

# A CHALLENGING TIME FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE

Rural Crime Report 2020



## INSIGHT

See what rural crime looks like across the country



## IMPACT

Understand how rural crime affects those living with it



## RESPONSE

Discover what we're doing to tackle the problem



**NFU Mutual**

# WORKING TOGETHER WE CAN BEAT RURAL CRIME



**Jim McLaren**  
Farmer and  
Chairman of  
NFU Mutual

There are few things more depressing for a farmer than to find the remains of sheep slaughtered in the field or a lorry load of fly-tipped waste in a gateway.

While the cost of rural crime continued to grow last year as organised criminals targeted the countryside, there are encouraging signs which demonstrate what can be achieved when we work together.

Increased use of tracking devices is helping police recover more stolen tractors. Information from farm watch groups is helping to bring criminals to justice. New technology is protecting our flocks.

During recent months, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought out the best in many people - and the worst in a few, with crime continuing to plague the countryside and hamper our efforts to keep the nation fed.

Without the efforts and funding that NFU Mutual has invested to tackle rural crime, along with the sharing of intelligence, I believe the cost would be far higher. This is why we will continue to fight crime alongside our members, using our expertise and support to protect their families, farms and livelihoods.



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# THE RISING COST OF RURAL CRIME





The cost of rural crime in 2019

**£54.3m**

NFU Mutual's theft claim figures reveal that rural crime cost the UK £54.3m in 2019. This is an increase of nearly 9% on the previous year, making it the highest cost recorded in eight years.

For the second year running, the sharp rise was driven by thefts of high-value tractors, quad bikes and other farm vehicles.

Livestock theft also increased in 2019, with organised gangs taking large numbers of sheep, which are thought to be entering the food chain illegally.

	Cost to the UK 2019	Cost to the UK 2018	Up or down	
	Agricultural vehicle theft			
	<b>£9.3m</b>	<b>£7.4m</b>	▲	Thieves are increasingly cloning the identity of tractors to make detection more difficult.
	Quad/ATV theft			
	<b>£3.1m</b>	<b>£2.6m</b>	▲	Quads and ATVs (All Terrain Vehicles) have no registration plates and are easy to transport, making them an easy target.
	Livestock theft			
	<b>£3.0m</b>	<b>£2.8m</b>	▲	Stock stolen for slaughter is being processed outside of regulated abattoirs before illegally entering the food chain.
	Land Rover Defender theft			
	<b>£2.1m</b>	<b>£1.6m</b>	▲	The iconic Land Rover Defender remains highly desirable to thieves stealing whole vehicles or parts for the black market.



## FIGHTING BACK

We offer discounts on agricultural vehicle policies when farm vehicles and machinery are fitted with Thatcham-approved tracking systems and immobilisers and CESAR marking.

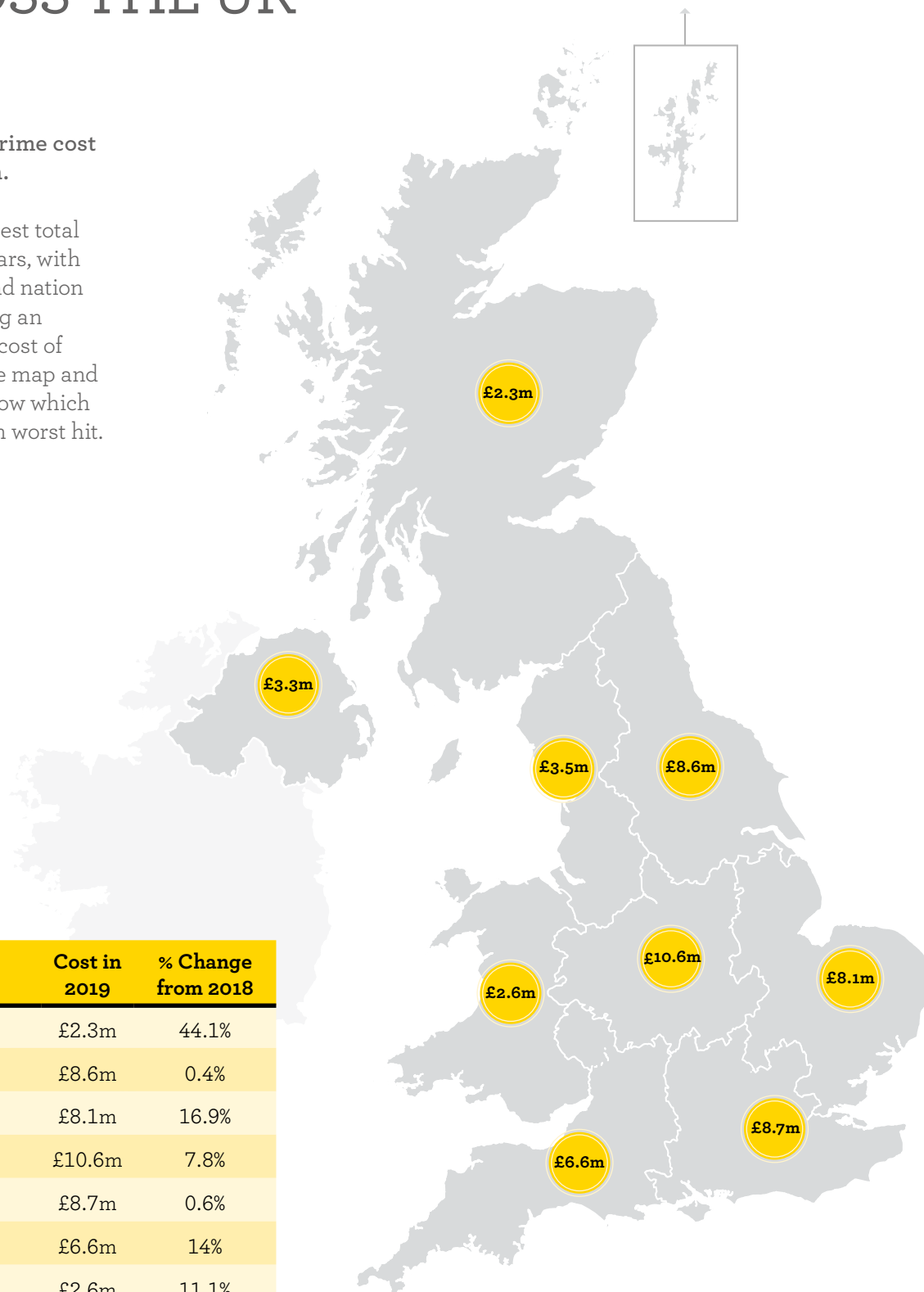
# RURAL CRIME ACROSS THE UK

In 2019 rural crime cost the UK £54.3m.

This is the highest total cost in eight years, with every region and nation of the UK seeing an increase in the cost of rural crime. The map and tables below show which areas have been worst hit.

Regions	Cost in 2019	% Change from 2018
Scotland	£2.3m	44.1%
North East	£8.6m	0.4%
East	£8.1m	16.9%
Midlands	£10.6m	7.8%
South East	£8.7m	0.6%
South West	£6.6m	14%
Wales	£2.6m	11.1%
North West	£3.5m	3.5%
Northern Ireland	£3.3m	18%

Estimates based on NFU Mutual claims statistics, costs rounded to the nearest £100,000



## THE 30 WORST AFFECTED COUNTIES

<b>Worst affected counties by cost</b>	<b>Cost in 2018</b>	<b>Cost in 2019</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Lincolnshire</b>	£2,558,435	£2,841,146	11.1%
<b>Essex</b>	£2,296,644	£2,738,873	19.3%
<b>North Yorkshire</b>	£1,790,062	£2,194,124	22.6%
<b>Cambridgeshire</b>	£1,722,185	£2,028,387	17.8%
<b>Kent</b>	£2,656,131	£1,825,576	-31.3%
<b>Lancashire</b>	£1,638,208	£1,798,116	9.8%
<b>Warwickshire</b>	£1,559,250	£1,691,786	8.5%
<b>Leicestershire</b>	£1,421,705	£1,689,554	18.8%
<b>Gloucestershire</b>	£1,709,511	£1,578,829	-7.6%
<b>Suffolk</b>	£1,118,882	£1,445,946	29.2%
<b>Shropshire</b>	£1,230,290	£1,412,222	14.8%
<b>West Yorkshire</b>	£1,526,966	£1,398,897	-8.4%
<b>Somerset</b>	£1,245,094	£1,382,387	11.0%
<b>Hampshire</b>	£1,128,231	£1,366,478	21.1%
<b>Norfolk</b>	£1,357,804	£1,260,881	-7.1%
<b>Northamptonshire</b>	£510,358	£1,196,717	134.5%
<b>County Antrim</b>	£805,680	£1,145,037	42.1%
<b>Herefordshire</b>	£1,055,329	£1,101,817	4.4%
<b>Wiltshire</b>	£527,774	£1,066,343	102.0%
<b>Nottinghamshire</b>	£691,675	£1,031,888	49.2%
<b>Hertfordshire</b>	£824,855	£1,026,599	24.5%
<b>Staffordshire</b>	£1,361,344	£988,083	-27.4%
<b>Derbyshire</b>	£1,245,631	£929,134	-25.4%
<b>Dorset</b>	£685,132	£881,939	28.7%
<b>West Midlands</b>	£830,750	£872,540	5.0%
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>	£871,738	£867,484	-0.5%
<b>West Sussex</b>	£464,119	£816,882	76.0%
<b>Worcestershire</b>	£1,008,621	£812,122	-19.5%
<b>Cumbria</b>	£721,223	£793,817	10.1%
<b>Oxfordshire</b>	£821,706	£792,041	-3.6%

The 30 worst affected counties by cost in 2019, based on NFU Mutual claims statistics



# CRIME UNDER CORONAVIRUS



**Rebecca  
Davidson**  
Rural Affairs  
Specialist

**The COVID-19 lockdown resulted in an initial reduction in thefts overall. But keen to cash in on the crisis, criminals continued to target the countryside and there were spikes in crimes such as livestock rustling.**

With farmers' minds focused on finding new ways to work safely while keeping the nation fed, the cost of livestock theft rose by nearly 15% year on year in April 2020 as rustlers took advantage of the high demand for food.

Farmers also had to deal with an influx of walkers on their land, and reports of dog attacks on farm animals also rose.

Incidents of fly-tipping waste increased in rural areas while local authority recycling centres were closed.

These crimes, compounded by the extra pressure of COVID-19, can seriously affect the wellbeing of farmers who work long hours and often in isolation.

Rural crime is like a wave as organised criminality spreads through our villages, farms and fells, affecting everyone in the countryside. Now, as the economic impact of the pandemic begins to bite, we are concerned that criminal activity could escalate – making it more important than ever that we work together to stem the tide.

## HOW WE HELPED IN 2020



### INVESTED £430,000

in schemes across the UK designed to tackle rural crime



### SPONSORED AGRICULTURAL VEHICLE THEFT UNIT

within the National Vehicle  
Crime Intelligence Service



### PARTNERED WITH SPARC

to promote crime  
prevention in Scotland



### SUPPORTED ANIMAL SHELTERS

that care for livestock  
recovered by police



### FUNDED

a new security advice service  
for our Directors and  
Officers policyholders



### SHARED

claims information and  
intelligence with police to  
tackle rural crime

# AGILE SECURITY APPROACH CAN BEAT RURAL CRIME

Protecting rural property today requires vigilance and an agile response.  
Thieves constantly change their targets and seek ways to defeat security measures.

As every farm and rural property is unique, each requires an individual response combining physical security measures and hi-tech devices together with strong community links to stay aware of crime trends.

Selecting the right combination from the three categories below and regularly updating your approach is the best way to keep ahead of rural thieves.



## PHYSICAL

Fit and use security gates on yard entrances

Secure workshops and chemical stores

Remove keys when not in use and lock up farm vehicles whenever possible

Use a specialist device such as a Quad Vice to lock down your quad

Keep tractor GPS equipment locked in a secure place when possible



## COMMUNITY

Join and participate in rural watch groups

Use local WhatsApp groups for immediate updates on suspicious activity

Get to know your local police rural crime team

Report crimes and suspicious sightings to police

Use the Crimestoppers number to report rural crimes anonymously



## TECHNOLOGY

Fit tracking devices to tractors and quads

Use CESAR vehicle marking to deter thieves and aid recoveries

Install CCTV to cover farm entrances and yards

Consider geo-fencing to alert you if vehicles go off the farm

Use burglar alarms with infra-red motion sensors

Consider protecting sheep with Tec-Tracer to deter rustlers



## EXPERT SECURITY RESPONSE

NFU Mutual has joined forces with Security Exchange Ltd to provide 'Security Response', a free-of-charge security service for its existing Directors and Officers insurance policyholders with AIG PrivateEdge. The service offers a telephone advice service, which can include on-the-ground support from experienced security consultants, advice on cost-effective and innovative security measures and rapid response in the event of a security incident.

# THE UK'S LEADING RURAL INSURER

NFU Mutual offers a wide range of insurance for farms, homes and businesses. These products are delivered through the agency network, as well as through a direct sales and service centre. With over 300 offices located in rural towns and villages throughout the UK, NFU Mutual has become part of the fabric of rural life and remains committed to serving the needs of people who visit, live or work in the countryside.

NFU Mutual is proud to deliver more than simply insurance. Tackling rural crime, making farming safer, supporting rural initiatives across the UK and helping to look after the environment are just some of the ways we do that.

For more information or to download a copy of this report visit:

**[nfumutual.co.uk/ruralcrime](https://nfumutual.co.uk/ruralcrime)**

Join in the conversation using **#ruralcrime**



To listen to the latest rural crime episode from our “Ahead Of The Field” podcast series, search for “NFU Mutual” in your smartphone podcast app.



Twitter: **@nfum**



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Instagram: **NFU\_Mutual**

NFU Mutual works closely with the police and farming unions to tackle rural crime.

For more information on the farming unions, visit:

NFU in England and Wales **[nfuonline.com](https://nfuonline.com)**

NFU Scotland **[nfus.org.uk](https://nfus.org.uk)**

Ulster Farmers Union **[ufuni.org](https://ufuni.org)**



**NFU Mutual**

**If you would like this document in large print,  
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