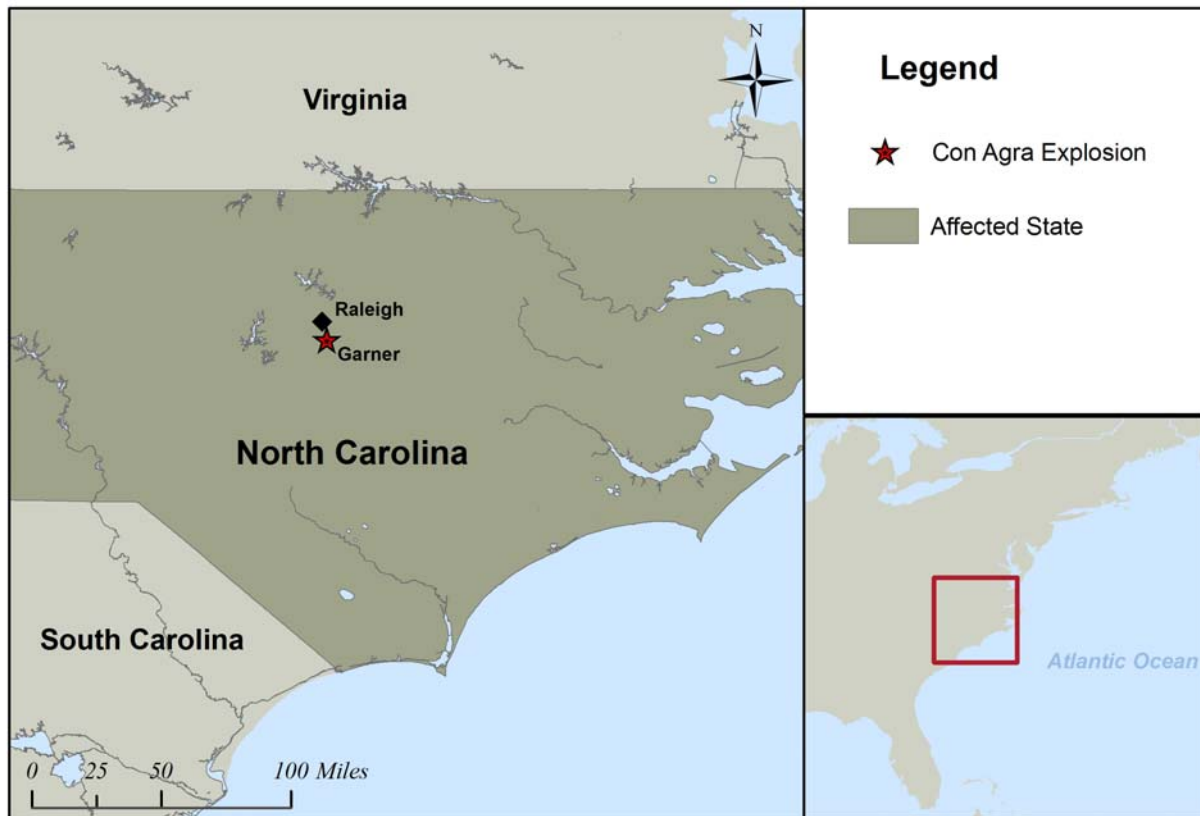


Event Date: 9 June 2009

Report Date: 24 June 2009

Explosion at ConAgra Food Plant, Garner, North Carolina

Type of Event:	Explosion at Food Plant
Date of Event:	09/06/2009
Location:	Garner, North Carolina
Number Killed:	3 people killed and 41 more injured
Damage Estimate:	-
Insured Loss Estimate:	-
Insured:	Include ConAgra
Carriers:	-



Summary

A large explosion caused severe damage at a ConAgra Foods processing plant in Garner, North Carolina on 9 June, killing three people. The explosion ripped through the 500,000-square-foot (46,000-square-metre) plant at 11.30 local time (15:30 UTC) while 300 workers were on duty. Officials said the explosion damaged half of the processing plant and that massive beams and heavy concrete pillars were unstable. At least three parts of the roof collapsed and an exterior wall crushed several cars parked next to the building. Officials at the US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives estimated damage to the building at significantly higher than USD1 million.

ConAgra confirmed that the damage from the blast forced the plant to close and they hope to resume output in August. However, while they aim to restart production in August, the packaging part of the plant will be closed for the foreseeable future, a company spokeswoman said. ConAgra added it expects its business interruption insurance to “substantially compensate” for any lost profits from the disruption.

Officials said 38 employees were injured in the blast and hospitalised, including four with critical burns. Three firefighters were also hospitalised for inhaling fumes from ammonia, which is used in the plant as a refrigerant. Four people were in critical condition at UNC Hospitals with burns covering between 40% and 60% of their bodies following the blast, health officials said.

Federal investigators said the blast was likely to have been ignited during the installation of a new natural gas-fired hot water system at the facility. The US Chemical Safety Board said a contractor clearing a natural gas line during the installation likely released a flammable cloud that ignited the explosion. However, investigators are yet to determine what ignited the gas and would not identify the contractor because the investigation is still being conducted. Reports said the plant was last inspected by the North Carolina Department of Labor for workplace safety last July and no violations were found.

ConAgra said it plans to continue paying workers indefinitely, even as the plant sits idle. The plant in Garner, just south of the state capital of Raleigh, employed 900 people in three shifts and made Slim Jim meat sticks, ConAgra said. The company has 25,000 employees worldwide.

Sources: CNN News, Associated Press, Reuters News, Agence France Presse, Charleston Gazette

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