

## **Strategic Partnership Program Agroterrorism (SPPA) Frequently Asked Questions**

Updated October 2007

### **1. What is the goal/purpose of the Strategic Partnership Program Agroterrorism (SPPA) initiative?**

The SPPA is an initiative among federal and state government agencies and private sector volunteers to provide government and industry with a more complete sector-wide perspective of food and agriculture defense in the sector. Under the initiative, vulnerability assessments will be conducted using the CARVER + Shock tool. The SPPA will provide a coordinated identification and assessment of possible vulnerabilities in the food and agriculture sector. In so doing, the SPPA will help distinguish between real and perceived food defense vulnerabilities and risks within the food and agriculture sector. It also will assist in identifying potential mitigation measures and strategies that may be appropriate for the food and agriculture sector. In addition, the SPPA will assist in the identification of research needs and the allocation of research investments to address priority needs.

### **2. Will the CARVER + Shock assessments characterize individual facilities or companies? Or will the assessments be based on the more general food and agriculture sub-sectors represented by the volunteering entity?**

The SPPA is intended to provide representative, factual information about identifiable product types, commodities, and activities across the food and agriculture sector. It is **not** the intent of the SPPA to assess the specific vulnerabilities of an individual company or facility. To achieve the representative information needed for the SPPA, the strong preference is to secure participation in the CARVER + Shock from multiple companies and the representative trade association(s) from the sector or sub-sector being assessed. However, where this is not feasible, expertise from a single company may be used to determine more generalized, representative processes and operations.

### **3. Will participating industry representatives (companies, facilities, trade associations) be required to disclose proprietary or company-specific information?**

No. The intent is that each CARVER + Shock assessment will be representative of the sub-sector product, commodity, or activity in general. Each participating company and industry representative has complete discretion over the type and specificity of

information volunteered. The desire is that industry participants will be volunteer and provide their general expertise and knowledge of the product, commodity, or activity being assessed. Participants are expected to provide factual and representative information that characterize products, commodities, and activities. The product, commodity, or activity being assessed will usually be characterized using ranges and/or specific data that participants agree are representative. For example, rather than using production volumes from a specific facility, the appropriate information would be a representative volume or range, such as 30,000 to 50,000 units per hour. Using another example – involving the process temperature used for a particular product – participants will be asked to agree on a representative temperature or range of temperatures, such as 120-150 degrees.

The expectation is that individual companies will be able to apply the experience and information available from the SPPA assessments to conduct internal company/specific CARVER + Shock or similar assessments.

#### **4. How will sensitive information and reports compiled as a result of the CARVER + Shock assessment be protected and used?**

Each participant in a SPPA CARVER + Shock assessment will be required to sign a sensitive information non-disclosure agreement. The final report of each assessment will include the detailed data and information used in the assessment. This report will be prepared by a U.S. government contractor as a classified document that will be protected under national security authorities. An appropriate security clearance will be necessary for accessing the classified information and report. The U.S. government will provide periodic classified briefings for industry, state, and federal partners with necessary security clearances on a scheduled basis, such as semi-annually.

Participants in each CARVER + Shock assessment will receive documentation, which will be identified as “working notes”. The working notes will be prepared by the U.S. government contractor and agreed to by participants before the closure of the assessment, and will include only non-sensitive information. In addition, the working notes will be designated “For Official Use Only” (FOUO) and will be subject to the conditions of the previously referenced non-disclosure agreement.

In addition, a FOUO report on the SPPA initiative will be prepared by a participating U.S. government agency and distributed on a periodic basis to SPPA participants and interested industry, state, and federal partners. This FOUO report will not contain sensitive information, but will relay important results, research gaps, and best practice information.

#### **5. What is the role and responsibility of the volunteer for a CARVER + Shock assessment?**

In volunteering for a SPPA CARVER + Shock assessment, the individual company, trade association, or other entity submits an application which initiates the scheduling and

organizing of the assessment. The volunteer will be asked to: a) participate in the organization, structure, and scheduling of the assessment; b) indicate an ability and willingness to arrange for a site-visit to a facility engaged in the particular product, commodity, or activity; and c) provide expert participation for the assessment. In the event that the volunteer is from the private sector, the assessment partners will work with the U.S. contractor to coordinate with the appropriate State and local officials to ensure participation and vice versa.

**6. What information will participants in the CARVER + Shock assessment be expected to provide and in what form?**

As indicated above, the preference is for the individual CARVER + Shock assessments to represent sub-sectors (products, commodities, activities) of the food and agriculture sector. Further, individual company participants are **not** required to provide confidential or proprietary business, product or process information. The types of information needed will be factual, consensus-based information typical of the sector being assessed, which will include a representative process flow diagram and general characteristics, production volumes, distribution characteristics, and time in commerce/to consumption. Information needs will be discussed in briefings before the assessment. The actual CARVER + Shock assessment generally is expected to take 2 to 4 days.

**7. How does the “site-visit” fit in the CARVER + Shock assessment? Who is expected to participate in the site visit and how many people are expected to participate? Will the host of the site visit determine who participates in the facility tour?**

While desirable, the SPPA does **not** require a site visit and a volunteering company is **not** required to provide access to a facility. The site visit is an optional part of the SPPA initiative. The decision as to whether a tour is offered, and the conditions imposed on such a tour, is solely at the discretion of the industry volunteer. If a tour is offered, it is done prior to the CARVER + Shock assessment exercise. The purpose of the tour is to provide orientation to the federal and state government officials participating in the assessment – generally involving five to 10 persons – who may be unfamiliar with the operations and product/commodity flow involved in the type of facility being assessed. Government officials participating in the tour are subject to the same confidentiality and non-disclosure restrictions that apply to the CARVER + Shock assessment itself. It is **not** envisioned that industry competitors would participate in the facility tour. But the final decision on whether a facility tour is offered and who is allowed to participate is up to the industry volunteer. Other industry volunteers participating in the assessment may decline to participate in the facility tour if one is offered by the host facility.

The SPPA assessment itself is conducted at a neutral, agreed-upon off-site location, such as a hotel or conference room.

**8. What government and private industry organizations will participate in the scheduled CARVER + Shock assessments?**

Representatives of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will serve as the leads and facilitate the assessment, depending upon the industry sector or sub-sector being assessed. Other government participants will include representatives from the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, pertinent State Departments of Public Health and Agriculture, and possibly local health, agriculture or food officials. From industry, in addition to representatives from the host entity or company that volunteers for the assessment, the goal is to have five to six additional industry representatives from the sub-sector participating in the assessment, as well as a representative from the appropriate trade association(s). Industry experts will be the primary source of information and consensus for the assessment. The desire is to have roughly an equivalent number of government and industry representatives participating to ensure a representative and balanced discussion and assessment.

**9. Who is responsible for obtaining industry participation in addition to the original volunteer?**

The Food and Agriculture Sector Coordinating Council will be provided the opportunity to seek and obtain the cooperation of relevant trade associations to assist in the organization and conduct of the assessments. The intent is to have a relevant national trade association(s) work with the original volunteer and government and state partners to identify, solicit, and seek the participation of other companies. If the original volunteer is a trade association, it is expected that the trade association will be able to identify multiple companies from the sector to participate in the CARVER + Shock assessment at the initial planning stages.

**10. Who will facilitate/moderate each CARVER + Shock assessment?**

FDA or USDA personnel, who are experienced in the use of the CARVER + Shock method, will facilitate and moderate the assessment. The moderator will be determined by the agency with jurisdiction over the product, process, or commodity in question or determined on a case-by-case basis.

**11. How far in advance will the dates of a specific CARVER + Shock assessment be known and how will this be communicated to participants?**

At a minimum, 60 days notice will be needed for scheduling, planning and completing an SPPA exercise. At present, there are volunteers sufficient to conduct approximately 6-8 months of assessments. Once a volunteer applies and is selected, the government and industry SPPA partners will begin to identify all participants, who will be included in the planning and establishment of the timeline, including choosing the date of the assessment.

**12. Who specifically should a potential volunteer contact to express the desire to volunteer?**

An entity interested in volunteering or learning more about the SPPA initiative can contact any of the following:

Jessica Fantinato, USDA  
202-720-7654  
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