# Rural Britain faces escalating crime crisis targeting farms



In rural Britain, a growing sense of unease is permeating the community as residents warn of an escalating "crime crisis" targeting farms and isolated properties. Organised gangs, primarily believed to be from Eastern Europe, have increasingly been linked to a series of thefts and acts of intimidation that are leaving locals feeling vulnerable and abandoned.

Recent research by the Countryside Alliance highlights that nearly one in five rural residents have contemplated leaving their homes due to rising fears over crime. These criminal operations are characterised by their precision and efficiency; they often target agricultural machinery and equipment, which locals report is swiftly transported out of the country. The gangs are thought to work alongside British accomplices, arriving in the UK for short periods to carry out these specific criminal activities before vanishing with their stolen goods.

Tim Bonner, chief executive of the Countryside Alliance, spoke to GB News about the pressing nature of the situation, stating, "Tackling crime and increasing police visibility is a major priority for people who live in the countryside." He emphasised that the awareness of rural crime issues in decision-making circles often does not align with the realities faced by those who inhabit these areas.

The crime wave has placed many farmers in a defensive posture, as they express frustration over their perception of inadequate police response times in rural settings. Mo Metcalf-Fisher, External Affairs Director for the Countryside Alliance, described the calculated nature of these operations, elucidating that there are organised groups travelling from Europe who collaborate with local accomplices to execute these crimes, stating that they "disappear into the night and they’re never seen again."

The efficiency with which these gangs operate presents significant hurdles for law enforcement, particularly in remote regions. Metcalf-Fisher underscored the delays that often occur in police response, noting instances in which farmers who called emergency services faced follow-up communications that came hours, or even the following day, after the report was made. In many cases, by that time, stolen machinery could already be headed overseas.

Alister Green from NFU Mutual Lincolnshire reported that many farmers have been compelled to adopt proactive security measures, including extensive gating, physical barriers, and CCTV systems equipped with remote sensing capabilities. Farmers instil vigilance in their operations by locking workshops and gates even during busy hours, and machinery is returned to secure yards rather than left exposed in fields. He remarked on the audacity of the criminals, saying they operate openly rather than in disguise, with some openly intimidating victims.

In addition, Simon Gadd, NFU Lincolnshire County Chair, highlighted that the repercussions of theft extend beyond the immediate loss of property. He explained the downtime that occurs when essential machinery, such as GPS systems from tractors, is stolen, which can render vehicles inoperable for weeks at critical times. He noted the financial burden this places on farmers, who often must rent replacements to continue their operations.

The political implications of this rising crime wave have not gone unnoticed. Lisa Smart, Liberal Democrat Home Affairs spokeswoman, articulated concern over what she perceives as a lack of adequate governmental response to rural crime, claiming, “Successive governments have failed to treat rural crime with the seriousness it deserves.” She cited illegal activities like hare coursing and equipment theft as being significant problems disrupting the tranquillity of rural life.

Further amplifying the sentiment, Lee Anderson, Reform UK MP for Ashfield, remarked on the nationwide nature of the issue, asserting, “Crime is no longer just a city issue — it’s now plaguing our countryside too.” He pointed to broader socio-economic challenges affecting rural communities and indicated that failure to address safety concerns could result in an accelerated exodus from countryside areas.

As these issues continue to evolve, the implications for rural communities are profound, instilling a heightened sense of vigilance among residents and prompting calls for comprehensive strategies to combat these criminal activities. With an increasing number of rural residents weighing their options to leave, the conversation surrounding the safety and security of Britain's countryside is becoming ever more urgent.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)