



# Protecting Rural Properties Using Video Surveillance to Thwart Property Theft and Damage

Ironically, there is little deterrence provided by an alarm system in a rural setting, yet most landowners rely on them to protect hundreds of thousands if not millions of dollars worth of machinery, facilities, vehicles, and livestock. Adding video surveillance to compliment an excellent alarm system can provide a crime deterrent, assist with retrieval of stolen goods, and lower insurance rates.

There are several reasons a standard intrusion alarm system is of limited effectiveness in a farm or rural setting. Some are:

First, an alarm system signals only after a break-in has occurred. When in an urban setting, an alarm sounding will bring unwanted attention to a criminal. This alone can deter them from an attempt. The alarm will also limit the amount of time they can remain on site when they do attempt a burglary.

In the rural setting, the alarm may not even be heard by another person. If it is, the criminal still will have many minutes to complete his thievery before he must flee from the local constabulary.

Second, the response time of the law enforcement officials in rural communities is typically too long to be a deterrent. This not intended as an insult to our public servants but as a reminder that there are typically 1 to 4 cars on patrol covering hundreds of square miles.

When my dad's brother retired and moved from a large Midwestern city to his boyhood home, he asked my dad what to do if the house caught fire. Dad considered the question and the fact that the nearest (volunteer) fire department was 10 miles away by a single-lane gravel road and answered, "you better close the front door on your way out." While the story is not exactly a law enforcement issue, it does explain the circumstances in many rural areas.

By the way, that conversation occurred over 20 years ago and the fire department is still a volunteer department, it is still 10 miles away, and the road is still gravel.

Third, the remoteness of the farms and ranches make them obvious targets. Because of the infrequent traffic and few prying eyes of neighbors, criminals are free to work openly with little concern of being discovered.

Combine the remoteness of the scene with the likelihood that no one is home because they are working in the fields or at an off-farm job and there is a negligible chance of someone being caught committing a crime.

The final issue that makes rural property crime attractive is the value of the items that are in jeopardy. These high-value items are easy to liquidate and include:

1. livestock
2. tools



3. machinery
4. fuel
5. typical household items

Here are my recommendations for evolving the current protection system that utilizes the typical intrusion alarm system into a more effective deterrent and evidence-gathering system:

- Install video surveillance to protect the perimeter
- hi-resolution, fixed cameras
- day-night and IR cameras
- develop a system that can gather useful evidence
- Link it to an alarm system to provide a seamless history of what occurred
- Use pre-event recording if storage space is limited
- The alarm monitoring station can use video verification
- Store video off site/in the cloud
- This prevents theft or destruction of video files during the crime

Living in a rural setting or “the country” can be a rewarding and peaceful experience. There are few disadvantages to this style of life if you do not mind driving further to get to some of the modern conveniences. A key disadvantage is the increased susceptibility to property crimes.

Counteracting this disadvantage is achievable with modern alarm and video surveillance systems. While no system will prevent every type of incursion, a prudently-designed system will deter many events and provide peace of mind.

©2016 by Doug Ringer. All Rights Reserved.

*Doug Ringer, the author of The Product Rocket, works with leaders who want to think strategically, grow dramatically, compete successfully, and develop profitable habits within their organizations. He can be reached at 502-509-9746 and [doug@dougringer.com](mailto:doug@dougringer.com). Follow his work at [www.dougringer.com](http://www.dougringer.com) and Twitter.*