



Rural Crime Prevention: Farm Security Techniques

Gary Holland

Community and Rural Development Introduction

The increasing frequency with which crimes are being committed in rural areas has transformed a relatively tranquil environment to one of growing anxiety. Crime in rural areas is essentially property-oriented. However, while property crimes are individually considered less serious than violent crimes (crimes against the person), on a collective basis, the magnitude of property crime in rural areas far outstrips the seriousness of violent crime.

Among the factors contributing to the increase in rural crime is the rise in affluence of rural citizens. Within the past few decades farm operations have come to include sophisticated tractors, combines, specialized tools, and equipment, and other easily fenceable items. The farm is an ideal target for theft due to the relative isolation of each operation. As a growing number of women pursue careers away from home, the farm site becomes particularly vulnerable.

While crime was once considered an urban problem, the tremendous mobility of American society today enhances a criminal's ability to cover great distances to strike and quickly get away. Also, the increase in the number of vehicles "just passing through" has resulted in little attention given to a stranger in a rural area who otherwise would have been scrutinized.

While rural citizens have little control over such broad technical and social changes, control can be exercised over one of the fundamental elements of rural crime - opportunity. Amateur and professional criminals alike are seeking opportunities to steal without being seen, without taking much time, and without making much noise.

Thus, concerned farmers and ranchers can take some simple steps to make theft more trouble than it's worth. By creating situations in which the potential thief is likely to be seen or heard, the criminal will probably look elsewhere for an easier target.

Preventing Theft of Farm Machinery

As a practical matter, farm machinery must often be left in the field overnight during busy times of the year. Machinery should be positioned to be visible from the homestead or from a neighbor's house when this is not possible, the machinery should be parked behind a hill or some trees out of sight from the road. Do not park machinery within easy access from a road.

Machinery to be left in the field overnight or longer should be disabled in some way to inhibit removal. Methods to disable machinery without much inconvenience to the farmer include:

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- 1) Remove the distributor cap, rotor, or battery.
- 2) Install a second ignition switch in a hidden location.
- 3) Chain and lock the front and rear wheels together.
- 4) Chain and lock equipment to a tree or other stationary object.

Although these steps will not stop the determined criminal, they will increase the amount of time and noise necessary to steal the equipment.

Smaller equipment should be kept in a neat, orderly, and well-organized storage area. The absence of a piece of equipment from its usual place will alert the farmer more quickly to a possible theft. An inventory list of equipment will also aid in keeping track of smaller items.

Put I.D. Numbers on Farm Equipment

Thefts of farm equipment can be discouraged when a permanent identification number is present. By using the standard system for marking farm equipment and machinery, criminals are warned that property recovered by police anywhere in the nation can be traced to the rightful owner.

To participate in the equipment I.D. system, contact the county sheriff to be assigned a property identification number. The number will be assigned to no one else, and only you and the local law enforcement personnel will have access to the number.

The identification number consists of ten letters and numbers arranged to tell law enforcement officers the state, county, and person to whom the equipment belongs. For example, equipment belonging to John Doe of Woodward County would be identified by an I.D. number such as "OK 0770306D." The letters OK designate the state of Oklahoma, 077 designates the 77th county in Oklahoma (Woodward), and 0306D designates the 306th person in Woodward County to be listed in the sheriff's office with the last name beginning with the letter "D."

Put I.D. Numbers In Standard Locations

Once an identification number has been assigned, impact die markers or a vibrating engraver can be used to mark the equipment. Most county sheriffs or county Farm Bureaus maintain marking kits for use at little or no charge. CAUTION: Impact die markers can be damaged if used on

Place ID number on the rear of the differential housing. The location will vary on different brands of tractors due to design. If access will not allow the mark to be placed on the center housing; place on right axle housing, on top, or rear.

Figure 1

TRACTOR

(On four-wheel drive tractors) Place ID number on right side frame rail; 12" from front.

Figure 2

4-WHEEL DRIVE

Place ID number on frame above pivot point of axle, not on axle, but on frame of machine.

Figure 3

COMBINE

Place ID number on corn head and grain table on right rear angle iron on the main frame.

Figure 4

CORN AND GRAIN HEAD

Place ID number on right side on top of tongue; 12" to rear of hitch pin.

Figure 5

ROUND BALER

Place ID number on front of frame, 12" from right.

Figure 6

SHREDDER

Place ID number on front of frame; 12" above hitch.

Figure 7

RAKE

Place ID number on front of frame above draw bar.

Figure 8

FORAGE HARVESTER

Place ID number on planter with tongue, on top of frame, 12" from right.

Figure 9

CORN PLANTER

Place ID number on front of frame, above draw bar.

Figure 10

SQUARE BALER

Place ID number on top of main beam; 12" from front.

Figure 11

PLOW

Place ID number on top of frame, above transport axle, on right side.

Figure 12

TANDEM DISC

Place ID number on top of main frame, 12" from right side.

Figure 13

FIELD CULTIVATOR

(On all equipment with non-removable tongues; manure spreaders, grain drills, auger wagon) Place ID number on right side on top of tongue; 12" to rear of hitch pin

Figure 14

GRINDER MIXER

(On 3 point equipment with tool bar) Place ID number on top of tool bar adjacent to right hitch pin.

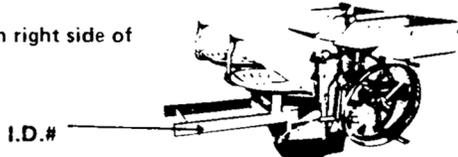
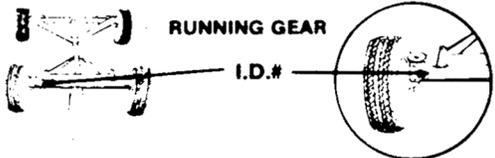
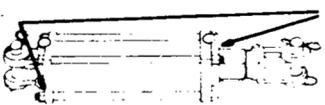
Figure 15

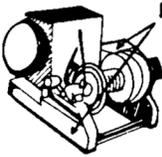
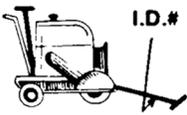
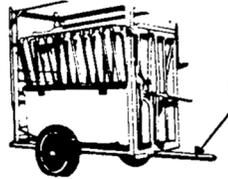
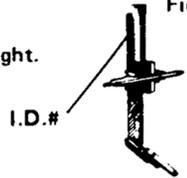
MOUNTED CORN PLANTER

Place ID number on all three-point hitches on frame adjacent to right side hitch pin.

Figure 16

3-POINT BLADE

<p>TOBACCO TRANSPLANTER Figure 17</p> <p>Place ID on right side of pin hitch</p> 
<p>Place ID number on right front of front axle. Figure 18</p> <p>RUNNING GEAR</p> 
<p>Place ID number on end cap of cylinder. Figure 19</p>  <p>HYDRAULIC CYLINDER</p>
<p>DOUBLE HANDLES Figure 20</p> <p>Place your ID marking on the under side of the right handle, half way between the top and bottom of the handle.</p> 
<p>SINGLE "T" HANDLE Figure 21</p> <p>Place your ID on the under side of the verticle handle, half way between the top and bottom of the handle.</p> 
<p>"U" SHAPED HANDLE Figure 22</p> <p>Place your ID on the under side of the right hand portion of the handle, approximately half way between the top and bottom of the handle.</p> 
<p>BUCKETS Figure 23</p> <p>Dragline — Put ID in vicinity of eye attachment. Clamshell — Put ID on top of the sheave frame. Hoe — Put ID on opposite side of serial plate, between hoe ears.</p> 
<p>PUMPS AND COMPRESSORS Figure 24</p> <p>Place your ID number in vicinity of the oil filler cap or if that is not practical, on the opposite side of the unit.</p> 

<p>MANUALLY GUIDED EQUIPMENT Figure 25</p> <p>Place your ID both on the shaft of the tool and on the motor of the equipment as shown.</p> 
<p>EQUIPMENT WITH COMPONENT PARTS Figure 26</p> <p>On multiple pieces of equipment such as pumps, hoists, compressors, etc. place the ID on each separate part.</p> <p>If unit is encased, mark cover as well.</p> 
<p>TRAILER "V" Type Trailer Hitch Figure 27</p> <p>Place your ID on the inside of the frame about halfway between the hitch and the body of the trailer.</p> 
<p>TRAILERS-single tongue Figure 28</p> <p>Place your ID on the under side of the single tongue, half way between the hitch and the body of the trailer.</p> 
<p>PORTABLE LOADING/CATCH CHUTES Figure 29</p> <p>Place ID on top of tongue, approximately 2 inches from frame.</p> 
<p>SADDLES (Western & English) Figure 30</p> <p>Place ID under left stirrup flap.</p> 
<p>TILLER Figure 31</p> <p>Place ID to rear of front frame between hitch pins.</p> 
<p>SUBSOILER Figure 32</p> <p>Place ID 2 inches from top on right.</p> 

MOWING MACHINE Figure 33

Place your ID directly under third arm (front).



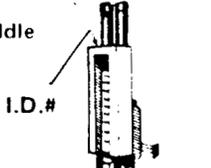
ROTARY MOWER Figure 34

Place your ID directly under third arm (front).



POST DRIVER Figure 35

Place ID on to rear of digger on top middle of frame.



ROUND BALE HAY MOVER Figure 36

Place ID directly under third arm in front.



Place ID number on right side frame rail. Figure 37

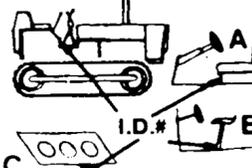


GARDEN TRACTOR

VEHICLES (Tractor, Trucks, Crawlers, etc.) Figure 38

Place your ID number below the drivers seat as close to the floorboards as convenient (see fig A & B)

If ID labels are being used the second marking should be placed under the dashboard, centered under the instrument panel. (see fig C)



NOTE: following items should be marked with hand engraver

ELECTRIC MOTORS Figure 39

Place your ID on the opposite side of the motor from the serial and or model number plate.



POWER HAND TOOLS (Drills, saws, grinders, etc.) Figure 40

Place your Identification Number (ID) on the tool away from the serial-model number plate.



case-hardened steel. Also, thin, cast aluminum could crack if impact die markers are used.)

A uniform marking system has been developed such that similar equipment and machinery can be marked in about the same locations (see Figures 1-40). However, the identification number should also be placed in a second, hidden location. Thus, if the identification number in the standard location is removed or destroyed, a positive means of identification will still exist.

As each piece of equipment and machinery is marked, the locations of the I.D. numbers should be listed on an inventory sheet along with the model and serial numbers. Be sure to store the inventory list in a safe place.

If a piece of equipment is sold, the purchaser should be advised of the locations of the I.D. number. The new owner should place his identification number below the existing number. Equipment can then be traced from one owner to another.

If equipment is to be permanently moved from one county to another, the sheriff's in both counties should be notified. The sheriff in the first county will forward the I.D. number to the new location as well as maintain the number in his files.

Advertise I.D. System Participation

Since the primary objective of the property identification program is to prevent theft, property owners should announce to potential thieves that equipment is marked with numbers the police can trace. Small vinyl decals are available at little cost which may be placed in highly visible locations on the equipment. Check with the county sheriff or alarm Bureau on how to obtain the decals.

Place I.D. Numbers In Grain And Hay

Grain and hay are particularly vulnerable to theft due to the lack of unique characteristics. However, identification confetti, tabs of paper $\frac{3}{8}$ " wide and $\frac{3}{4}$ " long printed with an identification number, can be quite effective in tracing stolen grain or hay to the rightful owner.

The confetti can be mixed with grain as it is being angled into the bin. Confetti can be mixed with hay as it is being baled. The paper and ink used to mark grain or hay should be easily digestible by animals. When the grain is ultimately be consumed by humans, the confetti can easily be removed during processing.

Identification confetti can be purchased from the Oklahoma Farm Bureau.

Identifying Livestock

Permanent identification of livestock can be accomplished through ear notching, branding, or tattooing (see OSU Extension Fact Sheet ANSI-3250, "Freeze Branding Cattle," and ANSI-3255, "Livestock Branding in Oklahoma"). Since all these methods provide identification which is difficult to alter, the live animal thief will be reluctant to take livestock so marked.

Fuel Tank Security

The rapidly increasing cost of gasoline and diesel fuel over the past few years has made the problem of fuel theft more serious. However, most fuel theft can be prevented with some simple, inexpensive methods.

Locking the fuel tank is obviously the most important preventive measure to be taken, but the type of lock chosen is critical to adequate security. A padlock with a $\frac{7}{16}$ " case hardened steel shackle is recommended. Also, the key to the padlock should not be removable unless the padlock is closed.

Locking the nozzle and hose will not prevent theft. The hose may be cut, which results in a total loss of fuel. The fuel tank cut-off valve should be locked instead. If the fuel tank has an electrically operated pump, the control switch should be in a location difficult to access by the potential thief but still convenient to the farmer or rancher.

Properly installed lighting can provide excellent security at low cost while improving safety and convenience to the farm operator. However, avoid placing the lights such that they shine directly onto the tanks. The effect could be to make the fuel tanks more visible to passersby.

An effective security light illuminates a wide area surrounding the fuel tank. Furthermore, lighting experts recommend a "soft" light which avoids a sharp contrast between darkness and the illuminated area.

When gasoline and diesel fuel are both stored on the farm, the tanks are ideally situated close together. To make identification of the fuels as difficult as possible for the thief, a color-code system can be used to identify the contents rather than labeling the fuel tanks.

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- Peters, John B. and Thomas Bean. "Livestock Security," Cooperative Extension Service - West Virginia University.
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