

THE NORTH DAKOTA NINE AND THE
FIGHT TO SAVE THE FAMILY FARM

The Farmer's Lawyer

SARAH VOGEL

"Remarkably well told and heartfelt."
-JOHN GRISHAM

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Everywhere
Books are
sold!

I'm Sarah Vogel,

attorney, advocate, and author of *The Farmer's Lawyer*, a memoir about my David and Goliath fight as a young single mother against the federal government on behalf of thousands of farmers nationwide who were facing foreclosure. I later became the first woman in U.S. history to be elected as a state Commissioner of Agriculture. I am a lifelong advocate for family farmers, small businesses, women, and Native Americans, and I currently serve as a Member of the Agriculture Subcommittee to USDA Equity Commission.

“This is my kind of story—the young, inexperienced lawyer facing big odds. It's remarkably well told and heartfelt. I really enjoyed it.”

- JOHN GRISHAM

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About the book

The Farmer's Lawyer

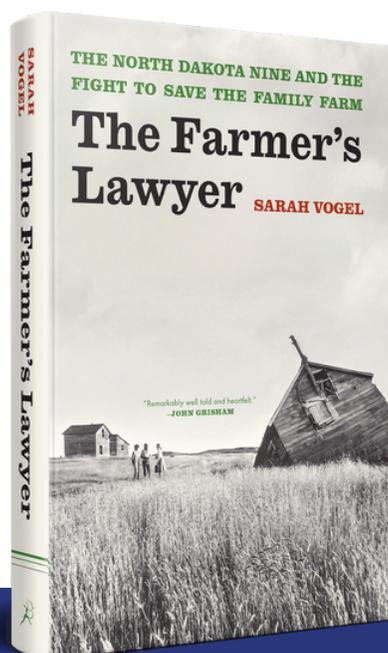
tells the unforgettable true story of a young lawyer's impossible legal battle to stop the federal government from foreclosing on thousands of family farmers.

In the early 1980s, farmers were suffering through the worst economic crisis to hit rural America since the Great Depression. Land prices were down, operating costs and interest rates were up, and severe weather devastated crops. Instead of receiving assistance from the government as they had in the 1930s, these hardworking family farmers were threatened with foreclosure by the very agency that Franklin Delano Roosevelt created to help them.

Desperate, they called Sarah Vogel in North Dakota. Sarah, a young lawyer and single mother, listened to farmers who were on the verge of losing everything and, inspired by the politicians who had helped farmers in the '30s, she naively built a solo practice of clients who couldn't afford to pay her.

Sarah began drowning in debt and soon her own home was facing foreclosure. In a David and Goliath legal battle reminiscent of *A Civil Action* or *Erin Brockovich*, Sarah brought a national class action lawsuit, which pitted her against the Reagan administration's Department of Justice, in her fight for family farmers' constitutional rights. It was her first case.

A courageous American story about justice and holding the powerful to account, *The Farmer's Lawyer* shows how the farm economy we all depend on for our daily bread almost fell apart due to the willful neglect of those charged to protect it, and what we can learn from Sarah's battle as a similar calamity looms large on our horizon once again.



The Farmer's Lawyer: The North Dakota Nine and the Fight to Save the Family Farm
(November 2, 2021, Bloomsbury)
Hardcover, \$28

“The most important book about the practical issues farmers face that I have ever read.”

– Dr. Frederick L. Kirschenmann, Distinguished Fellow for the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture and President of the Board of Directors, Stone Barns



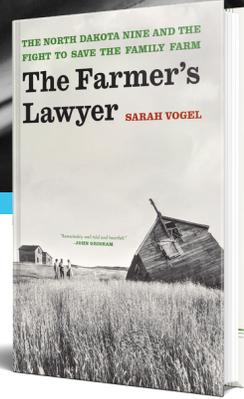
About Sarah

Hailed as “a giant killer in ag law” by *The Nation*, Sarah Vogel is an advocate, author, and one of the foremost agriculture lawyers in the United States. Her debut memoir, *The Farmer’s Lawyer*, shares her historic fight as a young single mother during the 1980s farm crisis when she took on her first case and sued the federal government on behalf of thousands of farmers nationwide who were in danger of losing their farms and livelihoods.

The first woman elected state Commissioner of Agriculture in US history, she was born in North Dakota to a family with roots in the Nonpartisan League, and has fought for decades to implement the progressive politics of the NPL.

She has received numerous awards and honors, including a Distinguished Service Award from the **American Agricultural Law Association** and a Lifetime Achievement award from **Democratic Nonpartisan League of North Dakota**. Vogel is best known for her work as lead counsel on the major national class action case, *Coleman v. Block*. More recently, she was a co-counsel on the massive *Keepseagle* case that remedied decades of the USDA’s race discrimination against Native American ranchers and farmers. She currently serves as a Member of the Agriculture Subcommittee to USDA Equity Commission.

Learn More:
SarahMVogel.com/About



Talking Points

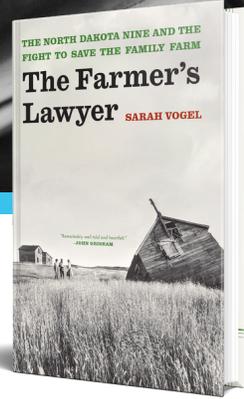
from Sarah (part 1)

- Politicians and civic leaders should focus on how we can achieve **economic democracy**. An economic democracy is a society where everyday citizens--workers, tradespeople, laborers, farmers, small businesses--have a fair chance to succeed in their jobs, trades, professions or businesses by hard work and effort. An economic democracy is a society where these people won't face unfair competition and exploitation from large corporations without regard to fair rules of competition and ethics. People, by exercising their right to vote, by speaking out, by cooperating with each other, can educate politicians on what is needed. And, if those politicians don't agree with the people, the politicians can be replaced with a set of politicians who do agree.
- As a lawyer, I tried to practice **good guy law**. All of the lawyers I most admire are fighters for people, against big corporations, or big business.
- As a politician, I advocated for farmers, workers, and everyday people.
- **The best measurement of how well a society is doing is not by measuring gross domestic product or dollars traded on Wall Street, but by the status of its people.** Do they have good jobs? Safe and affordable housing? Are they and their children safe? Do their children have access to fresh air, healthy food, and a good education? Are they hopeful and healthy?

Part 2 of talking points on next page...

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Advocate, Attorney and Author of *The Farmer's Lawyer*



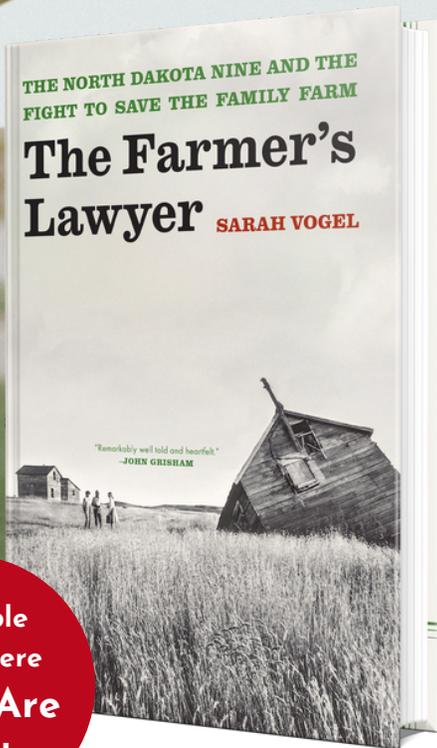
Talking Points

from Sarah (part 2)

- **Citizenship** comes with **responsibilities**, not just rights.
- **A system of small and medium-sized family farmers** growing diversified crops and livestock **is a remedy** to many of the ills that beset modern society, including food security and climate change.
- **As a woman lawyer**, coming up in the '70s and '80s, I've learned that "a woman has to be twice as good as a man to get ahead; fortunately, that isn't hard."
- **Corporations aren't people.** They are legal entities, chartered by governments, and subject to regulation and rules by governments. They can't vote. They shouldn't be allowed to distribute "dark money" to suppress democracy and buy politicians, and should not be favored over the people.
- **Economic opportunity is as essential to democracy as all other forms of equality.**
- **Farmers and ranchers are endangered**, and we need to save them in order to save ourselves. They are the ones who feed us all.

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“*The Farmer’s Lawyer* is riveting. Its characters amount to a new pantheon of heroes—author Sarah Vogel as well as the white and Native American farmers whose dogged righteousness prevails and inspires. I am humbled, heartened, and moved.”

– Elizabeth Fenn, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian and author of *Encounters at the Heart of the World: A History of the Mandan People*

Photos

Press photos of Sarah are available [here](#) in [Dropbox](#).

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