

Tackling Rural Crime: farmer behaviour and crime prevention decision making

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Aims

- To evaluate farmer's crime prevention responses in relation to rising rural crime rates
- To assess the effectiveness and uptake of current crime prevention measures, both physical and policy focussed
- To model the choice architecture for farm based crime prevention adoption
- To explore the use of behavioural economics to design effective decision making contexts for crime prevention measures



Reasons for the Research 1

- The past focus for much criminological research and crime reduction policy has been principally focussed on urban environments to the detriment of rural communities (Briddell, 2009).
- Briddell LON (2009) Rurality and Crime: Identifying and explaining rural/urban differences. Pennsylvania State University, PhD Thesis, December 2009.



Reasons for the Research 2

- The 1990's saw a large increase in urban CCTV which has been linked to a generation of travelling criminals keen to exploit farms with a historically poor uptake of security and lower policing levels (Williams et al, 2000).
- Williams, K. Johnstone, C. & Goodwin, M. (2000) CCTV Surveillance in Urban Britain: Beyond the Rhetoric of Crime Prevention. In J. Gold & G. Revill. (eds) *Landscapes of Defence*. Harlow: Prentice Hall.



The Research Question

- Why do farmers not adopt appropriate security measures, and, in addition, once you know why, how to go about changing this behaviour and influence farmers to protect their property?



Nudge Theory

- Nudge Theory is an idea which advocates influencing behaviour by altering the context or environment in which people choose (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008). By addressing the social norms of a person or group of people, you can influence the way that person or group think about things, and the way that they make decisions.
- Thaler, R & Sunstein, C (2008) Nudge: Improving decisions about health, wealth and happiness. New Haven: Yale University Press.



Nudge Theory and Rural Crime

- Despite the extensive use in policy-making, and the existence of a 'Nudge Unit' set up by the current government (Wintour, 2010), this approach has not been adopted in crime policy development, and in particular policies to assist in the reduction of the incidence of rural property crime.
- Wintour, P (2010) David Cameron's 'nudge unit' aims to improve economic behaviour. The Guardian: 9th September 2010 www.guardian.co.uk/society/2010/sep/09/cameron-nudge-unit-economic-behaviour accessed 18/10/2012



The Idea

- Is it asserted that, by identifying the reasons for the low levels of security adoption by farmers, this behaviour can be influenced using Nudge Theory in a way that changes the social norms of this group of people.



Objectives 1

- Firstly, an empirical analysis of rural crime using a systematic review of the existing evidence.
- Secondly, to assess the impact on the farming industry of low levels of on-farm security.



Objectives 2

- To ascertain whether farms are more likely to be targeted than other rural properties and which type of farm property is most vulnerable.
- Finally, to evaluate methods by which adoption of security measures can be promoted by appropriate policy mechanisms.



How will it be done?

- A systematic review of existing rural security literature and policies.
- An analysis of police data sets
- Face-to-face interviews, surveys, and focus groups of key stakeholders.
- Ex-offender interviews



Thank you for your attention



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