



AgEcon SEARCH
RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS

The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library

This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.

Help ensure our sustainability.

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search
<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu>
aesearch@umn.edu

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*



Imports and Global Collaboration on Food Defense

**Agriculture Outlook Forum
Washington, DC
February 21, 2008**

**Kim R. Green
United States Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service
Office of Food Defense and Emergency Response**



PRESENTATION

- **Who we are**
- **What is food defense?**
- **Why are we concerned about the food supply?**
- **U.S. Activities**
- **Import Vulnerability Assessments**
- **International Activities**
 - **G-8 Bioterrorism Experts Group (BTEX)**
 - **APEC Food Defense Initiative**
 - **MEPI Food Defense Initiative**



Food Safety & Inspection Service

USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)

- Responsible for ensuring safety of meat, poultry, and egg products

Office of Food Defense & Emergency Response

- Established in August 2002
- Mission: To prevent, prepare for and coordinate a response to an intentional attack on the food supply & large scale emergencies





Food Defense vs. Food Safety

- **Food Safety** – the protection of food products from *unintentional contamination* by agents reasonably likely to occur in the food supply (e.g., *E. coli*, *Salmonella*, *Listeria*)
- **Food Defense** – the protection of food products from *intentional contamination* by biological, chemical, physical, or radiological agents that are not reasonably likely to occur in the food supply (e.g., ricin, arsenic)



Why Are We Concerned about the Food Supply?

- **Food supply is soft target**
- **Intelligence: terrorists have discussed food**
 - **Documents found in Afghanistan caves used by al Qaeda specify how to contaminate food**
 - **Manuals for intentional contamination of food are widely available on internet**
- **No specific threats indicating that an attack is imminent**



Why Are We Concerned about the Food Supply?

- **Deliberate contamination could cause:**
 - Significant public health consequences; Threat agents can cause severe illnesses and death
 - Devastating economic impacts;
 - Widespread public fear;
 - Loss of public confidence in the safety of food and effectiveness of government





Why Are We Concerned about the Food Supply?

- Attacks could be directed at multiple nodes in the farm to table continuum
 - Crops, livestock
 - Processing, distribution, storage, transportation
 - Retail (restaurants or supermarkets)





US Activities in Food Defense

- **Conduct vulnerability assessments**
 - Determine most vulnerable products, likely agents, potential sites of contamination
 - Included **legally & illegally imported products**
- **Develop countermeasures**
- **Conduct surveillance and data analysis and integration**
- **Conduct research**
- **Manage food defense emergencies**
- **Provide outreach and training**
 - Domestic & **International**



FSIS Vulnerability Assessment of Legally Imported Food

- **3.8 billion pounds meat, poultry, eggs imported to U.S.**
- **Imported products offer more access points for attack than domestic (e.g., land/sea transport, port of entry, Inspection House)**
- **Assessment considered:**
 - **Potential vulnerabilities of product during processing in country of origin and during transport to U.S.**
 - **Which products more vulnerable than others (considered import volume)**
 - **Sociopolitical stability of exporting country**



FSIS Vulnerability Assessment of Illegally Imported Food

- **Smuggled product both food safety & food defense concern**
- **Primary motive for smuggling economic**
- **However, terrorists may choose this pathway:**
 - **Easier to contaminate**
 - **Avoids CBP inspections; USDA checks**
- **Assessment considered:**
 - **Feasibility of illegally importing products**
 - **Identified pathways with highest vulnerability**
 - **Estimated amount of illegal imports entering U.S.**
- **Given large quantity, illegally imported meat & poultry represent potential avenue for attack**



G-8 Activities

- **G-8 Bioterrorism Experts Group (BTEX)**
 - Established under U.S. Presidency in 2004
 - Goal: strengthen actions to prevent bioterrorism; establish expert-to-expert contacts
- **2005 Workshop for G-8 BTEX**
 - Food defense awareness
 - Methodology used for vulnerability assessments
 - Developing countermeasures
- **Representatives from all G-8 countries & EU participated**



G-8 Activities, cont.

- **Follow-up Meeting, London 2006**
 - Shared U.S. efforts: Strategic Partnership Program Agroterrorism (SPPA) Initiative; Food and Agriculture Sector Government Coordinating Council (GCC)
- **Table-top Food Defense Exercise planned for May 2008 (Minneapolis, MN)**





APEC Food Defense Initiative

- **Food defense - lead counterterrorism initiative for U.S. in APEC**
- **1st activity: Workshop, Bangkok, Nov 2006**
 - **USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), FSIS, Dept. of State, FDA**
 - **Policymakers, technical experts, public- and private-sector stakeholders from 17 APEC economies**





APEC Food Defense Initiative

- **Workshop goal:** Provide technical assistance, training on defending against foodborne terrorism
- **Information provided:**
 - Vulnerability assessment tools
 - Strategies to mitigate risk of intentional acts of terrorism to food supply
- **Follow on Workshop: Vietnam, June 2007**
 - Capacity building
 - Develop best practices in food defense
 - Mechanisms for sharing information in emergencies





APEC Food Defense Initiative

- **Food Defense Principles: “Mitigating the Terrorist Threat to APEC Food Supply”**
 - Co-sponsored by U.S., Australia, Chile
 - Provide scientific basis for protecting food supply from terrorism
 - APEC Counterterrorism Task Force (CTTF) recommended endorsement
- **Sept. 2007, 15th APEC Leaders’ Meeting (Sydney)**
 - All 21 APEC economies APEC Leaders signed onto principles
 - First international forum to issue guidance on food defense
 - Highlights importance of international cooperation
 - Outcome: 9 Food Defense Principles



Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)

- **Symposium: “Protecting the Middle East's Food Supply from Intentional Contamination”**
 - January 2008, Egypt
 - USDA FAS, FSIS, FDA, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of State
- **First-ever food defense activity in Middle East**
 - Goal: encourage broader regional dialogue and engagement among MEPI countries on protecting food
 - Representatives recommended follow-up steps be taken to expand awareness to key stakeholders





Other International Activities

- **FSIS Import Surveillance Liaison Officers (ISLOs)**
- **International Trade Data System (ITDS)**
- **CBP-National Targeting Center**
- **Bilateral arrangements with Canada & Mexico**



Summary

- **An attack on the food supply would have high impact**
 - **Possible to cause mass fatalities**
- **Food defense focus on both imports and exports**
- **International coordination & cooperation essential to protect global food supply**



Contact Information:

Kim R. Green

**Office of Food Defense & Emergency
Response**

Food Safety and Inspection Service

(202) 690-6469

kim.green@fsis.usda.gov

www.fsis.usda.gov