

Date 27 January 2016

Your Ref:

Our Ref: ACCLPN/DR/

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Dear Mrs Grahame

Agricultural / Rural Crime

In furtherance of the Justice Committee's ongoing consideration of agricultural / rural crime in Scotland, I would like to provide a further update on the significant progress being made in this vital area.

The Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime (SPARC) is now well established and, in addition to Police Scotland representatives, includes members from the National Farmers Union (Scotland), Scottish Land and Estates, Scottish Business Resilience Centre, Scottish Government, NFU Mutual Insurance, Confor (forestry), Crimestoppers, Neighbourhood Watch Scotland, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and Scottish Fire and Rescue.

Chaired by Chief Superintendent Gavin Robertson, this group continues to meet every six weeks in order to drive and support prevention, intelligence gathering and enforcement activity across Scotland.

There are now 13 local Rural / Wildlife Crime Governance Groups across Scotland, which were implemented according to a common 10-point plan

and are chaired by a member of the respective Police Scotland Divisional Command Team. These arrangements provide clear local leadership, governance and delivery, ensuring that local rural / wildlife crime issues can be identified and addressed by those who understand them best.

Partnership activity takes the form of prevention, investigation, intelligence gathering and enforcement, specifically targeting resources at the key rural crime issues affecting each local area.

You will recall that NFU Mutual claims data previously identified that, in early 2014, the theft of quad bikes and All Terrain Vehicles was increasing in Scotland despite a downward trend elsewhere in the UK.

I am pleased to report that, at the SPARC meeting on 26 January 2016, members were advised, by NFU Mutual, that its claims data showed that the partnership working driven and supported by SPARC is already showing what it described as "impressive results".

Quad bike / ATV theft claims for Scotland have decreased in number and value every month since July 2015 – a very welcome outcome in respect of one of the key aspects of rural crime affecting Scotland. However, we remain absolutely committed to continuing our collective drive to address rural crime issues and the attached briefing paper summarises some of the key activities being undertaken by SPARC and its members.

I trust that this provides an informative overview of the various initiatives being taken forward to further reduce the impact of rural crime on Scotland's communities.

Yours sincerely,


Kate Thomson
Assistance Chief Constable
Police Scotland East