Annotated links of interest to agricultural law students

Chapter 1

Federal Judicial Center

The Federal Judicial Center is the research and education agency of the federal judicial system. It is a rich source of information about the federal judicial system and a wide variety of legal topics.

https://www.fjc.gov/

Federal court system

Published opinions and other documents of the federal courts are published on the United States Courts website. There is also information about each court on the site.

http://www.uscourts.gov/

Chapter 2

Law Library of Congress

The Law Library of Congress is an excellent starting point for legal research. It provides access to the Library’s vast collection and links to other collections. It is a unique source of historical legal documents extending to the early colonial period.

http://www.loc.gov/law/

U.S. Government Publishing Office

The U.S. Government Publishing Office provides access to most federal legal documents, including the Code of Federal Regulations, the Federal Register, and Congressional documents including bills, enacted legislation with legislative history, and the Congressional Record.

https://www.gpo.gov/

Congress.Gov

This is the official site of Congress that provides information about current legislative activity. It includes Congressional documents such as bills, enacted legislation with legislative history, and the Congressional Record.

https://www.congress.gov
**USDA Office of the Administrative Law Judges**


https://oalj.oha.usda.gov/

**Cornell’s Legal Information Institute (LII)**

The LII is an excellent source for a wide variety of law including both federal and state law, uniform laws, and world law from countries around the world.

https://www.law.cornell.edu/

**The National Agricultural Law Center**

The National Agricultural Law Center is an excellent source for primary and secondary sources of legal information on agricultural law. It includes commentary from prominent attorneys in agricultural law. Legal materials are categorized by subject matter.

http://nationalaglawcenter.org

**The Bluebook**

The Bluebook is a guide to citing legal materials that is widely used by attorneys.

https://www.legalbluebook.com

**FindLaw**

FindLaw is a free service of Thomson Reuters that also provides the fee-based services to legal professionals. It can be a useful starting point for understanding legal topics and attorneys. Attorneys pay to appear on the site.

https://www.findlaw.com/

**Oyez**

Oyez is a free, nonprofit service that provides information about the U.S. Supreme Court.

https://www.oyez.org/
SCOTUSblog

SCOTUSblog is a popular blog that provides news and opinion about the U.S. Supreme Court.

http://www.scotusblog.com/

Texas Agriculture Law Blog

The Texas Agriculture Law Blog, part of Texas A&M University, is an excellent source of current information on agricultural law.

https://agrilife.org/texasaglaw/about/

Center for Agricultural and Shale Law

The Center for Agricultural and Shale Law, part of Penn State University, is an excellent source of current information on agricultural law.

https://pennstatelaw.psu.edu/academics/research-centers/center-agricultural-and-shale-law

Chapter 5

Raffles v. Wichelhaus

Raffles v. Wichelhaus is the oft-cited case of mutual mistake that may have created the contract defense of mutual mistake. There were two ships, both named Peerless, involved in the nineteenth century Indian cotton trade. One arrived in October 1864 with no cotton and the second arrived in December 1864 with a cargo of Indian cotton. The buyer claimed that he had expected the cotton on the October Peerless arrival and, not finding cotton, had bought cotton elsewhere. The seller, of course, sued to enforce the contract for the sale of the December-arriving cotton. The buyer successfully defended against the seller’s suit.

Most historians believe that there was no mistake despite the buyer’s assertion to the contrary. Vicksburg, Mississippi, was the last Mississippi River port held by the Confederacy. The city surrendered to Union forces on July 4, 1864, opening the Mississippi River to Union commerce over its entire length from Minneapolis to the port of New Orleans. Vast quantities of forfeited rebel cotton then entered the market dropping the price of cotton back to more normal levels. Cotton in 1860 sold in the range of 10 cents per pound but rose as high as $1.89 per pound prior to the fall of Vicksburg. The buyer’s contract for Peerless cotton was made prior to the fall of Vicksburg. His legal fees in avoiding the contract were undoubtedly much less than the difference between the contract price and the price of cotton when he claimed to have bought in October 1864.
For a delightful musical presentation of the decision in *Raffles v. Wichelhaus* see Mark DeAngelis’ YouTube video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ui_skg-3yPw

**Chapter 8**

*Uniform Commercial Code*

The Uniform Law Commission (ULC) is a nonprofit organization that was established in 1892 to bring non-partisan, well researched, and drafted model legislation to states. As such the model statutes are not law until adopted by individual states. Adoption of these model statutes is entirely voluntary on the part of the states. Each state often makes minor changes to these laws to tailor them to local needs. The Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) is the signal accomplishment of the ULC.

ULC: [http://www.uniformlaws.org/home](http://www.uniformlaws.org/home)

UCC: [http://www.uniformlaws.org/acts/ucc](http://www.uniformlaws.org/acts/ucc)

**U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)**

The USPTO issues patents, including utility, plant, and design patents, and federal trademark and service marks. These are all forms of intangible personal property.

[https://www.uspto.gov/](https://www.uspto.gov/)

**The Plant Variety Protection Office (PVPO)**

The Plant Variety Protection Office (PVPO) is an office within the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). It issues certificates of plant variety protection, another form of intangible personal property.


**Chapter 12**

*POLST (physician orders for life sustaining treatments)*

A POLST is not a substitute for a living will and a health care power of attorney. It is usually executed when a person becomes seriously ill or frail. It defines the wishes of the patient for end-of-life treatment. Different names are used in some states. Various state forms and programs can are linked to the POLST website.
Bloomberg Tax & Accounting Blogs
Bloomberg offers various free blogs that can be useful for keeping up with estate and income tax changes.
https://www.bna.com/accounting-blog/

Chapter 16
National Organic Program
The National Organic Program is overseen by the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service.

Alternative Farming Systems Information Center
The USDA National Agricultural Library operates the Alternative Farming Systems Information Center. It provides resources about sustainable food systems.
https://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic

Fair Trade USA
Fair Trade USA certifies and promotes fair trade products.
https://www.fairtradecertified.org/who-we-are

Community Supported Agriculture
Community supported agriculture provides a means for consumers to support agricultural producers. The USDA National Agricultural Library provides information to those interested in community supported agriculture.
https://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/community-supported-agriculture

Chapter 18
U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA)
FDA is responsible for a variety of programs designed to protect food safety under the FFDCA. It is also the lead agency for FSMA implementation.

https://www.fda.gov/Food/default.htm

FSMA implementation: https://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA/ucm239907.htm

Seafood safety

FDA regulates seafood safety, including inspections, except for siluriformes regulated by FSIS.

https://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/GuidanceDocumentsRegulatoryInformation/Seafood/default.htm

USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)

FSIS is responsible for inspection of meat, siluriformes (catfish and related species), poultry, and eggs.

https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/home

Auditing and accreditation for International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Standards and/or Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Principles and Guidelines; and good agricultural practices (GAP)/good handling practices GHP

The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) operates a number of auditing and certification programs relevant to food safety, notably HAACP and GAP.

https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/auditing

Chapter 21

Uniform Conservation Easement Act (UCEA)

The UCEA has been adopted by a majority of states that have enacted provisions allowing for conservation easements.

https://my.uniformlaws.org/committees/community-home?CommunityKey=4297dc67-1a90-4e43-b704-7b277c4a11bd

Chapter 22

Compliance Assistance - Wages and the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)
The U.S. Department of Labor provides assistance to employers with understanding and complying with the FLSA.

https://www.dol.gov/whd/flsa/

World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms, USA

World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms, USA, is part of a loose-knit international educational organization that places volunteers on host organic farms. Hosts provide room and board while volunteers provide labor. No money changes hands between host and volunteer.

https://wwoofusa.org/

H-2A Temporary Agricultural Workers

The H-2A program allows U.S. farms to employ temporary foreign agricultural workers. While the program has been beneficial to many farm businesses, the regulations are complex and the cost complying with those regulations is significant.


Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

The EEOC interprets and enforces federal anti-discrimination provisions.

https://www.eeoc.gov/

Chapter 23

U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS)

The U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is part of the U.S. Department of the Treasury. It is responsible for collecting federal taxes, enforcement, and interpretation of the tax laws.

https://www.irs.gov/

Center for Agricultural Law and Taxation (CALT) at Iowa State University

CALT is an excellent source for current information on federal agricultural taxation.

https://www.calt.iastate.edu/
Chapter 24

USDA Economic Research Service (ERS)
ERS provides analysis of U.S. agricultural trade.
https://www.ers.usda.gov/

World Trade Organization (WTO)
The WTO is the primary international organization that regulates international trade and resolves disputes between member states.
https://www.wto.org/

Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR)
The USTR is a federal agency that negotiates with foreign governments to create trade agreements, resolve disputes, and participate in international trade organizations.
https://ustr.gov/about-us

United States International Trade Commission (USITC)
The USITC provides a wide variety of assistance to U.S. exporters.
https://www.usitc.gov/

International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)
The IPPC is a multilateral treaty deposited with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It serves to control the spread of plant pests.
https://www.ippc.int/en/

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
The FAO focusses on eliminating hunger. It promotes sustainable agriculture.

NAFTANOW.ORG
NAFTANOW.ORG was created by the three partner nations to provide information about NAFTA.

http://naftanow.org/

*USDA Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS)*

FAS assists exporters with agricultural exports.

https://www.fas.usda.gov/

*USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)*

APHIS provides phytosanitary certifications to U.S. exporters of agricultural products.

https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/home/

*Chapter 25*

*H.R.2 - Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Farm Bill)*


*Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)*

NRCS works with state and local partners to promote agricultural conservation.

https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/national/home/