Agroterrorism: Means, mechanisms, results and readiness

Wm. Michael Whiteside
Concordia University, Chicago

In recent years, the potential for sophisticated and efficient terrorist attacks on our nation's food supply has become an increasing reality. Argoterrorists, of either domestic or foreign origins, with relatively minimal funding and using home-based “kitchen” laboratories, may already have the ability to produce and introduce harmful pathogens directly into our food supply at their source. The events of 911 have proven that with relatively minimal funding, a small group of terrorists are capable of causing major disruptions to our economy, through limited but strategic assaults. In a possible argoterrosim scenario, farms come under attack through direct exposure of crops to harmful pathogenic bacteria agents such as E. coli O157:H7 or the less known O104:H4 strain. A limited number of strategically located farms would be targeted for dissemination of the pathogen(s) with the potential for massive damage to our economy with widely reported news that segments of the American population have been made ill or killed due to the actions of agroterrorist having successfully contaminated essential crops at the farm level.

Biography

Whiteside received his PhD in Biochemistry at UIC in 2001 and his BSc in Chemistry at Elmhurst College in 1992. He is the CEO of Tactical BioResearch Consulting LTD. He teaches and consults on subjects such as biological WMDs and fluorescence microscopy of bacterial pathogens. He has had been an Assistant Professor of Molecular Biology at Concordia University Chicago in River Forest Illinois since 2005. He teaches microbiology, virology, bacterial genetics, cell biology, molecular biology and biochemistry. He is the Primary Investigator for the Biological Chemistry Research Group at Concordia as well as the Director for the student operated water analysis laboratory Aqualytica. From 2004-2006, Dr. Whiteside was an instructor with Louisiana State University’s National Centers for Biomedical Research and Training (NCMBRT) teaching first responders aspects of biological WMDs and sampling techniques. Prior to that Dr. Whiteside was the Director of Laboratories and Application at BioToolsInc specializing in the determination of protein secondary structure using FT-IR and factor analysis. Dr. Whiteside has a background as a first responder having been a Paramedic/Firefighter II and preceptor for 13 years with his last post as Chief Paramedic in Maywood IL.

michael.whiteside@cuchicago.edu