

# Beckie Anderer Murphy, MPH, RDN



## **What is your job title?**

Director of Global Regulatory Affairs

## **How long have you been at this job?**

12 years

## **Please describe your job (including typical role, population served and anything else you feel is important in understanding the job):**

I work as part of the Regulatory team within an in-house Legal Department for a privately-held, global agriculture/food company based in California. The company I work for owns several vertically-integrated businesses that grow, process, market and sell a variety of products including nuts, citrus fruits, pomegranates, wine and bottled water. Our team provides research and advice related to product labeling and packaging, marketing, food safety and regulatory compliance for the global market place. For example, our bottled water is sold in 90 countries. We are responsible for reviewing global product labels and marketing for the Brand teams. We support the Quality team by reviewing product standards and sanitation standards to ensure regulatory compliance in all markets, and in responding to consumer complaints and questions. We also support the Sourcing team in developing sourcing standards and verifying suppliers; and the Research & Development teams in developing new products and brand identities. Our team provides support when the businesses wants to enter new markets by informing them of any regulatory requirements and supporting compliance demonstration; and our team interacts directly with global regulatory authorities whenever there are questions or concerns about product quality or compliance.

## **Does your job require any additional schooling or education?**

Strictly speaking, a Bachelor's degree is required but I would suggest that a Master's degree is preferred. Our team is part of the Legal Department of our company so most of my colleagues in other divisions have Law degrees. My team is led by an attorney, we have one other attorney who focuses on FTC and other legal issues, we have one microbiologist who advises on Food Safety; and we have three dietitians, one

nutritionist and a food scientist supporting the regulatory function. Global food regulations are constantly changing so we attend conferences and webinars every year to stay on top of current issues. Personally, I have earned a Graduate Certificate in Global Food Laws and Regulations.

**What are possible places of employment for your position?**

Many food companies have Regulatory experts who review product labeling and marketing materials. There are also firms who provide this service to smaller companies. Regulatory Affairs experts also lead or support production and quality teams for food manufacturers. Industry Associations often have Regulatory Affairs experts on-staff who are responsible for monitoring and even working to influence regulations relevant to their industry. There are also opportunities to work as consultants in marketing, research and law firms.

**What is your favorite thing about your job?**

I have many. My job affords me the opportunity to learn new things every day. Regulations are always up for interpretation, always changing, and never quite keeping up with the pace of innovation in the food industry or the expectations of consumers. There is always a “grey” area and I love developing arguments to support the decisions that we make. It’s always interesting to me to learn how different countries view food regulations, what they focus on and how (or whether) they actually enforce the regulations. I love working for a progressive, innovative company that is always coming up with new ideas and seeing how their products fit within the current and changing regulatory environment. I love that I can use my background/training/interest in food science, food safety and nutrition to positively influence my company’s actions in the global marketplace. I also love working for an agriculture company which allows me to use my background in plant science and molecular biology on special agricultural questions that arise. All of the products we make and sell are nutritious and healthy so I am proud to work on them and to feed them to my family.

**What is your least favorite thing about your job?**

Part of working for a progressive, innovative company is that sometimes you can spend months working on a project and for whatever reason, the project is cancelled. While this can be a disappointment, I tend to appreciate what I have learned in the research and development process and I can often apply it to new ideas, and new projects that come later on.

**Why/how did you choose your field and how did you get into it?**

I was working for the Bottled Water Certification and Food Safety Program at NSF International in Ann Arbor, MI. I seized an opportunity to manage the State Licensing Program, which managed bottled water permitting and licensing projects for imported bottled water producers. I learned about regulatory compliance for bottled water in the US and was later hired by one of my clients to manage their global compliance program in-house. This position developed into my current role at my current company.

**What is your educational background?**

I have a Bachelor of Science degree, with a focus on plant science, from the University of Michigan. I have a Master of Public Health degree in Human Nutrition from the University of Michigan - School of Public Health. I completed my Dietetic Internship through the UofM - SPH Internship Program. Go Blue! I received a Graduate Certificate in Global Food Law and Regulations from Michigan State University - Institute for Food Laws and Regulations.

**What is your job/work background?**

I was a Research Associate for the Department of Psychiatry at The University of Michigan Medical School for several years as well as during and following my Nutrition training at the UofM - School of Public Health. I worked as a Contingent Dietitian for The University of Michigan Health Systems - Diabetes Self-Management Education Program for 2 years. I left UofM to work at NSF International, in the Bottled Water Certification and Food Safety Program. After about 2 years there, I was hired by one of my clients, FIJI Water Company. A year after that, I joined the Legal Department of our parent company, now known as The Wonderful Company.

**Why did you decide to become an RD?**

I became a Registered Dietitian because I am passionate about food, how its grown, where it comes from and how it is prepared. One of the things that attracted me to Nutrition and Dietetics is the breadth of the field and the unlimited opportunities. I have always tried to find work that would have a positive impact. Initially, I wanted to forge a path as a Dietitian in the Psychiatric field because I believe there is a brain-gut connection and that food can impact mood. However, the opportunities that arose took me in a different direction and I absolutely love my work in the regulatory field.

**What do you think are the most important things for students and/or new RDs to know?**

You are entering a field with unlimited opportunities. When you are presented with a chance to learn something new, seize it. You never know where that experience may take you.

**What areas in dietetics do you think will become more important/growing in the future?**

I think the Regulatory field is a currently untapped arena for Dietitians. It provides a perfect blend of food science, food safety, food production, food labeling and nutrition/health claims. I think the field presents great opportunities for Dietitians and I would love to see the Academy provide continuing education and focus in this area. With the legalization of cannabis and the upsurge of CBD in food products (still federally illegal but the landscape is always changing) there is a whole new world of opportunities needing regulatory expertise and support.