

Farm and Rural Crime in Wales 2025

A comprehensive analysis of rural crime patterns, impacts, and community responses based on the LPIP 2025 Rural Crime Survey.

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Executive Summary

The LPIP 2025 Rural Crime Survey collected responses from 164 participants across Wales, providing crucial insights into the state of rural and farm crime. This comprehensive study reveals significant challenges facing rural communities, attitudes towards crime and policing, and demonstrating a strong community engagement with rural crime issues.

22%

Farm Crime Victimization

Of farms surveyed experienced crime in the last 12 months

78%

Police Response Satisfaction

Of victims did not report crimes to police

81%

Environmental Crime Awareness

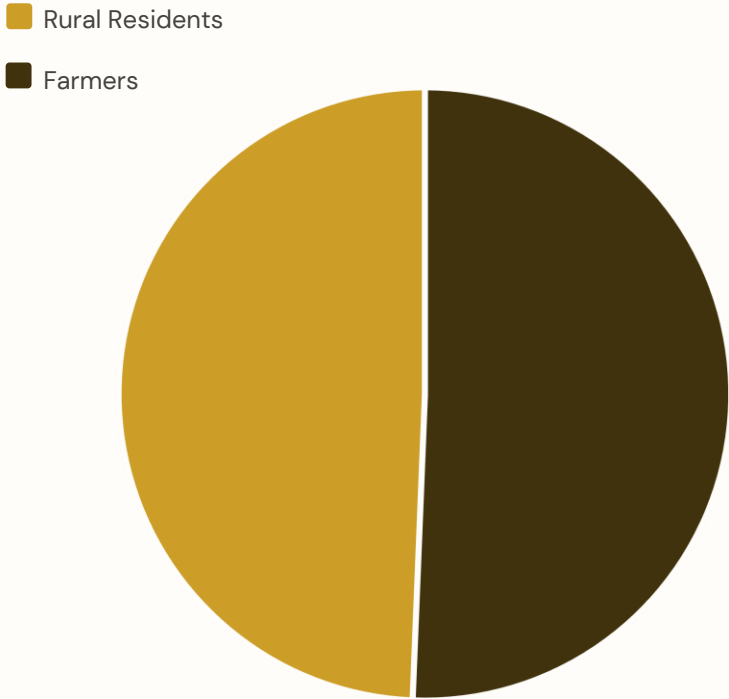
Reported awareness of some environment crime in their areas

Key findings indicate that rural communities face persistent challenges with theft, property damage, and environmental crimes, while experiencing limited police response and support services. The survey reveals significant gaps in crime prevention, reporting mechanisms, and community support systems.

Introduction and Methodology

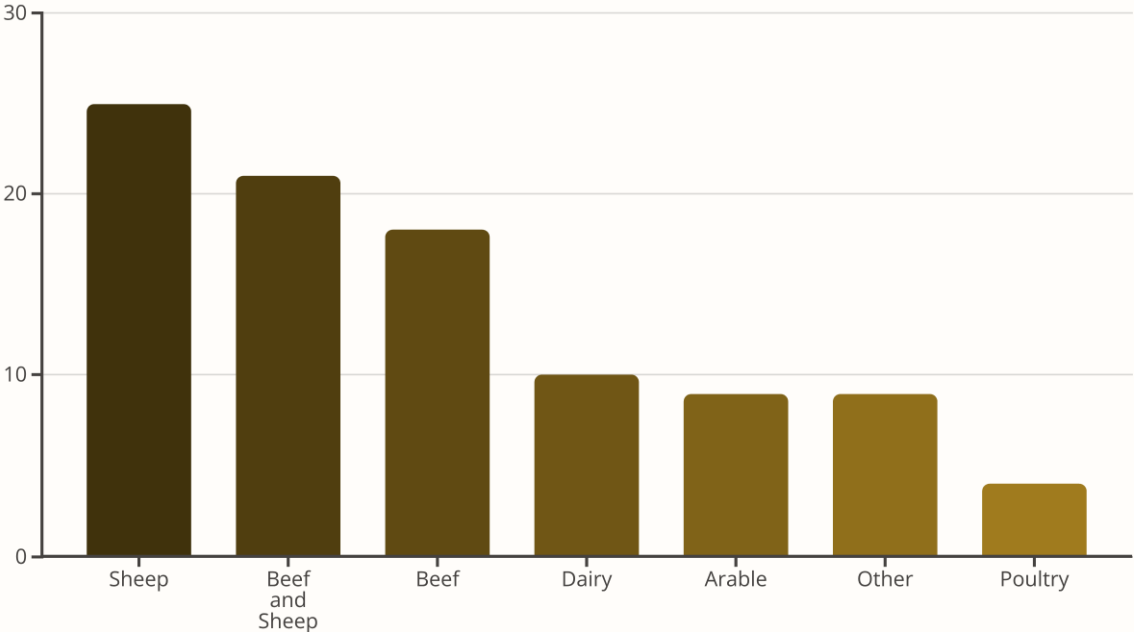
This report presents findings from the LPIP 2025 Rural Crime Survey, building upon previous research by Norris and Morris on rural and farm crime in Wales. The study examines crime patterns, police responses, and community impacts across rural Welsh communities, with particular focus on farming enterprises and environmental crimes.

Survey Demographics



The survey methodology employed a mixed-methods approach, collecting quantitative data on crime experiences and qualitative insights into community perceptions. **Responses were collected from 156 participants**, with 51% identifying as farmers or having responsibility for farming enterprises.

Farm Enterprise Characteristics



Farm locations were predominantly in lowland areas (56%), with upland (24%) and hill farms (18%) also represented. **The majority of farms (81%) were located within the Dyfed-Powys police area**, with smaller numbers in South Wales (8%), North Wales (10%), and Gwent (1%).

Farm Crime Victimization

Direct experience of farm crime affects a significant minority of agricultural businesses. **In the last 12 months, 22% of farm businesses were targets of crime.**

Theft (47%)

Most common crime type affecting farms, targeting machinery, livestock, and equipment

Combined Theft and Damage (24%)

Incidents involving both property theft and criminal damage

Other Crimes (18%)

Including attempted theft and specialised targeting

Property Damage (12%)

Vandalism and destruction without theft

Crime Targets

Analysis of crime targets reveals that **machinery theft represents 65% of incidents**, followed by livestock (24%), farm business related crimes (12%), and other targets (18%). Specific incidents included attempted digger theft, quad bike theft, power tool theft, and livestock killing by dogs.

Crime Reporting and Police Response

Despite the significant impact of rural crime, a large proportion of incidents remain unreported, creating a substantial challenge for accurate crime statistics and effective law enforcement. The LPIP 2025 Rural Crime Survey highlighted this critical issue, revealing that **78% of victims chose not to report crimes to the police**. This widespread underreporting suggests a deep-seated disconnect between rural communities and policing services, hindering the development of targeted prevention strategies and appropriate resource allocation.

Several interconnected factors contribute to this reluctance to report. Farmers frequently express a perception that the reporting process is overly time-consuming with little prospect of a successful outcome, particularly for property crimes. Other deterrents include concerns about potential increases in insurance premiums, a fear of reprisal from offenders, or a fundamental belief that the police lack the specific resources, understanding, or manpower necessary to effectively investigate rural crime incidents.

Perceived Futility

Belief that reporting will not lead to arrests or recovery of stolen property, deterring victims.

Time Constraints

Farmers' demanding schedules often mean they cannot dedicate time to the reporting process.

Lack of Local Knowledge

A feeling that police responders do not understand the nuances of rural crime or agricultural operations.

Minor Incident Perception

Some smaller thefts or damages are considered not worth the effort of official reporting.

For the minority of incidents that were reported, feedback on police response varied. While some respondents acknowledged the operational challenges faced by rural police forces, many expressed frustration with slow response times, a lack of consistent follow-up, and a perceived geographical and cultural disconnect from the realities of rural life. Addressing these concerns is paramount for fostering greater confidence and encouraging a more proactive approach to crime reporting within Welsh farming communities.

Crime Reporting and Police Response

A critical finding concerns the significant gap between crime occurrence and police reporting. **Of the 17 farms that experienced crime, only 69% reported incidents to police**, while 31% did not report crimes.

Reasons for Non-Reporting

"Little point, it's one of those things and the police are always very busy"

"Because nothing ever gets done"

"No point based on previous experiences"

Police Response Times

For those who did report crimes, response times varied significantly:

- Immediate response: "10 minutes very good"
- Delayed response: "1 week"
- Phone-only response: "Phone call. No police attended"
- Extended delays: "Six days"

Satisfaction with police response was relatively low, with **47% of victims rating satisfaction at the lowest level (1 out of 10)**.

Crime Prevention Measures

Rural communities have responded to crime threats through various prevention strategies. **71% of respondents have implemented crime prevention precautions**, with an additional 20% considering such measures.



CCTV Systems

Most commonly implemented security measure, providing surveillance and evidence collection capabilities



Enhanced Security

Additional locks on buildings, gates, vehicles, and trailers to prevent unauthorized access



Security Lighting

Motion-activated lighting systems around farm buildings and access points



Asset Tracking

GPS trackers and forensic marking systems for valuable equipment and machinery

Specific prevention measures mentioned by respondents included DNA marking, security gates, alarm systems, and professional monitoring services.

Wildlife and Environmental Crime

Environmental crimes represent a significant concern for rural communities, with **85% of respondents choosing to complete the wildlife and environmental crime section**. Fly-tipping emerges as the most prevalent environmental crime.

Fly-tipping (81%)

Illegal waste dumping represents the most widespread environmental crime affecting rural areas

Illegal Off-roading (56%)

Unauthorized use of 4x4s and quad bikes causing environmental damage

Water Pollution (41%)

Waste dumping in rivers and waterways affecting ecosystems

Wildlife Disturbance (21%)





Illegal activities disturbing birds, bats, and other protected species

Additional environmental crimes identified include cannabis farms (15%), fox hunting (20%), badger digging (13%), and heritage crimes (18%). Respondents also reported issues with illegal camping, sheep rustling, pesticide misuse, and habitat destruction.

Police Priorities and Environmental Crime

Community perceptions of police priorities regarding wildlife and environmental crime reveal significant concerns. **The average priority rating given to police investigation of wildlife and environmental crime was 4.2 out of 10**, indicating low perceived priority.

Recommendations for Improvement

-  **Dedicated Rural Crime Officers (78%)**
Specialized officers with rural crime expertise and community connections
-  **Serious Treatment of Environmental Crime (57%)**
Enhanced recognition of environmental crime impacts and consequences
-  **Technology Investment (43%)**
CCTV, tracking devices, and ANPR systems for detection and deterrence
-  **Community Consultation (31%)**
Regular police-community sessions for information sharing and partnership building

Respondents emphasized the need for better training, harsher penalties, and improved prosecution rates for environmental crimes.

Crime Impact on Mental Health and Wellbeing

The psychological impact of crime on rural communities represents a critical but often overlooked consequence. **87% of respondents indicated that crime impacts their wellbeing and mental health**, with varying degrees of severity.



- Little Impact
- Not Affected
- Sometimes Anxious
- Significantly Anxious

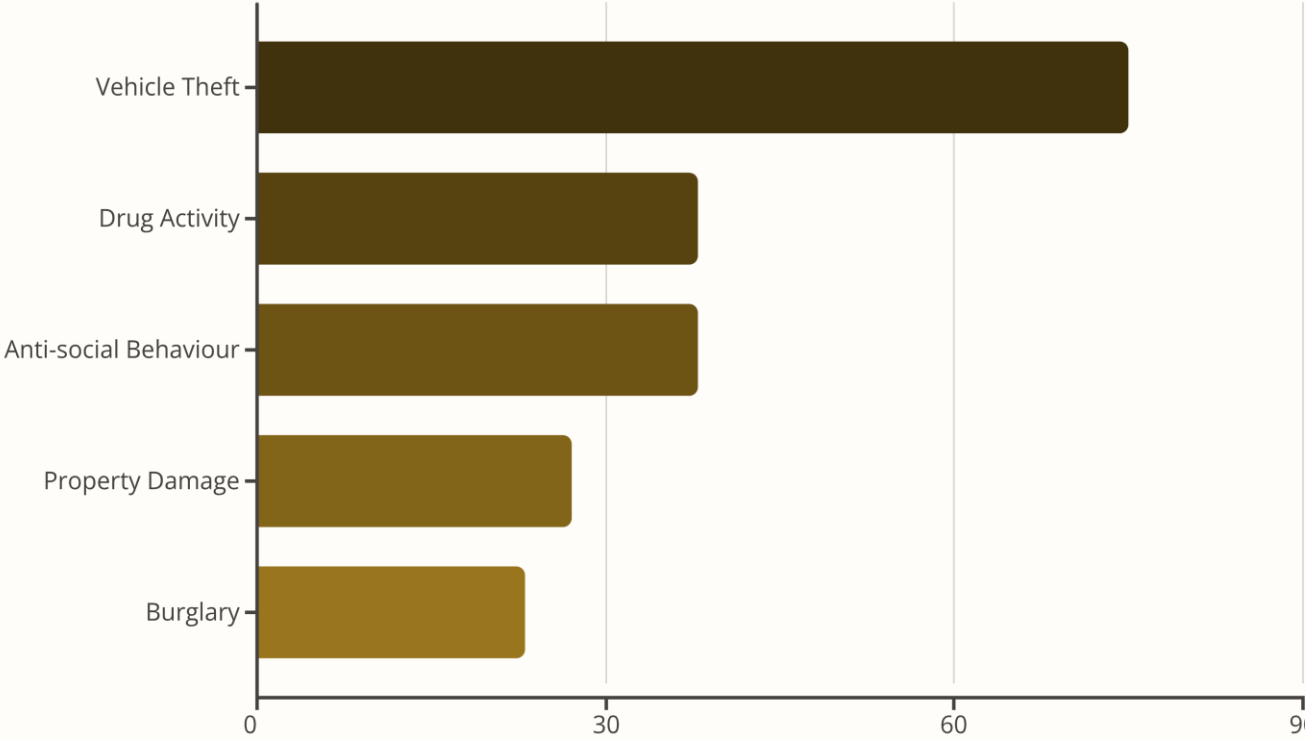
Behavioral Changes

Crime fear significantly alters rural residents' behavior, with **71% reporting behavioral modifications** including avoiding certain locations, increased wariness, and enhanced security measures.

"I find myself not trusting people in and around farms and open land. I used to stop the lads on bikes or in 4x4s, not anymore."

Community Crime Awareness

Beyond direct victimization, rural communities demonstrate high awareness of criminal activity in their areas. **87% of respondents consider themselves living in rural areas**, with 84% aware of crimes being committed locally.



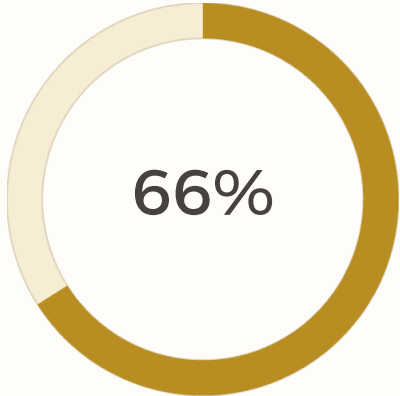
Information Sources

Rural communities rely heavily on informal networks for crime information, with **word of mouth (77%) and social media (59%)** serving as primary information sources, while formal police interaction accounts for only 11% of crime awareness.

Support Services and Isolation

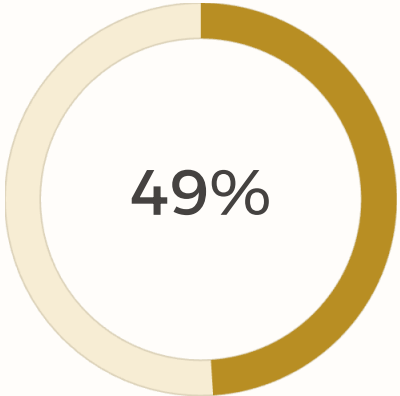
Rural isolation compounds the impact of crime victimization. **The average rating for isolation's impact on rural crime victims was 6.2 out of 10**, indicating significant concern about geographic and social isolation effects.

Support Service Awareness



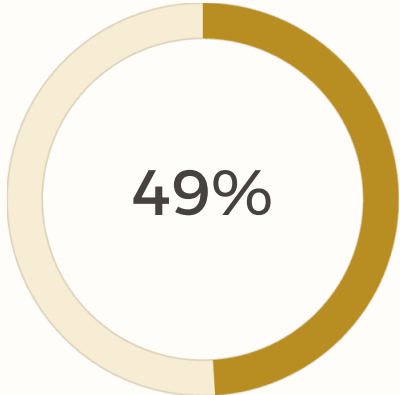
Crime Stoppers

Most recognized support organization



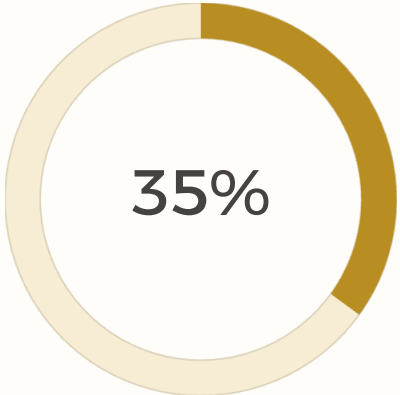
Victim Support

Formal victim assistance services



DPJ Foundation

Specialised rural support organization



Tir Dewi

Welsh rural support service

Despite awareness of support services, many respondents indicated limited access to appropriate assistance, particularly in remote rural areas where traditional support models may be inadequate.

Recommendations:



Strengthen Rural Policing Capacity and Visibility: Given persistent underreporting (78%) and low satisfaction with police response times and follow-up, rural areas would benefit from dedicated rural crime officers, increased patrol visibility, and improved geographical coverage. Strengthening relationships between police and farming communities can improve trust, reporting rates, and intelligence gathering.



Develop a Streamlined Crime Reporting System for Farmers: The report shows that many victims do not report crimes due to the time burden and belief that “nothing gets done.” A tailored reporting pathway—such as a rural-specific quick-report app, simplified online forms, or direct rural crime hotline—would reduce friction and make reporting more accessible for busy farm businesses.



Expand Support for Crime Prevention Through Technology: With 71% already adopting precautions, there is strong willingness to invest in prevention. Subsidies or grants for CCTV, asset-tracking, forensic marking, and ANPR coverage would help reduce theft and increase detection. A coordinated rural tech-security programme could significantly enhance deterrence and recovery rates.



Enhance Mental-Health and Support Services for Rural Victims: Crime has a demonstrable impact on rural wellbeing, with 87% reporting mental-health impact and many feeling isolated. Expanding access to rural-appropriate support—through DPJ Foundation, Tir Dewi, Victim Support, and community-based outreach—would help mitigate anxiety, isolation, and behaviour change linked to crime fear.

Conclusions and Policy Implications

This comprehensive survey reveals significant challenges facing rural Welsh communities regarding crime prevention, response, and recovery. The findings align with previous research by the current authors, demonstrating persistent issues in rural crime management and community support.

Key Findings

- 1 Underreporting Crisis**
Significant gap between crime occurrence and police reporting undermines crime statistics and resource allocation
- 2 Police Response Deficits**
Low satisfaction rates and inadequate response times indicate systemic issues in rural policing
- 3 Environmental Crime Epidemic**
Widespread environmental crimes require specialized response and enhanced penalties
- 4 Mental Health Impacts**
Crime fear significantly affects rural residents' wellbeing and behavioral patterns

The evidence demonstrates that rural communities face unique challenges requiring specialised approaches to crime prevention, investigation, and victim support.

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Statistical Sources

- LPIP Rural Crime Survey 2025 - Primary data collection
- Dyfed-Powys Police Rural Crime Statistics
- National Farmers' Union Crime Survey Reports
- Welsh Government Rural Development Programme
- Natural Resources Wales Environmental Crime Reports

About the project

Funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales is one of four Local Policy Innovation Partnerships established across the UK to connect researchers with local policymakers and communities to address regional challenges and drive sustainable and inclusive growth. It connects academic researchers, public bodies, third and private sector organisations and communities, with the aim of enhancing the use of research and innovation to support effective policy-making, sustainable regional development, and the wellbeing of people and places across rural Wales.

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