



Terrorism

General

Terrorism is the unlawful use or threat of the use 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 typically include chemical and biological agents, radiological dispersion devices (commonly referred to as “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, 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 used 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, which is the intentional contamination of food supplies or the introduction of pests and/or disease agents to crops and livestock; and cyberterrorism, which is terrorism that involves computers and networks, along with the information they contain.

History

There have been no terrorist attacks in Snyder County to date.

Vulnerability

Since its land is primarily agricultural and rural, Snyder County is susceptible to agriterrorism. However, the likelihood of an attack is low. It is important to note that the use of 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. The tables below show Snyder County's total number of farms and the total amount of cattle, hog and pigs, chickens, and egg production.

Snyder County Farms			
Year	Acres	Acres Per Farm	Number of Farms
1995	95,000	109	870
1996	95,500	110	870
1997	99,500	112	885
1998	100,500	116	870
1999	100,500	119	845
2000	100,000	121	825
2001	100,000	124	805
2002	99,500	127	785
2003	99,500	127	785

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Snyder County Cattle Inventory					
Year	Cattle - All	Cattle - Milk	Year	Cattle - All	Cattle - Milk
1975	18,500 head	-	1991	22,400 head	-
1976	19,200 head	-	1992	23,200 head	-
1977	20,000 head	-	1993	25,500 head	-
1978	19,500 head	-	1994	24,500 head	-
1979	19,500 head	-	1995	23,500 head	-
1980	20,700 head	-	1996	23,500 head	-
1981	21,700 head	-	1997	24,000 head	-
1982	22,200 head	-	1998	24,500 head	-
1983	20,000 head	-	1999	24,100 head	-
1984	20,600 head	-	2000	23,900 head	-
1985	20,600 head	-	2001	22,500 head	8,500 head
1986	22,000 head	-	2002	23,300 head	8,300 head
1987	20,600 head	-	2003	21,400 head	8,500 head
1988	21,600 head	-	2004	28,000 head	8,000 head
1989	20,100 head	-	2005	26,600 head	8,200 head
1990	19,500 head	-			

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Snyder County Hog and Pig Population, 1975-2004			
Year	Population	Year	Population
1975	13,700 head	1990	21,000 head
1976	15,600 head	1991	34,800 head
1977	19,700 head	1992	42,800 head
1978	22,500 head	1993	43,700 head
1979	22,700 head	1994	56,300 head
1980	25,000 head	1995	50,100 head
1981	15,800 head	1996	40,200 head
1982	21,500 head	1997	66,300 head
1983	22,500 head	1998	50,100 head
1984	18,000 head	1999	43,300 head
1985	19,500 head	2000	45,800 head
1986	18,000 head	2001	45,000 head
1987	19,500 head	2002	45,500 head
1988	21,800 head	2003	44,500 head
1989	20,000 head	2004	44,100 head

Source: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service



Snyder County Chicken Population and Egg Production, 1978-1999					
Year	Chicken Population	Egg Production	Year	Chicken Population	Egg Production
1978	396,000 birds	64.337M eggs	1989	84,000 birds	38.192M eggs
1979	251,000 birds	47.699M eggs	1990	140,000 birds	26.412M eggs
1980	240,000 birds	49.394M eggs	1991	150,500 birds	35.501M eggs
1981	240,000 birds	50.880M eggs	1992	185,000 birds	37.769M eggs
1982	231,000 birds	48.234M eggs	1993	252,200 birds	44.706M eggs
1983	191,000 birds	41.975M eggs	1994	256,000 birds	46.000M eggs
1984	193,000 birds	36.574M eggs	1995	260,000 birds	45.518M eggs
1985	185,000 birds	40.370M eggs	1996	275,000 birds	48.546M eggs
1986	185,000 birds	38.322M eggs	1997	420,300 birds	60.000M eggs
1987	320,000 birds	50.841M eggs	1998	442,800 birds	61.000M eggs
1988	230,500 birds	60.783M eggs	1999	435,900 birds	62.000M eggs

Source: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service

It is not likely that Snyder County will experience a direct attack by a terrorist organization. Snyder County is more likely to experience the secondary effects of a nearby area being attacked, such as the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant. 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 by looking at the amount of critical infrastructure in the area. Facilities, such as power plants and water facilities that could disrupt a much larger area, are more prone to terrorist attacks. Another way to gauge the threat of a terrorist attack is to review law enforcement threat warnings and the Department of Homeland Security's Threat Advisory System. This color-coded chart at right is an assessment of the current threat of a terrorist attack.



Source: Dept. of Homeland Security

Probability

Terrorist events are unpredictable by nature. While significant improvements have been made in their detection and prevention, they remain challenging to predict in size, scope, intent, and frequency. Although the likelihood of an occurrence in Snyder County or 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 largest 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 citizens; the continuation of government operations, facilities, and critical infrastructure; and to the financial and economic stability of the County.

The western municipalities of West Beaver, Spring, Adams, West Perry, Perry, Beaver, Center, and Franklin Townships are most susceptible to agriterrorism, due to the dependency on an agrarian lifestyle. The impact to traditional family farm operations, low-density residential areas, commercial agriculture operations, resource production facilities, and small-scale industrial operations in these municipalities could be severe. The Shamokin Dam and Selinsgrove Boroughs are most susceptible to the effects of a chemical, biological, nuclear, radiological, or explosive (CBNRE) event, due to the concentration of densely populated residential communities, proximity and reliance on major transportation arteries, and relative proximity to more likely targets.

Secondary Effect

The resulting secondary effects from an act of terrorism depend on the type, location, and severity of event. Nominal effects, similar to what Somerset County, PA, experienced in the wake of the Flight 93 tragedy on September 11, 2001, may be relatively minor in relation 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 among the more likely secondary effects of a similar incident occurring in Snyder County.

Secondary effects can be 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 CBNRE 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 agricultural productivity could permanently affect the County's economy.