

**Hasselberg Grebe Snodgrass
Urban & Wentworth**
Attorneys and Counselors

**AGRI-BUSINESS
LEGAL NEWS**



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Master Agreements – Are They Right for You?

Master Agreements continue to be utilized by more of our clients and are becoming more common in establishing the business relationship between a grain elevator and its customers. However, Master Agreements are not necessarily for everyone or for every customer. Some elevators are comfortable with the current way that they do business with many of their customers. A grain elevator may prefer to use a Master Agreement for some of their customers, but not others. It is a determination that only you can make. Because of the continued interest in Master Agreements, some information about Master Agreements that we have discussed at seminars is included in this newsletter.

For years we have strongly recommended that elevators have well drafted, fully signed contracts for every transaction. While this remains the best option, from a legal standpoint, some of our clients have found it cumbersome to get a signature on a full blown legal document every time a producer places an order.

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Jim Grebe Again Named Top 10 Lawyer in Agriculture

We are pleased to announce that Jim Grebe has again been named as one of the Top 10 attorneys in the State of Illinois in the area of Agricultural Law.

This Leading Lawyers list is determined through a statewide survey of attorneys, and each year identifies the top lawyers in certain areas of law, as determined by their peers.

Jim has been recognized as a Top 10 Agricultural Law attorney for a number of years.



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Meet Our Associate Attorney, J. Logan Block!



Logan is the grandson of John Block, former Director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Illinois Department of Agriculture. Logan grew up on the family farm in Gilson, Illinois and attended Knoxville High School where he was the 2007 State Champion in the 2 mile.

Logan graduated from Southern Illinois University where he competed in track and cross-country for the Salukis and received his bachelor's degree in Political Science Pre-Law. Logan went on to Northern Illinois University College of Law where he received his law degree before returning to central Illinois to pursue his legal career. Logan works with individuals in the agriculture industry and is a member of the Illinois Grain and Feed Association's Developing Professionals Group.

Logan is an active member of the State Bar Association and Peoria County Bar Association where he serves on the Young Lawyers Committee and Health, Fitness and Wellness Committee.

He is also a young leader in the community and serves on several committees for non-profit organizations including Family House and H.O.P.E.

Logan is a board member of Young Professionals of Greater Peoria where he chairs the Government Affairs Committee. Logan practices in the areas of agriculture law, family law, estate planning, estate and trust administration taxation, insurance defense and general litigation.

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Jim is a two-time past Chairman of the Illinois State Bar Association Agricultural Law Section Council (2004-2005 and 2012-2013) and served on the ISBA Agricultural Law Section Council for sixteen years beginning in 1998. Furthermore, while working closely with the Illinois Department of Agriculture, Jim and others assisted in drafting and amending the Illinois Grain Code that continues to govern the Illinois Grain industry.

Jim was appointed to the Grain Code Committee by the Director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture and was the drafting Secretary for that committee.

Today, Jim focuses on helping his clients protect their business interests through prudent grain contracting practices and careful planning, as well as general corporation matters, including mergers, leases and acquisitions. Succession planning for businesses is also a part of his legal practice. He also counsels his clients on the regulatory framework and administrative procedures when dealing with Illinois Department of Agriculture.

Jim is one of the founding partners of Hasselberg Grebe Snodgrass Urban & Wentworth. He has been admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court, the U.S. Tax Court, the U.S. Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit, and the U.S. District Court (Central District and Northern District) of Illinois. He is also a fellow of the Illinois Bar Foundation.

Jim is a native of Peoria and a graduate of Limestone Community High School. He obtained his undergraduate degree from Concordia University Chicago, and his Juris Doctor degree from the University of Illinois.

Upon graduating from law school, Jim returned to Peoria and began practicing law with several of his eventual law partners.

In addition to Agricultural Law, Jim also focuses his practice in the areas of Estate Planning, Wills, Trusts, Estate and Trust Administration, Business Entities and succession planning, Tax Law, Real Estate Law, Mergers, Acquisitions, Contracts, and other transactional law.

In addition to his numerous professional activities, Jim is active with many civic organizations. He has been recognized for his significant contributions to his alma mater, Concordia University Chicago, including serving as a member of its Board of Regents from 2007 to 2016 where he also served on the Executive Committee and as Corporate Secretary. Jim is also an active member at Christ Lutheran Church of Peoria. He has previously served as an officer, and on the Board of Directors, of the Lutheran Home of Greater Peoria, on the Board of Directors of the American Cancer Society, Peoria Division, and as a Trustee for the Alpha Park Library District.

He was also a long time member of the Board of Directors and an officer of the Arthritis Foundation, Greater Illinois Chapter. Hasselberg Grebe Snodgrass Urban & Wentworth has been a key sponsor of the Arthritis Jingle Bell Run for many years.



Hasselberg Grebe Snodgrass Urban & Wentworth is a proud member of the Grain and Feed Association of Illinois and the National Grain and Feed Association. We have extensive experience in agricultural law representing grain elevators, cooperatives and other agricultural businesses throughout the State of Illinois, on a number of matters including: grain contracts; grain industry commercial litigation; mergers and acquisitions; corporation representation; Illinois Grain Code and Illinois Department of Agriculture matters; and arbitrations before the National Grain and Feed Association. **Jim Grebe** has been practicing law and been an active member of the agri-business community for more than 30 years. Jim leads our firm's Agri-Business Law Practice Group, which includes **Bill Streeter, Chuck Urban, Dave Wentworth, John Dundas, Kyle Tompkins, and Logan Block.**



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One solution to this issue is a Master Agreement. As you may be aware, a Master Agreement is a longer, more detailed agreement setting forth the terms under which the elevator will work with a customer. Then, for each transaction, a much shorter and simpler document can be signed that sets forth the terms of the particular transaction. The net result is that the long document full of legalese needs to be reviewed and signed only once. If done properly, the time and effort to review the particular legal terms can be done one time up front, making the transactions during the rest of the year simpler and cleaner.

We continue to view the move toward Master Agreements as a positive and desirable trend. Some of our clients find them particularly helpful for new, unknown, or large customers, as well as limited liability business entities, such as corporations or LLCs. For example, a customer that it is a corporation or an LLC might not have sufficient assets to cover the elevator's damages if that customer defaults and walks away from a contract. These are situations where there might be more risk for the elevator, and the Master Agreement can help reduce that risk.

If you have not already done so, we encourage you to think about whether or not Master Agreements are appropriate for your company. You might find that it may involve a little more time to implement a Master Agreement program and get Master Agreements executed. However, it is anticipated that Master Agreements will save you and your staff time and effort during your busier periods.

Master Agreements can also be used for crop input agreements, if that is a part of your business.

If you have any questions about Master Agreements or any other agri-business issues, please give us a call.



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