

Police trained on VIN Chip technology as part of nation-wide rural crime crackdown

Police officers tackling rural crime across Scotland have taken part in new training as part of nation-wide crime crackdown.

Officers working within rural and acquisitive crime have been trained on VIN Chip technology to prevent and tackle thefts of agricultural machinery and equipment from farms.

This year alone, 34 quad bikes, 13 trailers and 10 agricultural vehicles and plant worth a total of £536,500 have been stolen from farms and rural premises across the country.

The most targeted areas being The Lothians and Scottish Borders.

Officers are encouraging farmers to take preventative steps to discourage criminals who prey on the rural communities.

Sergeant Laurent Semple, Rural, Acquisitive and Business Preventions Team, said: "We know that the theft of farming vehicles and machinery can have a significant financial impact.

"Quad bikes are one of the most depended on pieces of equipment on a farm and are often an attractive target for criminals, as they are easy to move and of high value when selling on.

"Often site or vehicle security is breached during hours of

darkness when there are very few potential witnesses, making it easier to make off with these items.

“The VIN Chip system provides an individual forensic footprint to a piece of equipment or vehicle which can be scanned from distance using devices carried by Police patrols and checks against registration databases to identify owner and if reported stolen. This allows roadside checks to be carried out quickly and stolen equipment recovered.

“Another preventative measure is by signing up to the Farm Watch scheme, which allows those involved to quickly be advised of offences or suspicious activity in their area, while recommending specific prevention measures that could be taken.

“Not only do we hope this will enhance our intelligence picture when investigating these incidents, but we are also looking to reduce the number of crimes occurring, with our ability to share information and make farms as uninviting as possible to serve as a deterrent.”

John Lally, CEO of VIN Chip, said: “We are proud to support Police Scotland in their efforts to tackle rural crime through the use of our VIN Chip technology.

“Agricultural theft is not just a financial loss, it’s a disruption to livelihoods and communities.

“By giving officers the tools to identify stolen machinery quickly and accurately, we’re helping to make rural areas less attractive to criminals and more resilient against organised theft.

“Collaboration like this is vital in keeping our farms and countryside secure.”

Further prevention advice –

Thieves are becoming more determined and bolder in their

pursuit of equipment and overcoming security such as padlocked buildings. They are increasingly well equipped with grinders and tools.

We advise multiple levels of security, following principles of Deter, Delay and Detect.

Deter – Forensic marking, vehicle decals, security lighting.

Delay – Secure farm gates, limit access, robust locks.

Detect – Trackers, CCTV, alarms.

Report suspicious, or out of the ordinary activity.

Sergeant Lauren Semple added: “I also want to send a clear message to organised crime groups that our rural communities are not a soft touch, and we will continue to work with key partners and the farming industry to explore new ways of reducing this kind of crime.

“By providing communities with advice on deterring criminality and increasing prevention methods, we can reduce opportunities for criminals.”