



Gide Loyrette Nouel
International Law Firm



2011

Agricultural & Food Law

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Agricultural & Food Law

Gide Loyrette Nouel prides itself on two decades of experience in agricultural and food law and consumer law with specialist teams in Paris and Brussels in addition to expert lawyers at the Firm's other international offices. The growing importance of agricultural and food law requiring detailed knowledge and expertise in new and technical fields has led us to set up a **specialist team dedicated to this area of law** within the International Economic Law practice.

This decision was principally dictated by profound changes that have taken place within the CAP since 1992. And its European significance is evidenced by the setting up of the EU's Directorate General for Health and Consumer Affairs in the late 1990s and, in France, by the recent creation of a ministry incorporating responsibilities for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries.

Agricultural and food law is not limited to farming since it also encompasses areas as diverse as health, the environment, and consumer protection. Our team thus aims to provide precise and practical solutions to all questions regarding the food chain.

Our specialist approach involves full service ranging from legal advice - including the drafting of agreements - to due diligence, lobbying, and litigation at the domestic and EU levels.

Food Chain and Sector Management

Expertise in the food chain demands in-depth knowledge of the regulatory framework governing agricultural production in the form of the EU's single Common Market Organisation which has replaced the previous diverse sector-based market structures.

While the principles and rules of the CAP are decided at Brussels, each Member State is responsible for their local enforcement. In France, Agrimer (the new decentralised arm of the EAGF) is in charge of allocating and controlling farm subsidies.

With its knowledge of the EU legal framework and national regulatory bodies, the Firm draws on the skills of its European network to handle all issues with regard to the food chain and its consequences.

Food Chain and Food Safety

Faced with a growing number of food scares in the 1990s, European institutions have since considerably strengthened safety measures right across the food chain to meet consumers' demands for a zero - or acceptable - level of risk.

These strict requirements mean that all operators in the food chain now have to meet new responsibilities to bring to market only products that are seen to be safe.

Our team provides practical assistance for companies to help them meet their obligations to respect health regulations, lends support in managing food scares, and drafts best practices for food safety.



Food Chain, Distributors and Consumers

As the final link in the food chain, the consumer is at the centre of safety and information measures (e.g. anti-obesity campaigns, information about allergens). Manufacturers and distributors now have to respect tight rules governing all forms of consumer communication.

The Firm closely tracks the whole procedure of EU regulations concerning food claims and labelling. Our lawyers have gained extensive experience in consumer law disputes.

We also offer companies internal training schemes to help them adapt their products and marketing policies.

Food Chain and Quality

To deal with the growing number of labels guaranteeing food quality and origin (e.g. AOP/AOC, IGP) and own-brand products, the Firm analyses their significance, specifications, and drafts internal charters for clients.

This area can also lead to disputes which our lawyers can ably handle.

Food Chain and Innovation

The emergence of new technologies, such as the use of GMOs and cloning, has led to the introduction of strict regulatory frameworks that must be understood in depth.

To remain competitive, farmers and producers are increasingly turning to innovative procedures. Our team is particularly interested in these technological niches (e.g. the use of nanomaterials and the discovery of "new foodstuffs") and their accompanying regulations which are evolving rapidly. As a result, the team is frequently consulted before new rules are drafted and during their implementation (marketing authorisation).

Food Chain and Globalisation

A thorough knowledge of technical, health and environmental standards is essential in the food import and export industry. Companies need to analyse the risks that are specific to their business and which involve other countries.

As the main difficulty with current regulations stems from the lack of coherent procedures worldwide, our international network and expert teams provide clients with a clear advantage in tackling these problems.

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