

Animal Activists – Secure Your Property

Those familiar with the tactics of hard-core animal rights activists suggest that farmers with livestock plan for potential trouble and accept the fact that isolation of rural farms not provide total protection. In fact, remote locations work in favor of extremists bent on criminal mischief or worse. So-called “direct actions” — opening cages at fur farms, gluing locks at butcher shops and setting fires — were popular with these groups in the 1970s and '80s. Since then, sporadic incidents have been reported.

More recent incidents have included “freeing” mink and foxes from fur farms and livestock farms being targeted for theft and vandalism. Farmers and ranchers who raise milk cows, veal calves, beef, hogs, chickens, turkeys, rabbits, mink and lab rats, to name a few, have all had individual instances where animals have been turned loose or facilities destroyed.

It is important for every farmer to stop and take time to think about the security measures they have — or don't have — in place. Law enforcement officials encourage farmers to be proactive and take steps to better protect their farm and livestock, even if they are not aware of any criminal activity in their neighborhood.”

Rural residents are encouraged to contact law enforcement agencies, including the FBI, when they see something out of the ordinary.

Suggestions for producers include:

- * Install motion-activated lights around buildings.
- * Install video cameras that also react to movement. Place two cameras, if possible, one to capture license plates, another higher to record faces and vehicles.
- * Develop good relationships with neighbors, sharing information about vacations and suspicious vehicles.
- * Vary your routines. Don't show up at your hog or turkey operation every day at 8 o'clock. Stop in at different times of the day.”
- * When you have visitors to your farm or ranch, be sure to have a guest sign-in book.
- * Never show ALL of your operation. Some areas are not necessary for the public to see.
- * Discretely take down license plate numbers of all visitors, not just those who refuse to give their full name or act suspicious. Even friends and neighbors could be innocently pumped for information from someone else... and, this too, creates a trail. According to the police...."ALL" license numbers need to be written down.
- * If someone refuses to give a name, do not allow admission to your property.
- * Immediately report the license number of anyone who refuses to give their full name or acts suspicious to your local law enforcement officers for future reference.
- * If your property is violated, turn your list of names in to the police.
- * All e-mails and letters of threat need to be kept and turned over to authorities.

Don't allow someone's extreme views to cause upset in your life and on your ranch.

Simple rules of care to protect your family and facilities.

- * Allow only scheduled tours.
- * Take down names.
- * Take down addresses.
- * Take down license plate numbers.
- * Light strategic areas.
- * Keep all correspondence of ill nature.

As we begin promoting National Emu Week across the nation, be sure to follow these simple rules, now and throughout the year.

You are running a business. Farming and raising animals is one of the oldest and most respected of businesses in the world. In our zest to promote don't lose sight of professionalism. People will respect you when you show them you are conscientious, caring and above all knowledgeable. We wish the best of farming and ranching to all of you.
