

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 include: chemical and biological agents; radiological dispersion devices (RDD commonly referred to as “dirty bombs”); nuclear weapons; conventional explosives; improvised explosive devices (IED which include 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 considered 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 – The intentional contamination of food supplies or the introduction of pests and/or disease agents to crops and livestock.
- Cyberterrorism – This is terrorism that involves computers and networks along with the information they contain.

History

There have been no terrorist attacks in Perry County, to date.

Vulnerability

Since 47 percent of its land is agricultural, Perry 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 or demonstrate symptoms. Often, these agents are contagious and the infected person must be quarantined, livestock culled, and/or crops destroyed. The tables below show Perry County’s total number of farms and the total amount of cattle, chickens, and egg production.

**Table C.24
Perry County Farm Acreage
1995-2007**

Year	Acres	Acres Per Farm	Number of Farms
1995	115,500	147	785
1996	116,500	148	785
1997	123,500	152	815
1998	124,500	154	810
1999	126,000	159	790
2000	127,000	163	780
2001	127,500	167	765
2002	128,500	170	755
2003	128,500	170	755
2004	128,500	170	755
2005	128,500	170	755
2006	128,000	170	755
2007	144,375	144	1,002

*Source: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service
U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1982 – 2007. Next Census is for 2012 – Data not yet available.*

**Table C.25
Perry County Cattle Population
1975-2013**

Year	Cattle- All	Cattle- Milk	Year	Cattle- All	Cattle- Milk
1975	22,400 head	n/a	1995	23,000 head	n/a
1976	22,100 head	n/a	1996	24,000 head	n/a
1977	23,500 head	n/a	1997	24,500 head	n/a
1978	22,500 head	n/a	1998	24,000 head	n/a
1979	20,600 head	n/a	1999	23,600 head	n/a
1980	21,800 head	n/a	2000	24,600 head	n/a
1981	23,400 head	n/a	2001	24,100 head	7,700 head
1982	25,300 head	n/a	2002	25,500 head	6,800 head
1983	23,600 head	n/a	2003	25,500 head	6,800 head
1984	23,000 head	n/a	2004	22,700 head	7,700 head
1985	23,300 head	n/a	2005	23,700 head	7,600 head
1986	23,800 head	n/a	2006	23,600 head	7,700 head
1987	23,000 head	n/a	2007	28,400 head	7,700 head
1988	21,900 head	n/a	2008	27,500 head	8,900 head
1989	22,000 head	n/a	2009	27,000 head	8,900 head
1990	21,700 head	n/a	2010	28,000 head	8,700 head
1991	23,700 head	n/a	2011	27,500 head	8,700 head
1992	25,200 head	n/a	2012	27,500 head	8,700 head
1993	23,200 head	n/a	2013	27,500 head	8,600 head
1994	22,500 head	n/a			

Source: USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service

**Table C.26
Perry County Laying Chicken Population & Egg Production
1978-2006* ****

Year	Laying Chicken Population	Egg Production	Year	Laying Chicken Population	Egg Production
1978	190,000 Birds	49,285 Thousand Eggs	1988	246,900 Birds	66,258 Thousand Eggs
1979	177,500 Birds	46,505 Thousand Eggs	1989	254,500 Birds	68,162 Thousand Eggs
1980	175,500 Birds	47,209 Thousand Eggs	1990	296,500 Birds	79,424 Thousand Eggs
1981	148,700 Birds	39,405 Thousand Eggs	1991	333,600 Birds	90,406 Thousand Eggs
1982	155,900 Birds	41,469 Thousand Eggs	1992	310,100 Birds	84,809 Thousand Eggs
1983	203,700 Birds	54,184 Thousand Eggs	2000	256,000 Birds	69,000 Thousand Eggs
1984	207,200 Birds	49,545 Thousand Eggs	2001	268,000 Birds	73,000 Thousand Eggs
1985	194,200 Birds	50,974 Thousand Eggs	2002	260,000 Birds	72,000 Thousand Eggs
1986	222,900 Birds	58,347 Thousand Eggs	2006	265,000 Birds	74,000 Thousand Eggs
1987	253,000 Birds	67,238 Thousand Eggs	No more current data available		

Source: USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service

* Latest year for which data available

** Data not available for all years

Possible attacks on livestock are a concern, but approximately 64 percent of the farmland in Perry County is utilized as cropland. Cropland made up 92,254 acres of the total 144,375 acres of farmland in Perry County in 2007.

It is not likely Perry County will experience a direct attack by a terrorist organization. Perry County is more likely to experience the secondary effects of a nearby area being attacked; this would include the Susquehanna Steam Electric Station, located in Luzerne County and Three Mile Island, located in Dauphin County. 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 could disrupt a much larger area and are therefore be more prone to terrorist attacks. Another way to gauge the threat of a terrorist attack is by reviewing 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.



Perry County is part of an eight-county Terrorism Task Force (SCCTTF) in an effort to be able to respond to a terrorism incident. Training, equipment, and planning are presently underway to develop a better response capability.

With no hospitals in the county, effected victims or patients would be required to be transported to a hospital outside the county.

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 Perry County or the surrounding area is extremely low, it is possible the County could experience the effects of a terrorist event. However, this is not likely within a period of 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 Perry 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 U.S. Route 11/15, U.S. Routes 22/322 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 Perry 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, Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001.

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, 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 Perry 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.