



## **Farm Security: Smile! You're on Camera – Part 1**

*The second installment will focus on system options.*

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There's nothing like a farm theft to make you feel like a victim rather than a manager. Millions of dollars in equipment are stolen from farms annually across Canada, resulting in high replacement costs, insurance increases and unnecessary stress for farmers and their families. A farm security system deters theft on your farm, provides a record for the police if a theft occurs, and offers peace of mind when you're away from your property. A picture is worth a thousand words, but a video clip will give the authorities what they require to get a warrant. Security cameras for livestock barns are also great for keeping you updated during calving and lambing seasons to reduce evening trips to the barn to check on progress.

It's no secret that farms contain large amounts of expensive and portable equipment, making them targets for theft. Every farm workshop has thousands of dollars of tools, welders, generators, and compressors, not to mention hobby toys like quads, sleds and motorcycles. Bold thieves have recently stolen larger items like tractors, GPS systems, and field equipment. Unmonitored equipment sheds and fuel tanks are vulnerable to impulse theft and more calculated incursions.

It isn't practical to lock doors on a 24-hour-a-day farm operation, so security cameras can provide a second set of eyes to monitor properties around the clock, record the footage for up to a month, and - if connected through your home internet - allow you to see live feeds on your phone from anywhere connected to cell or Wi-Fi service. A farm security camera system can deter intruders who want to sneak onto your property. Two conspicuously placed cameras pointed at the driveway can keep everyone on their best behaviour and act as a reminder that activity on the premises is recorded. A multi-camera security system will capture an image of them or their vehicle for further investigation. With a mobile app on your phone and instant security alerts activated, you can see farm security footage live on your phone, no matter where you are. Opt for automatic alerts every time movement is detected in specific areas. And it's not just about theft; there is peace of mind in knowing the feed truck arrived or the service technician left.

## **Rural Security Cameras - Protect your farm assets and:**

- Capture your driveway and yard, and record all vehicles, licence plates, and potential faces of criminal offenders.
- Monitor inside key buildings for a record of what moved when.
- Monitor fuel storage, feed bins, and dump pits.
- Record who comes and goes on the farm, visits and length of stay, including suppliers' service trucks, feed deliveries, etc.
- Remotely monitor livestock areas inside or out.
- Monitor key livestock areas like robot stations or birthing pens.

## **What Equipment Do I Need? – From simple to complex**

The most important features of a system include remote viewing from a phone and some level of recording capability. It's crucial that you have a recording and the ability to save that record if there is an incident.

- **Simplest:** The simplest systems use an inexpensive Wi-Fi camera connected to your house Wi-Fi connections and then to your phone with some cloud recording capability.
- **Recommended:** A hard drive recorder in your house or office with a combination of wired or wireless cameras. This system is then connected to the home internet for remote access.
- **More Complex:** You may need a cellular-based system and solar-powered cameras if you do not have Wi-Fi, have a large service area requirement, or have a remote location.

**Do I need to pay monthly monitoring fees?** – No, most systems can be managed on your own as there is going to be movement on a farm, and every activity is not a threat. An empty house is different from a farm. Depending on the system, you will pay for hardware and perhaps a remote cellular connection.

Farm security cameras are proving to be useful in deterring rural crime. Modern camera systems can help catch criminals in action, record details for police follow-up, provide significant benefits in your day-to-day management of animals and offer you a new peace of mind that comes from being able to see your yard when you're not there. Check-in on activities that are scheduled to happen and those that are not. For example, did the trailer get picked up on time? Was fuel or feed delivered today? Has the cow started calving?

There is a huge responsibility in owning a farm. Technology can help share the load by enabling you to view the inside of the barn, shed or farm yard when you can't be physically present. Yes, it's about security, but it's more about management and seeing what's happening in your barn, shed, or yard.

*Watch for part two to learn how Ontario farmers use video monitoring on their farms. Visit [www.farmfoodcare.on.org](http://www.farmfoodcare.on.org) for additional resources on emergency management, security and farm power systems.*