

Debate Pack

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Rural crime

1	Background	2
2	Parliamentary material	17
3	Media	27

Summary

There will be a Westminster Hall debate on rural crime on 27 February 2025.
The debate will be opened by Ben Maguire MP.

1 Background

A Westminster Hall debate on rural crime is scheduled for Thursday 27 February 2025, opened by Ben Maguire MP.

Rural crime is not defined by the government or in legislation. It generally relates to crime that is particularly prevalent in rural areas, such as:

- theft of farm equipment
- livestock theft
- wildlife offences
- fly tipping
- county lines

This debate pack contains background information on the prevalence and cost of rural crime and the police and government response to it. It also includes relevant Parliamentary and media material which Members might find useful in preparation for this debate.

1.1 Statistics on rural crime

Constituency and police force area statistics for rural crime are not routinely published. However, there are several sources of national data on rural crime available:

- The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs' (Defra's) [Communities and Households Statistics for Rural England Communities and Households Statistics for Rural England](#) (published September 2024) and accompanying [data tables](#) (download) show the differences in rural and urban crime rates in England.
- The [Rural Crime Report 2024](#) from the rural insurance provider the National Farmers Union Mutual Insurance Society (NFU Mutual), looks at trends in, and the cost of, rural theft in the UK in 2023. [Page 13](#) of the report looks at regional costs.
- The [Countryside Alliance's](#) annual Rural Crime Survey provides estimates of the concerns of rural communities and covers the UK: [Survey results for 2023](#) (PDF).

The [Rural Crime Report 2024](#) estimated that the cost of rural crime in the UK was £52.8m in 2023, an increase of 4.3% since 2022.¹ It found that the ten counties worst affected by the cost of rural crime in 2023 were Essex (£2.7m), Lincolnshire (£2.5m), Shropshire (£2.3m), Cambridgeshire (£2m), Kent (£1.8m), Staffordshire (£1.8m), Lancashire (£1.5m), North Yorkshire (£1.5m), Warwickshire (£1.4m) and Hampshire (£1.4m).²

Headline data from the [Defra report](#) (from page 38 onwards) show that in England:

- “The police recorded crime rate has been consistently lower in Predominantly Rural areas than in the rest of England.”
- “For the year ending March 2024, police recorded 59 crimes per 1,000 population (excluding fraud) in Rural areas and 99 crimes per 1,000 population in Urban areas outside of London.”
- “In Predominantly Rural areas, there were 3.4 more crimes per 1,000 population recorded in 2023/24 than in 2022/23 and in Predominantly Urban areas outside of London, there were 11.2 fewer crimes recorded per 1,000 population in 2023/24 than in 2022/23.”
- “In 2023/24, “violence without injury” was the most commonly recorded personal crime, with 9.4 crimes recorded per 1,000 people in Predominantly Rural areas (and 15.7 crimes per 1,000 people in Predominantly Urban areas outside of London).”
- “In 2023/24, there were 60 fewer knife-enabled offences recorded per 100,000 population in Predominantly Rural areas (49 offences per 100,000 population) than in Predominantly Urban areas (109 offences per 100,000 population).”
- “9% of all offences resulted in a charge or summons in Predominantly Rural areas, compared with 6% in Predominantly Urban areas.”

Further evidence in the report from the Crime Survey for England and Wales suggests that “Respondents in Rural areas generally had more positive responses to statements regarding the local police compared to those in Urban areas. People in Rural areas had a higher level of confidence in their local police compared to those in Urban areas (68% and 65%, respectively). Just 3% of respondents in Rural areas felt that the police were sufficiently visible through foot patrols, compared to 14% in Urban areas” ([page 61](#)).

¹ NFU Mutual, “[Rural Crime Report 2024](#)”, 1 August 2024, p7

² As above, p14

1.2

Rural crime types

Theft of farm equipment

The theft of farm equipment – including machinery, vehicles, GPS trackers and fuel – is one of the most common forms of rural crime.

In a survey of those living and working in the countryside conducted by the Countryside Alliance in 2023, 32% of respondents had been the victim of agricultural machinery theft whilst 25% of respondents had experienced theft from outbuildings in the previous year.³

The [Rural Crime Report 2024](#), published by NFU Mutual, estimated that the cost of GPS theft in 2023 had increased by 137% since 2022 to £4.2m and that the cost of quad bike and all-terrain vehicle theft had increased by 9% to £3.2m.⁴ The report also estimated that the cost of agricultural vehicle theft had decreased by 9% since 2022 to £10.7m.⁵

In July 2023, Parliament passed [the Equipment Theft \(Prevention\) Act 2023](#). This allows for the government to issue regulations via secondary legislation to establish a system in England and Wales to ensure commercial vehicles and equipment are marked with a unique identifier and registered at the point of sale. The intention of this would be to make it easier to identify and return stolen items and make it harder for stolen items to be resold on the second-hand market. The 2023 act started as a private members' bill, introduced by Greg Smith MP (Con), see [the Library briefing on the bill for more information](#).

The government has not yet utilised the power to issue regulations under the act. [The previous Conservative government consulted on what the regulations should cover](#), including proposals for agricultural equipment and GPS trackers to be forensically marked. The consultation closed in July 2023, and no outcome has been published.

[The current government has said](#) that it intends to introduce regulations under the act. On 13 January 2025, Dan Jarvis MP, Minister for Security, said that:

We will implement the Equipment Theft (Prevention) Act 2023, and we fully support its intention to tackle the theft and resale of high-value equipment, particularly for use in an agricultural setting. [...] We are currently considering the views of those who may be affected by the legislation, but we intend that the regulations will be in place by the summer.⁶

³ The Countryside Alliance, "[Rural Crime Survey 2023](#)" (PDF), accessed 10 February 2024

⁴ NFU Mutual, "[Rural Crime Report 2024](#)", 1 August 2024, p13

⁵ As above, p13

⁶ Hansard, [Equipment theft](#), 13 January 2025

[The National Farmers Union has urged the government to issue secondary legislation](#) under the 2023 act and to ensure the measures extend to GPS units.⁷

Livestock theft

Theft of livestock (particularly sheep rustling) is a key concern to farmers across the UK. For example, [160 sheep were stolen](#) from a farm in Northampton on 13 February 2025.⁸

The [Rural Crime Report 2024](#) estimated that the cost of livestock theft in 2023 was £2.7m. It noted that livestock theft had a “disruptive impact on breeding lines, as well as raising concerns about the welfare and treatment of stolen stock”. It added that in 2023 there were a number of incidents where farm animals were butchered in fields. Farmers are advised to join neighbourhood watch groups, to report incidents to the police and to install CCTV and security measures to help combat livestock theft. In 2024, NFU Mutual funded the UK’s first livestock theft officer at the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) National Rural Crime Unit.⁹

Livestock worrying

The [Rural Crime Report 2024](#) estimated that farm animals worth an estimated £2.4m were severely injured or killed in dog attacks in 2023, up nearly 30% compared to the previous year. However, [NFU Mutual reported](#) in February 2024 that this figure fell by just over a quarter to £1.8 million in 2024. Wales saw the biggest reduction in costs of dog attacks.¹⁰

Livestock worrying by dogs is covered by the [Dogs \(Protection of Livestock\) Act 1953 \(as amended\)](#). The act makes it an offence to be in charge of a dog that worries livestock on any agricultural land

In June 2021, the then government published a [press release](#) announcing that new measures to address livestock worrying were included in the [Animal Welfare \(Kept Animals\) Bill](#). The bill would have repealed the [Dogs \(Protection of Livestock\) Act 1953](#) and set out new, increased powers for the police and a broader scope of livestock species and locations covered under the legislation. The bill was carried over to the 2022-23 session but eventually withdrawn in May 2023, because of government concerns about ‘scope-creep’.

⁷ NFU, [NFU joins policing roundtable on tackling rural crime](#), 13 February 2025

⁸ Farmers Weekly, [Appeal after 160 sheep stolen from Northamptonshire farm](#), 19 February 2025

⁹ See 1.3 of this briefing for more information on the National Rural Crime Unit

¹⁰ Farmers Weekly, [Livestock worrying costs fall by 26%, NFU Mutual reveals](#), 20 February 2024

Subsequently, on 11 January 2024, the [Dogs \(Protection of Livestock\) \(Amendment\) Bill](#), a Private Members' [Presentation Bill](#), was introduced to the Commons by Dr Thérèse Coffey (Con) with government support. [The bill's explanatory notes](#) said that the proposals would increase the powers available to police for “gaining evidence and subsequently improve police enforcement”. The bill would also extend the places covered to include roads and paths. It would expand the scope of livestock covered to include camelids, such as llamas and alpacas. The legislation would extend to England and Wales only. The bill fell when Parliament was dissolved for the July 2024 general election.

In response to a PQ in November 2024, Home Office Minister, Dame Diana Johnson, said that the government recognised the distress livestock worrying can cause animals and their keepers. She said it was “considering the most effective ways to deliver our commitments in this area and will be setting out next steps in due course”.¹¹

Labour MP Joe Morris introduced a Private Members' Bill, [Dogs \(Protection of Livestock\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 2\) Bill](#), to the Commons in October 2024. This would change the law about the offence of livestock worrying, including changes to what constitutes an offence and increased powers for investigation of suspected offences. Second reading is scheduled for 25 April 2025.

Wildlife offences

[The National Wildlife Crime Unit defines wildlife crime](#) as “any action which contravenes current legislation governing the protection of the UK's wild animals and plants”. It lists the following as examples:

- hare coursing
- deer poaching
- fish poaching
- badger persecution – including baiting, snaring, shooting, and disturbance of setts
- bat persecution
- egg theft / collection
- bird of prey persecution – through poisoning, trapping, shooting, disturbance of nest and/or theft of chicks

The NPCC's [Rural and Wildlife Crime Strategy 2022-25](#) brought together both 'rural' and 'wildlife' crime types for the first time. The rationale for this was

¹¹ PQ 15548 [[Agricultural Machinery and Livestock: Theft](#)]. 29 November 2024

that “the two areas have cross cutting themes and opportunities which would benefit from a single strategy”. The strategy identified a number of wildlife priority areas including poaching and hare coursing, badger crime and raptor persecution.

The CrimeStoppers page on [Wildlife crime and how it affects rural communities](#) provides an overview of wildlife crimes, including highlighting links with organised crime. Wildlife Countryside Link publishes an annual report on wildlife crime in England and Wales. [Its latest report was published in 2024](#) (PDF).

There is [wide ranging legislation covering wildlife](#). This includes broad pieces of legislation such as the [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#) which lists protected species and banned actions, and [the Wild Mammals \(Protection\) Act 1996](#) which makes it an offence to inflict unnecessary suffering on wild mammals.

There is also legislation that protects specific species such as the [Protection of Badgers Act 1992](#), which banned badger baiting and makes it an offence to take, injure or kill a badger, inflict cruelty on it or interfere with a badger set. [The Hunting Act 2004](#) made it illegal to hunt a wild mammal with a dog (with some exceptions) and banned hare coursing (where hares are hunted with dogs). Other legislation such as [the Deer Act 1991](#) and [the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975](#) cover hunting and fishing activities, including deer and [fish poaching](#).

Concerns about links between hare coursing and other forms of crime resulted in the maximum penalties being increased to an unlimited fine and up to six months in prison under the [Police, Crime and Sentencing Act 2022](#).

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) publishes an [annual Birdcrime report](#), focusing on the illegal killing of birds of prey. It has called for improved legislation including the [licencing of drive grouse moors](#), similar to that introduced in Scotland in 2024. The [Game and Wildlife Conservancy Trust](#) has set out its concerns about the new legislation.

The NPCC lead on fox hunting, Chief Supt Matt Longman, has highlighted [weaknesses in the existing legislation](#) on hunting mammals with dogs, stating in February 2023 that “killing a fox with a pack of hounds is illegal, it’s wrong and it’s prolific in the UK”. The Labour government committed in its manifesto to ban trail hunting (where a fox scent trail is laid for hunt dogs to follow) over concerns it is used as cover for illegal hunting, and which according to the [Crown Prosecution Service](#) is used as a common defence in court. The government repeated in January 2025 that that it is [committed to ban trail hunting](#).

The [National Wildlife Crime Unit](#) highlights that in addition to badger baiting, badgers are killed in other ways such as snaring, gassing, poisoning, shooting and lamping. In addition, there are concerns about the welfare of dogs used in badger baiting, who often have serious wounds left untreated.

Fly tipping in rural areas

Fly-tipping can be a problem in rural communities. In September 2024 the campaign group, the Countryside Alliance said that following a survey, fly-tipping remained respondents' second-highest rural crime priority for police to tackle, behind only agricultural machinery theft. It found that among those who reported a crime having been committed against them, 37% had suffered from fly-tipping.¹²

A 2024 National Farmers' Union (NFU) survey found that more than half of respondents (54%) said they had experienced small-scale fly-tipping on their farm, while over a quarter (30%) said they had experienced large-scale fly-tipping.¹³

Between April 2022 and March 2023, local authorities in England dealt with 1.08 million fly-tipping incidents, a decrease of 1% from the 1.09 million reported in 2021/22. Most of these reported incidents were on public land, with the most common location being on highways (pavements and roads). Fly-tipping on private land is often underreported. In general this is because responsibility for dealing with fly-tipping on private land rests with private landowners and is not subject to mandatory data reporting.¹⁴

Fly-tipping can be prosecuted under several pieces of legislation. These include:

1. [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#), section 33, which prohibits the deposit of controlled waste (solid and liquid) or extractive waste in or on land except and in accordance with an environmental permit.
2. [Environmental Permitting \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2016](#), regulations 12 and 38. This is in relation to where someone has breached the requirement to have an environmental permit in place.
3. [Environmental Permitting \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2016](#), schedule 21, which relates to the dumping of waste in waters.

Local authorities have the discretion to choose whether to investigate such incidents on private land but have no obligation to clear fly-tipped waste. For further information see government guidance on [Fly-tipping: council responsibilities](#), March 2024.

If waste is fly-tipped on private land, then it is the landowner that must bear the cost of removing the fly-tipped rubbish. The Country Land and Business Association (CLA) stated that farmers and landowners pay on average £1,000

¹² Countryside Alliance, [Fly tipping remains a key issue for rural communities: Countryside Alliance Briefing Note](#), 3 September 2024

¹³ NFU, [Channel 4 highlights shocking impact of waste crime following NFU survey](#), 24 June 2024

¹⁴ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, [Fly-tipping statistics for England, 2022 to 2023](#), 13 March 2024

to remove such waste and in some cases have paid up to £100,000. The CLA has called for local authorities to help clear fly-tipping incidents on private as well as public land.¹⁵ The NFU has said that it needs to be made easier for the public to reduce, re-use and recycle waste. It has also called for “proportionate penalties as a deterrent to potential offenders, combined with more consistent enforcement measures”, to address fly-tipping issues.¹⁶

In a November 2024 Westminster Hall debate on fly-tipping, the government said that it would “continue to work with the National Farmers Union and others to promote and disseminate good practice on how to prevent fly-tipping on rural land.”¹⁷ The government also has proposals to introduce a [mandatory digital waste tracking service](#), from April 2026, with the aim of helping to track where waste ends up.

In January 2025, the Nature Minister also stated that the government was considering “how to most effectively [...] force fly-tippers and vandals to clean up the mess that they have created.”¹⁸

For further information about fly-tipping, enforcement, penalties and calls for change see Library briefing, [Fly-tipping: the illegal dumping of waste](#), December 2023.

County lines

County lines refers to networks of organised criminals involved in facilitating the supply and sale of illicit drugs across the UK. The government has defined county lines as:

a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.¹⁹

In 2024, the NPCC reported that [there were “6,600 active lines operating last year”](#), with Public Health England estimating that [each line generated £800,000 a year in criminal profits in 2022](#).²⁰

The Home Office’s [County Lines Programme data](#) estimated that 14,000 children were at risk or involved in child criminal exploitation in 2022 to 2023.

¹⁵ CLA, [Rural crime 2024: tackling fly-tipping](#), October 2024

¹⁶ NFU, [NFU calls for urgent action as fly-tipping cases remain high](#), 17 January 2024

¹⁷ [HC Deb 26 November 2024 c226WH](#)

¹⁸ UIN 25597 [[on Fly-tipping and Litter: Gloucester](#)], 21 January 2025

¹⁹ Home Office, [“Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines”](#), 20 October 2023

²⁰ NPCC, [“County Lines becoming more localised”](#), 5 November 2024 and Local Government Association, [“Tackling drug crime in local communities”](#), 14 April 2022

The Home Office stated that this figure is “likely to be a significant underestimate of the scale of the problem.”²¹

[Data released by the Office for National Statistics in January 2024](#) found that knife crime was rising faster in rural areas, with knife possession doubling in rural areas in the past decade.²² The Centre for Crime and Justice Studies has suggested that turf wars between competing county lines operations are “a significant factor in the rise of violence in rural areas.”²³

For more information on county lines, see the [Library briefing Misuse of drugs: regulation and enforcement](#) (section 2.3).

1.3

Policing responses to rural crime

Policing response to rural crime in England and Wales

It is an operational decision for chief officers to decide how best to respond to rural crime in their areas. Most police forces in England and Wales have a dedicated rural crime team, whilst national specialist units and strategies have been introduced to help improve the police’s response to rural crime.²⁴

UK National Wildlife Crime Unit

The [National Wildlife Crime Unit](#) was launched in 2006 and works to prevent and detect wildlife crime across the UK by providing “intelligence and direct assistance to individual police forces and other UK law enforcement agencies, including providing specialist support that allows warranted Officers to investigate wildlife crime.”²⁵

According to the [Wildlife Crime: No minor offence](#) (PDF) report published by the Wildlife and Countryside Link in 2023, the National Wildlife Crime Unit “has an impressive track record of spearheading successful wildlife crime reduction efforts, but is hampered by a funding settlement that is only ever issued on a temporary basis by the Home Office and Defra.”²⁶

²¹ Home Office, “[County Lines Programme data](#)”, 16 December 2024

²² Office for National Statistics, “[Crime in England and Wales: year ending September 2023](#)”, 25 January 2024, para 4

²³ Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, “[Young people, violence and knives – revisiting the evidence and policy discussions](#)”, 26 November 2018

²⁴ Examples of dedicated rural crime teams include [Staffordshire Police’s County Proactive and Rural Team](#), [Devon and Cornwall Police Rural Affairs Team](#), [Humberside Police’s Rural Task Force](#), [Essex Police’s Rural Engagement Team](#) and [Lancashire Constabulary’s Rural Task Force](#).

²⁵ UIN HLWS547 [on [Future Funding of National Wildlife Crime Unit](#)], 1 March 2016

²⁶ Wildlife and Countryside Link, “[Wildlife Crime: No minor offence](#)” (PDF), accessed 12 February 2025, p6

The National Rural Crime Unit

In April 2023, the NPCC established the National Rural Crime Unit to support police forces in England and Wales in their response to rural crime.

The National Rural Crime Unit provides specialist operational support and training for forces, as well as coordination, better information sharing and helping to develop strategies to better protect farmers from crime.²⁷

In October 2024, Lord Hanson of Flint, a Minister of State at the Home Office, stated that since 2023, the unit had recovered £10m worth of stolen property, including agricultural machinery and vehicles as well as conducting operations that had resulted in multiple arrests.²⁸ Dr Kate Tudor, a criminologist at Durham University, has said that the National Rural Crime Unit has “absolutely changed the playing field in terms of policing.”²⁹

Wildlife and Rural Crime Strategy 2022-2025

The NPCC has published a three-year Wildlife and Rural Crime strategy, which provides a framework for the police and its partners in England and Wales to work together to tackle the “most prevalent threats and emerging issues which predominantly affect rural communities.”³⁰

The [Wildlife and Rural Crime Strategy 2022-2025](#) focussed on creating an “effective, nationally coordinated response to rural and wildlife crime” which is “sustainable and enduring” and supports the police and its partners to “prevent crime, pursue those who commit it, and protect those most affected by it.”³¹

The strategy stated that it would focus on “the pursuit of criminals involved in serious and organised acquisitive or wildlife crime” as well as “preventing crimes and reducing the impact on victims.”³²

The strategy’s action points include:

- pursuing serious and/or organised criminality across wildlife and rural crime,
- improving support for victims,
- increasing the capacity and capability of resources,

²⁷ NFU Mutual, “[Rural Crime Report 2024](#)”, 1 August 2024, p16

²⁸ UIN HL1941 [on [National Rural Crime Unit](#)], 23 October 2024

²⁹ “[How successful in the National Rural Crime Unit one year on?](#)”, Farmers Weekly, 25 April 2024

³⁰ National Wildlife Crime Unit, “[NPCC Wildlife Crime and Rural Affairs Strategies](#)”, accessed 14 February 2025

³¹ National Police Chiefs’ Council, “[Rural and Wildlife Crime Strategy, 2022-2025](#)”, 1 September 2022, p3

³² As above, p17

- improving intelligence and information sharing, and
- using technology to prevent criminality.³³

Policing response to rural crime in Scotland

Police Scotland is a member of the [Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime](#) (SPARC), a multi-agency partnership which aims to “prevent, reduce and tackle rural crime.”³⁴

SPARC launched its first [Rural Crime Strategy](#) in 2019, with a particular focus on the threat posed by organised crime groups, including the theft of agricultural vehicles, farm machinery and livestock.³⁵

An update provided by SPARC in March 2023 reported “positive results from the rural crime strategy, with a reduction in rural crime and associated financial costs”, including:

- 16 less reported crimes in the year to March 2023 compared to the year to March 2022,
- total estimated cost of rural crime reduced from £5,696,846 in March 2022 to £3,658,085 in March 2023,
- minimum of 284 less victims in the year to March 2023 compared to the year to March 2022.³⁶

In July 2022, SPARC launched its new [Rural Crime Strategy for 2022-2025](#) (PDF) to build on the progress made to “deter, disrupt, pursue and prosecute perpetrators at every opportunity.”³⁷

The new Rural Crime Strategy for 2022-2025 included an updated action plan, which aims to:

- reduce opportunities for criminals to steal agricultural machinery,
- strengthening prevention tactics and techniques, and
- prevent, reduce and tackle livestock theft.³⁸

³³ As above, p17

³⁴ Scottishparc.co.uk, “[Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime](#)”, accessed 4 December 2024

³⁵ Ruralnetwork.scot, “[Rural crime strategy published](#)”, 18 April 2019

³⁶ Safercommunitiesscotland.org, “[SPARC Update Shows Positive Results From Rural Crime Strategy](#)”, 20 April 2023

³⁷ Scottishparc.co.uk, “[Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime](#)”, accessed 4 December 2024

³⁸ As above

Rural Watch Scotland

Police Scotland participate in [Rural Watch Scotland](#) which is a voluntary organisation which aims to address rural crime. Rural Watch Scotland provides crime prevention tips, local crime alerts and initiatives to make rural communities safer.

Policing response to rural crime in Northern Ireland

The Rural Crime Partnership

The Rural Crime Partnership (RCP) is a “networking, information sharing and problem-solving forum” in Northern Ireland which enables the police, the government and rural organisations to raise awareness and prevent rural crime.³⁹

The RCP runs joint operations to prevent and detect rural crime, awareness and education sessions as well as providing advice and support to make rural properties and businesses safer.

The RCP also hosts an annual rural crime week to raise awareness and highlight the challenges faced by rural communities and the support that is available.⁴⁰

The RCP is staffed by police officers with “experience in detecting and preventing rural crime, with investigative powers to track and intercept stolen machinery and equipment.”⁴¹

Data published in August 2024 by NFU Mutual found that the cost of rural crime in Northern Ireland had fallen to an estimated £2m in 2023, which was a reduction of 21.3% from 2022.⁴²

Farm Watch

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) runs a [Farm Watch scheme](#), which aims to “promote vigilance and improve communication, within rural and farming communities and between rural communities and the police service.”⁴³

Under the Farm Watch scheme, the PSNI supports crime reduction measures, such as:

³⁹ Justice-ni.gov.uk, “[What is Rural Crime Partnership](#)”, accessed on 4 December 2024

⁴⁰ Police Service of Northern Ireland, “[Rural Crime Partnership launch Rural Crime Week NI 2024](#)”, 20 September 2024

⁴¹ NFU Mutual, “[Rural Crime Report 2024](#)”, 1 August 2024, p13

⁴² As above

⁴³ Police Service of Northern Ireland, “[Rural Crime Prevention](#)”, accessed 17 February 2025

- running a property marking scheme to make it more difficult for thieves to dispose of stolen goods,
- operating a Machinery Assets Register for recording farm machinery and equipment,
- providing practical crime prevention advice to help make property secure,
- operating an email and text alert service, and
- installing Farm Watch signs to advertise the scheme is active in the area.⁴⁴

Challenges in policing rural crime

Police forces face a number of challenges when responding to rural crime.

Police forces covering rural areas serve “large, sparsely populated geographical areas” that can mean response times can be much longer than in urban areas.⁴⁵ For example, in 2024, Leicestershire Police’s rural response time to 999 calls graded ‘immediate’ was 22 minutes, compared with 16 minutes in urban areas.⁴⁶

Rural areas also tend to have less CCTV, ANPR cameras and witnesses than urban areas which makes it harder for the police to investigate crimes.

Analysis of the police funding formula for 2024/2025 by the National Rural Crime Network found that the average rural police force budget (£6.03 million) is smaller than the average urban police force budget (£8.52 million).⁴⁷

The Country Land and Business Association have stated that some rural police forces “lack basic kit” such as “4x4 vehicles, rural drone surveillance kits, high-powered torches and thermal spotters to help detect criminals in the dark” due to budgetary constraints.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ NI Direct Government Services, “[Keeping your farm secure](#)”, accessed on 17 February 2025

⁴⁵ “[Farmers urged to help police in fight against rural crime](#)”, Farmers Weekly, 22 June 2018

⁴⁶ The Country Land and Business Association, “[Rural policing crisis: forces lack dedicated officers, funding and even torches](#)”, 26 June 2024

⁴⁷ National Rural Crime Network, “[Police Funding Analysis 2024/25](#)”, accessed 18 February 2025

⁴⁸ The Country Land and Business Association, “[Rural policing crisis: forces lack dedicated officers, funding and even torches](#)”, 26 June 2024

1.4

A government rural crime strategy?

In April 2024, the then Leader of the Opposition, Keir Starmer, announced that a Labour government would introduce “the first ever government-backed rural crime strategy” to “stamp out crime and disorder in our countryside communities.”⁴⁹ In July 2024, the Minister for Farming stated:

... we’re absolutely committed to the first ever cross-government rural crime strategy. Of course, this will cover agricultural theft, fly-tipping and livestock worrying.⁵⁰

The National Farmers Union has [urged the government to deliver on its promise of a rural crime strategy](#). Rachel Hallios, Vice President, said:

Farmers are not only bearing the financial cost of theft but also the emotional strain of knowing their family businesses are being targeted, which cannot be overlooked. This National Rural Crime Action Week provides an opportunity for the government [...] to deliver on their promises of a rural crime strategy and send a strong message to those targeting our communities.⁵¹

The Countryside Alliance said that whilst it shared similar goals as the government to address rural crime, [the “approaches and specific commitments differ.”](#)⁵² It [has called on the government](#) to focus on the prioritisation of rural crime, a commitment for the police to respond to every report of rural crime and funding for dedicated rural teams.⁵³

The Country Land and Business Association, the membership organisation for owners of land, property and businesses in rural England and Wales [welcomed the government’s pledge for a rural crime strategy](#), stating:

We warmly welcome Labour’s announcement of a Rural Crime Strategy, something that is needed to protect people, communities and businesses. The first place to start must surely be ending the chronic underfunding of rural police forces.⁵⁴

In October 2024, the Environment Secretary provided further confirmation that the government would introduce a rural crime strategy, though the government has not yet provided a timeframe for publication.⁵⁵

In January 2025, Ben Maguire MP presented a [presentation bill](#) to Parliament, with the title: “A Bill to require the Secretary of State to establish a task force

⁴⁹ [“Labour vows to stamp out crime in rural areas with new strategy”](#), The Independent, 22 April 2024

⁵⁰ Gov.uk, [“Minister Daniel Zeichner – NFU Summer Reception speech”](#), 18 July 2024

⁵¹ National Farmers’ Union, [“Government must deliver on rural crime strategy”](#), 21 October 2024

⁵² Countryside Alliance, [“Will the Labour Party stand by its strategy to tackle rural crime?”](#), 24 July 2024

⁵³ As above

⁵⁴ The Country Land and Business Association, [“Rural communities need protecting from organised crime gangs”](#), 23 April 2024

⁵⁵ [HC Deb 8 October 2024 c239](#)

to produce a strategy for tackling rural crime; to require the Secretary of State to implement the strategy; and for connected purposes.”⁵⁶ Its second reading is scheduled for 4 July 2025.

⁵⁶ [Rural Crime \(Strategy\) Bill](#), 14 January 2025

2

Parliamentary material

2.1

Early day motions

[Police funding settlement in rural areas](#)

That this House notes with concern the ongoing funding disparities affecting rural police forces, particularly in areas such as West Dorset; recognises that rural forces face unique challenges, including vast geographical areas to cover with fewer officers, as well as significant seasonal population increases due to tourism, which are not adequately accounted for in current funding formulas; notes that West Dorset experiences a 42% increase in population during peak seasons, placing additional pressure on already stretched police resources; further notes that the current funding deficit of £3.6 million is projected to rise to £7.3 million next year, undermining the ability of local forces to keep communities safe; is alarmed that, despite submitting evidence-backed requests for an additional £12.2 million in annual funding—primarily to recruit 250 additional officers and staff—the necessary support has not been provided; regrets that to meet budget shortfalls, the Police and Crime Commissioner has been forced to reduce Community Support Officers by 43%, freeze staff recruitment, sell off surplus vehicles and buildings, restrict overtime, and halt all non-essential spending; and calls on the Government to urgently revise the police funding formula to ensure rural forces receive a fair and sustainable settlement that reflects the true demands placed upon them.

04 Feb 2025 | Early day motions | Open | House of Commons | 748 (session 2024-25)

Primary sponsor: Morello, Edward

[Rural Crime Action Week 2024](#)

That this House recognises Rural Crime Action Week which runs between 21 and 25 October 2024 to highlight the impact of rural crime on communities; is concerned by the NFU's 2024 Rural Crime Report which states that the cost of rural crime increased by 4.3% across the UK in 2023; further notes that the highest regional cost of crime in 2023 was in the Midlands at £11.7 billion; acknowledges that Shropshire has been rated the third worst affected county for rural crime for two consecutive years; recognises that the impacts of rural crime are felt by business and across communities from large-scale fly-tipping to theft of farm machinery, tools and livestock; and calls on the Government to recognise the serious and organised nature of rural crime and urgently to take steps to tackle crime and disorder in the countryside.

21 Oct 2024 | Early day motions | Open | House of Commons | 273 (session 2024-25)

Primary sponsor: Morgan, Helen

2.2 Debates

[Police Funding: Cambridgeshire](#) - HC Deb 06 Jan 2025 - 759 cc701-710

[Fly-tipping](#) - HC Deb 26 Nov 2024 - 757 cc217-696WH

[Rural Affairs](#) - HC Deb 11 Nov 2024 - 756 cc583-4

[Rural Communities](#) - HL Deb 15 Oct 2024 - 840 cc166-190

[Fly-tipping](#) - HC Deb 06 Feb 2024 - 745 cc19-27WH

[Equipment Theft \(Prevention\) Bill](#) - HL Deb 14 Jul 2023 - 831 cc1976-8

[Equipment Theft \(Prevention\) Bill](#) - HC Deb 03 Mar 2023 - 728 cc1037-1054

[Equipment Theft \(Prevention\) Bill](#) - HC Deb 02 Dec 2022 - 723 cc1077-1113

2.3 Statements

[Unleashing Rural Opportunity](#)

06 Jun 2023 | Written statements | House of Commons | HCWS825

2.4 Parliamentary questions

[Rural Crime: Prosecution Rates](#)

Asked by: Dave Robertson

As I am sure the Solicitor General knows, fly-tipping is the most commonly reported rural crime. In 2022-23, the last year for which there is full data, there were well over 13,000 significant multi-load incidents; I use the phrase specifically, as it is an internal description. Those incidents cost more than £4 million to clear up, yet just 22 custodial sentences were handed out in that time. What assurances can she give me and my constituents that the most egregious examples of fly-tipping, like those we saw in Lichfield two weeks ago, will result in jail time for the perpetrators?

Answered by: The Solicitor General | **Department:** Solicitor General

Fly-tipping blights communities, and I am grateful to my hon. Friend for raising the issue. I know that he has also raised it with the Minister for Food Security and Rural Affairs, but I am happy to arrange a meeting with his local chief Crown prosecutor to discuss the matter further.

06 Feb 2025 | Oral questions - 1st Supplementary | Answered | House of Commons | 761 c922

Date answered: 06 Feb 2025

[Crime: Rural Areas](#)

Asked by: Cane, Charlotte

To ask the Solicitor General, what steps she is taking to help ensure the effective prosecution of rural crime.

Answering member: Lucy Rigby | **Department:** Attorney General

This Government is committed to working with the police and other partners to address the blight of rural crime to ensure the safety of those in all communities.

We are introducing tougher measures to clamp down on anti-social behaviour, strengthening neighbourhood policing, and introducing robust laws to prevent farm theft and fly-tippers.

The National Police Chiefs' Council Wildlife and Rural Crime Strategy 2022-2025 provides a framework through which policing, and its partners, can work together to tackle the most prevalent threats and emerging issues which predominantly affect rural communities.

Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) prosecutors work closely with local police officers and officers from the National Wildlife Crime Unit to tackle all types of rural crime.

The CPS provides legal guidance on Wildlife, Rural and Heritage Crime, which is available to all its prosecutors, to assist them in dealing with these cases. They also provide specialist training to ensure that its prosecutors have the expert knowledge needed to prosecute these crimes.

06 Feb 2025 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 27732

Date tabled: 30 Jan 2025 | **Date for answer:** 03 Feb 2025 | **Date answered:** 06 Feb 2025

[Agriculture: Crime](#)

Asked by: Fenton-Glynn, Josh

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many offences involving agricultural crime resulted in (a) charges or summons, (b) evidential difficulties outcomes and (c) investigations completed but no suspects identified. in each year since 2010.

Answering member: Dame Diana Johnson | **Department:** Home Office

Rural crime can have devastating consequences for countryside communities. That is why this Government is committed to reducing crime in rural areas.

The National Police Chiefs' Council is expected to publish its next four-year Rural and Wildlife Crime Strategy in April. We fully support the aims of the Strategy and are working closely with the NPCC, including to ensure wider Government priorities are reflected.

We are committed to implementing the Equipment Theft (Prevention) Act 2023 and support its intentions to tackle the theft and re-sale of high-value equipment, particularly for use in an agricultural setting.

The Home Office collects and publishes information on the number of offences and their investigative outcomes recorded by the police in England and Wales on a quarterly basis. However, offences involving agricultural crime cannot be separately identified from the data held centrally.

NFU Mutual estimated that the total cost of agricultural vehicle theft claims in 2023 was £10.7 million. This estimate only includes costs of agricultural vehicle thefts where a subsequent claim was made through NFU Mutual.

13 Jan 2025 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 21532

Date tabled: 19 Dec 2024 | **Date for answer:** 07 Jan 2025 | **Date answered:** 13 Jan 2025

[Rural Crime](#)

Asked by: Josh Fenton-Glynn

I welcome my hon. Friend to her place. Representing a rural constituency, I am aware of the ongoing problem of agricultural vehicle theft. In Calder Valley, vehicle crime counts for one in every 20 crimes committed. The Equipment Theft (Prevention) Act 2023, passed by the hon. Member for Mid Buckinghamshire (Greg Smith) as a private Member's Bill, was restricted to the re-sale of specified equipment. However, 18 months since it received Royal Assent, the statutory instrument needed for it to be enacted has yet to be laid. Will my hon. Friend act where the previous Government did not?

Answered by: The Solicitor General | **Department:** Solicitor General

We are committed to implementing the Equipment Theft (Prevention) Act, which aims to prevent the theft and re-sale of high-value equipment, particularly for use in an agricultural setting, as my hon. Friend describes. He will know that the Minister for Policing, Fire and Crime Prevention takes this matter very seriously and is working closely with the automotive industry to ensure the most robust responses possible to these crimes. I am also happy to raise the matter with my hon. Friend's local chief Crown prosecutor.

19 Dec 2024 | Oral questions - 1st Supplementary | Answered | House of Commons | 759 c445

Date answered: 19 Dec 2024

Organised Crime

Asked by: Antony Higginbotham

In Burnley and right across Lancashire county lines continues to be a problem, with organised groups peddling drugs and exploiting young people with no regard for the harm they are doing, not just to the communities but to the young people they are exploiting. Lancashire police are making very good inroads with an enhanced rural policing unit and neighbourhood taskforces, but what more can Lancashire Constabulary do to tackle the county lines issue and bring order back to our streets?

Answered by: James Cleverly | **Department:** Home Department

I thank my hon. Friend for highlighting this vile type of criminality, which targets the young and the most vulnerable. As part of our fight against county lines we are investing up to £145 million in our county lines programme, and since it was launched in 2019 police activity has resulted in over 4,700 county lines being closed, over 14,800 arrests and over 7,200 safeguard referrals. We will keep our focus on this evil criminality.

27 Nov 2023 | Oral questions - 1st Supplementary | Answered | House of Commons | 741 c534

Date answered: 27 Nov 2023

Rural Crime

Asked by: Olly Glover

I thank the Solicitor General for her answer. The Equipment Theft (Prevention) Act 2023 had support from across the House in the previous Parliament. The

statutory instrument to bring in its measures is with the Home Office but has yet to be brought forward. Property seized by the Thames Valley police rural crime taskforce across South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse since the start of 2023 is valued at more than £400,000, with an incalculable impact on farmers' mental health, wellbeing and anxiety. To improve the rate of prosecutions for rural crime, will the Solicitor General urge her colleagues at the Home Office to bring that statutory instrument before the House?

Answered by: The Solicitor General | **Department:** Solicitor General

I thank the hon. Member for raising an important point. I can confirm that we are committed to implementing the Equipment Theft (Prevention) Act and, with that, bringing about real benefits and impacts for farmers suffering from the theft and resale of high-value equipment, with all the stress and distress that that causes.

14 Nov 2024 | Oral questions - 1st Supplementary | Answered | House of Commons | 756 c901

Date answered: 14 Nov 2024

[Hunting: Foxes](#)

Asked by: Mohamed, Abtissam

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to tackle illegal fox hunting.

Answering member: Mary Creagh | **Department:** Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

This is a devolved matter with regard to Scotland and Northern Ireland; hunting with dogs is a reserved matter with respect to Wales and therefore, the information provided relates to England and Wales only.

The Hunting Act 2004 makes it an offence to hunt a wild mammal with dogs except where it is carried out in accordance with the exemptions in the Act. Those found guilty under the Act are subject to the full force of the law. Enforcement of the Hunting Act is an operational matter for the police.

In addition, the Government made a manifesto commitment to ban Trail Hunting as part of a set of measures to improve animal welfare. Work to determine the best approach for doing so is ongoing. Further announcements will be made in due course.

31 Oct 2024 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 11101

Date tabled: 24 Oct 2024 | **Date for answer:** 28 Oct 2024 | **Date answered:** 31 Oct 2024

[Rural Crime](#)

Asked by: The Lord Bishop of St Albans

My Lords, it is recognised that one niche area of rural crime by organised crime groups is laundering money through events such as illegal hare coursing, which is causing a huge problem. We were very grateful for the recent support of the Government in trying to bring an amendment to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act, but is the Minister sure that the new police and crime commissioners not only understand the problem but have the right training in place so the law can be implemented?

Answered by: Lord Sharpe of Epsom (Con)

First, I commend the right reverend Prelate on his work in introducing the amendment to that particular Bill. It came into force on 1 August 2022 and, without his efforts, I do not think it would have happened. Hare coursing is not a notifiable offence, but the statistics I have are very encouraging. There has been a 60% reduction in the poaching of both hare and deer over the course of the

2022-23 season. The National Rural Crime Unit informs us that there has been an increased use of criminal protection notices when used alongside the new measures, including those involved with hare coursing. I was very pleased to hear about the successful prosecution of two individuals in Lincolnshire last week for hare coursing. So, it would seem to bear out that enough work is being done, but of course I will follow up and, if there is more to say, I will come back to the right reverend Prelate.

09 May 2024 | Oral questions - Supplementary | Answered | House of Lords | 838 c231

Date answered: 09 May 2024

[Rural Crime](#)

Asked by: Baroness Bakewell of Hardington Mandeville (LD)

My Lords, we hear more in the media about crimes in urban areas and cities due to the numbers. However, many rural crimes are serious. Cuts in bus services and the decimation of youth services have left young people adrift. Young people are vulnerable to predation by criminal drug gangs running county lines. Prevention is always better than cure. Why have the Government abandoned vulnerable young people in rural areas?

Answered by: Lord Sharpe of Epsom (Con)

Well, that was more of a statement than a question and I do not think the Government have abandoned rural young people.

09 May 2024 | Oral questions - Supplementary | Answered | House of Lords | 838 c232

Date answered: 09 May 2024

[Crime: Rural Areas](#)

Asked by: Knight, Sir Greg

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to reduce (a) hare coursing, (b) theft and damage to farm equipment and (c) other rural crime; and if she will make a statement.

Answering member: Chris Philp | **Department:** Home Office

The Government is committed to driving down rural crime, which is why we are providing funding for the National Wildlife Crime Unit and the National Rural Crime Unit (NRCU).

The Home Office committed to provide one-off funding of £200,000 to the NRCU this year to assist with set up costs of the new unit. The NRCU will provide support to forces nationally in their responses to rural crime, such as the theft of farming or construction machinery, livestock theft, rural fly tipping, rural fuel theft and equine crime.

Police Uplift Programme (PUP) funding has been used to tackle rural crime by forces and led to the formation of new teams and to bolster capabilities.

New measures in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act came into force on 1st August 2022, which empower and equip the police and courts with the powers they need to combat hare coursing. These powers included creating two new criminal offences; trespass with the intention of using a dog to search for or pursue a hare; and being equipped to trespass with the intention of using a dog to search for or pursue a hare.

The Government supported the Equipment Theft (Prevention) Act 2023, which will help to prevent the theft of agricultural equipment such as quad bikes by requiring immobilisers and forensic markings to be fitted before new equipment is sold to customers, and equipment to be registered on a database. The Act gained Royal Assent on 20 July.

11 Sep 2023 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 198036

Date tabled: 06 Sep 2023 | **Date for answer:** 11 Sep 2023 | **Date answered:** 11 Sep 2023

[Foxes: Animal Welfare](#)

Asked by: West, Catherine

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to (a) help tackle illegal fox hunting and (b) prevent all forms of cruelty to foxes.

Answering member: Trudy Harrison | **Department:** Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The Hunting Act 2004 makes it an offence to hunt a wild mammal with dogs except where it is carried out in accordance with the exemptions in the Act. Those found guilty under the Act are subject to the full force of the law.

Foxes are not protected for conservation purposes in England. Cage traps and snares can lawfully be used to trap foxes. Anyone using cage traps or snares has a responsibility under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 to act within the law to ensure their activities do not cause any unnecessary suffering. For instance, snares and cage traps must be checked at least once a day to prevent a captured fox (or non-target species) suffering. This government takes wildlife crime seriously and there are strong penalties in place for offences committed against wildlife. An industry-owned code of practice for the use of snares to control foxes in England sets out clear principles for the legal use of snares, using evidence from snare-use research to improve snare deployment and design.

02 May 2023 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 182365

Date tabled: 24 Apr 2023 | **Date for answer:** 26 Apr 2023 | **Date answered:** 02 May 2023

[Crime: Rural Areas](#)

Asked by: Jones, Ruth

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to tackle (a) raptor persecution and (b) rural crime.

Answering member: Trudy Harrison | **Department:** Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

This government takes wildlife crime seriously. We have significant sanctions for crimes against birds of prey in place which include an unlimited fine and/or a six-month custodial sentence.

Raptor persecution is a national wildlife crime priority. Defra continues to be fully involved with the police-led national Bird of Prey Crime Priority Delivery Group and Natural England continues to work closely with wildlife crime officers. In 2022, Defra more than doubled its funding of the National Wildlife Crime Unit from a total of £495,000 over the three previous years to £1.2 million for the three year period of 2022-25 to tackle priorities including crimes against birds of prey.

Where any birds of prey are killed illegally the full force of the law should apply to proven perpetrators of the crime. Vicarious liability occurs where one person can be held liable for the actions of another person. In relation to raptor persecution this means a landowner (or shooting manager) can be held criminally liable for unlawful acts of others on their land such as the shooting of a bird of prey. It has been introduced in Scotland but it is unclear whether it has had a significant deterrent effect. We will continue to monitor the situation in Scotland to consider whether it is necessary and proportionate to assist in tackling wildlife crime in England.

09 Mar 2023 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 156291

Date tabled: 01 Mar 2023 | **Date for answer:** 03 Mar 2023 | **Date answered:** 09 Mar 2023

2.5

Committee material

[Child exploitation and county lines.](#)

Parliamentary committees - Education Committee - Select Committee's correspondence, oral and written evidence | House of Commons | Non-inquiry session

3 Media

3.1 Press releases

[County Lines becoming more localised](#)

National Police Chief's Council

05 November 2024

[Government must deliver on rural crime strategy, says NFU](#)

National Farmers' Union

21 October 2024

[Bird crime across the UK showing no signs of stopping](#)

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

21 October 2024

[Hare coursing – new powers and tougher penalties](#)

National Farmers' Union

11 July 2024

[Rural communities need protecting from organised crime gangs, says CLA President Victoria Vyvyan](#)

The Country Land and Business Association

23 April 2024

3.2 Articles and blogs

[Livestock worrying is still an issue, however, numbers are decreasing](#)

Rural crime

Farmers Guide

20 February 2025

['Starmer's planned trail hunting ban is another nail in the coffin of the countryside'](#)

Telegraph

19 February 2025

[Trail hunting being used as 'smokescreen'](#)

BBC

18 February 2025

[The night 'Mad Max' hare coursers ran riot and police did nothing](#)

Times

09 February 2025

[Fox hunters to face bigger fines under Labour's plans](#)

Telegraph

25 December 2024

[Its that time of year when hare coursing is brought to the spotlight, drawing attention to its impact and legal implications](#)

Country Land and Business Association

05 December 2024

[Senior police officer said he was 'very happy' with claims of two-tier policing of hunts](#)

Telegraph

Rural crime

15 December 2024

[Hunting Act: Countryside still divided 20 years on](#)

BBC

13 November 2024

[Cracking down on the illegal killing of birds of prey – the CLA’s Robert Frewen, who sits on the Harrier Task Force headed up by the National Wildlife Crime Unit, explains more](#)

Country Land and Business Association

22 October 2024

[Police chief fears Ukraine war link to GPS thefts](#)

BBC

11 October 2024

[Our rural areas and antisocial behaviour](#)

Resolve

08 October 2024

[‘Some animal rights groups belong on MI5’s watch list – fox hunters must be a protected minority’](#)

Telegraph

16 August 2024

[Total cost of rural crime across UK exceeds £50m](#)

National Farmers’ Union

01 August 2024

Rural crime

['I'm not going out at night': Farmers fearful as criminal gangs drive machinery black market](#)

ITV News

10 May 2024

[Police must help farmers eradicate fly-tipping blight](#)

Times

30 April 2024

[Crime rate surging faster in rural than urban areas](#)

Telegraph

22 April 2024

[UK police forces and farmers took part in the survey](#)

The Scottish Farmer

29 March 2024

[The disturbing rise in dog thefts and how communities can fight back](#)

Countryside Alliance

21 March 2024

[Why were 50 dead hares dumped outside a Hampshire shop?](#)

Guardian

19 March 2024

[Hundreds of sheep stolen as livestock rustlers target UK farms](#)

Rural crime

Farmers Guide

06 March 2024

[UK cost of livestock worrying rises by nearly 30%](#)

NFU Mutual

26 February 2024

[Ministers under fire over 'disastrous' grouse-shooting plans](#)

Times

11 September 2023

[Rural crime soaring as organised gangs target farm machinery](#)

Police Professional

02 August 2023

[New equipment theft law described as a "win" for farmers](#)

Farmers Guide

21 July 2023

[England and Wales law on foxhunting unworkable, says police chief](#)

Guardian

29 June 2023

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