



## Orston Neighbourhood Watch

### Rural Crime - Farming and other local businesses

Whilst crime levels locally are relatively low thieves are increasingly targeting rural areas. The main reasons being:

1. Rural means remote and therefore difficult to police
2. Less chance of thieves being seen or caught
3. Relaxed attitude to security

The main targets for thieves are: power tools /quad bikes /oil /red diesel /tractors /metal /machinery /trailers /4x4 vehicles / livestock

While thieves in the past have focused on targeting farms and businesses during broad daylight, the most common time of day for thieves to act is during the night (midnight – 6am). Thefts from farms or outbuildings appear to be the biggest problem, but garden sheds and garages have also proved tempting for thieves.

There is a close correlation between the price of commodities and the level of theft, particularly metal, oil /red diesel and livestock.

### Recommendations on basic security

Most of the measures that are recommended are either no-cost or low-cost and are down to good housekeeping.

- How your farm appears to a casual observer should not be underestimated and may affect whether that observer becomes a potential intruder.
- Properties and businesses which are perceived to be well maintained are significantly less likely to be subject to criminal activity.
- Good housekeeping significantly increases the chance of identifying something out of place or recent damage that might indicate an attempted or actual intrusion.
- Buildings, fences and other structures should be kept clean and in good repair, maintenance should be carried out promptly, and rubbish and debris should be cleaned away and removed where possible.
- It is good practice to maintain a list of key phone numbers, such as those of the local police and neighbouring farmers, so that you can quickly contact the appropriate people if the need arises.
- Make items of value more resistant to attack or more difficult to remove or damage
- Make sure that items capable of being used by an offender to commit a crime are not accessible, e.g. lifting gear, cutting tools.
- Restrict access to sites, buildings or parts of sites and buildings
- Making sure that an offender would be visible if they carried out the crime, e.g. use of security lighting /CCTV
- Anything that slows down an offender deters them by increasing their chance of being caught

- Secure and monitor those areas that are particularly sensitive, e.g. fertiliser and chemical stores or where other items of value are kept

### **Recommendation on security for vehicles, plant and machinery**

- Where possible hand-tools and power tools should be kept locked away when not in use and mobile plant and vehicles should be secured and immobilised.
- Commercially available 'off the shelf' vehicle immobilisers (electronic or physical) can be very effective and will certainly delay anyone wishing to make use of them in order to force an entry into a secure store.
- Vehicle keys should be secured when not in use. Where many keys are in use it is good practice to maintain a key list and routinely check that they can be accounted for
- Fit expensive machinery with Datatag ID under the CESAR scheme. A CESAR registered machine is 4 times less likely to be stolen and 6 times more likely to be recovered  
<http://www.cesarscheme.org/>

### **Security for fertilisers & chemicals**

- Storing fertiliser in an enclosed secure barn or covering fertiliser with a tarpaulin in an open-sided barn may seem basic but can be effective. Similarly, closing and locking a gate that gives access to fertiliser is cheap, quick and will deter offenders
- **Do not** store fertiliser where there is public access near to, or visible from, the public highway or in bags in the field overnight
- Consider using heavy agricultural machinery such as buckets, power harrows or other large machines to restrict direct vehicular access to stacks of sheeted fertiliser

### **Alarms and Intruder Detection Systems**

- An intruder detection system combined with an alarm is an effective deterrent and you are far less likely to be targeted if you have a professionally fitted and maintained alarm system
- Radio security systems – these are wire free systems that will alert you and warn of an intrusion on your property. <http://www.radiosecurity.co.uk/>
- Fog Cannon – Aims to protect businesses against night-time burglary and day-time robbery by filling the room with thick dense fog in seconds  
<http://www.protectglobal.co.uk/>

### **Animal protection**

The vast majority of animal crime offenders are not local. They often travel some distance to commit their crimes in rural areas.

Pay attention to people who you're unfamiliar with or suspicious of. Make a note of their appearance and the registration description of the vehicle they are using.

Travelling criminals sometimes use hire cars. If possible, make a note of any hire company details. All of this information can be a great help to police if there is an incident in your area. Don't judge a book by its cover. Criminals are often smart and well-dressed.

## **a) Livestock**

- Keep hedges, fences and gates in good repair to assist security and reduce visibility
- Be vigilant, make regular checks and encourage your neighbours to report the presence of strange vehicles
- If livestock is stolen, it is important that you can give police an accurate description
- Ear tags and horn brands can help to identify livestock. Freeze branding, hot branding or tattooing your postcode can also be carried out

## **b) Horses**

Criminals who target horses are not usually opportunist – they know what they are looking for and will come prepared.

Horse saddles and tack have been targeted over the past few years as the demand for this equipment has increased. Tack rooms and stables are not built with security in mind, and many owners do not like to use locks due to the risk of fire.

- Mark tack, saddles and accessories so that they are identifiable, and also less attractive to the thief
- Tack, saddles and accessories should be locked in the house and not left in or around the stables.
- Use freeze marking or hoof branding to make horses and ponies identifiable. A recent development is using a microchip implant placed under the animal's skin which can be read by a receiver.
- For future reference, take photographs of your animal and expensive equipment.

## **What about suspicious activity around the farm /business premises?**

Trust your instincts. If you think it is suspicious then it is worthy of further investigation. Try to make a note of the registration number and description of vehicle and people and contact your local police. If your call is urgent call 999, otherwise dial 101. Also, warn your neighbours.

This note is not exhaustive but attempts to serve as an aide memoire covering the basic strategies and technologies that can be used for rural crime prevention and includes information provided by the police, NFU, security companies and various crime prevention studies.

There is available a **police sponsored DVD entitled “Rural Crime – Closing the gate on criminality”**. If you wish to borrow this please contact Bob Clarke (Tel: 01949 850015).

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