

On the winning side

The Construction Equipment Security and Registration Scheme, better known as Cesar, has come a long way since 2007 and shows what can be achieved in the fight against organised crime

PLANT THEFT

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To understand the influence of the Cesar scheme on the security of construction plant, it is necessary to take a step back to 2006, when the theft of plant was effectively seen as an occupational hazard on site.

"The CEA came to us to highlight the problem that machinery theft was averaging something like £1.5m per week, with related costs running at many millions more," says Metropolitan Police head of gangs and organised crime Commander Neil Basu. "At that time, the two phrases that you could often hear used were: 'one key fits all' and 'one stolen is another sold'. The CEA basically wanted to know what we, as the police, were going to do about it."

The response from the Metropolitan Police to tackle the problem of machinery theft was threefold and the Met made recommendations to the industry on that basis, he says: "These were to establish a police unit dedicated to tackling the problem of construction and agricultural machinery theft; create a database to capture all reported theft for the UK; and develop a universally accepted marking scheme, recognised by the industry, for the industry."

These recommendations were ultimately embraced by the industry and, working together with the Metropolitan Police Service, the CEA took up the challenge to become



The triangular CESAR stickers have helped prevent theft of plant

the owner of the proposed marking scheme. In a remarkably short time, November 2007, the first machine protected by the new scheme rolled off the production line at JCB World Headquarters. And so Cesar was born. Fast forward to today and more than 160,000 machines are protected by Cesar.

The funding necessary to form the dedicated Met Police Unit came from donations from another section of the

industry that could see the value of clamping down on theft: namely the insurance companies specialising in the arena of construction and agricultural machinery. So a year



Commander Neil Basu speaking at the Construction Equipment Association conference in September

later, in October 2008, the Plant and Agricultural National Intelligence Unit (PANIU) was formed and with that came a national database designed to capture all reported machinery thefts.

As the reputation of PANIU

grew, so too did the theft database, Commander Basu notes: "Accurate reporting of thefts was key so that the industry and the public had confidence in the police response. The reported plant theft figures peaked in October 2010, with an estimated



