

Rising Star: FaegreBD's Jacob Bylund

By **Andrew Strickler**

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Jacob D. Bylund has built on his childhood at a northwest Iowa family farm to become a young leader in Faegre Baker Daniels' agriculture and food-focused practices, putting him among Law360 top food and beverage attorneys under 40.

The 36-year-old Rising Star said FaegreBD's experience in all aspects of agriculture and food production — from fertilizer to food freezer — has been a natural fit for his rural upbringing and lifelong interest in farming.

"A lot of lawyers eat bacon, but very few know all the mechanics of how bacon gets all the way from the farm to the store," he said. "I'm the first generation of my family not to farm, this is what I grew up with, and several of my colleagues here at the firm have a similar background and are still involved in agriculture production."



Jacob Bylund

Since joining FaegreBD's office in Des Moines, Iowa, as a summer associate in 2002, Bylund has represented clients like Hormel Foods Corp. and Cargill Inc. and grown his practice alongside the firm's involvement in areas like supplier contracts, licensing, integrated procurement processes, and antitrust and trade regulations for food and agriculture businesses.

Last year Bylund successfully represented food processor Cargill, which filed breach of contract claims against Nebraska-based Greater Omaha Packing Co. Inc. over raw beef trim that allegedly contributed to an E. coli outbreak in 2007, which sickened dozens of people.

Bylund and the FaegreBD team won summary judgment on the supplier's \$16.3 million counterclaim asserting interference with contractual relationships, and then a Nebraska federal jury awarded Cargill a \$9 million verdict in September.

Bylund was also lead trial counsel for defendant Hormel Foods on a suit brought by hog finishers related to Canadian-born hogs and country-of-origin labeling. After an order on summary judgment materially limited the plaintiffs' claims for breach of a supplier contract, a four-day trial ended with a favorable jury

verdict for Hormel in March 2014.

That case followed Bylund's representation of Hormel in a 2013 arbitration with AgFeed USA LLC, which resulted in an \$8.8 million award for Hormel.

The Iowa native, who earned his law degree from the University of Iowa College of Law, made partner in 2011 and has been on FaegreBD's food and agriculture steering committee since its inception.

Bylund's recent years have been dominated by litigation and trial work, as well as counseling clients on large production and marketing contracts. He called the Cargill trial the largest of his career in which he was a lead trial counsel.

"It was a hard-won case," he said. "There wasn't a single document or bit of testimony that was material that wasn't fought over."

In addition to his trial work, Bylund has also represented clients in matters involving the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of the General Counsel, the USDA's Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, and the U.S. Department of Justice's Antitrust Division.

Bylund said he hopes to continue concentrating on trial work as well as clients' interest in specialty products and labeling.

"I think we'll see more of that in the years ahead, with consumers wanting specific products and labeling that meet a very particular consumer interest," he said. "It takes a whole series of contracts and processes to bring that product to the consumer, so how do you drive that all the way back to the farm?"

--Editing by Edrienne Su.