



Attorneys in Ward and Smith, P.A.'s Agribusiness Practice Group have the knowledge and experience in agribusiness law to provide high-quality legal representation to a wide variety of agribusinesses throughout North Carolina and the United States. We represent clients ranging from small farm and horticultural operations to livestock, poultry, and vegetable producers and processors, to industrial hemp operations.

Our attorneys strive to gain a thorough understanding of our clients' businesses, needs, and goals in order to provide exceptional client service. They know that a client's needs do not necessarily arise during the normal business day, so they make themselves available at work or at home, in or out of the office, whenever a legal question or concern arises.

The Agribusiness Practice Group understands the challenges facing our clients and can offer the guidance clients need to protect their current positions and build for the future. Attorneys in this Practice Group advise clients in the following matters:

- Formation, merger, acquisition, and dissolution of farming corporations, family partnerships, and other agribusiness entities;
- Tax advice including representation in proceedings before the U.S. Tax Court;
- Partition, cartway, and boundary line disputes;
- State and federal antitrust matters;
- Farm rent disputes;
- Disputes concerning tobacco buyout contracts and other government payment programs;
- Participation in the Industrial Hemp Pilot Program in North Carolina
- Interpretation and application of the Farm Bill and regulatory compliance issues;
- Environmental issues including water quality compliance for animal operations, enforcement defense, odor control, and groundwater pollution;
- Intellectual property matters including copyright, patent, trademark, and trade secret;
- Distributor/grower and related agreements;
- Employee discrimination, harassment, wage and hour, and other employment-related claims;
- Emergency response issues;
- Real estate transactions;
- Succession and estate planning; and,
- Structuring loan transactions and assessing issues that arise during the borrower/lender relationship.

Members of this Practice Group also have significant agribusiness litigation experience. They appear in all of the trial and appellate courts in North Carolina and in the federal trial and appellate courts spanning several jurisdictions. In a widely reported North Carolina Supreme Court decision, *Craig v. Chatham County*, our attorneys successfully represented a local pork producer seeking to set aside county ordinances which, if found valid, would have significantly and negatively impacted the operation and growth of the client's agribusiness.

In addition, the attorneys in this Practice Group also are members of numerous legal and agribusiness organizations. Many are members of the American and North Carolina Bar Associations; three are members

of the American Bar Association and North Carolina Bar Association Intellectual Property Law Sections; two are members of the North Carolina Bar Association Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Law Section; and one is a member of the American, North Carolina, and Virginia Angus Associations.