

Agriculture is a significant sector within the U.S. economy, accounting for 13 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product and 18 percent of domestic employment. A deliberate attack on the U.S. food supply and agriculture operations would cause severe economic loss from farm to plate. As we have seen with naturally occurring plant and animal diseases, losses could be particularly severe in states where animal and crop production is concentrated and largely responsible for the majority of economic activity.

For example, three states, Arkansas, Alabama and my home State of Georgia account for 41 percent of the chicken produced in the United States. North Carolina, Iowa and Minnesota account for 53 percent of hog production and five others, Nebraska, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas and California producing 35 percent of the cattle. Four states, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska and Minnesota produce 54 percent of the corn and three of those, Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota, produce 39 percent of all soybeans.

Current Federal efforts to prevent and respond to a terrorist attack are governed by two main Presidential directives. We will hear testimony from representatives of the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Homeland Security and the Food and Drug Administration, outlining existing efforts and capabilities, and what we must do to deter, detect, and respond effectively to an attack. I am particularly interested in hearing a status report on the implementation of Homeland Security Presidential Directives 7 and 9 and what, if any, additional authorities are necessary to prevent and deter a terrorist attack on the food supply.

While the Homeland Security Act of 2002 and the Bioterrorism Act of 2002 increased biosecurity efforts, it is clear that more needs to be done. This hearing will serve as a useful dialogue as this Committee works with Senators Burr, Enzi and members of the HELP Committee in drafting follow up legislation to the Project Bioshield Act signed by the President last year.

I want to take a minute to commend the leadership of Senator Burr in this respect. He was a colleague and a friend of mine in the House and a leader during those House days, and now he has brought that same leadership and that knowledge and experience to the Senate. He is providing real, positive direction on this issue.

As we will hear, the responsibility to counter an agroterrorist attack spans various agencies with different regulatory functions. However, a new partner and often overlooked component in any response is the integration of national and local law enforcement agencies. A recent symposium on agroterrorism hosted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation highlighted the need for our nation to respond quickly and to ensure local producers and first responders are part of any national response plan. I welcome our colleagues from the law enforcement community to the Agriculture Committee and look forward to your testimony.

As anyone in agriculture knows, farmers, ranchers, extension agents and many others are an integral part of detecting and responding to any disease outbreak, whether naturally occurring or deliberate. The second panel highlights this important partnership between the public and private sectors and we will hear what is being done to increase our preparedness at the local level in coordination with farmers and ranchers, the scientific community, and industry. No effort to prepare for an attack can be successful without a healthy and strong public/private

partnership.

This will be the third hearing in the Senate since 1999 devoted to biosecurity and agroterrorism. My friend and colleague, Senator Roberts, held the first hearing in 1999. I think it is fair to say that he recognized early on the need to address the issue and in his capacity as Chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee has continued to highlight the need for correction relative to this issue. The events of September 11, 2001 propelled the government into action and forced Federal agencies to rethink the threats facing agriculture and the need to take steps to prevent agroterrorist attacks. Later, Senator Talent, also a member of this Committee, highlighted the importance of the topic at a hearing before the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee chaired by Senator Collins almost two years ago.

I look forward to working with members of this Committee to make sure that this aspect of homeland security receives the attention and the resources it deserves. To do otherwise, would place a critical sector of the economy at risk.