

Fuel Tank Security

Fuel theft is the most common type of theft in the Agricultural Industry, which can vary from a nuisance factor to a substantial financial loss. With the current high price of fuel, thefts from fuel tanks and equipment have drastically increased.

- Lock your fuel tanks with heavy-duty, quality locks. Restricted/No duplicate key type locks are recommended. Place lockable fuel caps on equipment/machinery.
- Place above ground fuel tanks where it is visible from the shop, but concealed from the roadway. The further from the road, the better.
- Keep the area around pumps/tanks clear of equipment and other obstructions – don't provide cover for thieves.
- Close and lock the valves on all tanks when not in use and turn off power to pumps. Cover/insulate power connects so jumper cables can't be used to power the pump.
- Keep track of fuel purchases. Dip your tanks daily and monitor your fuel usage. Install a flow meter to supervise fuel use.
- Locate tanks close to an out-building and erect security fence/gates around the entire area.
- Security lights can provide good low-cost security for fuel tanks located within the shop/office area. Verify that the light doesn't blind you when looking at the tanks and doesn't create shadows, providing cover for criminals.

Protecting Livestock

- Regularly check your stock, pastures and fences – daily if possible, especially around sale or round up days.
- Keep fences and gates in good working repair. Gate hinges should have capping hinges so they cannot easily be removed. Keep gates closed and locked.
- Ditches and canals form a natural barrier. Cattle grids should be removable and locked out of position when not in use.

Reporting Crimes to Law Enforcement

Law enforcement needs to know about the crime, otherwise there is little they can do to prevent it. The criminals will get away with whatever they have done and will be encouraged to do it again. Law enforcement often finds that crimes occurring in a particular area can present a pattern. Once identified, specialized patrols and tactics are used to deal with it.

- **If a crime is in progress, call 911 immediately!** This includes any theft, trespassing, vandalism, dumping or suspicious activity that is occurring in your presence, or relayed to you from the field. Be ready to give the 911 operator the **incident location**, a description of **what is happening**, any **suspect/vehicle description**, any **injuries**, any **weapon** information, and a **direction of travel**.
- **If a crime is discovered and the suspects are not in the area**, call the Sheriff's Office **non-emergency number 561-688-3000**. The report may be taken over the phone, or a deputy will meet you at the scene. Once the initial report is filed, the **Agricultural Crimes Unit** will be notified. In some cases, a detective will respond directly to the scene.



Agricultural Crimes Unit

Sgt. Mark Bohne 561-996-1680
BohneM@pbso.org

Det. Michael Fincannon 561-996-1689
FincannonM@pbso.org

Det. David Alderman 561-992-1054
AldermanD@pbso.org

Det. Mary Hansen-Morency 561-992-1133
Hansen-MorencyM@pbso.org

Deputy Terry Senecal 561-996-1648
SenecalT@pbso.org

PBSO #0097 REV. 03/10

PALM BEACH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

AGRICULTURAL CRIME PREVENTION



Agricultural Crimes Unit



RIC L. BRADSHAW, SHERIFF
PALM BEACH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
3228 GUN CLUB ROAD
WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33406
(561) 688-3000 • www.pbso.org



FROM THE SHERIFF

In order to serve our agricultural community in an effective and helpful manner, we have put together this informative crime prevention brochure.

In it you will find important information on topics ranging from fuel tank security to securing the property boundary and protecting equipment. We hope you will find this information useful and will share it with other members of the agricultural community.

Agricultural Crime and How it Affects You

Within an 18-month period, the Agricultural Industry in Western Palm Beach County lost over \$2 million from equipment theft, product theft, vandalism, chemical theft, burglary and illegal trash dumping.

The Agricultural Industry operates on a thin line between success and failure. The escalating cost to the consumer for agricultural products is directly related to the losses sustained within the Agricultural Industry.

Palm Beach County Agriculture

- #1 Agricultural County in the State of Florida.
- #1 provider of winter sweet corn and beans in the U.S.
- Encompasses over 1,950 square miles, with 509,800 acres or 43% of the land used for agriculture.
 - Sugar cane 424,310 acres
 - Row crops 32,164 acres
 - Rice 28,000 acres
 - Nursery 6,015 acres
 - Citrus 13,974 acres
 - Pasture land 17,718 acres
 - Sod 9,976 acres



Agricultural Crime Prevention

In recent years, crime in the agricultural community has increased at an alarming rate because of the isolation of agricultural areas, the ease of access to most properties and the portable nature of equipment.

The Property Boundary

The boundary is the property/business owner's primary line of defense. The stronger and more noticeable it is, the greater the probability of deterring a crime.

- Secure locks and gates. Gates should be as strong as possible and locked with heavy-duty chains and padlocks. Keep fences and gates in good repair.
- Canals and ditches form a natural barrier.
- Put up "No Trespassing" signs at entry and exit points, and along heavily traveled roads bordering the property, alerting criminals that you are watchful of your property.
- Contact the **Agricultural Crimes Unit** and ask about the **AG WATCH Trespass Sign Program**. This program includes having a Trespass Enforcement Affidavit on file, an Agricultural Detective completing a security assessment of your property/business, and the eligibility to purchase Sheriff's Office AG WATCH Trespass signs.



Protecting Equipment

Outlying areas and remote sheds are more difficult to secure. Here are some things you can do to protect equipment/machinery:

- Position equipment where it cannot be seen from the roadway.
- Remove keys and if practical, disable the equipment by removing the distributor cap, rotor or battery.
- Equipment can also be secured with heavy chains and locks; chain equipment together or to other stationary objects.
- Maintain an accurate inventory of all equipment, including product/vehicle identification numbers (PIN/VIN), serial and model numbers, colors and descriptions. Photograph or video your equipment and store them with the inventory.
- Obtain and mark all your equipment with your personal owner applied number (OAN). You can apply for your OAN through the PBSO website at www.pbso.org or contact the **Agricultural Crimes Unit**. The OAN System allows law enforcement nationwide to identify stolen property and contact the owner.
- Mark the OAN in at least two places, one easily visible and another in a hidden location. Include marking easily removable parts and accessories.

