

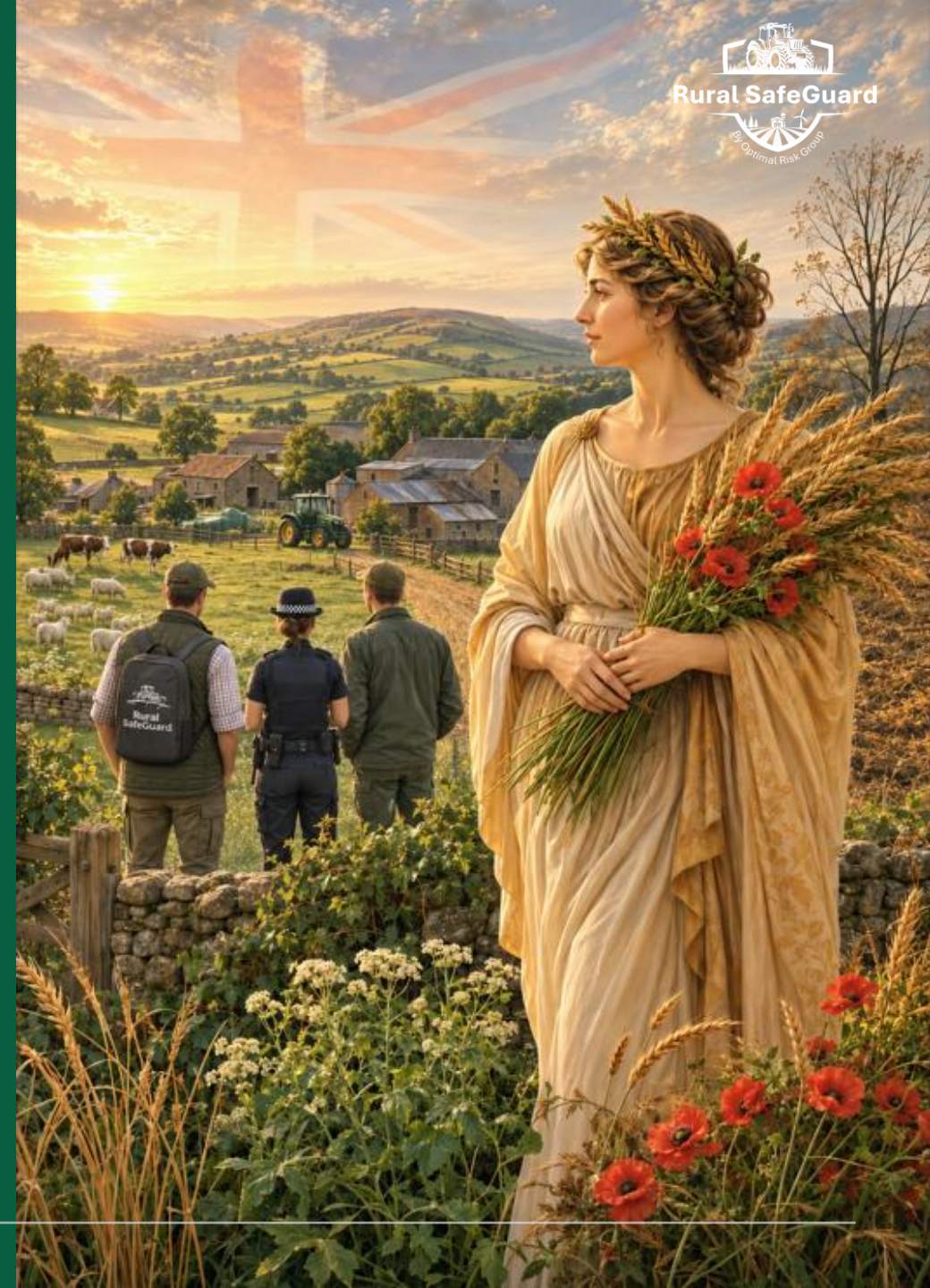
THE DEMETER INITIATIVE

*A Collaborative Approach to
Reduce the Rural Crime Risk*

An Optimal Risk Group Initiative

Version: 1. Dated: 1 August 2026

The Demeter Initiative, a Rural SafeGuard Proposal from the Optimal Risk Group



Executive Summary

BOTTOM LINE UP FRONT

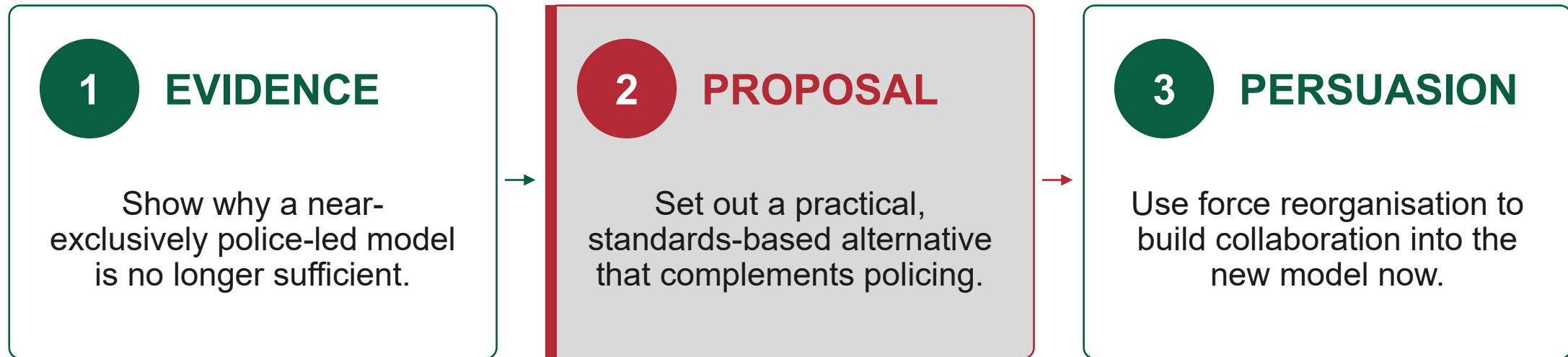
The Demeter Initiative proposes a paradigm shift: rural crime risk is not a problem for the police to solve alone, but a shared risk that HMG, farmers, landowners, insurers, academics, representative bodies, and the private security sector must manage together, using the disciplines of modern risk management rather than reactive police enforcement alone.

This programme is not designed to replace police enforcement. It is a complementary programme that addresses the left-hand side of the risk bowtie—the likelihood-reducing activity that a stretched, enforcement-led police service is not resourced to deliver at scale.



Purpose of the Initiative

To set out why the current, near-exclusively police-led model of rural crime reduction is no longer sufficient, to propose a practical alternative, and to persuade stakeholders that the pending reorganisation of policing is the moment to build this collaboration in.



Why Demeter

In Greek mythology, Demeter is the goddess of the harvest, of agriculture, and of the fertility of the earth.

Demeter's domain, the harvest and the fertility of the land, is precisely what today's rural crime threatens — and the myth's central lesson, that abundance and safety must be actively protected and periodically restored, mirrors the risk management principle that crime risk is never eliminated but must be continuously assessed and treated.

Harvest & Livelihoods

Livestock, machinery, crops, and the businesses built upon them.

Cycles of Loss, Protection & Renewal

Crime risk is never eliminated; it is continuously assessed and treated.

Community & Shared Protection

HMG, police, security professionals, insurers, membership bodies, academics, food retailers, and farmers acting together.

Rural Crime has a Human Cost



THE IMPACT GOES BEYOND FINANCIAL LOSS



Rural crime causes real psychological distress – anxiety, a sense of violation, and in some cases, more serious mental ill health.



These effects interact with the pressures of farming life, and a traditional rural masculine identity can discourage farmers – especially men – from seeking help.



Farming has one of the highest suicide rates of any occupational sector in the UK, and rural crime victimisation is a known contributing pressure. We must name this and address it.



REGAINING AND RETAINING CONTROL PROTECTS WELLBEING



Response planning and root-cause analysis help farmers regain and retain control of their business quickly after an incident.



This is a protective factor for mental health – not just an operational convenience.



YOU ARE NOT ALONE. HELP IS AVAILABLE. The Demeter Initiative signs farmers to established charities providing vital support.

RABI
helping farming people

Practical, emotional and financial support for farming people of all ages.

0800 188 4444
rabi.org.uk

YANA
RURAL SUPPORT NETWORK

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Peer support for anyone in agriculture feeling stressed, anxious or overwhelmed.

0300 323 0400
yanahelp.org

FCN
THE FARMING
COMMUNITY NETWORK

Confidential support and guidance for the farming community.

03000 111 999
fcn.org.uk

**FARM SAFETY
FOUNDATION**
YELLOW WELLIES

Helping farm families take action to improve health, safety and wellbeing.

01788 851 851
farmsafetyfoundation.org.uk



**OTHER REGIONAL
FARMING CHARITIES**

A network of charities across the UK providing local, practical support.

Find support in your area through The Demeter Initiative

Protecting farms includes protecting the people who keep them running.

Potential Stakeholders

Rural crime is a risk that has outgrown the response built to contain it.

Scope: acquisitive and organised rural crime

Future: start with farmyards and then expand to the wider rural economy



Vision – A Coalition of the Willing

A countryside in which the risk of crime to farms, rural businesses, and the people who depend on them is actively and continuously managed by a **coalition of the willing.**



WORKING TOGETHER TO REDUCE RURAL CRIME RISK

STRONGER TOGETHER • SHARED PURPOSE • SAFER RURAL COMMUNITIES



The Right Time. The Right Alignment. The Right Solution

Four National Priorities – One Shared Opportunity

1

POLICING REFORM – A ONCE-IN-A-GENERATION OPPORTUNITY

The Home Office is proposing to reorganise the current policing model – reducing the 43-county police forces to larger regional bodies.

Specialist units will be spun out to focus on the more serious, organised, and complex crimes.

Rural crime could be one of those specialist nationally led units.

Home Office

From local
to national:
a new model
for policing

White Paper
May 2025

2

SUPPORTING FOOD SECURITY AND PROFITABLE FARMS

FARMING ROADMAP 2050

Growing England's Future

HMG have just published the Farming Roadmap 2050: Growing England's Future for the next 25-years.

The Demeter Initiative could form part of this business risk reduction to remove one of the stressors that impact farm profitability.

Using public money to help create and maintain safe farms to enable them to deliver the food we eat.

Helps Food Security.

HM Government

3

NATIONAL RISK REGISTER 2026 – RURAL PRIORITIES RECOGNISED

HM Government

National Risk Register 2026

A secure
and resilient
United Kingdom

The UK National Risk Register 2026 explicitly names agricultural and rural exposures, including livestock health protection, agricultural disease management, and rural community resilience, as local priorities for named Local Resilience Forum areas.

4

INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT – BUILDING RESILIENCE FOR THE FUTURE

National Preparedness Commission

The relationship
between civil unrest
and food security
in the UK

May 2025

The Commission's independent assessment, drawing on interviews with over seventy stakeholders across government, industry, and academia, calls for:

- A Food Security and Resilience Act
- A National Food Security Council
- A shift from 'just-in-time' to 'just-in-case' resilience planning



THE DEMETER INITIATIVE CAN HELP DELIVER SUCCESS ACROSS ALL FOUR PRIORITIES.

Those working to implement or further develop the themes of all four papers or reports should consider the value that The Demeter Initiative could have in helping them deliver success.

The Demeter Initiative, and the additional capabilities it brings through the leveraging of the private security sector could be the difference.



ALIGNING
national priorities



REDUCING RISK
for farms and
communities



STRENGTHENING
food security and
resilience

What We're Asking of You

The Demeter Initiative asks the following from each principal stakeholder group.

HM Government

Endorse; appoint joint Defra/Home Office sponsorship; consider funding and policy inclusion.

NPCC / PCC / Police College

Endorse the risk-based model; appoint a police lead; support lawful information-sharing and accreditation review.

Farming Bodies

Endorse, appoint a lead, and part-fund reviews, workshops, and post-incident root-cause analysis.

Insurers

Recognise certification through premium incentives and share anonymised claims and incident data.

Food Retailers

Fund supplier-facing security services and embed rural crime risk within ESG and lifelong-learning support.

Security Sector

Supply suitably qualified and experienced (SQEP) rural crime specialists working to common standards.

Academia Continue research; consider embedding rural crime risk and business resilience education within agricultural and land-based courses.

Concept and Structure

The Initiative proposes three linked activities: a shared risk register at force or regional level; an accredited network of private security professionals; and a shared communications and education programme.

SHARED RISK REGISTER

Police intelligence and consent-based farm vulnerability data inform one another.

ACCREDITED PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

SQEP specialists deliver reviews and certification to a consistent standard.

COMMUNICATIONS & EDUCATION

Police, security, and farming bodies shift knowledge, habits, and reporting.

Governance and Partnership Principles

The Demeter Initiative is designed to sit alongside, not above, existing police governance. Nothing in this model requires an extension of police powers to private individuals, nor a need to dilute operational police independence.

POLICE GOVERNANCE

- Democratic mandate
- Operational independence
- Intelligence
- Enforcement
- Investigation



MEMORANDUM
OF UNDERSTANDING

DEMETER PARTNERSHIP

- Crime risk assessments
- Crime risk advice
- Education
- Behaviour change
- Certification to Standards

Information-sharing • Code of Conduct • Clear advisory / enforcement boundaries

Mirror Existing Partnerships

LEARN FROM EACH OTHER. PROTECT TOGETHER.

Rural crime policing should learn from the counter terrorism public policing-private security partnership;
both of which engage the communities they serve.



RURAL COMMUNITIES STRONGER TOGETHER SAFER TOGETHER

RURAL CRIME POLICING

- Engage rural communities and understand local challenges
- Work with farmers, land managers and rural businesses
- Partner with private security and other specialists
- Share information, build trust, reduce risk together

CT POLICE SPECIALIST

COUNTER TERRORISM POLICING

- Engage communities and understand local concerns
- Work with businesses, venues and local organisations
- Partner with private security and other specialists
- Share information, build trust, reduce risk together

DIFFERENT THREATS. SHARED PRINCIPLES.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT. PARTNERSHIP. TRUST. INFORMATION.
SAFER COMMUNITIES FOR ALL.

LEARN FROM BEST PRACTICE | **SHARE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE** | **BUILD STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS** | **ENGAGE AND EMPOWER COMMUNITIES** | **REDUCE RISK TOGETHER**

ONE APPROACH. ONE PARTNERSHIP. PROTECTING RURAL AND URBAN COMMUNITIES TOGETHER.

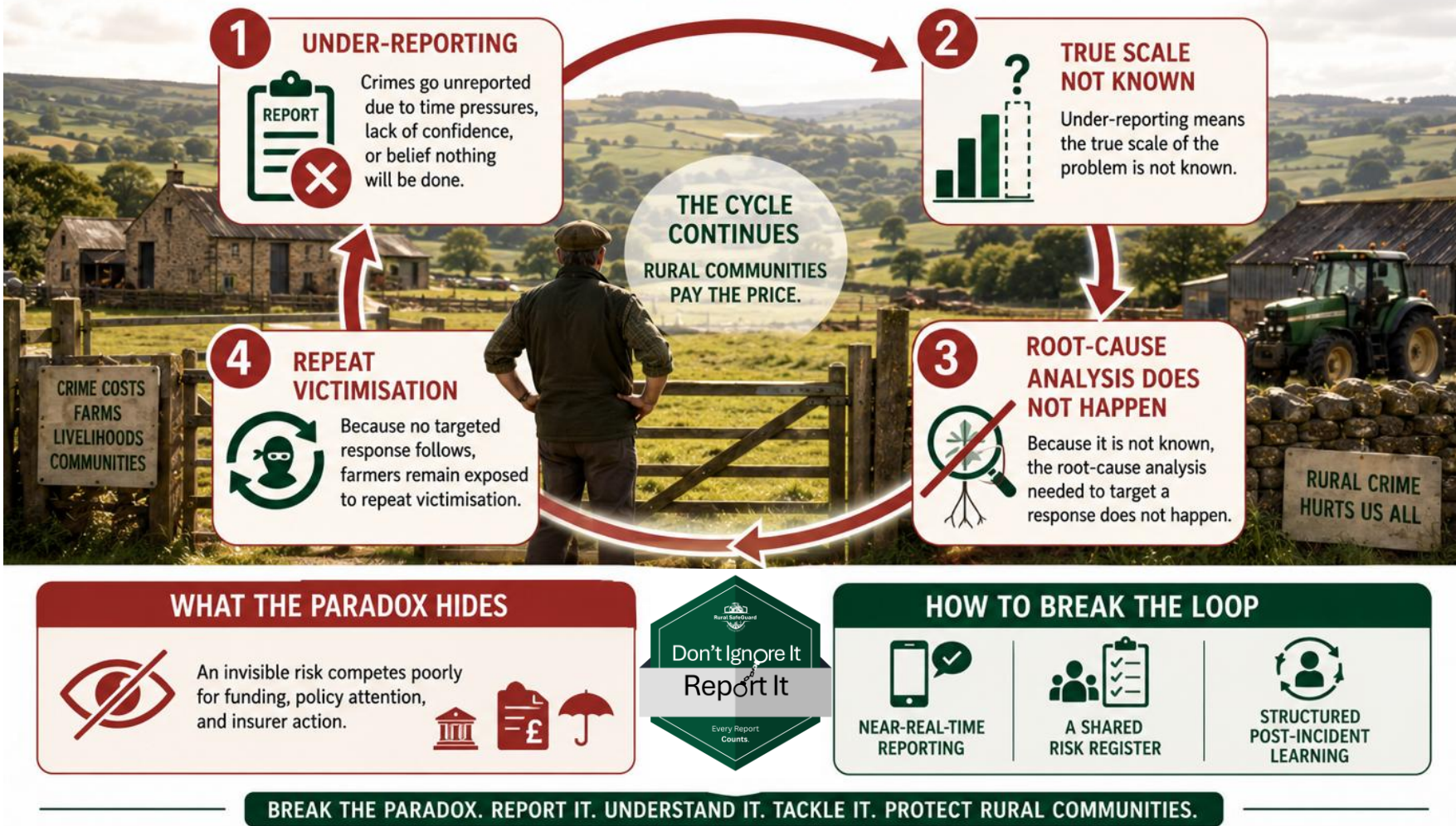
Counter Terrorist Police currently work alongside SQEP security professionals to protect public realm and create safe places.

Why not repeat this success across our rural communities?

The Rural Crime Paradox

THE RURAL CRIME PARADOX

A cycle of under-reporting that perpetuates rural crime



Under-reporting means the true scale of the problem is not known; therefore, a targeted response does not happen. The root-cause-analysis helps understand ‘*how*’ the crime occurred to influence change to help reduce the farmers’ exposure to repeat victimisation.

The Changing Character of the Threat

Organised groups can travel 100s of miles overnight to strike a target and be gone long before farmers or local police officers are even aware an offence has occurred.



1 ORGANISATION & MOBILITY



Hundreds of miles overnight; one group can cross four or five force areas.



2 TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED OFFENDING



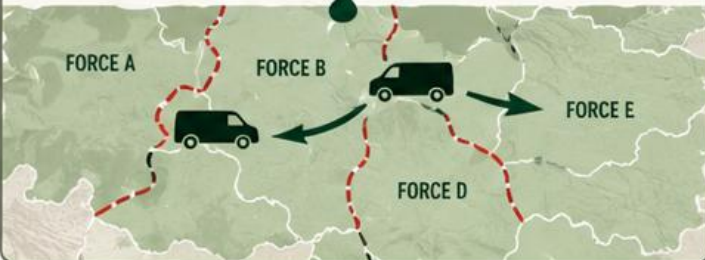
Tracking interference, social-media reconnaissance, satellite imagery, and online markets.



3 CAPACITY GAPS IN A 43-FORCE MODEL



Organised groups exploit seams between geographically bounded forces.





THE THREAT IS MOBILE. THE CRIMINALS ARE ORGANISED.
OUR RESPONSE MUST BE INTELLIGENT, CONNECTED AND COLLABORATIVE.



SHARE INTELLIGENCE



CLOSE THE GAPS



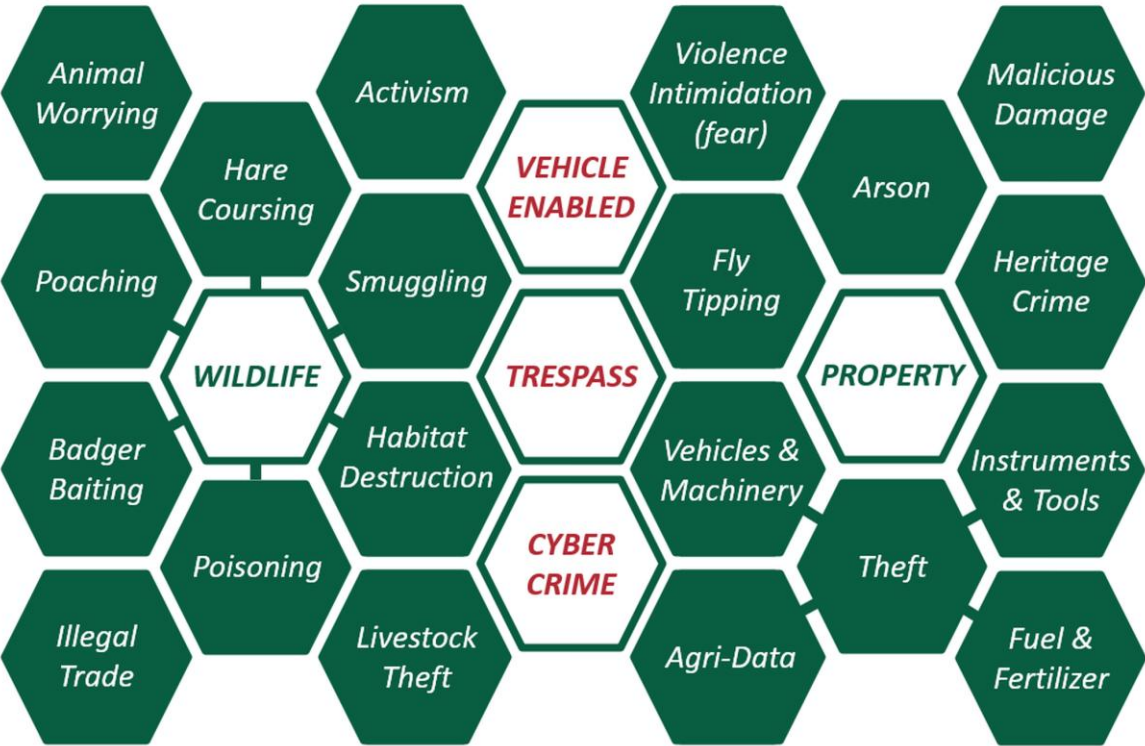
PROTECT RURAL COMMUNITIES



PROTECT OUR LIVELIHOODS AND FOOD SECURITY

The Crime Types to be Mitigated

This is not opportunistic; this is serious and organised and delivered with forensic precision.



MOSTLY VEHICLE-ENABLED EXCEPT CYBER CRIME & ANIMAL WORRYING

FORENSIC & SURVEILLANCE AWARE

Beyond a Policing-Only Model

Policing, however well resourced, is structurally only one part of a wider risk management system, not the whole of it.

A rural crime security specialist can help complete the service required.

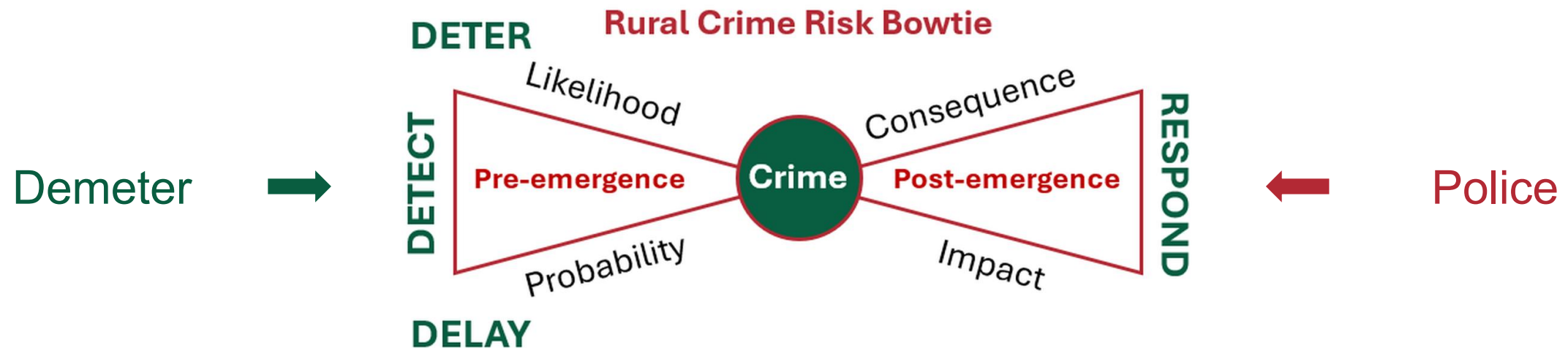


STRONGER TOGETHER. SAFER RURAL COMMUNITIES.



The Risk Bowtie: Moving Left of the Event

On the left-hand side of the diagram sit the threats and the likelihood-reducing controls; on the right-hand side sit the consequences and the mitigating controls.
Policing today sits almost exclusively on the right-hand side.



LEFT-HAND SIDE: LIKELIHOOD-REDUCING

RIGHT-HAND SIDE: CONSEQUENCE-MITIGATING

This complementary programme does not replace police enforcement. It resources the left-hand side of the bowtie [the likelihood-reducing activity that are stretched] where the enforcement-led police service is not resourced to deliver at scale.

An Intelligent, Organised, and Adaptive Adversary



Unlike the weather, safety hazards, or machinery failure, criminals actively probe for weaknesses and adjust their attack methods in response to defensive measures.



The Contribution of the Private Security Sector



FORMER POLICE PROFESSIONALS



- ✓ Criminal investigation
- ✓ Community engagement
- ✓ Evidence collecting
- ✓ Justice experience

Bringing policing skills, judgement and empathy to keep rural communities safer.

MILITARY VETERANS



- ✓ Defend in layers against an adversary
- ✓ Operational planning
- ✓ Mission focussed
- ✓ Use of force
- ✓ Shaping the ground

Trained to operate under pressure, plan ahead and adapt to the threat.

INDUSTRY SECURITY & RISK PROFESSIONALS



- ✓ Risk management
- ✓ Commercial proportionality
- ✓ Business resilience and continuity
- ✓ Continual review and improvement

Experienced in high-consequence industries, focused on resilience and results.



ALL THREE HAVE LEARNT TO ADAPT PRIOR LEARNING FOR TODAY'S SITUATION.

Many have studied their craft, understood the challenge, and delivered proven solutions in their current roles.

TURNING PROVEN EXPERIENCE INTO RURAL CRIME PROTECTION



A wealth of transferable skills, judgement and professional discipline built over years of service across policing, military and industry.

Specialist education to understand rural environments, farming operations, assets, vulnerabilities and the rural crime threat landscape.

Adapting methodologies, tools and strategies to the farmyard and rural workplace.

Identifying why incidents happen to better guide farmers in creating (and testing) their response plan to foreseeable risks.

STRONGER FARMS. SAFER COMMUNITIES. Resilient rural businesses, protected livelihoods and thriving rural economies.



ALL THIS CAN BE AVAILABLE AND APPLY TO THE AGRICULTURAL AND FARMING SECTORS.

DRAWN FROM LEADING PROFESSIONAL BODIES



The Security Institute

Setting standards, raising professionalism.



The Association of Security Consultants
Promoting excellence in security consultancy.



UK Chapter of ASIS International
Advancing security worldwide.



Worshipful Company of Security Professionals

Supporting the profession, serving the public.

RCSP

Register of Chartered Security Professionals
Setting the benchmark for chartered professionalism.



Most are academically and vocationally qualified



Operate to a shared code of professional conduct



Committed to integrity, duty and public trust.



PROVEN PEOPLE. PROVEN STANDARDS. PROTECTING RURAL LIVELIHOODS.



EXPERIENCE THAT MATTERS



KNOWLEDGE THAT PROTECTS



PARTNERSHIPS THAT DELIVER



COMMUNITIES THAT THRIVE

A substantial proportion of the United Kingdom's private security and risk management sector is made up of individuals on their second or third career.

Learning From Other High-Consequence Sectors

Agriculture is the slowest sector to establish this collaborative standards-based approach.

CONSTRUCTION

- Site boundary
- Controlled access
- Immobilisation
- Marked equipment
- Remotely monitored cameras
- Incident response



TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS

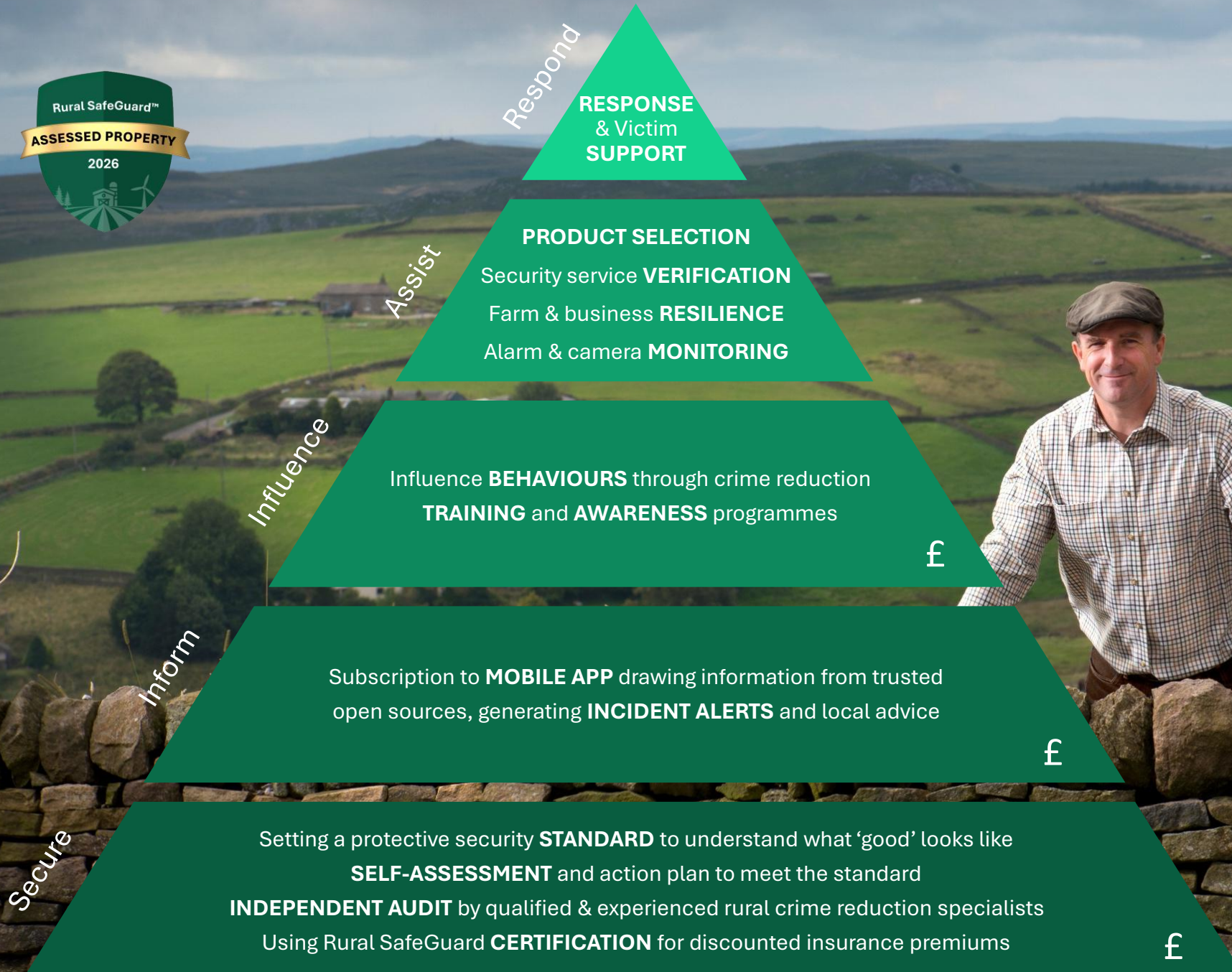
- Route risk assessment
- Secure yards
- Tracking and geofencing
- Driver behaviour training
- Incident response



AGRICULTURE

- Farm security review
- Farmyard boundary
- Control access
- Layered defences
- ALARP controls
- Incident response

Design-Out Crime At Manufacture: CESAR marking • tamper-resistant ignition • tracker-ready design

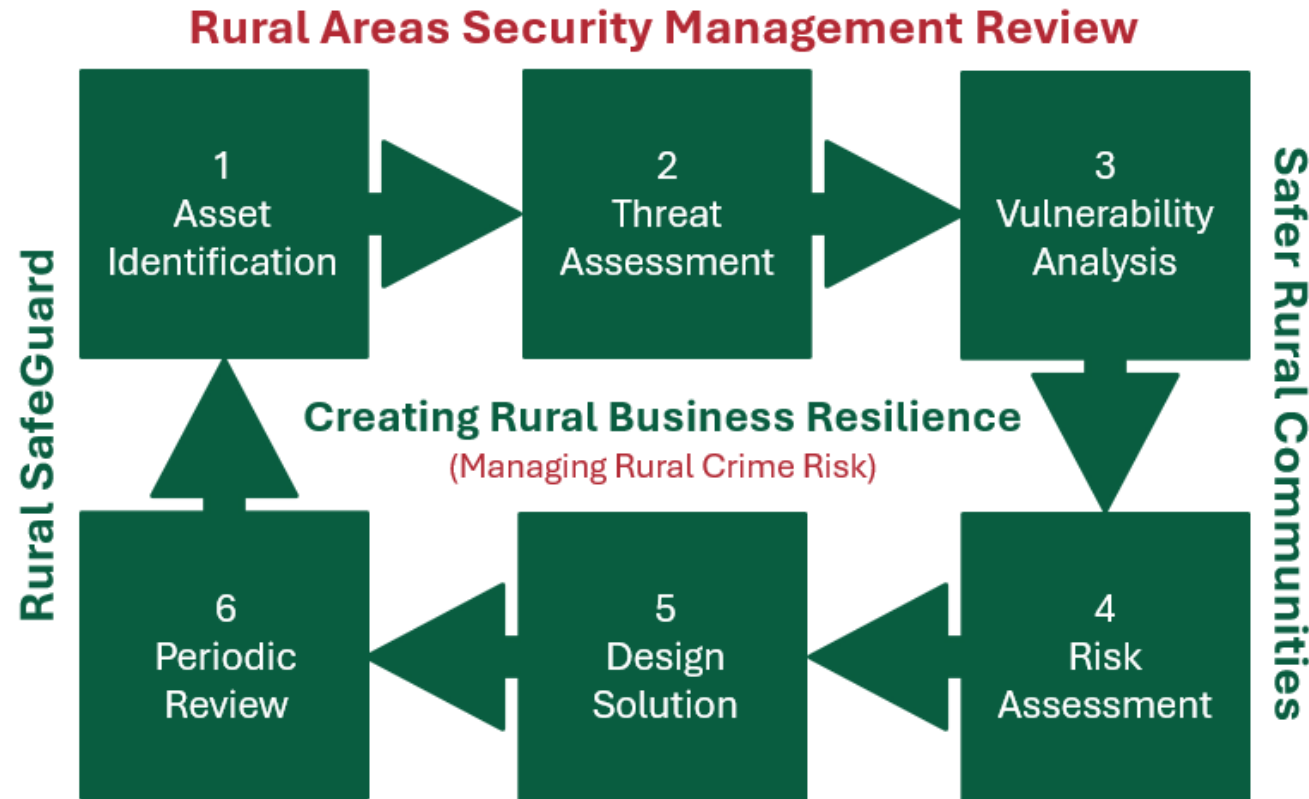


Rural SafeGuard is presented in this paper not as the only possible model for delivering The Demeter Initiative's principles, but as evidence that the model already works in practice.



Treating the Rural Crime Risk

Farms and rural cooperatives adopting this approach do not need to develop their own methodology from scratch. The Rural SafeGuard Farm Security Standard offers a ready-made, standards-based methodology.



ISO 31000 TREATMENT OPTIONS

Avoid

Accept / increase for opportunity

Remove the source

Change the likelihood

Change the consequences

Share learning

Retain (residual risk)

Overcoming Cultural Resistance to Change

Farmers are not resistant for no reason. Decades of low crime risk and the constant pressure of running a farm shaped behaviours that made sense – until the threat changed.

THEN: LOW CRIME RISK, LOCAL AND OPPORTUNISTIC BEHAVIOURS THAT MADE SENSE.

- Low crime risk
- Mostly local offenders
- Opportunistic and impulsive
- Gates open, keys in ignition
- Behaviours supported daily tasks around the farm

It'll be alright, we've always done it this way!

Rural communities seldom suffered with crime prior to improved road networks, advancements in technology, or when acquisitive crime was not organised or serious.

NOW: ORGANISED, MOBILE, TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED OUTLAWS A NEW REALITY REQUIRING A NEW RESPONSE.

- Organised and well-resourced
- Mobile – travel hundreds of miles
- Embrace technology for illegal business models
- Willing to work outside the law to thrive
- Outlaws in the very sense of the word

The threat has changed. The old ways no longer provide adequate protection for people, property or livelihoods.

INFLUENCE, DON'T IMPOSE

Help farmers choose change that makes sense for them.

- RETAIN CONTROL**
Support decisions without threatening ownership, responsibility or authority.
- MAKE IT RELEVANT**
Justification must be relevant to the individual farm and specific to the risks that need reducing.
- MAKE IT IMPORTANT**
It must matter to the farmer – protect what's important to them and their business.
- NO BLAME**
Change the situation, not the farmer.

HOW CHANGE MUST BE DELIVERED

- CONSISTENT**
Clear, aligned messages across all partners.
- SUSTAINABLE**
Ongoing engagement, not a one-off conversation.
- NOT REACTIVE**
Don't rely on a single visit after a crime or a leaflet left on the table.
- PARTNERSHIP APPROACH**
Work together, build trust, and understand the reality of farm life.
- PRACTICAL & PROPORTIONATE**
Solutions that fit the farm, the workload, and the level of risk.

THIS IS A CULTURE CHANGE – AND ONE THAT FARMERS WANT TO MAKE, BECAUSE THEY UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT OF NOT CHANGING BEHAVIOURS.

THE BENEFITS OF GETTING CHANGE RIGHT

- REDUCED RISK**
Protect people, property, livestock and livelihoods.
- GREATER RESILIENCE**
Stronger farms, stronger communities.
- PEACE OF MIND**
Confidence that you're in control.
- SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**
Safe today, secure for tomorrow.
- PROTECT WHAT MATTERS**
Your land, your business, your way of life.



TOGETHER, WE CAN BUILD A SAFER RURAL FUTURE – ON FARMS, IN COMMUNITIES, AND FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

Resistance to change is not careless; it's a rational response to how farming has always been.

“ This is about enabling farmers to protect what they've worked hard to build, in a way that works for them. ”



Education, Engagement and Proportionate Measures



**OBJECTIVE: NOT TO TURN EVERY FARMYARD INTO A FORTRESS.
OUR GOAL IS AS LOW AS REASONABLY PRACTICABLE (ALARP).**

ALARP

As Low As
Reasonably
Practicable

1. TRUSTED INTERMEDIARIES WITH EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS

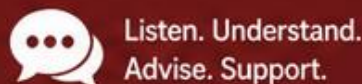


2. THE DEMETER INITIATIVE SPECIALIST SECURITY CONSULTANTS



THE DEMETER INITIATIVE

- ✓ Take time to walk the farm
- ✓ Engage with farmer and key staff
- ✓ Understand operations, people and assets
- ✓ Identify risks and vulnerabilities
- ✓ Share practical, affordable opportunities to improve defences



3. TAILORED, PROPORTIONATE SOLUTIONS – EVERY FARM IS UNIQUE



Probably the same ingredients, blended in a way that suits your risk appetite and budget.



Proportionate.
Affordable. Practical.
Sustainable.

4. PRACTICAL, WORKABLE DEFENCES THAT WORK



✓ Designed around farm routines and realities



✓ Easy to use and maintain



✓ Supports daily operations – not hinders them



✓ Value for money – no unnecessary complexity

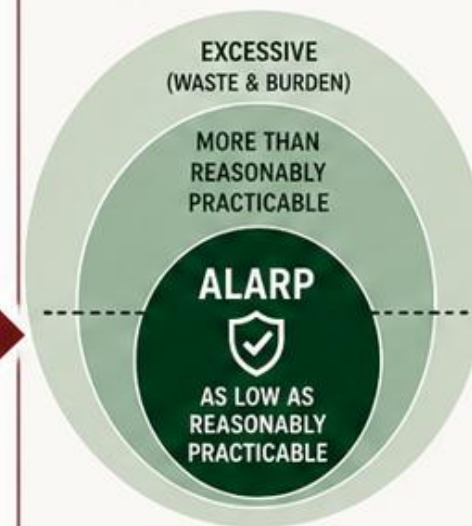


✓ Reviewed and improved over time



Practical. Proportionate.
Sustainable. Reviewed.

5. THE TARGET: A WORKING FARM WITH PROPORTIONATE DEFENCES



Realistic defences that protect people, property and livelihoods without unnecessary cost or disruption.



A Safer Farm.
A Stronger Future.
Sustainable Protection.

National Guidance & Proven Standards

The Demeter Initiative aims to bring together national guidance, expert advice, and industry standards to deliver tailored, affordable, and sustainable security for every farm

1 NATIONAL PROTECTIVE SECURITY AUTHORITY (NPSA)



National Protective Security Authority



UK-wide guidance on protecting people, property and assets from a range of threats. Its methodology maps directly onto the farm security review process.



Understand the asset base, assess threat and vulnerability, and design proportionate, layered physical and procedural protection.



Guidance on perimeter protection, access control, lighting design and secure storage – readily adaptable to farmyards, grain stores and machinery sheds.



An existing, authoritative, government-backed resource the private security sector can draw on – not reinvent.



Addresses more than crime: includes risks from serious and organised crime, terrorists and lone actors.



Accredited rural crime specialists (regional model) provide a key resource for Counter Terrorism Security Advisors (CTSOs).



Aligns directly with NPSA and CTSOs to protect people, property, assets and critical supplies.

2 NATIONAL CYBER SECURITY CENTRE (NCSC)



National Cyber Security Centre
a part of GCHQ



Modern farms rely on connected technology. Cyber risks are real, growing and often overlooked in physical-only reviews.



Covers GPS-guided machinery, telematics, livestock monitoring, online banking and record-keeping.



Addresses cyber risks such as device spoofing or jamming, phishing, and invoice fraud – common threats to smaller businesses.



Provides clear, proportionate guidance for small and medium enterprises – non-technical and practical.



An integrated approach ensures the four pillars – people, property, information and business viability – are protected together.



Physical and cyber security together = one integrated plan, not separate workstreams.

3 SECURED BY DESIGN (SBD)

Secured by Design



Official Police Security Initiative



Practical, police-backed tools to embed security into buildings, products and practices from the start.



Design Guides for architects, developers and police Designing Out Crime Officers (DOCs) to embed security from the earliest design stage.



Police Preferred Specification (PPS) accreditation scheme – an independent basis for choosing tested and certified security products.



Rural and agricultural security advice covering farmyard access, equipment marking and fuel security.



Recommends PPS products to build practical, layered defences as set out in Section 8.2.



Use SBD guidance and PPS products alongside RSG 1001:2026 as the primary reference point.

An Information Sharing Platform



ProtectUK ... is the clearest working example in the UK of a public-private partnership delivering education, training, and a single trusted channel ... and it is the model The Demeter Initiative proposes as the template for an equivalent rural crime platform.

PROTECTUK – EXISTING AND OPERATIONAL

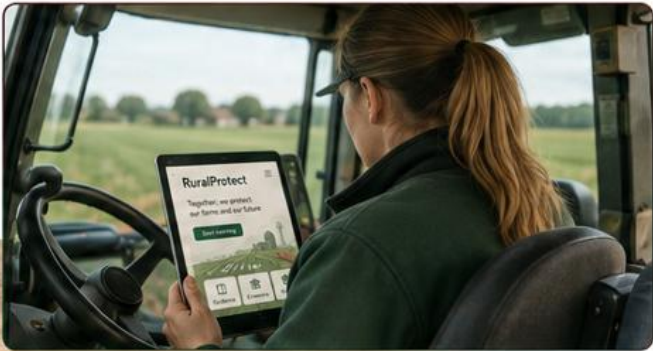


- Authoritative guidance
- Free e-learning
- Reporting tools
- Single trusted channel
- Police / government / Pool Re partnership

PROPOSED RURAL CRIME PLATFORM – ASPIRATIONAL BUT NOT YET FUNDED



- Sector-specific guidance
- E-learning based on awareness workshop syllabus
- Crime and near-miss reporting
- Response planning and signposting
- One trusted channel for rural users



ACCESSIBLE ACROSS ALL DIGITAL DEVICES. ANYTIME. ANYWHERE.

Partner Sponsorship Opportunities

Insurers, food retailers, and farming membership bodies can obtain benefits by sponsoring elements of The Demeter Initiative and convert them into direct financial incentive, through premium discounts for farms that complete an accredited security review or achieve a recognised certification standard.



RURAL INSURER:

- ✓ Recognise accredited reviews and certification to help offer premium incentives.
- ✓ Receive anonymised data to help assess crime risk.



FOOD RETAILER AND MEMBERSHIP BODIES:

- ✓ Demonstrate social value and direct support to their supplier cohort, cooperative, county, or members.
- ✓ Create a community and trusted relationship.

IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

1 PILOT & PROOF OF CONCEPT

Volunteer police forces recognise SQEP security professionals and partners under an MoU and test limited, consent-based intelligence and farm review data sharing.

2 STANDARDISATION & ACCREDITATION

Agree a national public police-private security partnership approach based on demonstrated ability to deliver the farm review and certification pathway.

3 NATIONAL ROLL-OUT

Build shared risk registers, accredited partners (police, security, academic), and customer and insurer-linked incentives into reorganised police and farming planned structures from the outset.

CALL TO ACTION



ENDORSE

Respond to The Demeter Initiative and appoint a lead to join the coalition of the willing.



SPONSOR

Fund a costed service or platform workstream.



PILOT

Volunteer police force, retailer, insurer, and farmer cohort.

POLITICAL
MINISTER

Ask me how
to reduce
rural crime

FARM
MEMBERSHIP
OFFICIAL

FOOD
RETAILER

RURAL
INSURER

ACADEMIC

Contact and Next Steps

Stakeholders are invited to treat this document as an invitation to shape, test, and adopt The Demeter Initiative, not as a finished blueprint.

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Visit Us

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