Preface

As US and EU negotiators engage in painstaking talks on a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) governments struggle with the politics of the opening up of markets and the harmonization of standards to encourage greater bilateral flows of trade and investment. Many agricultural producers fear intensified competition and will argue for exclusions or long transition periods before market forces are felt. Food firms would like to expand trade but have different views on labeling and intellectual property protection. Regulators insist on the superiority of their own idiosyncratic standards. Activists predict the demise of democracy if the US and the EU agree on investor–state dispute settlement. NGOs in the EU warn of Frankenstein food and chlorinated chicken flooding Europe’s markets once standards are harmonized across the Atlantic.

There is little talk, though, of the historical background against which the current efforts to strengthen economic ties between the US and the EU must be seen. Tensions over agricultural and food policies have repeatedly soured relations over the past five decades. Could a TTIP constitute a radical improvement in transatlantic economic relations in the area of food and agricultural trade? Could it usher in a more constructive and harmonious trade relationship in this area across the Atlantic? And what role might an opening up of markets in food and agriculture across the Atlantic play in the overall picture of multilateral trade in farm products? Do farm and food policies still differ fundamentally between the US and the EU? Or will the TTIP negotiations bring to an end the era of divisive rhetoric and suspicion that has been the hallmark of this aspect of transatlantic relations?

We felt that such questions were sufficiently important and interesting to warrant a book that looks at the agricultural and food issues on the TTIP negotiating table against the background of the 50 years of transatlantic trade relations in food and agriculture through which the US and the EU have lived – and frequently suffered. Both authors have watched that history in the making and spent a good part of their professional careers engaged in the analysis of farm and food policies on the two sides of the Atlantic. Both have commented widely on efforts to establish an effective regime of international rules for agricultural and food trade in the GATT and the WTO. After having worked together for a long time and on many
publications we decided that it would be rewarding professionally and personally to add a work that took a longer look at the development of trade relations in this contentious area since the 1960s. We would hope that our enthusiasm for addressing this topic is reflected in the end product.

A number of colleagues and friends have generously offered their knowledge and time in commenting on an earlier draft. We are deeply grateful to Joe Glauber, Eckart Guth, Rob Johnson, Rolf Möhler, Wayne Moyer, David Orden and Alan Swinbank for their excellent suggestions that helped us to avoid misrepresentation, and improve interpretation of the policy developments. They should not be blamed if we managed to retain errors.

Our long-time friend, colleague and co-author Sandy Warley mustered an impressive amount of energy in going through our manuscript word by word, sentence by sentence, page by page, chapter by chapter, putting us on the right track in numerous places and challenging us to express ourselves in more appropriate language. We would not wish to attribute co-responsibility for this product to him, as he would have written a better book if it were his. But we are delighted to dedicate this book to him.

The main burden of authorship falls on the families of the authors. They must endure months of preoccupation bordering on neglect. So our sincere thanks and affection go to our wives, Anthea and Gabi, for their endless support and tolerance in this venture.