

Trooper offers suggestions to improve farm security

(Continued from Page A1)

Trooper Romaine Edwards of the State Police Department in Lancaster, "so they are moving to the country."

Trooper Edwards, a safety education officer who is trained in crime prevention, said that thieves find the country a real haven. "They can get what they want in the country as well as in the city," she said.

Because most rural residents don't lock their doors or use other security measures, it's easier to steal in the country than in the city, Edwards said. "Farmers don't expect crime and don't take precautions against theft," she explained.

Prevention is the key to decreasing rural crime, Edwards said, and farmers should consider locking their doors and windows, using night lighting and marking their property with an identification number.

According to Trooper Edwards, four minutes is all that's needed to prevent a potential crime. "If you can delay a thief for four minutes," she said, "he will go away and go somewhere else."

Explaining this further, Edwards said that if a thief needs more than four minutes to break through a locked door or window, he will not take the time. The more time spent on trying to break the lock, the greater the chances are of getting caught.

What precautions can a farmer take against crime?

Most rural crimes occur because of unlocked doors and windows and the lack of adequate exterior lighting. Edwards suggested that all doors and windows be checked to see if locks are adequate. If not, they should be replaced.

Edwards recommended that a double cylinder dead bolt lock be

used on doors. For double-hung windows, a nail drilled through the first panel and slightly into the second provides extra security.

In addition to the house, locks should be mounted on farm shop doors and other buildings where valuable tools, farm equipment or other farm necessities are kept. Trooper Edwards stressed that it's not enough to have the locks in place; they should be used.

Exterior lighting is also important, Edwards said. "Lights should be thrown around," she said, "so there aren't too many dark corners. It is also a good idea to keep lights on in the barn at night."

In addition to locks and lighting, marking property with an identification number is helpful. This can be done through Operation Identification, a program available through local and State Police.

Through this program, an identification number is marked on all power and hand tools, removable tractor parts such as batteries and other items susceptible to theft. The driver's license number is usually used for identification, Edwards said, but a number can be obtained by the state if a driver's license is not available. A small fee will be required for this service.

To mark the number on farm property, an electric engraver is used. An engraver can be borrowed from the local or state police department free of charge. Once items are marked, the person is asked to bring a couple of the items to the police for verification of program participation. Crime watch stickers are then distributed and are to be hung on windows and doors.

The stickers, Edwards explained, warn a thief that the house

or farm is under the Operation Identification program. This, again, acts as a deterrent to potential crime.

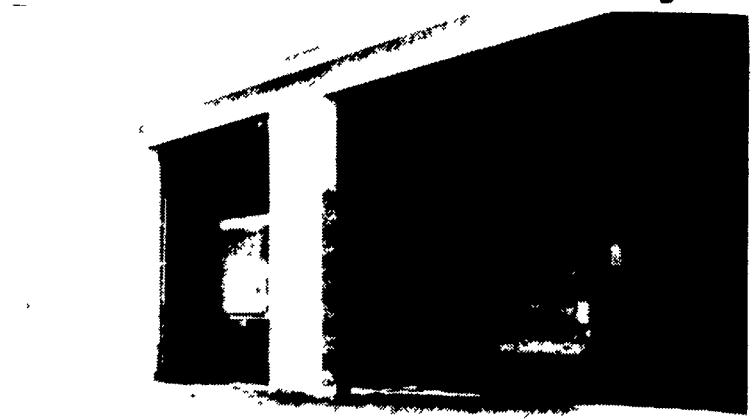
Edwards said that farm families can implement Neighborhood Crime Watch programs similar to those used in cities. Farmers can look out for each other, she said, and keep their eyes open for strange vehicles or unusual occurrences.

If a farmer needs to be away from his farm, he can request a "house check" from the State Police, Edwards said. This service is provided on a daily basis, three times a day. Neighbors can also help to keep an eye on things.

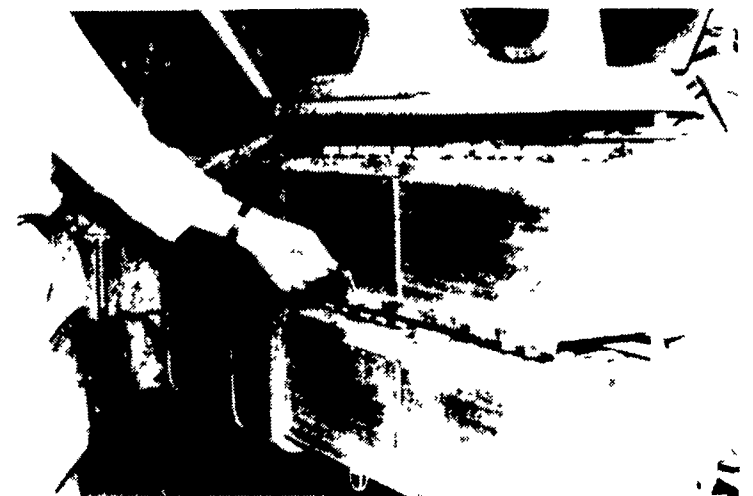
Other crime prevention methods, Edwards said, are to keep machinery housed at night and not out in open fields and to practice the use of "key control" where one person is in charge of keys. Guard dogs and burglar alarms are also helpful, she added.

With these various methods, Edwards explained, a farmer can deter the "run-of-the-mill" burglar who is trying to steal what anyone has. Professional burglars, she said, are more difficult to deter from crime because they usually know what they are looking for and will try harder to get it.

In any case, Trooper Edwards stressed that if a burglary is suspected to call the police immediately. "Don't take a chance in confronting the burglar," she said. "Property is not worth going to the hospital for."



An unlocked shed housing tools and machinery is an open invitation to crime.



To secure tractor batteries, replace the clip pin (as shown in photo) with a strong, quality lock.

From alarm systems to locks; How much security is needed?

BY LAURA ENGLAND

LANCASTER — Adding extra security measures to the home or farm can be as simple as installing locks on doors or as sophisticated as tailoring a complete burglary system to the premise.

But just how much security is needed?

According to Trooper Romaine Edwards of the Lancaster State Police, the amount of security needed is a personal choice, one involving the value of property and how much money one wants to spend.

"It depends on what you want," Trooper Edwards said. "You can do a lot with little money just by using things on the farm."

One of the simpler measures is to secure double hung windows with the use of a nail. The nail is pounded through one panel and slightly through the next, Edwards explained.

Another simple method is to add locks to doors. Bob Saxton, service supervisor for the Wizard Lock and Safe Company, Lancaster, said that all makes and models of locks are available, and a customer is "fixed up with exactly the one they want."

Saxton suggested that the most secure lock system consists of a double cylinder dead bolt lock complete with a 747 strike and a smoke detector. The dead bolt lock runs between \$30 to \$50, and the strike, which is placed in the door jam to add strength, is about \$9, Saxton said.

Two types of dead bolt locks can be used. One works with a key on the inside and outside and the other with just a key on the outside. The bolt itself, Saxton added, cannot be cut with a hacksaw.

Service mounted items such as chain locks and barricade locks can also be used, Saxton said, but they are less secure and easier to get through.

The more sophisticated security systems are complete burglary packages similar to that installed

by Commonwealth Security Systems of Lancaster. Ray Bear, vice president of sales, said systems can be placed in barns as well as houses or "anything that can be watched 24 hours a day."

A complete burglary system, Bear explained, begins with the control panel which is the heart of the system. The panel is responsible for monitoring the other security devices placed in the home. It is also equipped with a battery-operated reserve power source should the power be cut off to the house, Bear said.

The other security devices include door contacts, motion detectors, pressure mats, panic buttons and fire alarms. All are hooked up to the control panel.

With this burglary system, Bear said, the first line of defense is to cover all perimeters and install the security devices needed in an individual home. Once a system is installed - about three weeks time - the premise is watch 24 hours a day.

Bear explained that if a break-in is occurring or if a fire or emergency situation is present, the alarm will be sounded at Commonwealth Security's main office. There, a call will be placed to the police station to alert them of the problem.

The next step is to contact the person who owns the property. If this person cannot be reached, the security personnel will refer to an emergency call list, which could include the names of neighbors or relatives, until someone is contacted.

A complete security package, Bear said, runs between \$1,200 and \$1,600. The control panel, itself, is about \$500, door contacts are \$140 each, and motion detectors run between \$100 to \$250. An additional \$400 to \$600 is needed for a fire system.

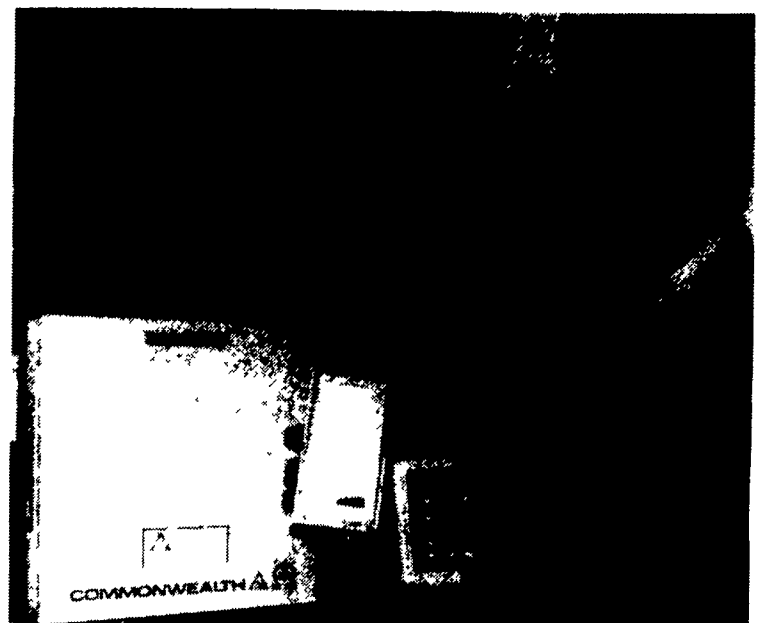
How much security is needed? Again, the decision is a personal matter, but it is one that Trooper Edwards said would be "money well spent."



All power and hand tools should be marked with an identification number. Tools with removable handles should be marked on both the handle and the head.



Adequate night lighting is important. Pole lights are a good source of nighttime protection.



Ray Bear, vice president of sales for Commonwealth Security Systems of Lancaster, displays, from left, the control panel, key pad and motion detector used in a complete burglary system.