



Farm Security Guide: Preventing & Reporting Crime



Rural crime

Farming communities can be subject to a range of serious crimes and, as farms are family homes as well as thriving small businesses, these crimes can have a severe impact.

The NFU is the leading rural organisation raising the issue of rural crime to the highest levels of government, the police and local authorities. We are calling for a coordinated approach from everyone to address rural crime.

We are urging NFU members to report all rural crime to ensure police can investigate thoroughly. The police also keep records of all reported crime and this information goes into government statistics and reports. Farmers should also ensure they take suitable prevention measures.

This guide offers advice on how to report crime effectively and take measures to protect your farm business.

NFU members can seek further support from **NFU CallFirst** on **0370 8458458**.

The Rural Crime HUB offers advice and information on preventing and reporting rural crime.

Visit www.nfuonline/ruralcrimehub for more information.

Crime prevention

These **10 crime prevention tips** can help to reduce the opportunity for crime at your farm.

1. Secure your property (sometimes called **target hardening**) - *make your farm more resistant to attack and your farm equipment more difficult to remove or damage*

- Keep gates, doors and windows closed and locked wherever possible
- Fit better, stronger locks to doors and windows
- Replace an ordinary entrance door with one that is certified to an enhanced security standard
- Use thick laminated glass on vulnerable windows
- Fit security grilles or shutters for vulnerable openings such as rear ground floor doors and windows or those that can be accessed from a flat roof
- Use hitch locks, wheel clamps or ground anchors to prevent removal.

2. Remove targets - *ensure that a potential target is out of view*

Storing valuables out of sight and securely locked away will make it more difficult for a would-be thief to find them. This should help to make your farm less attractive to them as the more time they have to spend searching for items the greater the risk of being caught.

- Keep high value machinery and vehicles out of sight and away from public roads
- **Remove ignition keys from machinery and vehicles.**

3. Help yourself - *remove items that may help commit an offence*

- Avoid leaving tools and accessories in fields or gardens
- Chain up wheelie bins and ladders that could be used as a climbing aid to break in
- Clear away rubble and bricks that could be used to smash windows
- Don't leave a key in a back door, especially if it has a cat-flap
- Take spare car keys with you or secure them in an insurance rated safe
- Keep passwords hidden.

Securing firearms and shotguns

All NFU members who keep firearms or shotguns should be aware of the legislation they have to comply with and should ensure that they always observe all relevant requirements.

Firearms and shotguns should always be stored securely, and in accordance with any conditions in your licence or certificate. Never leave your weapon unsecured or unattended. Any missing weapons should be reported immediately to the police.

Before storing a firearm or shotgun, be sure it is unloaded and that any mechanism to rechamber ammunition is secured. For example, remove the bolt from the action of a rifle.

Ammunition should be stored and secured in separate ammunition storage and positioned away from any sources of ignition and away from any escape routes.

4. Reduce the pay off - *reduce the profit the criminal can make from the offence*

Property that is clearly and obviously marked is less attractive to a thief as it is more difficult to sell. Stolen property recovered by police, is more easily returned to its rightful owner if it is clearly marked with identifiable information.

- Use pens or a marking solution only visible under Ultraviolet (UV) light
- Mark or etch your property with your postcode
- Keep a list of serial numbers
- Don't buy property you suspect could be stolen
- Mark vehicles to make them unique, e.g. use large letters on the roof.

5. Control access – *restrict access to land and buildings*

- Lock vehicles, remove keys and keep secure
- Store quad bikes and trailers in secure buildings if possible
- Block-in smaller vehicles such as quad bikes with larger machinery
- Invert gate hinges to prevent easy removal. Make regular checks to see if they have been tampered with. Mark gates to make them unique to your farm.

Protect your land

Stopping criminals getting on to your land and property may be an obvious approach. Some methods put into practice include:

- digging ditches or earth bunds around the perimeter of a field or compound
- barriers in front of access points, such as logs, old machinery and even reinforced gates
- specialist barriers.

However, you should think carefully before constructing or installing such security measures. Remember to consider:

- land management and environmental designations e.g. Cross Compliance and conservation status
- environmental considerations e.g. Environment Agency permissions
- local planning policy.

6. Surveillance – *make sure offenders are visible when carrying out a crime*

This can be:

- Natural surveillance - modifying the surroundings to increase visibility (pruning or removing shrubbery, improving or installing lighting, changing the height of fences, etc.)
- Formal surveillance - using technology to deter criminals (alarm systems, CCTV systems, security lighting, trail cameras, etc.)
- Informal Surveillance – encouraging employees and the community to be vigilant and ensure they know what to do when they see a potential risk. Procedures should be put in place to advise individuals or staff what to do if they see anything suspicious.

7. Environmental change – *change the environment to reduce opportunities for committing crime*

A well-maintained farm yard where any theft of equipment, or fly-tipping, would be immediately obvious will help to discourage criminals.

- Be tidy
- Put tools away and keep storage areas locked so that items are not left on display. This not only reduces the chances of tools themselves being stolen, it also reduces the chances of an opportunist using your own tools to break into your house, barn or shed
- Keep fencing and hedging in good repair.

8. Rule setting - *change habits by setting rules and positioning signage in appropriate locations*

Knowing what you have and where it should be is also useful if thefts do occur, as you will be able to establish what is missing more quickly and easily. Consider preparing an inventory including photographs of valuables and for extra security store digital photos on a separate hard drive or cloud, rather than on a computer that may be stolen.

- Consider keeping a spare key with a trusted neighbour or family member rather than hiding it in a convenient place
- Introduce a rule that the last person entering or leaving should lock the door and remove the keys
- Inform visitors that they must report to reception or the office on arrival and that a site is closed between certain times, after which it should not be accessed.

Reporting rural crime - your essential guide

When reporting a rural crime, it is important to give the police as much information as possible. Information can include the following:

Vehicle & machinery theft:

- State that someone is stealing your vehicle or machine and if they are still there. If they have already left the scene, state which direction they went in
- Provide location details and time of incident e.g. what3words location, nearest road, specific local landmarks
- Describe what is being stolen e.g. make, model, registration, serial numbers, colour, identifying marks such as dents and bumps. If a tracking device is fitted please provide details for this. Mention if you have recent photographs of the stolen property
- Describe the suspect e.g. number of people involved, appearance, height, their behaviour, clothing
- Describe the suspect vehicle if they used one e.g. make, model, registration, colour, identifiable features
- Take photographs and videos if safe to do so
- Was any evidence left behind? For example, clothing, blood, fingerprints, cigarettes, drink cans? Do not disturb the crime scene if possible
- Was anything else damaged or stolen?
- Ensure you receive and make note of your incident reference number – this will be updated to a crime reference number needed for insurance.

Hare coursing

- State clearly someone is hare coursing. Explain that they are using dogs to pursue and kill hares
- State clearly if the coursers are subjecting you to other criminal activity, including harassment, assault, criminal damage, aggravated trespass or antisocial behaviour
- Provide location details e.g. what3words location, nearest road, specific local landmarks
- Describe the people involved e.g. are they in a group, their appearances, their behaviour
- Describe any equipment and dogs e.g. do they have a gun and if so, what kind? Do they have any dogs and if so, the breed, colour, size?
- Describe the suspect vehicle if they used one e.g. make, model, registration, colour, identifiable features and if possible, their direction of travel
- Take photographs or videos if safe to do so – consider using a dash cam
- Ensure you receive and make note of your incident reference number.

Livestock worrying:

- State 'livestock worrying' clearly then explain serious damage is being done to your livestock e.g. sheep, cows or goats due to a dog attacking, injuring or killing
- Provide location details e.g. what3words location, nearest road, specific local landmarks. If officers are dispatched, arrange to guide them to location if possible
- Describe the person in detail e.g. clothing, height, appearance, their behaviour
- Describe the dog in detail e.g. breed, size, its actions
- If they used a car describe their vehicle make, model, registration plate, colour, identifiable features and if possible, their direction of travel
- Take photographs or videos of the event as they occur if possible and safe to do so
- Preserve evidence for police e.g. do not remove anything from the scene and if raining or wet cover carcasses with waterproof material as forensic evidence may be available
- If a vet needs to attend, provide details of the vet so statements can be obtained later if required
- Ensure you receive and make note of your incident reference number
- If you do shoot the dog, **which must not be done unless you have no alternative**, you must inform police within 48 hours. There may be criminal or non-criminal consequences for you if you shoot a dog in this situation. More information can be provided by NFU CallFirst 0370 845 8458.

Fly-tipping:

Is it happening now?

- **Call 999**
 - **State that someone is fly-tipping** and that it is a criminal offence
 - **Describe the person** in detail e.g. clothing, height, appearance, their behaviour and actions
 - **Describe the suspect vehicle** if they used one e.g. make, model, colour, registration, identifiable features and if possible, their direction of travel
 - **What is being dumped?** Describe the type of waste and its quantity
 - **Provide location details**, including **what3words** location, nearest road, specific local landmarks or if it is in proximity to water
 - Ensure you receive and make note of your incident reference number.
- ## Has it already happened?

- **Small scale:** call your local authority
- **Large scale or hazardous:** call the Environment Agency
- State clearly that someone has fly-tipped on your property and that this is illegal
- Provide details about the date and time you discovered the waste
- Provide location details, including grid references, nearest road, specific local landmarks or if it is in proximity to water
- What has been dumped? Describe the waste and its quantity
- Take photographs or videos as evidence if safe to do so
- Ensure waste is disposed of safely and responsibly once the relevant authority have all the evidence.