
September 16, 2025
Chairman Dale Strong AL-05
Emergency Management and Technology Subcommittee
Homeland Security Committee
United States House of Representatives

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you, Chairman Strong, Ranking Member Kennedy, [if present: Chairman Garbarino, Ranking Member Thompson] and the honorable members of the Committee to participate in today's hearing on this critical national security threat, Agroterrorism.

INTRODUCTION

I am Dr. Daniel K. Wims, and I serve as the 12th President of Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University, an 1890 land-grant university in Huntsville, Alabama.

For 16 years prior to becoming president, I served as Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Research, and Professor of Agricultural Sciences at 1890 land-grant universities in Alabama and Georgia. More broadly, over the past 30 years, I have served in varying capacities at

land grant universities such as Alcorn State University (MS), Southern University (LA), South Carolina State University (SC), Fort Valley State University (GA) and Florida A&M University (FL).

AGROTERRORISM

I am grateful to be here today to discuss the critical topic of the threat of Agroterrorism to the United States, particularly the food and agriculture critical infrastructure sector. In 2023, the Bureau of Economic Analysis, agriculture, food, and related industries contributed roughly \$1.537 trillion to the U.S. gross domestic product (GDP), a 5.5-percent share.

The output of America's farms contributed \$222.3 billion of this sum — about 0.8 percent of U.S. GDP. With nearly 2 million farms in the United States, agriculture is essential to our nation considered and one of the most important pillars of America. Americans must eat safe and high-quality food.

Today, threats to American agriculture not only expose us to risks of food shortages, foreign dependencies, and higher prices but they also strike at one of the most essential pillars of America. Those threats to American agriculture will lead to **Agroterrorism**. Defending access to American abundance and preserving the American experiment is the essence of Agrosecurity, and it is why **Farm Security is National Security**.

Twenty-three years ago, the Chairman of the Joint Economic Committee addressed Congress stating that an agroterrorism incident could immediately cost in the “range of \$25 billion to \$60 billion.” Given the inflation rate, this could cost as much as \$106 billion today.

In 2001, Foot Mouth Disease in the United Kingdom affected 9,000 farms and required the destruction of more than 4,000,000 animals. Researchers believe that a similar outbreak in the United States would cost taxpayers up to \$60 billion.

AAMU AGROTERRORISM ROLE

As an 1890 and-grant University, Alabama A&M has robust agricultural research capabilities. Alabama A&M researchers have been working actively on technical solutions and research projects in Agrosecurity, Food Safety and Quality, Diagnostic and Detection of Foodborne Pathogens such as E. coli, Salmonella and Listeria, and Toxicology.

Additionally, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES) is the primary outreach organization for the land-grant mission of Alabama A&M University and Auburn University. Auburn University President, Dr. Christopher Roberts and I are committed to research and outreach programs collaborations.

ACES agents play a pivotal role in educating farmers and stakeholders about Agroterrorism and Agrosecurity through different agriculture programs such as Food Safety and Security, Integrated Pest Management, Soil Health and Water Quality, Agronomy, Animal and Plant Health, and the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). ACES has assigned agents to work with FEMA agents and get trained by FEMA agents. In times of crises and emergencies, ACES agents are ready to work and coordinate with FEMA agents.

With the development of the novel Rapid Detection System and Remote Sensing for Chemical and Biological Threats by Alabama A&M scientists, I can attest that our institution is well positioned to contribute to protecting our nation from Agroterrorism and provide technologies to counter wide range of threats to our farmlands, crops, animal and plants health, food processing facilities, and food supplies.

An additional threat is the increase in foreign investment in our nation's agricultural land from countries such as China. This too cannot be ignored. In fact, legislation introduced by you, Mr. Chairman, the ***Protecting America's Agricultural Land from Foreign Harm Act***, is a step in the right direction in safeguarding these lands from foreign adversaries.

CLOSING

To close, I'd like to reinforce the role Alabama A&M, as an 1890 land-grant institution, can play in keeping our food safe. It is evident from the threats

that Alabama A&M is aligned with the ***National Farm Security Action plan*** introduced by USDA in July 2025. Alabama A&M scientists stand ready to partner with industry, the federal government, and other academic institutions to ensure our homegrown food supply remains safe and secure for consumption for all Americans.

Farm Security is National Security and I thank you for bringing attention to this important matter. As President of Alabama A&M University, I look forward to working with you in the future.