

Now initiative launched to help prevent rural crime in East Lothian

Police officers in East Lothian, alongside a range of partners, are encouraging members of the local community to take part in a new initiative to help prevent rural crime in their area.

Police Scotland is providing farming communities with a specially designed, waterproof sticker that can be displayed on tractors, excavators, and other rural machinery, encouraging police to stop them to verify ownership and permitted use during set hours where the machinery is not routinely used by the owners.

This will ensure anyone illegally in possession of the vehicle on the road network is more quickly identified and arrested.

In recent months, East Lothian has seen a rise in rural thefts compared with the same time period as last year.

Officers have worked alongside colleagues from the Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime (SPARC) and Northumbria, Durham and Cumbria Constabularies, to design the sticker, which can be offered to rural communities free of charge, either during engagement at their properties, from their local officers or when police attend local agricultural events.

Constable Lynn Black, from the National Rural, Acquisitive and

Business Crime Prevention Team, said: "We know that rural crime can have a significant impact on our rural communities.

"This initiative will help identify those responsible for crimes such as vehicle theft by allowing officers to carry out relevant checks on vehicles displaying the sticker and ensure anyone driving these are legally permitted to do so.

"Road policing officers and their local policing colleagues have been made aware of the scheme and throughout the course of their duties can carry out these checks and help address any concerns people have.

"In East Lothian, we are committed to tackling rural crime in all its forms and will continue to work alongside our key partners and the farming industry to explore any and all opportunities to reduce these offences and bring those responsible to justice."