and agricultural trade associations, such as the American Feed Industry Association, the National Association of Wheat Growers, and the National Institute of Oilseed Products. In this role, he provides advice on corporate governance, contract drafting and evaluation, antitrust, director fiduciary responsibilities, and employment matters.

John also represents clients in litigation in state and federal civil matters and USDA administrative enforcement proceedings. John has litigated cases involving Clean Water Act disputes, livestock nuisance odor torts, Packers and Stockyards Act enforcement, Animal Welfare Act enforcement, biotech seed patenting, country-of-origin labeling requirements, and Native American agriculture. John has also represented the interests of trade association clients that have participated in several high-profile agricultural law cases.

**Fitz Elder** serves as Staff Director, United States Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. Prior to that role, Mr. Elder served as Staff Director for the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration. He has nearly two decades of experience in Senate service, including as Staff Director for the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies; Deputy Staff Director for the Senate Committee on Appropriations; Republican clerk for the Senate Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies; and in the office of former Senator Robert Bennett (R-UT).

**Seth Hampton** is a partner with Rose Law Firm and a member of the firm's business section in Little Rock, Arkansas. Mr. Hampton has a diverse and innovative law practice focused on real estate and commercial finance transactions, agricultural law and environmental compliance, and renewable energy developments.

His extensive experience in these areas includes representing clients with acquisitions, dispositions, financing and developments involving agricultural, commercial, timber and recreational properties and portfolios throughout the Southeast. He also has a significant renewable energy practice and routinely represents landowners and lenders throughout the United States in negotiating option, lease and purchase agreements for solar and wind developments.

**Asa Hutchinson** After a long career in law and public service, Asa Hutchinson fulfilled his long-time dream to practice law with his son, Asa III, when the two founded The Asa Hutchinson Law Group, PLC in 2008. Together they served clients from across the world for six years, until the elder Hutchinson was elected in 2014 as the 46th Governor of the State of Arkansas. Governor Hutchinson was overwhelmingly re-elected in 2018 to a second four-year term with 65% of the popular vote, having received more votes than any other candidate for Governor in the State's 182-year history.

Asa began his legal career in 1974 in private practice in Bentonville, Arkansas. In 1982, at the age of 31, President Ronald Reagan appointed him as the youngest United States Attorney in the nation. During his tenure, Asa personally negotiated the peaceful surrender of a heavily armed para-military organization to end its stand-off with the FBI, without a shot being fired and without any loss of the lives of men, women and children held in the besieged compound. Asa was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1996, where he served on the Judiciary and Intelligence Committees, among others. As a result of his extensive trial experience, he was appointed by the House of Representatives to try the impeachment case against then-President Clinton in the United States Senate. He received praise across the political spectrum for his reasoned and professional presentation.

After being elected to his third term in Congress, Asa was appointed by President George W. Bush as Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in 2001, where he combined tough law enforcement initiatives with advocating increased investment in treatment and education programs.

In January 2003, Asa was confirmed by the U.S. Senate to be the first Under Secretary of the newly created Department of Homeland Security. As one of the nation's top-ranking homeland security officials, Asa was responsible for more than 110,000 federal employees housed in such agencies as the Transportation Security Administration, Customs and Border Protection, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (now USCIS) and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center. Asa resigned in 2005 and subsequently joined the Venable LLP law firm in Washington, DC as a Senior Trial Counsel and a partner within Venable's Litigation Division.

**Quinn Kendrick** is General Counsel for Peoples Company and its affiliates, responsible for overseeing the company's legal functions across the nation. Quinn provides strategic legal counsel to the company's business divisions and supports its mission of being the leading agricultural land transaction firm in the United States. Quinn works directly with the President to proactively identify opportunities and mitigate risks throughout the organization. In addition to driving the company's overall objectives, Quinn is actively involved in the Capital Markets and Corporate Services divisions.

Quinn is licensed in Kansas and Iowa.

**Russell Morgan** possesses over 38 years of agricultural consulting experience, providing farm business advisory services and financial / economic analyses. Russell has worked with local attorneys assisting farmers

navigate the Chapter 12 process. His responsibilities lay in the financial analysis / projections and monitoring aspects of the Chapter 12 Plan.

Prior to starting his private consulting firm in 2003, Russell was employed as an Area Specialist in Farm Management with the University of Kentucky (UK) Cooperative Extension Service. In that role, he provided supervised accounting and farm management consulting services to cooperating farmers in far Western Kentucky. While on staff with UK, he co-authored and/or participated in peer-reviewing various extension publications. In addition, Russell was tasked with presenting extension programs on a variety of topics including farm accounting, farm financial analysis, income tax rules for farmers and USDA programs impacting farms (e.g. new farm bills).

**Dave Muth** leads the Capital Markets team as the Director of Capital Markets by overseeing asset management strategy and execution, integrating technology into workflow processes, and publicly representing the company through industry presentations. He utilizes his extensive experience with farmland investing and operations across the United States to acquire and manage investment grade assets on behalf of clients and capital partners. Dave is responsible for ensuring assets are managed according to investment structures as well as optimizing farm revenue potential and mitigating risks when possible.

**Clark Ogilvie** is Special Counsel on the Democratic staff of the House Committee on Agriculture. This is his third return to the Committee having served from 2005—2014 and from 2018—2019. During that time, he has worked on the past three Farm Bills, the Dodd-Frank Act, and the 2008 reauthorization of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC). In addition to working on the Committee, Clark Ogilvie served for 2 ½ years as Chief of Staff of the CFTC and two years as General Counsel for the Farm Credit Administration. He has a law degree from George Washington University and a B.A. from Rhodes College.

**Harrison Pittman** is the director of the National Agricultural Law Center. Harrison received his Juris Doctor from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law, after attending Mississippi State University and graduating from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. He then earned an LL.M. in Agricultural Law from the University of Arkansas School of Law's Graduate Program in Agricultural Law. Harrison has worked at the NALC since 2001. During that time, his title and job duties have spanned the range of graduate assistant, staff attorney, co-director, interim director and currently, director; in which capacity he has served since 2007. He has taught at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law as part of the Ben J. Altheimer Distinguished Professorship for Agricultural Law, and has also served as a visiting professor at the Drake University Law School. In addition, he has taught Environmental and Natural Resources Law and Introduction to Agricultural Law in the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food, & Life Sciences, Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness. In that role, he was awarded the 2011-2012 Agricultural Business Club Teaching Award.

**Brigit Rollins** is a staff attorney at the National Agricultural Law Center. At the NALC, her primary area of research and scholarship is environmental law as it intersects with agriculture. She maintains an interest in promoting sustainability and environmental health through agriculture and resource use. Brigit earned her B.A. in environmental studies with a minor in studio arts from Sonoma State University and her J.D. from Lewis & Clark Law School. She began her work at the NALC as a research fellow during her second year of law school. As a research fellow, Brigit worked on a wide variety of agricultural law topics ranging from liability issues to the new frontier of lab-grown meat. After graduating from Lewis & Clark in 2019, Brigit joined the NALC full-time. She is licensed to practice law in Oregon.

**Elizabeth Rumley** is a senior staff attorney at the National Agricultural Law Center. At the NALC, her primary research and scholarship focus is on legal issues in animal agriculture, and she frequently lectures on those issues and others to audiences nationwide. She has co-taught a course titled "Animals and Agricultural

Production, Law and Policy” several times at the University of Nebraska College of Law and the University of Oklahoma College of Law and has developed and teaches a graduate/undergraduate course discussing legal issues in animal agriculture at the University of Arkansas. Additionally, she teaches Environmental Law through the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences at the University of Arkansas. She is licensed to practice law in Michigan, Ohio, and Oklahoma. She earned her B.A. from Michigan State University, her J.D. cum laude from the University of Toledo College of Law, and her L.L.M. in Agricultural Law from the University of Arkansas School of Law.

**Edward Swaim** has served as Executive Director of the Bayou Meto Water Management District since April 2019, overseeing a project that will provide irrigation water, flood control, and wildlife habitat across multiple Arkansas counties. Prior to this role, he served as chief of the Water Management Division at the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission, where he coordinated the Arkansas Water Plan 2014 update involving over 1,000 citizens.

His career includes roles as general counsel and associate general counsel for the Natural Resources Commission, along with service as an Assistant Attorney General. He also served as a Judge Advocate officer in the US Army Reserve and continues to serve on the Plum Bayou Irrigation District board of directors.

Originally from England, Arkansas, Swaim earned degrees from Hendrix College and the University of Arkansas School of Law.

**Wes Ward** is serving as the 3rd Secretary of Agriculture for the State of Arkansas. He was first appointed to the position in 2015 by Governor Asa Hutchinson and reappointed in 2023 by Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders. He is currently the 2024-2025 President of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, or NASDA.

Wes is from the small town of Lake City in Northeast Arkansas and is a graduate of Riverside High School. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Business with an emphasis in Agricultural Finance from Arkansas State University. Wes has also earned a law degree (JD), a Master of Laws degree (LL.M.) in Agricultural and Food Law, and a Master of Science degree in Agricultural Economics from the University of Arkansas.

Wes has been serving in the United States Marine Corps for over 24 years and has completed deployments and exercises in Afghanistan, Jordan, Japan, Indonesia, and South Korea. He is currently serving in the Marine Corps Reserves as the Executive Officer of the 1st Civil Affairs Group in Camp Pendleton, California.

**Will Veve** is a seasoned professional specializing in land acquisition and development for industrial scale renewable energy projects. Will fosters strong relationships with landowners, and their representatives, particularly those engaged in commercial agriculture, the timber industry, and livestock operations. Recognizing the unique needs of these businesses, Will collaborates closely with all the stakeholders to craft mutually beneficial agreements that work with their land, while also considering ongoing operations, and the development cycle for industrial renewable energy projects. Will has direct experience in complex negotiations and many successful agreements under development and built with landowners from the West Coast to the East Coast of the US. When not working Will spends his time as a volunteer National Ski Patroller on the weekends and during the summer is on the lake with his family.

**Renee Williams** is the Chapter 12 Standing Bankruptcy Trustee for the Eastern and Western Districts of Arkansas. She has served in this position since her appointment in 1995. She also served as a Chapter 7 Panel Trustee. Williams is a 1980 graduate of Harding University and a 1983 graduate of the University of Arkansas School of Law. Prior to her appointment as Chapter 12 Standing Trustee, she was engaged in private practice

concentrating on bankruptcy matters. She is a past president of the Association of Chapter 12 Trustees and served on the Chapter 12 Handbook Revision Committee.