



## Awareness in Action: Case Study

**Who could become an insider threat?** Anyone with authorized access to protected information who uses that access—either wittingly or unwittingly—to harm national security. Insider threats can have far reaching consequences and impacts on national security.



America Tonight

### Mo Hailong (aka Robert Mo) and Co-Conspirator Insiders

- Arrested in December 2013 for conspiracy to steal trade secrets
- Mo and his conspirators stole proprietary advanced technology from production fields in the Midwest
- Age at conviction: 46
- Sentence: 3 years prison, 3 years supervised release, restitution, and forfeiture of properties.

### Insider Threat Indicators

- **Foreign Contacts:** Insiders worked with Mo (a naturalized US citizen) and five Chinese nationals
- **Mishandling of Sensitive Information:** Insiders provided sensitive company information
- **Anomalous Behavior:** Suspicious activity, including foreign national presence in proprietary cornfields.



### What Happened

- Mr. Mo and other employees of a subsidiary of a foreign company, the Beijing Dabeinong Technology Group, admitted traveling to the Midwest to take corn seed out of fields in Iowa and ship them to China for the purpose of reproducing their genetic traits.
- *Insiders* within US companies provided exact geo-coordinates of the fields growing the sensitive test seeds.
- Mo facilitated the purchase of nearby farmland at a cost of \$600,000 and later re-sold the property at a loss of \$300,000.
- US Company reported suspicious activity to the FBI which began an investigation.



### Impacts

- Trade Secret Theft and Economic Espionage contribute to the degradation of the US economy and impact national security.
- Theft of “in-bred corn” worth \$30-40 million and 5-8 years of research may severely impact several US companies whose Chinese revenues were in excess of \$1 billion

### Learn More

This case study examined a real-life insider threat. Your awareness is key to protecting our national security from insider threats like this one. Visit the Center for Development of Security Excellence's website (<http://www.cdse.edu>) for additional case studies, information, materials, and training or go directly to the Insider Threat Tool Kit at <http://www.cdse.edu/toolkits/insider/index.php>

If you SEE something, SAY something.