



UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE VIÇOSA
CENTRO DE CIÊNCIAS EXATAS E TECNOLÓGICAS
DEPARTAMENTO DE TECNOLOGIA DE ALIMENTOS

Campus Universitário – Viçosa, MG – 36570-000 – Telefone (31)3899-2226 – fax: (31) 3899-2208 - E-mail: dta@ufv.br

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Aluno: Daniela Abrantes Leal

Orientadora: Regina Célia Santos Mendonça (Departamento de Tecnologia de Alimentos)

BIOTERRORISMO
BIOTERRORISM

Bioterrorist attack is the intentional release (in the air, water or food) of viruses, bacteria or other agents used to cause disease or death in people, animals or plants. Difficult to predict, the threat posed by bioterrorism is a constant concern. A large-scale biological attack could be devastating and lead to social and economic chaos. Bioterrorism agents are typically found in nature. For example, initially, biological agents were used in an intuitive and rudimentary way (feces of animals in arrowhead made by Neanderthals, for example), raising doubts about their effectiveness. However, the advances of nineteenth century in microbiology, biotechnology and genetic modifications has allow the control of microorganisms growth, beyond the development of more aggressive organisms or even new agentes, with greater potential for destruction. Letters containing anthrax spores were sent to people related to the US government and the press a week after the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11th, 2001, and alerted the world about the new terrorist threats. Biological agents used for terrorist purposes are, for the most part, effective in extremely low quantities, and so sensitive and selective methods of detection are required. Techniques such as chromatography, mass spectrometry and biosensors have been optimized in order to improve their capacity to recognize biological agents to ensure a quick response of authorities in case of bioterrorist events. The role of the State in promoting preventive biosafety measures has been discussed, as well as the actions to be triggered in the event of an attack. Between these actions are the creation of an agile network of epidemiological information, communication systems between health and defense agencies, creation of biological research centers, training personnel to deal with bioterrorist attacks and tools to disseminate information to the population when necessary.

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