

LL.M. in Agricultural and Food Law

For more than 30 years, the University of Arkansas School of Law has led the nation in agricultural and food law education, research, and outreach. We were first to offer an advanced legal degree program in agricultural and food law, first to publish a specialized journal devoted to food law and policy issues, and first to offer a fully integrated opportunity for face-to-face and distance education. Outreach efforts, including the Indigenous Food & Agriculture Initiative and the Food Recovery Project, link our academic efforts to emerging issues of critical importance. Our unique curriculum offers a full range of specialized classes in agricultural and food law. Courses are offered on a regular semester basis or condensed to allow for more concentrated study. Special intensive classes taught by nationally recognized food and agricultural law experts offer the opportunity to earn credits with a 2-3 day focus on a specific topic. Our innovative distance program allows students to participate through live-stream video-conferences, interact in flipped classes, tune in to recorded lectures, and undertake guided online study. Course design assistance from the experienced distance learning professionals at the UA Global Campus (<http://globalcampus.uark.edu/>) assures excellence. The program also includes popular condensed courses.

LL.M. students attending classes on-campus in Fayetteville benefit from an expanded curriculum and special experiential opportunities available in Northwest Arkansas. These include participation in the Indigenous Food & Agriculture Initiative (<http://law.uark.edu/ifai/>), the Food Recovery Project (<https://law.uark.edu/service-outreach/food-recovery-project/>), and food and agriculture related externships. And, of course, they get to experience the charm of Fayetteville, Arkansas (<http://www.agfoodllm.com/2014/01/a-californians-perspective-on.html>), first hand. A limited number of Graduate Assistantships are available to students on campus.

Introduction to Agricultural and Food Law

America is the world's most productive producer of food and fiber. With more than 2 million farms and the livelihood of one out of every five Americans linked to agriculture, the agricultural sector is one of the country's most important economic enterprises. Recognizing this unique and important status, agriculture has historically been treated differently than other industries, often with its own body of laws and exceptions. Most of these special rules are not covered in the typical law school curriculum.

Just as it is extraordinarily productive, American agriculture is also highly consumptive. The agricultural sector uses more of our nation's natural resources, including land and water, than any other single industry. It is an industry that is increasingly challenged by complex environmental issues. Developing an agricultural system that balances production needs with environmental sustainability, particularly in the face of global warming is a serious challenge for the future.

Consumer interest in food and our overall food system has led to the development of food law as a central component of agricultural law studies. Increased interest in food safety, food labeling, and animal welfare — indeed, an interest in where and how our food is produced — has raised fundamental issues for legal study.

In an increasingly globalized world, issues of food and agriculture often involve international trade and require a greater understanding of international perspectives and priorities. Whether the task is debating international food safety standards, assessing our farm programs for

compliance with World Trade Organization requirements, or addressing world hunger and the right to food, the study of agricultural and food law extends far beyond our borders.

Agricultural & food law is a study of a network of laws and policies that apply to our food system. There is nothing more basic, yet there are few things more complex.

Agricultural and Food Law at the University of Arkansas

Located where the agriculture of the West, Midwest, and South merge, Arkansas provides an ideal location for the study of agricultural and food law. Agriculture is the state's leading industry: Arkansas-based Riceland Foods is the world's largest miller and marketer of rice; Wal-Mart is the world's largest grocery retailer; and Tyson Foods leads the world in meat sales. The University of Arkansas is also a leader in agricultural sciences through the work of the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences. Northwest Arkansas has a vibrant local foods community, with an extensive network of farmers' markets and local food venues, community organizations working to improve local food access, and strong support for sustainable agricultural production.

Recognizing the importance of agriculture to Arkansas and the surrounding region, the University of Arkansas School of Law founded the LL.M. Program in Agricultural Law in 1980 as the first specialized degree program for attorneys interested in the study of agricultural law. Understanding the inherent connection between agriculture and our food system, the program expanded to include food law in 2009. Graduates of the agricultural law program are uniquely prepared to shape agricultural and food law and policy in the 21st century.

LL.M. Admission Requirements

Applicants for admission to the LL.M. Program in Agricultural & Food Law must have earned a J.D. or LL.B. degree from a fully accredited school in the United States or be admitted to a bar. Attorneys who have graduated from a law school in another country may be admitted upon the approval of the Graduate Legal Studies Admissions Committee. Professional or Graduate level students may take courses on a non-degree basis.

All applicants should demonstrate academic excellence coupled with an interest in agricultural law or food law issues. A law school grade-point average of 2.50 or higher on a 4.00 scale is required; 3.00 or higher is preferred.

The following information is required for a complete application from a domestic applicant:

- A completed application form;
- An admission statement or letter explaining the reasons why the applicant seeks to be admitted and demonstrating an interest in agricultural and/or food law;
- Official copies of transcripts from all post-secondary educational institutions attended (these must be sent from the school, directly to the Director of the LL.M. program);
- At least one letter of recommendation (two in the case of international students) from an individual who can attest to the applicant's academic and professional abilities (this should be sent directly to the Director of the LL.M. Program).

A writing sample is optional, but will be considered if submitted.

International candidates should refer to the application requirements as explained on the PDF of the application form (<https://law.uark.edu/academics/llm-food-ag/apply/2021-LLM-internatl-app.pdf>).

Non-degree seeking candidates should contact the program at llm@uark.edu for eligibility and application information.

The University of Arkansas School of Law's Graduate Admissions Committee will make all admissions decisions and may in some cases place conditions on a candidate's admission.

Applications for the 2017-2018 class will be accepted beginning Oct. 1, 2016. The program has a rolling admissions policy, and applications will continue to be accepted until all candidate positions are filled.

J.D. Electives in Agricultural and Food Law

J.D. students in good standing at the University of Arkansas School of Law have the opportunity to enroll in many of the specialized LL.M. courses as electives in the J.D. program. Food Law and Policy, Agriculture and the Environment, Global Issues in Food Law, and Agricultural Bankruptcy have all been popular choices for J.D. enrollment.

Nine-Hour J.D. Students

A School of Law student who is within nine hours of completing the total credit hours required to earn a J.D. degree may be admitted conditionally to the graduate law program. This allows students to begin their LL.M. coursework during their final semester of law school. Credits are assigned to either the J.D. program or the LL.M. program but cannot be counted toward both degrees. In order to be admitted to the nine-hour program, a J.D. student must:

1. Obtain advance approval from the Graduate Legal Studies Committee;
2. Obtain advance approval from the director of the graduate law program for credits to be applied toward the LL.M. degree; and
3. Earn a grade of 2.50 or higher in each course to be applied toward the LL.M. degree.

A student who satisfies these requirements and who is subsequently awarded a J.D. degree will be admitted to the graduate program as a degree candidate, unless the Graduate Legal Studies Committee determines that there are substantial grounds for revocation of the conditional admission.

Non-Degree Program

J.D. students, practicing attorneys, and graduate students in related disciplines may be allowed to enroll in our specialized agricultural and food law classes for non-degree credit.

A number of LL.M. courses are open to J.D. students in good standing. This includes law students enrolled at University of Arkansas School of Law as well as students at other accredited law schools. Students wishing to transfer credits must contact their Dean for approval prior to enrollment.

LL.M. alumni and other attorneys can take many of the LL.M. classes, and the class may qualify for CLE credit (subject to their state CLE rules).

Graduate students working in a related discipline may also be allowed to take LL.M. courses. This includes graduate students enrolled at University of Arkansas School of Law as well as students in other accredited

graduate programs. Students wishing to transfer credits must contact their Dean for approval prior to enrollment.

Interested students and attorneys should contact the program administrator, Sarah Hiatt, at llm@uark.edu for the current class schedule and information about enrollment.

Degree Requirements

To receive an LL.M. degree in agricultural law, a candidate must:

1. Complete a total of 24-credit hours pursuant to a course of study approved by the director of the graduate law program;
2. Maintain a cumulative grade-point average of 2.50 or better (on a 4.00 scale); and
3. Conduct research in a specialized area of agricultural law and produce a written product for graded credit. The required written product can be of the sort that is published in a law journal or, with the permission of the director of the graduate law program, a less traditional product that demonstrates rigorous legal analysis, significant academic content, and quality legal writing skills.

Candidates may enroll on a full or part-time basis but may not enroll for more than 15 hours in any semester without the approval of the director of the graduate law program. All coursework, including completion of the research requirement must be completed within four years of matriculation.

All candidates are subject to the LL.M. Program Honor Code.

Dual Degree Program

The School of Law cooperates with the department of agricultural economics and agribusiness in the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences to offer a dual-degree program leading to the LL.M. in agricultural law and Master of Science in agricultural economics degrees.

Each program applies its own admission standards. For further information on the master's in agricultural economics, contact the graduate program adviser at 479-575-2256.

Course of Study

The LL.M. program offers 24 credits of specialized agricultural law courses. Most students take all of the specialized courses. However, with the approval of the director, a student may substitute courses offered in the J.D. program (if not taken previously as a J.D. student) or courses offered for graduate credit elsewhere within the University of Arkansas provided that they are substantially related to agricultural or food law. Given an increasingly globalized food system, some LL.M. students have taken international law classes offered in the J.D. curriculum. Graduate students may be allowed to earn up to six credits through alternative courses. An effort is made to accommodate each student's particular areas of interest, and the director works closely with each student to develop their preferred curriculum. Credit may not be granted for courses taken at other law schools.

Costs and Funding

The LL.M. Program in Agricultural and Food Law is one of the most affordable LL.M. opportunities available.

The university provides an online calculator for tuition and fees information at the Treasurer's website (<http://treasurer.net.uark.edu/Tuition.aspx?pagestate=Calculate>).

The Graduate School at the University of Arkansas and the School of Law provide for Graduate Assistantships to be awarded to a limited number of LL.M. candidates. These assistantships provide for a full tuition waiver plus a stipend of \$5,000 less withholding per semester in exchange for the candidate's work in a variety of legal and teaching capacities. Competition for the Graduate Assistantship positions is high, and the awards are primarily merit-based, although special consideration may also be given to particularly well qualified international candidates.

Graduate Assistantships awards are made by the Graduate Admissions Committee after a candidate has been admitted to the LL.M. Program.

LL.M. Courses

The courses offered as part of the LL.M. curriculum are specifically designed to address the most current legal issues involving the law of food and agriculture. The curriculum and the focus in each of the individual courses varies year to year as professors incorporate new issues.

Each year's curriculum is based on candidate interest, professor availability, and current events.

Journal of Food Law & Policy

The *Journal of Food Law & Policy* was established in July 2005 as the country's first student-edited legal journal devoted to the study of the relationships that exist among food, law, and society. It is credited with helping to foster the development of the emerging food law and policy discipline in law schools across the country. The journal is published twice a year. It features work by many prestigious authors, including renowned food law expert Peter Barton Hutt, agricultural law scholar Neil Hamilton, the director of UCLA's food law program, Michael Roberts, and many others. In the spring of 2015, the journal celebrated its 10th anniversary by hosting a symposium titled, *The Past, Present and Future of Food Law & Policy*. The event was hosted at the law school and live-streamed to a wide audience.