

Working together to prevent rural crime



In association with:



Avon and Somerset Police
RURAL AFFAIRS UNIT



Preventing rural crime

Across the South West we are fortunate to live in open landscapes and rolling countryside, where the average crime rate is lower in rural areas than in towns and cities. Despite this, we can still suffer the financial, physical and emotional impact of rural crime.

Rural crime includes livestock theft and injury, theft of vehicles, fuel, tools and equipment and vandalism to farm buildings. We generally see an increase in thefts over the autumn and winter, as shorter days and darker evenings offer thieves and vandals more opportunity to operate under the cover of darkness. In contrast, during the spring and summer, farmers face the increased risk of trespassing and livestock worrying.

Thankfully, our rural communities are generally tight-knit and supportive, with neighbours looking out for one another and reporting anything unusual. There are also a number of steps you can take to protect your farm and land.

In this guide we look at:

- Livestock theft and injury
- Farm vehicles and machinery
- Farm buildings and equipment
- Working together to keep our communities safe

“Remain vigilant for suspicious activity and report incidents to the police. We recommend farmers, rural businesses and members of the community set up or join a local alert scheme and social media watch groups. This collaboration creates eyes and ears in rural locations and allows communities to support one another.”

Chris Collins, Devon and Cornwall Rural Affairs Team



Livestock theft and injury

Livestock theft and injury is a constant concern for many farmers. Following a few basic steps can really make a difference:

Keeping your livestock safe

- When checking your fields with livestock, keep an eye out for your hedges, fences and gates and ensure they're in good repair.
- Tagging your livestock? If so, you could also take a photo of your valuable animals. This can help track your livestock if the unthinkable happens.
- You could also search for other methods of marking stock such as, horn brands, freeze marking or tattooing to make your livestock more easily identifiable and unique should they be stolen.

Being alert and making others alert too

- Have you displayed clear, visible signs to remind owners to keep their dogs under control in fields containing livestock? If you would like to request a Cornish Mutual Dogs on Lead sign, please give us a call on 01872 277151.
- When you're busy with other tasks, having a remote gate alarm and hidden cameras can be a real benefit. The cameras can instantly alert you if someone unauthorised is driving vehicles across your land or access points, enabling you to ring the police to try and intercept criminals.

Making your land secure

- You can invert and cap your gate hinges to stop gates being removed. Did you know, you can also weld any gate nuts and threads to secure fixings?
- Public rights of way can be a confusing topic. For advice on Public Rights of Way and whether you can separate off footpaths from your livestock, visit www.cornishmutual.co.uk/news/trespassing-and-public-rights/

How do you report livestock worrying incidents?

Phone 101, or visit your local police team's website to report online. **In an Emergency, call 999.** To report an incident anonymously, contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.





Farm vehicles and machinery

Farm vehicles and machinery are essential for tasks on the farm and can be costly if stolen. To help keep your equipment safe, follow these tips:

Daily checks

- Once you've finished for the day, remember to remove all GPS guidance receivers, aerials or antenna globe on vehicles or machines.
- Have you removed your keys from the vehicle ignition? Are your keys in a safe place away from the vehicle?
- If you've finished using your trailer, reverse it up to a solid object, such as a wall, and place a bucket or something heavy over the hitch to prevent removal.

Making your vehicles trackable

- Top tip: Mark your vehicles and machinery with UV pen or engrave your postcode.
- Pen and paper at the ready. Record your machinery serial numbers and take photos. This can help the police track down your vehicle or machinery if stolen.
- If you haven't, make sure you register your vehicle with a security marking scheme, such as Datatag, CESAR or TER.
- You could also consider fitting isolating systems to all farm vehicles to prevent theft such as fuel and battery isolators.

Increasing the difficulty for thieves

- When you're not using your trailer, do you remove the wheels and lock the wheels away in a different place? If not, it's a good way to deter thieves from taking your trailer.
- To secure your machinery further, you could consider locking devices and fixed ground anchors or security posts.
- Simply fitting a battery-operated alarm can scare off thieves.

Keeping your premises secure

- Consider installing security lighting and CCTV with sensors and Passive Infra-Red (PIR) sensor alarms on the perimeter of the building or premise.
- Storing your farm vehicles away for winter? As well as locking the farm building, you could also cover the building windows to keep your vehicles hidden from view.

"Our farming communities often witness and are certainly affected by rural crime. Rural crimes can be reduced by the use of Watch schemes. By using your knowledge and awareness of what is happening on and around your land, you can help to reduce crime and deter criminals.

Please pass on all information about criminal activity, we need to know what is happening within our rural settings. Report all crime and suspicious incidents, often a piece of information can be that missing piece to the jigsaw."

PCSO Michael Storey, Avon and Somerset Rural Police Affairs Team





Farm buildings and equipment

Follow these basic steps to help protect your farm buildings and deter would-be thieves and vandals:

Restricting access

- Have an entrance without a gate? Concrete posts or tree stumps can work well as useful deterrent.
- When completing your daily farm checks, repair and replace damaged fencing or gates.
- Try and remember to lock your gates. If you have a public right of way, gates can be closed but must remain unlocked. You cannot restrict access to a public right of way.
- To help discourage thieves, you could install or replace security and warning notices.

Securing farm buildings

- Life on the farm is busy, but there are security systems that will monitor and notify you through text alert or video footage.
- Your farm dogs can give early warning signs of intruders, but please be aware that guard dogs must not be allowed to roam freely.
- To enhance your property security, installing security lighting and CCTV with Passive Infra-Red (PIR) sensor alarms on the perimeter can help.

Keeping your equipment safe

- Remember to keep your tools and equipment stored in a locked, and ideally, alarmed building.
- Have you recorded your power tool serial numbers and taken photos for reference? These can also be marked using a security marking scheme and help track equipment if stolen.

What about chemical and fuel storage?

- You can surround your fuel tanks with a locked metal cage and fit wheel clamps or hitch locks to fuel bowsers.
- You should also keep chemical storage areas locked at all times.

Working together to keep our communities safe

Look out for your neighbours and help to keep your community safe:

1. Consider setting up your own WhatsApp or social media group with other farmers to share local intelligence.
2. **Join your local Community Alert System** to receive free live information about incidents happening in your area.
 - Devon and Cornwall Alert: www.alerts.dc.police.uk
 - Dorset Alert: www.dorsetalert.co.uk
 - Somerset: www.avonandsomerset.police.uk
3. **Join your local Farm Watch Scheme** to be aware of what is happening on and around your land, helping to reduce rural and deter criminals.
 - Devon and Cornwall: www.devon-cornwall.police.uk/farmwatch
 - Dorset: www.dorset.police.uk/help-advice-crime-prevention/safety-in-your-community/watch-schemes/farm-watch/
 - Avon and Somerset: www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/apply/farm-watch/

“Reporting is a must because unless a crime or suspicious incident is reported and recorded it hasn’t happened and as the police we cannot begin to investigate, prevent or bid for resources to stop the problem happening again unless we have the reports to enable us to do this.”

PCSO Tom Balchin, Dorset Police Rural Crime Team



Always report a crime

- **In an emergency call 999.** A threat to life or seeing a crime take place is an emergency.
- **In a non-emergency call 101.** This is a 24/7 service. You can also report crimes online by visiting your local police team's website.
- **To report anonymously** you can contact Crimestoppers, an independent charity where you can pass information anonymously by calling 0800 555 111 or visiting www.crimestoppers-uk.org.

This guide has been produced by Cornish Mutual in association with the South West Regional Forces.



Devon & Cornwall
POLICE



Dorset Police
Rural Crime Team



Working in partnership to protect rural communities



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RURAL AFFAIRS UNIT



Cornish Mutual are happy to offer farming insurance help and guidance. To speak to one of our advisors please call or email us.

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