



SECURED BY DESIGN SECURITY ADVICE GUIDE

Farm Security and Machinery

The theft of farm machinery and other farm equipment in the UK is a growing concern and has a major impact on farmers and their families. Farms and the expensive equipment needed to run them have become a major target for thieves and organised criminals in the UK.

Some of the drivers to this crime relates to constraints in the supply of products, long lead in times for new equipment from manufacturers, the cost of raw materials and rising fuel costs.

Farms, by their nature, tend to be in remote locations with buildings spread over a wide area, multiple sites often with limited security and isolated from other neighbours which makes them an ideal target.

The cost of the theft can be devastating for farms, not to mention the inconvenience of replacing the equipment and the loss of time. To make matters worse thieves will often target the same farm again once the stolen equipment has been replaced with new products.

Below are a few simple precautions to deter thieves – remember the best security is a layered approach with the aim of making your property a less attractive target to thieves.



Security

The first step is to assess and review your farm's existing security. You know your farm better than anyone else so walk around and conduct a survey. Work from the outside boundaries of the farm inwards to the farmhouse and office, try to think about your land and property from the perspective of a potential thief. This is referred to as the "onion peeling principle".

There are 3 key areas where you can be most effective in reducing the likelihood of crime on your farm

DETER

Measures you can use to make it harder for a criminal to identify your farm as an easy target. For example, parking machinery out of sight or removing the keys and locking them in a safe or security cabinet.



DELAY

Measures you can use to make it more difficult for a criminal to physically break into your building or trespass on your land to take away your property. For example, maintaining fencing, hedges, ditches and gates around the farm building or using an approved hitch lock and wheel clamp on a livestock trailer.



DETECT

Measures that you can use to help detect if a criminal tries to break into your farm building or attempts to steal your property. For example, installing an alarm system to your farm office or CCTV covering your fuel tanks.



Look for any weaknesses in your security — like boundary fences, hedges and gates. Can the gates be locked and are you using a security rated lock or padlock?

Once you have identified any weakness through conducting the survey you will need to work towards improving the situation – if you know your fuel tanks are in a vulnerable location don't wait until you have been a victim before doing anything about it.

Please speak to your local police's rural crime team who may be able to assist with a survey and identify any crime trends in your local area.

The Farm Office

There are several factors to consider when securing the farm office.



Doors and windows

Are they secure – could they be updated? – All doors and windows shown on the Secured by Design (SBD) website can withstand attack methods commonly used by burglars.



Security shutters

Might be an option to deter and delay any intruders – SBD have several companies which specialise in this area with security rated products.



Alarms

If you have a house alarm system, consider either connecting the office to the system (this may depend on the location) or having a separate system for the farm office and outbuildings. For further information about alarms please visit the [National Police Chiefs' Council \(NPCC\) Security Systems Group](#) website.



Safes

You might want to consider a safe – there are several standards for safes and secure safe cabinets in the UK, which can be confusing when looking for the right product for your home or farm office. When buying a safe or secure cabinet you want to ensure that you make the correct choice for your circumstances and risk. For more details, please see our advice on safes and secure safe cabinets.

Watch out for vehicles

Criminals will drive onto your farm using a vehicle and make up a story as to why they are there if stopped and challenged. So, try to prevent vehicles from driving around your farm buildings looking at your security and anything to potentially steal either now or later.



You know when something's not right so be suspicious – if you can, safely record the details and let others know i.e. the police rural crime teams, farm watch or your local social media group. These vehicles and occupants are likely to have been on other farms in the locality.

Having a CCTV system covering the main access point on the farm can alert you to the presence of vehicles or record vital evidence when you are away from the farm.

Be on the lookout for drones, they are a modern way to observe your farm.

Report any incidents to your police rural crime team.



Remove keys

When not in use, all vehicles, plant and machinery should have their ignition keys removed and where possible, their immobilisers and or anti-theft devices activated.

Lock the keys in an approved secure key cabinet or safe on the farm office or at the farmhouse.



Fit a tracking system

Fit immobilisation and tracking systems – the use of tracking systems can notify the owner the machinery is being interfered with or moved, allowing for a prompt response to either prevent the theft or detain offenders. Anti-theft devices make your plant and machinery less attractive to the thief. SBD have several members which specialise in this area and can advise on the best system and fitting of the product for your machinery and plant type.

Secure machinery overnight

Preventing access isn't easy on a large farm site, so try to restrict the number of access roads onto the farm. Install gates and fix them to a sturdy metal or concrete post, any adjoining fence also needs to be substantial – a combination of a fence, hedge and ditch will help prevent access.



Keep the gates locked when possible and consider appropriate signage such as “private property”.

When left overnight, machinery should be secured in a barn, compound, or container if possible. Lock the doors at night using a heavy-duty SBD approved hasp and staple security padlock. Commercial security shutters are a good option to deter and delay any intruders – SBD have several companies which specialise in this area with security rated products

Quad Bikes and All-Terrain Vehicles are a major target for thieves and organised criminals in the UK so take steps to secure them.

Further advice is available in the [Rural section](#) of the SBD website.



The CESAR system

The [CESAR](#) System is the National security marking system of the Construction Equipment Association and Agricultural Engineers Association and has the aim of reducing plant and farm theft.



Secure your power tools

Secure tools vaults can be securely fixed within a pick-up or ATV type vehicle to prevent opportunist theft. Consider using a secure tool vault or cabinet to store your battery powered hand tools within any workshop area on the farm or store them in a secure room near the farmhouse or office overnight.

Security marking your power tools using an SBD recognised forensic asset marking is another highly effective, visible deterrent to thieves and an established method of reducing theft.



Fuel theft

Fuel theft is a significant and wide-ranging crime problem that affects many different areas, people and businesses across the UK, including farming.

Our [separate advice page](#) offers best practice for you to follow, alongside practical crime prevention methods and includes links to SBD member companies that can offer products designed to reduce the risk of fuel theft.



CCTV and lighting

Lighting is a good deterrent on a farm, especially in the long winter nights and around the barns where your equipment and vehicles are stored. Consider outside security lights controlled by an automatic time-switch or infra-red beams that react to heat or movement.

The design of any CCTV system should be co-ordinated with the lighting system on the farm to ensure that the quality of lighting is sufficient to support it and does not interfere with the picture quality.

Don't forget if the CCTV system is intended for prosecution, it should have a recording and storage capability of 31 days, using a format that is acceptable to the police for evidential purposes.



Fogging systems

Fogging systems work with your alarm system and fill a protected area with an impenetrable cloud of fog which reduces visibility and can fill the barn or outbuildings within seconds of a detection; it is difficult to steal what you cannot see.

For further information about alarms please visit the [National Police Chiefs' Council \(NPCC\) Security Systems Group](#) website.



Alarms

Alarm systems can be used in barns and outbuildings, however the type of system you install may be different from an office or home. We advise you use a reputable alarm company for advice and installation of the system.

To obtain information on reputable companies who supply and install security systems in your area, we recommend you contact the following Independent Inspectorate Bodies who will be able to supply you with these details.

[National Security Inspectorate \(NSI\)](#) [Security Systems and Alarm Inspection Board \(SSAIB\)](#)

Trailers and horseboxes

Theft of lightweight livestock and flatbed trailers and horse boxes has been growing – they are particularly vulnerable as they can be easily towed away unless security measures are taken.



Physical security

Try and make your trailer or horsebox unattractive to steal – if the thief must spend more time breaking the security products attached to the trailer, they may move on to an easier target.

Consider fitting a combination of several products such as a hitch lock anti-theft device, wheel clamps and locking wheel nuts. If your trailer is stored in a barn or on a hard concrete surface, an SBD approved ground anchor with a heavy duty chain with a high attack rating is another option to be considered.



Restrict access

If your trailer or horsebox is parked on the driveway, consider closing any gates at night or when you are not using it. If you don't have gates, a vehicle bollard will provide an extra visible deterrent.



Record details

Keep a record of serial numbers, chassis and model numbers and take note of any custom marks on the horsebox or trailer. Take colour photographs from several angles and additionally take videos with a smartphone if possible, including markings. If stolen, being able to track and identify your horsebox or trailer is vital to the police.



Security marking

Security marking your trailer or horsebox using an SBD recognised forensic asset marking is another highly effective, visible deterrent to thieves and an established method of reducing theft.



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Tracking Systems

Fit an SBD approved tracking device to the horsebox so it can be traced if stolen. SBD have several members which specialise in this area and can advise on the best system and fitting of the product.



Tack

Don't leave any tack in the horsebox overnight – store it away safely and be especially careful at events and shows.



Insurance

Check that you have adequate cover under your insurance for theft for your tack, including overnight shows away from home.

For further advice about any of the security tips listed above, or to find out how to buy police recognised security products, visit www.securedbydesign.com

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Official Police Security Initiative