

# Definitions

Last Updated: May 1, 2005

## **Agroterrorism**

*The use, or threatened use, of biological (to include toxins), chemical, or radiological agents against some component of agriculture, in such a way as to adversely impact the agriculture industry or any component thereof, the economy, or the consuming public.*

## **Biological Agent/Toxin**

*A microorganism or toxin derived from a microorganism that causes disease in humans, plants, or animals.*

## **Biological Defense**

*The methods, plans, and procedures involved in establishing and executing defensive measures against attack using a biological agent.*

## **Biological Threat**

*A threat that consists of a biological agent planned to be deployed to produce casualties in humans or animals and damage plants or other material.*

## **Biological Warfare / Bioterrorism**

*The use of microorganisms or toxins derived from living organisms to cause death or disease in humans, animals, or plants in civilian settings. (Source: Huxsoll D, Patrick W, Parrott C. Veterinary services in biological disasters. JAVMA 1987;190:714-722.)*

## **Case Fatality Rate**

*The proportion of people or animals contracting a disease that die of that disease. The numerator is the number of deaths caused by the disease and the denominator is the number of diagnosed cases of the disease.*

## **Endemic**

*A disease that is present or usually prevalent in a population or geographical area at all times.*

## **Enzootic**

*A disease that is present in an animal community at all times, but occurring in only a small number of cases. A disease of low morbidity which is constantly present in an animal community.*

## **Epidemic**

*A disease that occurs suddenly in numbers clearly in excess of normal expectancy. This refers especially to infectious diseases but applies also to any disease, injury, or other health related event occurring in such outbreaks.*

## **Epizootic**

*A disease of high morbidity which is only occasionally present in an animal community.*

## **Incidence**

*The rate at which a certain event occurs, e.g. the number of new cases of a specific disease occurring during a certain period.*



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY®

**Center for Food  
Security and Public Health**  
College of Veterinary Medicine  
Iowa State University  
Ames, Iowa 50011  
Phone: (515) 294-7189  
FAX: (515) 294-8259  
E-mail: [cfsph@iastate.edu](mailto:cfsph@iastate.edu)  
Web: <http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu>

## **Mortality Rate**

*The number of deaths in a population at risk.*

## **Pandemic**

*A disease distributed or occurring widely throughout a region, country, continent, or globally.*

## **Prevalence**

*The number of cases of a disease that are present in a population at one point in time.*

## **Terrorism**

*The Code of Federal Regulations (28 C.F.R. § 0.85) defines terrorism as "...the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in the furtherance of political or social objectives." Title 22 of the United States Code (U.S.C.), § 2656f (d) defines terrorism as "...premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience."*

## **Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)**

*In arms control usage, weapons that are capable of a high order of destruction and/or being used in such a manner as to destroy large numbers of people. These can be nuclear, chemical, biological or radiological weapons, but excludes the means of transporting or propelling the weapon where such means is a separable and divisible part of the weapon.*

## **Zoonosis**

*A disease of animals that may be transmitted to man under natural conditions.*

---

Reference: Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary. 27th Edition, W.B. Saunders Company. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. Philadelphia, PA. 1988.



**Center for Food  
Security and Public Health**  
College of Veterinary Medicine  
Iowa State University  
Ames, Iowa 50011  
Phone: (515) 294-7189  
FAX: (515) 294-8259  
E-mail: [cfsph@iastate.edu](mailto:cfsph@iastate.edu)  
Web: <http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu>