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AeroFarms Speaks at Ag Committee Hearing

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It's been four years since the last Farm Bill passed, which means it's time to talk about the next Farm Bill. In late March, Marc Oshima, co-founder and chief marketing officer at AeroFarms, a vertical farm company based in New Jersey, was one of several panelists who spoke in front of the House Committee on Agriculture's Subcommittee on Biotechnology, Horticulture and Research.

Marc not only talked about CEA as a whole and about AeroFarms specifically, but he also had recommendations for increasing funding in two areas that would benefit the CEA segment.

"First, within the Horticulture Title, we see opportunity to expand the Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP) and Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) to include Urban, Controlled Environment Agriculture and Indoor Vertical Farming Practices," Marc said according to a written version of his testimony. "Second, within the Research Title, we support increasing overall funding for the Urban, Indoor and Emerging Agricultural Production, Research, Education and Extension Initiative.

"These expansions would help encourage competition, while promoting the technology and innovation that forms the bedrock of our national ethos and is necessary to feed the growing population."

The Urban, Indoor and Emerging Agricultural grant program was a new addition under the National Institute of Food and Agriculture from the 2018 Farm Bill, with \$10 million in funding the first year and then up to \$10 million in funding annually for 2019 through 2023. **IG**