

PRESS RELEASE

Former USDA Acting General Counsel Mary Beth Schultz Joins Wiley as Partner, Bringing Decades of Government Experience to Food & Drug Practice

September 3, 2025

Washington, DC – Wiley is pleased to announce that Mary Beth Schultz, former senior legal official at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), has joined the firm as a partner in its Food & Drug Practice. With more than two decades of leadership experience across USDA, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), and the U.S. Senate, Schultz brings clients unparalleled insight into navigating complex food and drug regulatory, compliance, and policy challenges.

At USDA, Schultz served as Acting General Counsel and Principal Deputy General Counsel, acting as the Department's chief legal officer and advising the Secretary of Agriculture and senior leadership on a broad array of issues central to the nation's food and agriculture system, including in areas such as food safety, development and implementation of programs under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), conservation and rural development, pandemic assistance, and legal guidance supporting the development of the next Farm Bill. Her work included agricultural biotechnology issues involving the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and matters such as foreign ownership of agricultural assets and implementation of the Agriculture Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA). These responsibilities frequently required coordination with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on overlapping regulatory and policy issues.

Related Professionals

Mary Beth Schultz
Partner
202.719.3471
mschultz@wiley.law
Peter D. Shields
Managing Partner
202.719.3249
pshields@wiley.law
Ann M. Begley
Partner
202.719.4585
abegley@wiley.law

Practice Areas

Enforcement & Recalls
FDA and USDA Regulatory Compliance
Food & Drug

“Mary Beth has been at the center of some of the most significant food and agriculture policy issues in Washington,” said Peter D. Shields, Wiley’s Managing Partner. “Her leadership at USDA and on Capitol Hill gives her a rare ability to see how regulatory priorities are shaped and implemented, and to translate that knowledge into clear, practical guidance for clients. She further strengthens Wiley’s platform at a time when regulatory decisions are increasingly driving business strategy and market outcomes.”

Schultz also served as Chief Counsel to both the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee and the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, where she managed oversight and investigations and played a lead role in the development and passage of major legislation. Her work included helping to draft and negotiate the 2018 Farm Bill, contributing to COVID-19 relief legislative efforts as well as energy provisions later incorporated into the IRA, and advising on oversight matters with broad implications for regulatory policy and compliance.

Earlier in her career, Schultz served in the DOJ’s Office of Consumer Litigation (later known as the Consumer Protection Branch), where she litigated civil and criminal enforcement cases involving statutes administered by the FDA and the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

“Mary Beth’s deep familiarity with USDA agencies and her experience coordinating on cross-cutting issues with FDA and EPA will be a tremendous asset to our clients,” said Ann M. Begley, chair of Wiley’s Food & Drug Practice. “Her system-wide leadership—spanning food safety, agricultural biotechnology, rural development, and major farm and conservation programs—strengthens our ability to provide clients with forward-looking counsel in today’s complex regulatory environment.”

At Wiley, Schultz will counsel clients on regulatory and enforcement matters involving USDA- and FDA-regulated products, with a focus on aligning regulatory priorities and compliance strategies with business objectives. She will advise on issues ranging from food safety and agricultural biotechnology to conservation, trade, and rural development programs, drawing on her cross-branch government experience to help clients manage complex regulatory landscapes with confidence.

“I was drawn to Wiley because of its reputation for guiding clients through some of the most complex regulatory and policy issues in the food and agriculture space, and for its ability to seamlessly integrate expertise across practices – including government contracts, telecom, and trade – to address challenges that span industries and agencies,” said Schultz. “My experience across the three branches of government has shown me how critical it is for clients to understand how regulatory frameworks overlap, and I look forward to applying that perspective to support their business objectives.”

Wiley’s Food & Drug Practice operates at the intersection of law, policy, business, technology, and scientific innovation. The team counsels clients across the product lifecycle, from development and approval to marketing, labeling, and post-market compliance. With deep experience across USDA, FDA, and related agencies, the practice helps clients navigate regulatory frameworks, respond to enforcement actions, and adapt to evolving policy priorities impacting industries including food, dietary supplements, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, and agricultural products.