

Terrorism

General

Terrorism is the unlawful use or threat of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives (28 CFR 0.85).

The major weapons and activities of terrorists include: chemical and biological agents; radiological dispersion devices or “dirty bombs”; nuclear weapons; conventional explosives; improvised explosive devices (includes incendiary devices); kidnappings; hijackings; arson; and shootings. Terrorist targets are usually high-value, high-profile, high-visibility targets. Such targets may include: international airports; large cities; major special events; critical infrastructure; resorts; important landmarks; and political and/or business leaders. It is important to keep in mind that these are specific people, places, and targets, not regions.

A nuclear detonation is potentially the most destructive of any terrorist attack. The amount of destruction caused by a nuclear attack is determined by the size of the weapon. The effects of the fallout are determined by other factors, such as wind speed and weather conditions. “Dirty bombs” are not included in the category of nuclear weapons and do not result in a nuclear explosion, but are one of the many forms of explosives sought by terrorists.

Anthrax, as an example of bioterrorism, is an infectious disease that can be spread by inhaling, ingesting, or touching the spore-forming bacteria. As seen in the past, terrorists (either international or domestic) can use the U.S. Postal Service to spread anthrax. With the massive size of the Postal Service, this form of terrorism is extremely difficult to stop.

Other types of terrorism include:

- **Agriterrorism** – Intentionally contaminating the food supplies or the introduction of pests and/or disease agents to crops and livestock.
- **Cyberterrorism** – Terrorism that involves the electronic destruction of computers and networks, and the information they contain.

History

There have been no terrorist attacks in Huntingdon County.

Vulnerability

Since its land is primarily agricultural and rural, Huntingdon County is susceptible to agriterrorism. However, the likelihood of an attack is low. It is important to note that the use and exposure to these biological agents can remain unknown for several days until the infected person(s), livestock, or crops begin to experience symptoms. Often these agents are

contagious and the infected person must be quarantined, livestock culled, and/or crops destroyed.

A 2002 USDA National Agricultural Statistics Services (NASS) census provides an indication of the potential impact agriterrorism could have on Huntingdon County. In 2002, Huntingdon County had 850 farms. This was an increase of 9.7 percent from 1997, when the County had 775 farms. Total County farmland in 2002 was 142,500 acres, with an average size of 168 acres per farm, and an average estimated market value per farm of \$512,244. The total County cropland in 2002 was 78,143 acres, with the primary commodities harvested being corn, sorghum, wheat, barley, oats, rice, sunflower seed, cotton, tobacco, soybeans, and dry edible beans. In 2002, crop sales accounted for \$6,248,000 of the total market value of production for the County, and livestock sales accounted for \$37,202,000. The tables on the following pages show Huntingdon County's total amount of farms and the total amount of cattle, hog and pigs, chickens, and egg production.

Huntingdon County Farms, 1995-2003			
Year	Acres	Acres Per Farm	Number of Farms
1995	137,500	182	755
1996	134,500	178	755
1997	134,000	173	775
1998	135,000	170	795
1999	136,000	169	805
2000	139,000	170	820
2001	140,500	168	835
2002	142,500	168	850
2003	142,500	168	850

Source: United States Department of Agriculture

Huntingdon County Cattle Inventory, 1975-2006					
Year	Cattle - All	Cattle - Milk	Year	Cattle - All	Cattle - Milk
1975	25,600	-	1991	30,500	-
1976	25,300	-	1992	32,300	-
1977	27,000	-	1993	32,400	-
1978	27,500	-	1994	31,500	-
1979	24,800	-	1995	32,000	-
1980	25,600	-	1996	32,000	-
1981	26,900	-	1997	31,500	-
1982	28,800	-	1998	31,500	-
1983	29,000	-	1999	31,500	-
1984	28,200	-	2000	30,000	-
1985	28,900	-	2001	28,700	13,300
1986	29,400	-	2002	29,900	14,000
1987	29,600	-	2003	29,200	12,500
1988	29,600	-	2004	23,000	11,400
1989	30,300	-	2005	24,900	11,600
1990	28,000	-	2006	24,800	12,200

Source: United States Department of Agriculture

Huntingdon County Hog and Pig Population, 1974-2004			
Year	Population	Year	Population
1974	6,300	1990	5,000
1975	6,700	1991	6,300
1976	7,100	1992	8,000
1977	7,300	1993	9,400
1978	7,200	1994	5,700
1979	6,700	1995	5,000
1980	7,500	1996	3,100
1981	5,300	1997	2,600
1982	4,500	1998	9,500
1983	6,000	1999	9,400
1984	4,000	2000	9,300
1985	3,900	2001	10,500
1986	4,500	2002	10,600
1987	4,200	2003	11,000
1988	5,000	2004	10,900
1989	5,600		

Source: United States Department of Agriculture

Huntingdon County Chicken Population and Egg Production, 1978-1992					
Year	Chicken Population	Egg Production	Year	Chicken Population	Egg Production
1978	72,000	15,165	1986	7,000	1,440
1979	25,000	4,773	1987	6,000	1,488
1980	23,000	4,725	1988	6,000	1,342
1981	23,000	4,673	1989	16,000	2,651
1982	21,000	4,196	1990	8,000	2,947
1983	15,000	3,670	1991	7,500	1,924
1984	9,000	2,263	1992	6,900	1,723
1985	6,000	1,522			

Source: United States Department of Agriculture

It is not likely that Huntingdon County will experience a direct attack by a terrorist organization. Huntingdon County is more likely to experience the secondary effects of a nearby area being attacked; this would include Three Mile Island. However, the threat of a terrorist attack with chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosive (CBRNE) weapons is increasing. One method to assess the potential for a terrorist attack is to look at the amount of critical infrastructure in the area. If attacked, facilities, such as power plants and water facilities, could disrupt a much larger area more prone to terrorist attacks. Another way to gauge the threat of a terrorist attack is to review law enforcement threat warnings and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Threat Advisory System. This color-coded chart is an assessment of the current threat of a terrorist attack.



Probability

Terrorist events are unpredictable by nature. While significant improvements have been made in their detection and prevention, terrorist events remain challenging to predict in size, scope, intent, and frequency. Although the likelihood of an occurrence in Huntingdon County or the surrounding area is extremely low, it is possible the County could experience the effects of a terrorist event within the next 30 years or more.

Maximum Threat

The impact resulting from a terrorist event can vary from nominal to catastrophic, depending on the type, location, and severity of the event. The greatest impact would be to the health and safety of the citizens, the continuation of government operations, facilities, and critical infrastructure, and local economic stability.

While Huntingdon County may not seem to be a conventional terrorism target, its rural areas are susceptible to agriterrorism. The impact could be severe to the traditional family-operated farm, low-density residential areas, commercial agriculture operations, resource production facilities, and small-scale operations.

Similarly, the areas along the major transportation routes, including I-76, and U.S. Routes 22 and 522, could be susceptible to some form of public transit terrorist attack. The more populated areas of the County would be susceptible to chemical, biological, nuclear, radiological, or explosive events, due to the concentration and density of residential communities.

There is also the chance that Huntingdon County could be indirectly affected by an act of terrorism. Somerset County witnessed this first-hand, as United Flight 93 crashed into a field in Shanksville, PA.

Secondary Effects

The resulting secondary effects from an act of terrorism are contingent on the type, location, and severity of an event. Nominal effects, similar to what Somerset County experienced in the wake of the Flight 93 tragedy on September 11, 2001, may be relatively minor compared to the impact on the populace, property, and surrounding environment. Emotional trauma, subsequent property damage, and the introduction of small amounts of hazardous materials into the environment are the likely secondary effects of a similar incident occurring in Huntingdon County.

Secondary effects can also range to the catastrophic in impact and may be more damaging and have a greater lasting impact than the initial event. This may occur as the result of a chemical, biological, nuclear, radiological, or explosive event that directly or indirectly affects the County. Critical protective actions may be required of first responders or the entire population. Resulting mass evacuations could lead to traffic congestion and a breakdown in civil order, further exacerbating the situation. Government operations may be disrupted, due to the need to displace or operate under reduced capacity. The environment may experience damaging long-term effects from radiation fallout, chemical introduction into the ground water, or biologic/germ introduction into the ecosystem. Critical infrastructure may be irreparably damaged and a loss in agriculture productivity could permanently affect the County's economy.