



Farm security: Tips for protecting your property

Farms can be vulnerable places, with equipment and stock often left unattended or out of sight. But taking some simple steps can assist you to deter thieves and vandals and give police some assistance in finding your stolen goods and those responsible for taking them.

TOOL TIME FOR THIEVES

High-value portable tools such as electrical, cordless and quality hand tools can be carried from your farm easily. Marking these tools is probably the only method of ensuring their identification.

Engraving and DataDot technology, when used in conjunction with the National Equipment Register, can provide police with a means of identifying stolen gear.

KEEP GOOD RECORDS

Vehicles, including tractors and machinery, carry a Vehicle Identification Number (VIN). These are located on a VIN plate fixed to the chassis or cast into the engine block.

Serial numbers are common for high-value electronic goods including GPS, UHF or radios. Serial numbers are important to keep for both insurance and theft recovery purposes.

Keeping a register of equipment make and model details with serial numbers and even photographs can also be helpful if the equipment is stolen.

MOBILE PHONES

Mobile phones have a serial number known as an IEMI (International Mobile Equipment Identity) which means they can be identified if recovered. With many farmers owning an iPhone, one feature which should be switched on via settings, location services (scroll right to the bottom) and "Find my iPhone". This feature allows remote tracking and deletion of all data off the phone if it is stolen.

FUEL

Fuel is difficult to protect but locking on-farm fuel storage outlets and fill-caps is a good start. Coded padlocks provide a quick means of accessing the bowser without having to find keys. But vigilance is often the best deterrent with fuel-meter logs being good practice. Cameras can also be used to monitor the storage.

Fuel storages should be located where they can be easily monitored but not easily seen from a road.

LOCKING GATES

A locked gate is one of the best deterrents for thieves. A good quality padlock connecting a length of hardened steel chain will generally do the job. Make sure gate hinges are captive and not removable once the gate is in position to prevent the gate from being lifted-off at the non-locked end.

LOCKING SHEDS

Sheds should be locked where practical. Sheds with roller or sliding doors can be locked from the inside with pins or track locks allowing a smaller lockable door for regular access. Cameras can also be used to monitor your sheds.



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DON'T LEAVE KEYS IN VEHICLES

Nothing is easier and more convenient for thieves as driving your machinery onto the back of a truck, or simply driving it off the property. Consider a coded secure key cabinet to store the keys of the tractor, harvester, quad bikes or other farm vehicles.

UNATTENDED FARMS

Thieves often strike when you are away from your property which can leave you with a nasty surprise when you return from holidays. If you are planning on being away for an extended period arrange for a friend or neighbour to do regular checks of your farm.

GPS TRACKERS

GPS trackers use a mobile phone network to transmit the GPS location of the tracker, and the machine it is attached to, to a website which the owner can log into and locate the item. The trackers generally require a data SIM card to transmit the location, accurate to about 5m, back to the website.

BE ALERT

Keep an eye out for unusual vehicles in the area, jot down licence plate numbers and talk to neighbours so you can keep an eye out for each other.

INSURANCE

Although these steps can help to secure your farm property, thieves and vandals can still strike. Adequately insuring your farm can help get you back up and running should the unthinkable happen.

If you would like to review your insurance policies contact your local WFI Area Manager on 1300 934 934, or visit wfi.com.au.

Sources:

Kondinin Group, 2013, Research Report: Farm Security, safe is better than sorry, www.farmingahead.com.au/articles/1/research-reports

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