

RURAL CRIME

KEEPING YOUR PROPERTY SAFE

INTRODUCTION

A farmer's property can be spread over many acres and as much of this is portable, it can be easy to steal.

While access to most farms makes total security impossible, much can be done to reduce the risks while not increasing the costs.

This booklet provides you with the advice and information to help keep your home, farm and possessions safe.



Home security

Protecting your home is just as important as protecting your farm equipment, barns and outbuildings.

There are ways to reduce the risk of crime by:

- Ensuring windows and doors are in good repair and locked – both when you're going out and at home.
 - Keeping objects considered valuable or interesting to a thief out of sight, for example, don't leave car keys on tables or on hooks near doors.
 - Leaving a light on inside your property or using a timer switch when it's dark or you're away from the farm at busy times – this will create the impression that someone is in your house.
 - Installing external lighting or repairing any lighting that is not working.
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Perimeter and outbuilding security

Security around the perimeter of your premises and outbuildings is also important and you should remember to:

- Restrict access to your farm with fences and hedges kept in good repair and regularly checked for breaches or weak spots.
- Keep gates locked and ensure they can't be lifted off their hinges.
- Use storage which reflects the value of your property; use a secondary secure storage such as a container if necessary.
- Use British Standard locks and high security closed shackle padlocks.
- Reinforce wooden doors and door frames, protect windows with grilles, bars or block them up completely.
- Keep outside lighting on a dusk to dawn circuit.
- Use building or perimeter alarms where possible. CCTV can provide surveillance on places not in view from the farmhouse.
- Lock buildings when not in use.
- Display prominent signs promoting crime prevention measures and ensure employees know that security measures are in place.



Tack

Tack is expensive and can be protected by:

- Keeping all tack items securely locked away; saddle locks are also available.
 - Marking your tack with letter stamps, engraving or microchipping so it is identifiable to you.
 - Taking photographs and keeping an inventory of your tack.
 - Registering your property free with the Immobilise National Property Register at www.immobilise.com.
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Quads, trailers and tools

These items are expensive and costly to replace and can be protected by:

- Securing or immobilising vehicles and equipment when not in use and removing keys from unattended cars, tractors and quad bikes.
- Avoiding leaving machinery in fields, particularly near roads.
- Keeping quad bikes and trailers in your most secure outbuilding; if kept outside put behind locked gates.
- Using ground anchor chains with anchor plates.
- Marking trailers, quad bikes, horseboxes and tools with your postcode or farm name.
- Listing your tools, together with serial numbers, and registering these on www.immobilise.com
- Fitting a tracker device or immobiliser to your vehicles.

REGISTER YOUR FARM VEHICLES

The Immobilise National Property Register (www.immobilise.com) is a free web based property register supported by Northumbria Police.

CESAR (www.cesarscheme.org) combines state of the art identification technology with a 24/7 secure and accredited database for police enquiries.

The National Plant & Equipment Register (www.ter-europe.org) allows five items to be registered free.

The DVLA offers an 'off-road register' for off-road quad bikes. No costs are involved and all vehicles are given a 'Q' prefix registration number. You are not issued with a tax disc.

Fuel theft

Fuel theft can occur from both domestic tanks and vehicles but you can help prevent this by using the following advice.



Domestic tanks

- Install good security lighting which illuminates your fuel tank.
 - Keep an inventory of how many litres you are using, so thefts are discovered immediately.
 - A wooden fence, trellis or wall can give significant protection and should be as close to the tank and as high as possible.
 - You can buy secure lockable containers for fuel tanks.
 - Restrict access to your property by keeping gates locked.
 - Alarms are available which send a text message to a mobile phone if the tank is tampered with.
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Vehicles

- Consider your business operating procedures and if possible leave vehicles empty overnight and only refuel in the morning.
- Park private, farm and agriculture vehicles under lighting, within view of any CCTV or close to your property.
- Park vehicles with the fuel cap closest to a wall, if this is not possible park vehicles close together to restrict access to the fuel tank.
- Check perimeter fences regularly and keep gates locked.



Livestock

Grazing animals can be targeted by thieves and should be treated like any other valuable, with crime prevention measures used where needed:

- Regularly check the fields where animals are grazing.
- Keep hedges, fences and gates in good repair - ditches form a natural barrier.
- Field gate hinges should be capped and locked securely to prevent easy removal.
- Use Eartags, horn brands, tattooing or paint marks to make animals more identifiable.
- Photographs should be taken of particularly valuable animals.



SCRAP METAL DEALERS

From 1 October 2013 mobile scrap dealers collecting in Northumberland must be licensed by Northumberland County Council under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013.

If a mobile collector is not licensed by Northumberland County Council, they cannot collect in the Northumberland area.

The licence is similar to a tax disc and must be displayed in the front of the vehicle visible to the public.

It is an offence for scrap metal collectors to give payment in cash and payments must be made by cheque or electronic transfer. There is no circumstance where cash may be paid for metal.

Mobile collectors must record all details of the metal received within a record book issued by Northumberland County Council.

For help in verifying licence holders, call Northumberland County Council on 0845 600 6400 and ask for the Licensing Department.

FARMWATCH

Farmers and members of the rural community can join the successful Northumbria Police Farmwatch scheme.

This is a network designed to alert residents to any criminal or suspicious activity, share crime prevention advice and make appeals for information.

By signing up to the scheme, you will be kept informed of crime in your area, receive a monthly news bulletin, crime prevention advice and appeals for information about suspicious people or vehicles.

If you need any further information about Farmwatch contact your Neighbourhood Policing Team on 101 or visit www.northumbria.police.uk



Contacting the Police

Call 101 to contact your local police

In an emergency always call 999

Other numbers

Crimestoppers - to report a crime or provide information anonymously call 0800 555 111 or visit www.crimestoppers-uk.org

Northumberland County Council - can be contacted on 0845 600 6400 or email ask@northumberland.gov.uk

Environment Agency

Telephone (24 hour service) 0800 807 066

Northumberland Wildlife Trust

Telephone 0191 284 6884 or email mail@northwt.org.uk

For crime prevention advice go to the Northumbria Police website at www.northumbria.police.uk

To contact the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner go to www.northumbria-pcc.gov.uk

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