

**Nathan Ley | Dreaming Out Loud, Sales Manager**

Hunger is not just a problem on the consumption/access side but also on the production side which is too often overlooked. Increased focus on producer diversity, equity and regionality is essential to addressing hunger in our country. We need more economic tools such as loan programs for new farmer ownership that can help drive better representation and increase equity or ownership within the food system. Now is a great time to enact such a system as the bulk of current farmers in our country age into retirement. The average farmer is older, white, and male. About 64% of farmers in 2017 were male, 62% over the age of 55. Less than 2% of farmers are Black. If this committee is sincere in addressing hunger, the current farming and incentive structure needs to be addressed as a key factor to what's driving hunger in our country. We need increased and livable wages for food system workers who currently, on average, rely on government assistance to subsidize their low wages more than any other sector. If these root issues are not addressed, most of the funding that comes from this report will only act as direct cash infusions to those already exploiting the current system's structure.

Also, in the 6 presidential appointees for the committee, there should be people who have or are currently experiencing hunger or food insecurity on the panel.