

# Rural Crime - the emerging threat of Agroterrorism



Centre for Rural Innovation  
at Harper Adams University College



## PROJECT SUMMARY

Acts of terrorism are more normally associated with urban areas, infrastructure, and military or governmental targets. However, as societies around the world come to terms with the reality of asymmetric warfare and global terrorism, new targets and vulnerabilities have to be considered and a wider view of what constitutes critical national infrastructure needs to be recognised.

The Rural Crime Study Group's latest project challenges 'traditional' strategic thinking, which has considered agriculture as having limited vulnerability to terrorist attack and considers the potential impacts of an attack including the use of biological, chemical and radiological material on this key area of critical national infrastructure.

The ongoing project has examined the potential threat and the implications for agriculture and rural communities in the UK for a variety of Agroterrorist attacks – which are terrorist acts intended to disrupt or damage a country's agriculture. It has done so through the consideration of a range of scenarios and subsequently has identified many wider socio-economic implications for the UK's diversified rural economy and communities.

So far, it has become clear that potential impacts go well beyond the farm gate and involve a variety of emerging and established industries such as horse racing, speciality food, leisure and tourism as well as threatening the well being of individuals in the industry.

The study has also undertaken an appraisal of the UK government policy in this area, which has highlighted some key areas of policy concern given the potential wide nature of an Agroterrorism attack in the United Kingdom. The team considers it appropriate that the UK should recognise Agroterrorism as a distinct threat to critical national infrastructure (as in the US). Through doing so it should seek to raise awareness across rural communities and stakeholders for both prevention and mitigation means.

Outputs of the project are set to include conference presentations, published articles and reports and contribution to wider debate through committee and media exposure. The project is currently seeking further funding to continue and develop its research in this dynamic area of policy provision.

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### KEY FACTS:

Lead Group: Rural Affairs and Environment

Key Theme: Linking Urban & Rural Communities

Contract Value: N/A

Project Leader: Dr Richard Byrne

Project Duration: Ongoing

Sponsor/Client: Ongoing



## Centre for Rural Innovation

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### **Accessing the research and consultancy work at Harper Adams University College**

The main purpose of the Centre is the sharing of knowledge to support innovation in the rural economy by:

- the provision of technical research services and business consultancy
- making our facilities available to support the needs of businesses
- supporting business networking
- the development of new technologies
- providing training programmes and work-based qualifications to businesses and individuals

### **[www.cfri.co.uk](http://www.cfri.co.uk)**

The website is designed to allow you to interpret the range of research and consultancy work undertaken using seven key Themes:

- Rural Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprise
- Innovation for Sustainable Farming
- Food Chain Safety
- Linking Urban and Rural Economies and Communities
- Sustainable Technology and the Rural Economy
- Rural Advisors and Agencies
- Rural Professional Practice

### **General enquiries**

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