



Tuesday, 14 September 2010

## Making a Big Noise to Prevent Rural Crime

POLICE have been making a big noise in the North Devon countryside in the battle against rural crime. With an increase in thefts from farms and country locations this summer, officers have not only been visiting communities with advice, but with a loud attention-catching device to help protect their property.

Across North Devon and Torridge our rural communities remain very safe and enjoyable places to live. Recent crime figures show rural crime has continued to drop ever since April 2007. However there has recently been a slight increase in rural crime, with figures starting to rise from March 2010 and throughout the summer months.

Crime Prevention Officer Donna Woolway said: " We have noticed an increase in crimes where the farmer will have his property 'cased' during the day. If spotted, the driver of the vehicle will give them a poor excuse for being there or just ask a question and then drive off. The farmer is then discovering the next day that they have had something stolen. " She added "Items stolen have ranged from quad bikes, to trailers, power tools and engines. "

Any theft from farms can have a significant impact; Farmers are without vital farm equipment and also have the hassle of dealing with insurance companies and finding replacements. The cost of replacing a quad bike alone can be more than £3,500.

To help combat this rural theft, Donna and local police officers have been visiting rural communities promoting security awareness and advising on new technology and equipment to help people protect their property - including a new 110-decibel siren padlock alarm. This robust padlock will sound the attention-catching alarm if tampered with.

Siren Padlock alarms cost £12 each and are available by contacting Donna at the Crime Prevention Office (01271 335220).



Police are urging people living in rural areas to consider the security of their properties, stables, farm buildings, machinery, trailers and power tools.

They offer the following advice:

- Ensure that all farm equipment and tools are securely stored and locked away.
- Property mark all power tools and equipment using UV markers, engravers, paint or forensic property marking. Make a record of all equipment marked with serial, chassis and model numbers.
- Use security lighting to light up yards, lighting will help deter and detect a potential thief.
- Consider alarming outbuildings and sheds that store expensive equipment.
- Remove keys from quad bikes and other vehicles and store them away safely.
- Remain vigilant at all times. Look out for strange vehicles and people acting suspicious. Please try to take a registration number and descriptions and report this information to the Police immediately.
- Sign up to police community messaging to ensure that you are kept up to date with what is going on in your area.

For more information contact the crime prevention officer or visit [www.devon-cornwall.police.uk](http://www.devon-cornwall.police.uk).

To pass on any information and remain anonymous, call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.