

Farm Talk

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By the time the incident would be reported, the livestock would have been sold to some unsuspecting customer miles and miles away.

There are other things farmers can do to protect themselves against being ripped off. Mark all equipment with identification numbers. Be suspicious of strange vehicles and strange people. Jot down license numbers of unfamiliar vehicles that show up in the driveway.

Beware of strangers asking directions for someone you've never heard of, or providing some other excuse for their presence. Notify law enforcement agencies when you plan to be away from the farm for a few days and ask them to keep an eye on things.

Talk with your neighbors and agree on what might be suspicious activity around your place. You hear those stories about how a moving van backed up to a house and loaded up everything in it while the unsuspecting neighbors pour iced tea for the perspiring movers.

There was a time when the neighborliness and isolation of rural America made these kinds of crimes very difficult. A stranger would be watched from the time he entered a community until he left.

Nowadays farmers have become accustomed to the invasion of outsiders, and they probably don't think much about it when a truck

rolls into the neighbor's place and loads up a tractor. And that's where some good old-fashioned suspicion comes in handy.

After all, how many tractors get a ride to town without the farmer-owner being there to supervise the trip? And how many farmers load cattle in the middle of the night or send a truckload of fertilizer back to town?

Another contributing factor to some of the farm burglaries around the country is a new kind of absentee farming. There used to be a family living on every farm and it was easy to keep track of things. But not a farmer may live many miles from the farm where he stores his equipment or bins his produce. Those kinds of vacant farms are easy targets for the professionals. They're in and out in a matter of minutes, taking whatever they want without a trace, and it may take the owner days or weeks to figure out he's been ripped off.

It may be a long time before the crime rate around the farm catches up to some of our large cities. But it is a growing factor — something that farmers must come to grips with.

Farmers discuss hog diseases

MILLERSVILLE — City Applegate of the Pennfield Corporation recently presented a program on Swine Disease Identification.

To best illustrate the Penn Manor Young Farmers meeting's topic, two sows and three young pigs were dissected to determine various diseases and reproduction problems. Among the diseases discussed were T.G.E., pseudorabies, and many others. The dissected sows were used to explain and identify the parts of reproductive system.

Applegate later outlined the signs to look for in healthy swine;

normal temperature, skin color and texture. It was stated that a swine producer should learn to identify healthy qualities of a normal pig.

University of Delaware's Dick Fowler relayed current information on swine selection, development and gilt breeding at the meeting. Fowler based his findings on the University of Delaware's swine housing system and explained new management improvements on breeds and growth rates through experimentation.

Tethering as an alternative to caging was also discussed. The

advantage of tethering maybe more economically feasible.

Another improvement in management is efficient record keeping. These records should include the number of sows; number of gilts; number of open animals; number bred; number recycling; number culled and number farrowing.

Agri-business meetings are presented at Penn Manor High School throughout the year. For further information, contact Jeff Hart, advisor of the Penn Manor Young Farmers, 717/872-5431.

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