

Since September 11th, we have necessarily sharpened our focus on unconventional methods of future attacks, including the potential for agroterrorism. Most people do not equate terrorist attacks with Agroterrorism. But the threat is real, and the impact could be devastating.

Today I want to talk about what the FBI is doing to prevent, detect, and investigate threats of agroterrorism. We have been fortunate so far - we have not faced any direct large scale attacks to our food supply. We have investigated possible Agroterrorism attacks with our interagency partners, ultimately determining that these were cases of product tampering, natural disease outbreaks, or accidental events.

The absence of any direct attack on our food supply does not minimize the threat. We know that members of Al Qaeda have studied our agricultural industry along with other potential targets. In addition, some animal rights activists and environmental extremists have touted agroterrorism as a potential means to end animal testing, animal consumption, and genetic engineering.

One thing is certain: given the nature of the threat, the partnerships the FBI has developed, and that we are diligently working to expand and strengthen will go a long way toward preventing potential agroterrorism attacks.

Today, we are sharing information, technology, and resources with our federal, state, and local counterparts as well as industry.

One of the ways we are working together is through the Agricultural Intelligence Working Group. Members of this group - including the FBI, the CIA, the USDA, the FDA, the Department of Homeland Security, and the military - meet regularly to exchange information and ideas about food security, and to discuss ways in which we can best utilize our combined skills, technology, and resources to prevent an attack on our food and agriculture sector.

Another way we are working together is through various Scientific Working Groups. FBI scientists are working with their counterparts around the country. Scientists from the CDC, key laboratories around the country, the CIA, and the Department of Homeland Security, analyzes animal and plant pathogens - down to the DNA level - to distinguish between pathogens that occur in nature, and those that are intentionally spread.

This distinction is important. Recovery of the components of an improvised explosive device at the scene of an explosion can clearly indicate an intentional act has occurred. In contrast, if a cow contracts Foot and Mouth Disease or a soybean plant exhibits rust, it can be difficult, if not impossible, to determine whether the attack was intentional or occurred naturally.

We are not limiting our partnerships to the federal level. We are reaching out to the people on the front lines - farmers, cattle ranchers, food producers, and distributors.

FBI Headquarters is directing the formation of a program called Ag-Guard, as well as the formation of Agroterrorism Working Groups nationwide. The Ag-Guard program is modeled after our existing Infraguard network. Through a secure web portal, members of the agricultural community are sharing information with each other, and with scientists, state and

local law enforcement, and the FBI. Members can pose questions, and alert the FBI to any suspicious or unusual activity. This program is a win-win for everyone involved. We are continuing to expand this program and expect to have a nationwide network developed in the near future.

Additionally, the FBI has formed a partnership with the DHS, USDA, FDA, and private industry to conduct site surveys of specific private industries within the agriculture industry. The intent of this Strategic Partnership Program is to determine critical points in our agricultural system that may be the target of a terrorist attack, identify early indicators and warnings that would signify planning and/or preparation for an attack, develop a focus for intelligence collection strategies around these indicators and warnings, and develop mitigation strategies for early detection, deterrence, disruption, interdiction, and prevention.

We are currently working with the Food and Agriculture Sector Coordinating Council and the Government Coordinating Council (GCC) to identify approximately 50 sites that we hope to visit over the next two years. The sites will include the entire production cycle, from farm to fork.

Now, I want to move to the FBI's detection and investigative methods. I will discuss the two together, because both rely upon the partnerships that we have established with our interagency partners.

We currently lead 105 Joint Terrorism Task Forces. These JTTFs are the focal point of our counterterrorism efforts. The JTTFs are aided in these efforts by highly trained WMD Coordinators in each field office. WMD threat related information is provided to the WMD Coordinator either via the extensive liaison network that each has established locally, or through the JTTF. The WMD Coordinator then contacts FBI Headquarters where we facilitate the interagency threat assessment process. This threat assessment process capitalizes upon the expertise of scientists and subject matter experts both within the FBI and those of our interagency partners. Our Hazardous Materials Response Unit and the 27 Hazardous Materials Response Teams they oversee in our field offices possess significant capabilities to collect and assess potential WMD materials, further enhancing our capability to provide timely input into the interagency threat assessment process. The same process is utilized in the event the threat involves a potential chemical release or agroterrorism. It is a process we utilize almost every day across the nation. We continue to expand our agroterrorism specific liaison contacts.

In order to expand this information sharing, in July of 2004, I directed field offices nationwide to identify and survey agriculture and food systems within their jurisdiction. I tasked field offices to assess the level of interaction and coordination between the FBI and key infrastructure officials in this sector on preparedness and information sharing matters.

To further formalize the mechanism for communication of threat information and to strengthen the FBI's relationship with the food and agriculture sector, field offices were directed to establish formal Agroterrorism Working Groups within their jurisdiction. This working group will enhance the already established relationships between Federal partners by bringing together representatives from all entities involved in the areas of proactive prevention and

awareness, intelligence, investigative response, and crisis management.

The Select Agent Registration Program was established to enhance the security of specific biological pathogens and toxins. Under the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002, the Attorney General has the responsibility to query criminal, immigration, national security, and other electronic databases to determine if an individual applying for select agent status is a restricted person.

Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and CDC Select Agent Program personnel have the responsibility of determining if a facility and/or an individual is properly trained and has the appropriate skills to handle the listed select agents and toxins; has proper laboratory facilities to contain and dispose of listed agents and toxins; including provisions to ensure that facilities and individuals seeking to register have a legitimate purpose to receive, possess, or transfer such agents and toxins. The FBI Criminal Justice Information Services Division (CJIS) has been designated to conduct the Security Risk Assessments (background checks) mandated under the Bioterrorism Act. CJIS processes the background checks on the facility owner/operator, the Responsible Official, and all facility employees requesting access to listed biological agents and toxins.

In the event that the background check raises additional concerns about an applicant a lead will be set to gather additional information to clarify and determine if sufficient information is available to restrict the individuals' access to listed select agents or toxins. FBIHQ will then coordinate with USDA and CDC to determine whether an applicant is restricted or not.

These are just a few examples of what the FBI is doing to prevent, detect, and investigate agroterrorism. But information sharing is a two-way street. We cannot investigate if we are not aware of the problem.

Farmers, ranchers, food distributors, and producers are the first line of defense. If a rancher sees unusual symptoms of illness in the herd, he must notify his veterinarian or a representative from the USDA. If a food distributor notes suspicious activity in one of her distribution centers, she must notify the FDA or USDA FSIS, local law enforcement, or her FBI Field Office. Likewise, we in the federal government and in the public health sector must keep each other in the loop. This is why the establishment of Agroterrorism Working Groups is important.

Our goal is to impress upon those in the food supply industry, and those of us who work with them, of the need for education, vigilance, and cooperation.

We are working with our partners in the federal government, in state and local law enforcement, in scientific labs, on college campuses across the country, and with members of the agricultural industry. We are sharing our information, our resources, and our knowledge to ensure the safety of our nation's food supply.