

RuralMatters

POLICE SCOTLAND

Keeping our Rural Communities Safe

August 2022



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Keeping our Rural Communities Safe

August 2022

Welcome to the August edition of Rural Matters.

A bi-monthly bulletin produced by the Police Scotland North East Division Crime Reduction Team aimed at keeping you up to date with what's happening in our countryside.

In this edition of Rural Matters

PC Lynn Black from the Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime looks at escalating fuel thefts.

Station Commander Craig Shand from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service explains how fires can be prevented in rural properties.

PC Mark Irvine examines the pitfalls of purchasing machinery online.

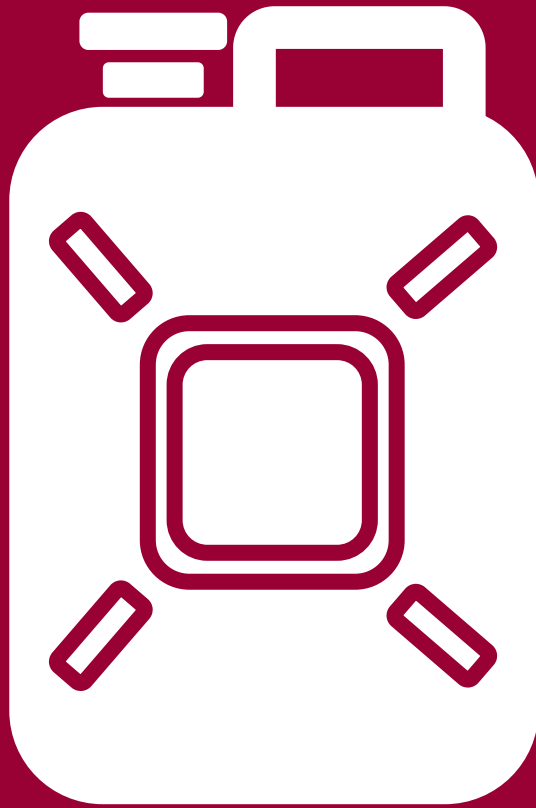
Inspector Claire Smith investigates domestic abuse in rural communities.

As well as a regular round-up of crime in the North East.

From the latest frauds and scams, to general security measures, each issue will bring you advice on how to keep your property safe.

Rural Crime across Scotland is increasing and criminals are using ever more sophisticated methods. By working in partnership we can make our countryside a safer place to live and work.

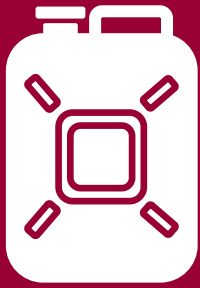




Fuel Theft

By PC Lynn Black,
Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime (SPARC)

The Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime (SPARC) and Police Scotland have seen a significant rise in fuel theft in recent months across the whole of Scotland.



Fuel Theft

By PC Lynn Black

Fuel Theft costs the rural economy in Scotland a disproportionate amount every year.

It was thought to be a seasonal crime, however over several years this has proved to be incorrect. It was also thought to be an opportunistic crime, but again, this is not necessarily the case.

In particular there are two main discernible areas for this type of theft. Domestic, particularly in rural locations and commercial often from forestry sites and HGV's.

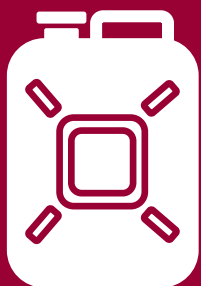
This crime affects many in rural communities especially those who may be vulnerable and causes significant costs for companies trying to operate in forestry sites and farms.

Crime groups will target oil companies and follow them for both domestic oil and red diesel to farms and rural properties as well as targeting forestry and windfarms.

Prevention Products to consider

The Oil Defender by Fuel Alarms Ltd – with SBD Accreditation
www.securedbydesign.com
www.fuelalarms.com

Watchman Oil Tank Alarm - Kingspan, Great Britain
www.kingspan.com



Fuel Theft

By PC Lynn Black

Fuel tank theft prevention

Position in a safe location

Many thieves use Google Maps to find satellite images of fuel tanks. Consider locating your tank behind a garage or shed and away from roads. Positioning it close to your business or home will ensure it's in clear view.

Remember to locate the tank away from any risk of obstruction and ensure its easily accessible for delivery drivers. Locate inside a security gate or cage - a good quality, robust fence or cage will help make life difficult for thieves.

Install an alarm

Consider fitting alarms to external gates surrounding your fuel tank or to the inside of a shed or outbuilding that is housing the tank.

Fit a fuel theft lock

Thieves often come armed with tools so it's worth investing in quality locks, locking fuel caps and anti-siphoning deterrents to slow down the criminals and reduce the likelihood of success. Locks with a CEN or BSEN 12320 Grade 6 classification indicate maximum security (Grade 1 is the least secure)

It's important to put measures in place to protect your fuel tank and make it extremely difficult for thieves to target your fuel.

Install outdoor security lighting

Positioning your tank in the bright light is an effective solution worth considering. With the majority of thieves striking at night, installing automatic security lighting will help stop criminals from targeting your fuel tank. Low energy dusk till dawn lights are a low-cost option to protect your expensive fuels and oils.

Install CCTV

Installing visible CCTV cameras on your premises can dissuade anyone from targeting your tank as well as catch a thief in the act, providing the police with the evidence required to bring justice to those who choose to ignore the deterrent.

Put up signage to highlight the security measures you've installed can help deter those up to no good. These could include: Private property, Keep out, Warning CCTV in Operation, All vehicles are left with minimum fuel, Security patrols in operation, All vehicles fitted with security devices etc

Here are a few more simple tips on how to protect your fuel tank from theft

<https://ukifda.org/consumers/oil-tank-security/>

With harvest now in full swing it's important to remember that equipment, vehicles and fuel left in fields overnight are an attractive proposition for thieves.

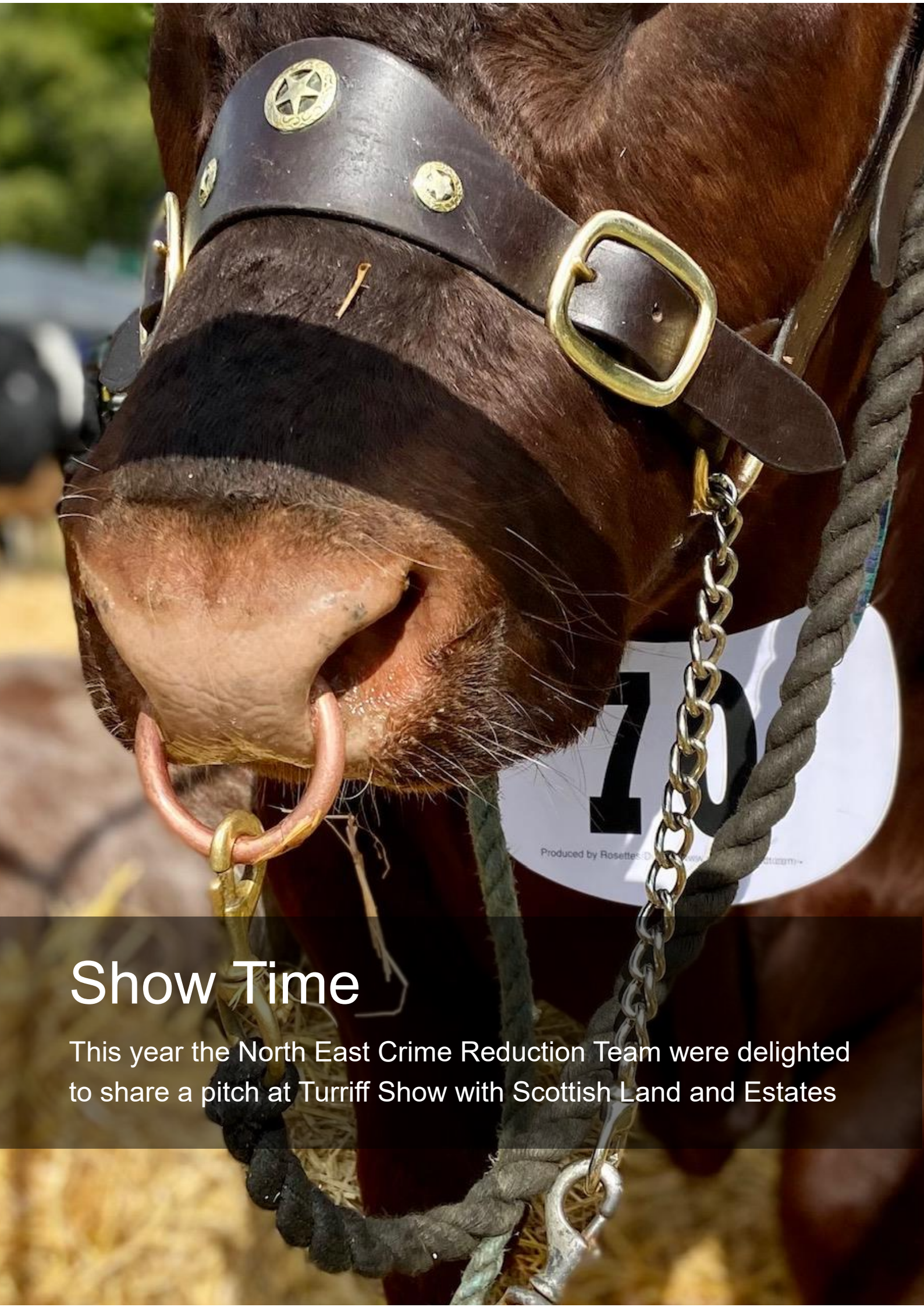


The uWatch Cube is accredited by SBD having achieved Police Preferred Specification. The Cube is a small, portable battery powered crime prevention device that notifies you when a crime is in progress via an alert to your smartphone.

The Cube is instantly deployable, does not require Wi-Fi or mains power and has a range of sensors, GPS and a day/night camera to keep an eye on the things in rural environments.

www.uwatch.co.uk





Show Time

This year the North East Crime Reduction Team were delighted to share a pitch at Turriff Show with Scottish Land and Estates

The North East Crime Reduction Team were on hand to answer questions over both days at Turriff Show. Common queries included what type of CCTV systems to go for, the strongest chains and padlocks available and fuel security.

Many thanks to Gammies for supplying a shiny new quad to enable us to demonstrate the latest security kit available from Pragmasis and Selecta DNA property marking.

CCTV advice

www.scotland.police.uk



SPARC

Secured By Design locks and chains

www.securityforbikes.com

Property marking

www.selectadna.co.uk



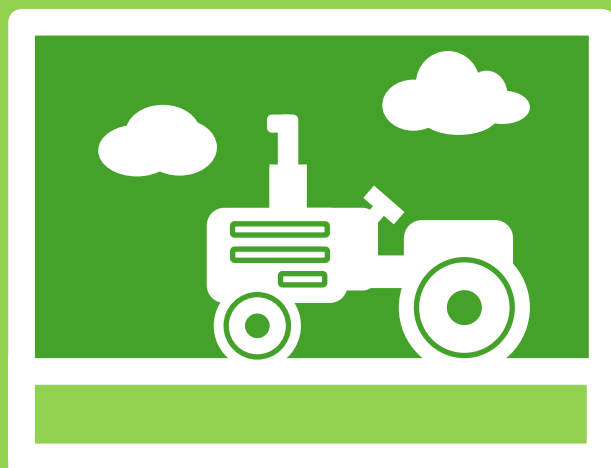
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**THIEVES
BEWARE**



SelectaDNA
Advanced Forensic Marking



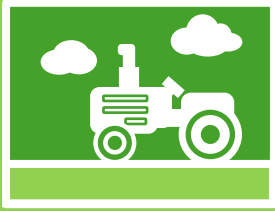


Machinery Fraud

By PC Mark Irvine,
North East Crime Reduction Team

In recent years we have seen an increase in fraudulent online companies selling discounted agricultural machinery with many victims in the Grampian area.

Victims have lost tens thousands of pounds handing over cash for a tractor or piece of equipment that doesn't exist.



Machinery Fraud

By PC Mark Irvine

The chance of buying at a bargain price in the current financial climate can be very appealing but there is always a risk involved in buying from an unknown source or without seeing the item first.

Always consider the following points before purchasing online.

If the equipment price seems too good to be true then it probably is – check the market value and find a legitimate reason the price is so low before progressing.

Research the equipment and see what its current market value is across different brands and locations of the country. Doing your research will help provide you with a more accurate price.

Ensure the seller has a valid address and telephone number. If possible, visit them at their home, or business premises. Be suspicious of anyone offering to meet halfway at a services or car park.

Using a search engine like Google can give you all sorts of information on a company including reviews about them. Sites like Trustpilot and Google reviews can reveal a lot about a company before you interact with them. Do not use this as your only method of checks, this is just another tool to use.

Check important, identifiable features such as serial numbers. Make sure they haven't been scratched away particularly on trailers and quad bike frames.

Give the vehicle a full inspection and test drive. Always check the documentation related to the machinery or vehicle. Check the details on the Vehicle Registration Cert (log book) with the tractor serial/chassis number.

Only buy from a trustworthy source. Buying from a trusted dealer can help to reduce the risk of being scammed and can also make it easier to get redress or have any problems rectified.

Many fraudulent companies will ask you to pay via bank transfer. If you do this and it turns out to be fraudulent you'll struggle to get your money back.

Some will even ask you to transfer funds into their bitcoin or other cryptocurrency wallet (and even provide all the instructions needed for you to do so). If you do there will be absolutely no way to get your cash back.

If you've paid by credit or debit card you do have a chance of getting your money back. Usually it makes most sense to pay by credit card. That way a dodgy company can't clear out your bank account and you'll also get more consumer protection.

Don't be rushed into the wrong decision. If you're unsure, walk away until you have carried out more research and checks.



Speak Up about Domestic Abuse in Rural Communities

By Inspector Claire Smith

Partnerships, Preventions & Interventions

**Domestic abuse is often perceived as an urban issue,
but it also occurs in rural communities.**

The problem is often made worse by a number of factors
like social and geographical isolation.



Speak Up about Domestic Abuse in Rural Communities

By Inspector Claire Smith

Partnerships, Preventions & Interventions

It has been found that domestic abuse in rural areas lasts, on average, 25% longer than in urban areas with a higher risk of harm.

Domestic abuse occurs when one person in a relationship attempts to dominate or control the other person. Domestic abuse is often thought of as physical violence, but it can also take the form of emotional, psychological or financial harm. Abusers will cut victims off from friends and family, and restrict access to money and transport amongst other things to leave victims feeling powerless and utterly reliant on them.

Victims may feel vulnerable seeking support from others in the community in fear that word may get back to the abuser. Indeed, those who the victim has confided in may find it hard to believe domestic abuse is happening.

Specialist services may be difficult to access in rural communities for similar reasons and the victim may worry that being visited at home by a support worker or Police will attract attention and gossip may get back to their abuser, making the situation worse for them in the long run. Likewise, it may be impossible for the victim to travel to get support from specialist services without their absence being noticed.

Communities are key to alleviating these problems for victims in rural areas, especially for people who may not be confident seeking Police assistance themselves. Being aware of

signs of domestic abuse is crucial. Has someone in your community become withdrawn, been seen with unexplained injuries, stopped getting in contact or are no longer engaging in community events or activities? It may be due to domestic abuse.

You can report suspected crimes to Police on 101 or anonymously by contacting Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Organisations like Grampian Women's Aid (www.grampian-womens-aid.com or 01224 593381) can also offer advice and support.

The Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme may be helpful to those who have concerns about an existing relationship or are entering into a new relationship.

The scheme is a way for people to ask the Police if someone has a history of domestic abuse if there is a concern that the individual may be abusive towards their partner. If Police checks show that the individual has a record of abusive behaviour; or there is other information to indicate someone you know is at risk, we will consider sharing this information with the person(s) best placed to protect the potential victim. The scheme aims to enable potential victims to make an informed choice on whether to continue the relationship, and provides further help and support to assist the potential victim when making that choice.

More information can be found at www.scotland.police.uk/secureforms/disclosure/.

Reduce the risk of fire

By Craig Shand

Station Commander, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service



Each year the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) responds to a number of fire-related incidents on farms and rural properties. With more than 9,000 farms in Scotland, SFRS wants to help reduce the risks of emergency incidents in rural settings such as crop, building or vehicle fires.

Farms are particularly vulnerable to wilful fire-raising with their isolated location, open boundaries, readily ignitable hay and straw stacks often making them easy targets.

Farmers can help by filling out the SFRS's Rural Risks Questionnaire, available at www.firescotland.gov.uk

In the event of responding to an emergency incident, firefighters will already be equipped with vital insight and intelligence on what risks are located where on a farm.

This questionnaire asks you to answer if there is easy access to supplies of water nearby - for example, hydrants, rivers, lochs or ponds; the type of farm you operate; if livestock is kept there and more.

In total, this will help Scotland's fire and rescue service crews make a more informed, tactical response to help bring incidents to a safe, positive outcome and can achieve significant reductions in the level of damage or loss sustained.

Here are just a few ways in which farmers can reduce the risk of fire:

Have appropriate safe distances for machinery – to allow machinery to cool down

Regularly maintain machinery - for example, meat producing equipment

Ensure you are disposing of rubbish in a safe environment, away from ignitable or hazardous material

Maintain a clean and tidy environment - blocking exits is a fire hazard

Implement fire safety training for yourself and employees

Enforce a no-smoking policy in and around farm or rural locations

Install and regularly check smoke alarms



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What's happening in Aberdeenshire

Tool Theft, Stonehaven

On 09/06/2022 power tools valued at over £2000 were stolen from a farm near Stonehaven.

Used Oil Theft, Inch

On 10/06/2022 80 litres of used cooking oil was stolen from a commercial property near to Inch. A man has been charged and reported to the Procurator Fiscal.

Quad Theft, Drumoak

On 13/06/2022 a yellow Suzuki quad bike was stolen from a rural property near Drumoak. The suspects are believed to have been driving a blue Ford Fiesta.

Diesel Theft, Banchory

On 13/06/2022 100 litres of white diesel was stolen from the fuel tank of a large Volvo articulated dump truck. Police are keen to speak with the occupants of a silver or grey Ford Transit seen in the area at the time.

Theft of Diesel and Tools, Strichen

On 21/06/2022 100 litres of red diesel, two chainsaws and a compressor valued at over £1000 were stolen from a farm near Strichen.

Suspicious incident near Fettercairn

On 22/06/2022 a gamekeeper and his family were disturbed during the night by persons outside their property looking at their ATV parked in the driveway.

Tool Theft, Fyvie

On 03/07/2022 a workshop near Fyvie was broken into and Makita and Stihl power tools valued at over £2000 stolen.

Quad Theft, Banchory

On 06/07/2022 a dark green Yamaha Kodiak 450cc quad bike was stolen from a rural property near Glassel, Banchory.

Chainsaw Theft, Glen Esk

On 31/07/2022 x4 chainsaws were stolen from a shed at a rural property in Glen Esk.

Fraudulent Vehicle Sale, Inverurie

On 01/08/2022 a farmer near Inverurie saw a tractor and excavator advertised for sale on a well known social media site. A price for both was agreed with the seller and the funds transferred. No delivery was made and the seller could not be contacted.

What's happening in Moray

Hare Coursing, Elgin

About 2050 hours on 09/06/22 three males each with a lurcher type dog were observed hare coursing in fields near to Elgin. A black and white lurcher type dog chased a hare across the field. The males were seen to be using a grey Toyota Rav 4.

Fencing Damaged, Elgin

Between 16 and 25/06 a length of fencing was deliberately cut at a farm near Elgin. The value of damage is in excess of £3000.

Quad Theft, Keith

On 19/07/2022 a red 500cc Honda quad bike valued at over £5000 was stolen from a farm near Keith. The quad was recovered a short time later and a male has been charged and reported.

Intended Theft, Keith

On 18/07/2022 a man was disturbed searching through commercial buildings near Keith. A report has been submitted.

Attempted Heating Oil Theft, Rothes

On 21/07/2022 sheds at a property near Rothes were broken into and attempts made to steal domestic heating oil from a tank within.

Poaching, Aberlour

On 07/08/2022 seven males were caught and charged with various poaching offences at the River Spey near Aberlour. The males have had all equipment confiscated and a report has been submitted.

SIGN UP TO



Rural Watch SCOTLAND

We aim to ALERT you to:



Local crimes and emerging trends that may impact you and your community



Information on safety, resilience and community wellbeing



Prevention tactics to protect your home and business



Approved "Secured by Design" products and recommendations



Advice on how to secure your property, equipment and machinery



The opportunity to share best practice



**Rural Watch
SCOTLAND**

Delivered by Neighbourhood Watch Scotland



SPARC

SCOTTISH PARTNERSHIP AGAINST RURAL CRIME

**Sign up to Alerts
to register**

www.ruralwatchscotland.co.uk



Neighbourhood Watch Scotland SCIO is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Charity Number: SC036510

Keeping Our Rural Communities Safe

Police Scotland's North East Division covers rural and urban areas in Moray, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City. The division has five territorial command areas which have their own dedicated Area Commander, who is responsible for the daily policing function. Each command area is served by a number of community policing teams whose activities are built around the needs of the local community. These teams respond to local calls and look for long term solutions to key issues. They are assisted by the division's Crime Reduction Unit who deliver against

Force and local priorities in a number of areas, including physical and social crime prevention, supporting and enhancing community engagement and creating and sustaining strong and effective partnership working.

Website

www.scotland.police.uk

Twitter

www.twitter.com/NorthEPolice

Facebook

[www.facebook.com/
NorthEastPoliceDivision](https://www.facebook.com/NorthEastPoliceDivision)

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