

PREFACE

To write a book that can guide the reader through the legal, regulatory, institutional, and economic issues that surround our modern food and agricultural system is, in a word, challenging. And therein lies its value. This *Handbook* is a practical resource to allow the reader to navigate the unique legal, regulatory, and economic history within the disparate, but connected, industries that are agriculture and food. The *Handbook* provides a synthesis of antitrust and consumer protection issues that arise within these industries.

These are important issues. Consider the history of agriculture. The development of advanced food and agriculture systems is what allowed the first civilizations to establish large cities, freed individuals to pursue specialized professions, and ultimately created complex culture. Our intrinsic connection to the fruits of nature is still evidenced in the location of many of the world's great cities, nearly all of which were first established close to fertile land and bodies of water.

Our population continues to grow. Globalization continues to present opportunities and challenges in agriculture and food. Climate change will likely require changes in the balance of our food systems. Food and agriculture will continue to be fundamental to our societies, and with it the tenets of competition and consumer protection. Our goal is for this *Handbook* to aid the pursuit of sharpening our legal and regulatory approach to the evolving issues in antitrust and consumer protection in agriculture and food.

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