Is Wisconsin Agriculture Vulnerable to Terrorism?

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Define Terrorism

- **Agriculture Terrorism:** Spreading biological or chemical agents amongst crops or livestock to cause economic harm.

- **Food Supply Terrorism:** Tainting food products with chemical or biological agents that can cause human illness to lead to human casualties or economic harm.

*Source: Rocco Casagrande, Ph.D., Director, Homeland Security Program, Abt Associates*
Appears that agricultural attacks have been considered.

“A page in al Qaeda’s playbook.”

- Sen. Susan Collins, Maine
Why Attack Agriculture?

“a favored form of secondary aggression…the employment of cheap and unsophisticated means to undermine a state’s economic base and possibly overwhelm its public management resources, give livestock and food-related attacks a beneficial cost/benefit payoff that would be of interest to any group……” Peter Chalk, RAND Corp.
Is It Likely in Wisconsin?

• Wisconsin County Food & Agriculture Preparedness Assessment
• Survey completed by 69 of 72 counties
• Emergency management directors and/or UWEX agents
It’s likely, but... ...

- Nearly 85% of respondents felt it likely or very likely that a terrorist attack on agriculture or food supply will occur somewhere in the nation.
- 81% indicated that a terrorist attack is not likely to occur in their county.
- 60% did not address agriculture in their response plans.
Importance of Wisconsin Agriculture

• Food and fiber production generates est. $40B annually to state economy
• One of every five jobs tied to agric.
• In 2002, WI milk produced and marketed valued at $2.66B
• No milk shipments, est. $7M daily loss to farms
Impact of Event or Threat

• Exports halted
• Restricted movement of product
• Loss of business, income, or market share
• Consumer perceptions
• Full recovery may never happen
• Govt. resources diverted
Localized Impacts

- No milk shipped, herds or crops destroyed
- Loss of farm income
- Little or no inputs needed
- Loss of farms
- Rural communities hard hit
Why So Vulnerable?

- Crops grown over large areas - impossible to secure
- Inputs and commodities handled in bulk; spread over large areas
- Industry concentration - especially livestock
- Rapid movement
- Tracebacks not perfect
Examples

• BSE in Canada and U.S.
  - Estimated $2.5 billion loss for Canadian beef industry
• PPB incident in Michigan (fire retardant in dairy feed)
• Animal fat contaminated with chlordane in Wisconsin
What is Wisconsin doing?

- Long-standing toxic response team
- Comprehensive plans
- Agriculture vulnerability assessment
- Cooperative agreements with other states
- Developing regional lab capacity
- Increasing/improving resources
- Strengthening state and federal partnerships
- Reviewing/refining procedures, training
What can you do?

- Work with county emergency management
- Check your ingredients; use reputable sources
- Maintain good producer relationships
- Trace distribution routes; accurate records; security; production samples
- Biosecurity measures on clients’ farms
- Predetermine your response; training
Conclusion

• Appropriate steps can reduce our vulnerability
• Prepared, proactive, vigilant industry less likely to be attacked
• Increased public confidence reduces fear that is key to terrorism