



Advice on Rural Security



Keeping People Safe

You should consider the following security issues:

Access to your property

Restrict access to your yard, the fewer ways in the better, use locked gates or security posts if practicable.

Boundaries

Fencing, hedges and walls should be robust, well maintained and regularly checked. Find out about alarms and the latest technology, such as point-to-point electronic beams, to protect the perimeter of your property.



Lighting

Good lighting helps make a farmyard both safe and secure, use two levels, a working level and a lower security level, low energy units will keep the cost down.



Vehicles

Secure or immobilise vehicles, plant, trailers and equipment when not in use. Remove valuable ma-

chinery from fields overnight and keep items of value such as quads and cattle trailers in a securely locked shed, out of sight. Police operate a trailer marking scheme which is free of charge. Regular trailer marking days are held across Northern Ireland throughout the year. An electronic system such as Tracker and a CESAR vehicle marking system can help prevent thefts and help police return recovered items to their owner. Your insurance company may offer good discounts for using these. ALWAYS remove keys from parked vehicles.



Tools

Hand-tools, generators and smaller items are easily stolen if not locked away when not in use. Take steps to protect any item which could be resold by a thief. Engraving your house number and postcode on items can be a good deterrent.

Alarms/CCTV

Fit alarms to storage and other sheds. These could be permanent or wireless and use a 'bell-only' warning system or be connected to a phone line to let yourself or a monitoring company know the alarm has been activated. Consider installing a CCTV system to your yard, sheds and any other vulnerable areas. **Remember, technology only adds to good security and vigilance. It does not replace it.**

Property marking

Identify items as yours, engrave your postcode and house number on smaller tools etc, paint your herd

or farm name on trailers, record and keep all serial and model numbers. Fit quads, ride-on mowers etc with specialist marking kits.

Metal theft

Scrap metal and goods can be valuable to sell on and are therefore vulnerable to theft. This can result in the targeting of metal such as gates, tools, machine parts, cable, etc. from fields and farm sheds and yards. Use the checklist to help stop metal theft from your property:

- Remove or delay fitting metal such as copper tanks and copper pipes if a house is going to be empty
- Mark metal with tamper-proof stickers, UV spray or grease. Use your Postcode and house number if possible
- Use signs on vacant properties warning that metal has been marked or removed
- Consider using anti-climb paint, however, you may have to display signage
- Artificial lead (which is lower in resale value) is a good replacement in the event of a theft
- If appropriate install permanent or temporary CCTV and erect warning signs

Livestock Theft

Regularly check the fields where the stock are grazing; keep the hedges, fences and gates in good repair. Keep all sheds and stockyard gates closed and locked. Livestock identification is essential for proof of ownership. It can also serve as a deterrent to



thieves. Livestock identification could include ear tags, earmarks, tattooing, freeze branding or microchips (electronic identification). Tattooing is often the cheapest form of permanent identification and is suitable for all breeds of livestock. Take photographs or videos of valuable animals with the brand and/or ear tags clearly visible. Maintain accurate livestock records.

What else?

Think about the tools/equipment a thief would find most attractive about your farm or yard.

What can you do to make it difficult for them? It's as simple as this, why take your quad if they can find one that's easier to steal?

In all aspects of farm security good neighbourliness and vigilance are the most effective deterrent against crime.

So watch out for your neighbours and encourage them to watch out for you. Consider forming/joining a Neighbourhood Watch group.

Report anything suspicious immediately to the police, it's a free service. The police can't operate effectively without the help of the public.

What can you afford to lose? ... NOTHING!

- Where are your tools, quad, garden equipment, trailers and other expensive machinery, are they vulnerable to theft?
- Have you ever found people in your yard without a valid reason?
- Have you noticed strange vehicles on your property or in the neighbourhood?
- If you saw a strange vehicle in a neighbour's yard would you ignore it, or report it?

Farm Watch

Some PSNI Districts, working with local Policing and Community Safety Partnership groups, operate a Farm Watch scheme. Farm Watch offers specialised:

- Warning signage
- Property marking
- Crime prevention advice
- Updates from local police

To ask about support available in your area contact your local PSNI Crime Prevention Officer on 101.

Freeze out the cattle thieves

Freeze branding is a quick, humane and simple procedure that brands the last three digits of ear tags onto the animal, to protect against theft. The branding of cattle has a long history as a means of identification as well as preventing theft and, whilst hot-branding is no longer legal, the modern method uses branding irons super-cooled with dry ice to remove the pigment from the animal's skin and hair.

Firstly, the area to be marked is clipped and cleaned. Then, super chilled markers are placed on the skin and held in place for approximately 30 seconds. The extreme cold kills the pigmentation in the hair cells so that new hair grows back white, making the mark visible. The actual branding process does not cause the animal any pain but it may suffer some mild discomfort.

Freeze branding is the only visible deterrent for thieves and this is borne out by the fact that when cattle thefts do occur, thieves will take unmarked cattle in preference to those which are marked. The freeze branding of dairy cattle for identification purposes is increasingly common in the industry.

CALL THE POLICE

IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS CALL 999

101