

CHAPTER 16

SECURITY ON FARMS AND SMALLHOLDINGS

INTRODUCTION

It became very clear to the Committee at a very early stage of its enquiry that security measures on many farms and smallholdings were inadequate or even totally absent. The case studies that the Committee undertook showed that a large proportion of properties attacked had no security measures at all, while others only had rudimentary security systems in place. Even on those farms where nominally there were good security systems, they were often out of order or not being utilised by the farmer.

In several of the reports on farm attacks issued by the Crime Information Analysis Centre, reference is made to the lack of security on farms in general.¹ All the investigating officers interviewed and many other police officials who made submissions to the Committee, also expressed great concern about the lack of security on many farms. These persons are all very experienced in the field of farm attacks, and great weight must be attached to their views even though they are subjective opinions. It would nevertheless be useful to have objective data on farm security.

Nominally the database used by NOCOC should contain information regarding the security on all farms that have been attacked. When the Committee examined the database, however, it turned out that that particular field had not been properly covered. Fortunately some studies specifically concentrating on farm security have been undertaken.

STUDY BY CHIEF JOINT OPERATIONS

Col. B.J. Schoeman, a member of the SANDF and attached to Chief Joint Operations, conducted such a survey on farms attacked during 1999 and 2000.² He found that on the majority of farms that suffered attacks there had been inadequate security measures. For the purposes of the survey he set the following protection standards:

- Burglar bars of a certain minimum strength should be fitted to at least all opening windows. If there is an internal security gate separating the sleeping quarters from the living quarters, all the opening windows in the sleeping quarters must be burglar proof.
- Security doors must be fitted to all outside doors or, if there are no security doors, the outside doors must have additional locking devices as a minimum requirement.
- External lights must be installed at least at all outside doors, but should preferably be installed all round the house and at the gate. The lights must be controlled from inside the house and must allow observation from the house through the windows without silhouetting the observer.

¹ See, for example, CIAC Report no 1/1999 *Attacks on farms and smallholdings* (CIAC 1999, compiled by Supt J.C. Strauss) p 9.

² Col B.J. Schoeman, interview and written presentations on 2003-02-13

- Dogs or geese must be kept to act as an early warning system. At least two capable dogs or at least five geese are required for this purpose.
- There should be a fence around the yard with a lockable gate. The dogs or geese should be kept inside this area.
- A communication system such as a Telkom landline is essential, with an alternative such as a radio or cellular telephone.

Col. Schoeman studied 810 incidents of farm attacks which occurred during 1999. He found that in no fewer than 454 incidents (56%) the security measures did not meet the standards set out above. Furthermore, in 162 cases (20%) where the protection levels were up to standard they were either not utilised, e.g. doors being left open, or else they were not functional due to neglect, e.g. broken bulbs in external lights not being replaced. In 32 incidents (4%) it was not possible to determine the level of protection.

In the 454 cases where the protection level was deficient, the biggest problems were as follows:

- In 431 cases (53.2% of the total) no burglar bars were installed at all.
- In 451 cases (55.7%) there were no security doors.
- In 411 cases (50.7%) there was no or inadequate fencing.
- In 387 cases (47.8%) the victims did not have dogs at all. In another 99 cases the dogs were inefficient, and if these cases are also taken into account, the number of farmers without suitable watchdogs increases to 486 or 60%.

Col. Schoeman also commented on the fact that almost 40% of the victims actually had adequate protection, but were nevertheless attacked successfully by the intruders. Good security systems by themselves are therefore no guarantee against attacks – the mindset of the victims in terms of mental preparedness also plays a significant role.

In terms of provincial spread, the best protected farms were in KwaZulu-Natal, with the worst in the Free State and Northern Cape. Security in Limpopo and North West Province also did not have the required quality of protection. In Mpumalanga the protection levels varied dramatically between extremely high and virtually none. In Gauteng and the Western Cape, the smallholdings in the more affluent areas were extremely well protected, although elsewhere the protection varied between reasonable to poor.

At a national level there is a correlation between the quality of protection and the levels of victimisation. (This simply means that the better the security the less will be the chance of being attacked.) In Gauteng there is a deviation to this pattern, however, in that in the Wierdabrug and De Deur areas, which are both hotspots in terms of farm attacks, victimisation occurred to about an equal degree in the well protected and the badly protected smallholdings.

Colonel Schoeman repeated the survey during 2000. He found that the security situation had virtually not changed – there was a deviation of less than 1% which, statistically, was not significant.

STUDY BY CIAC, EASTERN CAPE

Inspector P.deJ. Cronje (now Captain) from the CIAC office in the Eastern Cape coordinated an exhaustive research study during 2001 on security on all farms in the 21 police precincts, making up the Karoo SAPS Area of the Eastern Cape. He compiled separate but similar reports for each of those precincts under the title 'Identifying and addressing farm attack risk factors'. Although the reports were classified as secret, due to the sensitivity of the information in them, they were made available to the Committee and the Committee was given permission to publish some of the information.

The reports stresses that the police can do little about the reasons motivating criminals to commit farms attacks. They can play a meaningful role in preventing this crime, however, by pro-actively identifying possible targets and taking preventative measures. The purpose of the study therefore was to identify the farms most at risk, to enable the police to implement a suitable strategic safety plan, to bring security in the area to an acceptable standard, and to thwart the threat of crime displacement. The research was therefore practice-oriented. It should also be emphasised that the research study was based on accepted criminological theory, which will be discussed below.

For the purposes of the study each precinct was asked to identify risk factors which they thought were applicable to their particular circumstances. These factors were then evaluated in terms of known farm attack intelligence and their relevance was also evaluated in terms of applicable criminological theories. Thirteen risk factors were found to be universally applicable to all precincts, while in two precincts three additional risk factors were included.

The risk factors were then incorporated in a research questionnaire, and each of all the permanently occupied farms in the area, numbering some 1614, was visited individually by field workers. The survey therefore involved not just a sample but the universum. Only the security measures at the main homesteads were investigated, as it was assumed that they represented relative wealth in the eyes of the rural criminal to a far greater extent than other houses such as the farm workers' cottages. Where the main house was occupied by employees, however, it was included in the survey.

After the field studies and completion of the questionnaire, the total risk factor for each farm was calculated, each positive risk being given one point. Many farms had a risk factor of 9 out of 13. None was rated with zero risk, although a couple had only one risk factor present. The average for the risk factors for all the farms in the particular precinct was then calculated. The thirteen generally applicable risk factors and their importance, also from a criminological point of view, will be discussed in greater detail later. At this stage it will suffice to give the results of the survey.

The average results for all 1614 farms in the 21 precincts were as follows:

No signs warning trespassers to keep out	83.0%
No proper fencing around homestead	45.5%
No proper fencing at houses of employees	79.5%
No or unlocked home yard gates	72.8%
No or ineffective guard dogs	55.1%
No or unlocked door security gates	41.2%

No burglar proofing at all windows	60.8%
No proper external lighting	29.7%
No monitored alarm system	70.0%
Farms with persons of 60 years or older	19.5%
Farms occupied by single residents	5.8%
Farms with shops or stalls	2.9%
Farms subjected to crimes during 2001	25.2%

The risk factors will be discussed below in greater detail under security measures, and their importance from a criminological point of view will also be pointed out.

After analysing the results of the survey, a rural crime prevention strategy for each precinct was then formulated for 2002, setting out the objectives, strategy, responsibilities and time frames. An objective, for example, might be to improve crime intelligence capacity in rural areas. The strategy might then be to involve farm workers in the Rural Safety Plan, the responsibility might be allocated to SAPS and farmers' associations, and the time frame might be to promote it during farm patrols and at meetings. Typically 20 or 25 objectives might be set for a precinct. Again, for safety reasons, the specifics of those objectives cannot be published.

Two modes of evaluating the crime prevention strategy are to be used in the project. Process evaluation is to be carried out continuously to determine whether the action plan is being implemented correctly by the station commissioner. Impact evaluation will assess the outcome of the strategy by comparing statistical data. This will require follow-up research. (This has not yet been completed.)

In conclusion the reports note that by improving security on a specific farm, crime may be displaced to a neighbour who is a softer target. The security standards of the whole community must therefore be increased to an acceptable level. Disinterested farmers should therefore not be sidelined, but rather assisted and encouraged to co-operate.

Reference should be made to another study conducted by CIAC in the Eastern Cape during 1998.³ The study concentrated on three aspects, namely whether farms were sufficiently safety conscious, whether farms owned a large number of firearms and whether farmers had sufficient capacity to communicate with the outside world. A total of 207 farms were visited, and the results of the survey are given in the following table.

Watch dogs not efficient	60%
Homes with no security gates	55%
Security gates found open	56%
Homes without burglar proofing	58%
Homes without external lighting	39%
Farmers not carrying firearms	81%
Farmers with five or more firearms	50%
Firearms not stored in a safe	8%
Women found alone on farm	19%
Women alone with open doors	46%
Farms with only telephone communication	17%

³ See CIAC *Attacks on Farms and Smallholdings* (Report No 1 of 1999 compiled by Supt. J.C. Strauss)

It was also found that 79% of the farms had a citizens band, Marnet or Nearnnet radio systems, while 15% had cellular telephones.

As a result of the findings the 1999 CIAC report made certain suggestions to enhance security on farms and smallholdings, which will also be discussed under the section on security measures.

Comparison between the Eastern Cape and the national studies

It is somewhat problematic to draw a comparison between the national and the Eastern Cape Karoo surveys, because different criteria were used to evaluate the various factors. Nevertheless, the results were as follows (see Table 53):

Table 53

Security levels nationally compared to Eastern Cape			
National		Eastern Cape Karoo	
No burglar bars at all, even at opening windows	53.2%	No burglar bars or burglar bars not covering non-opening windows	60.8%
No security doors or doors with extra locks at all	55.7%	No security doors or security doors not locked	41.2%
No fencing and gates to keep dogs or geese inside	50.7%	No security fencing or gates not locked	45.5%
No or ineffective watch dogs	60.0%	No or ineffective watch dogs	55.1%

It will be seen that on a national level the security measures in three of the four of the categories are inferior to those on the Eastern Cape Karoo farms. The only exception was in respect of burglar bars, but different tests were applied: in the national study only the opening window had to be covered. In the Eastern Cape fixed windows also had to be protected. In all likelihood, their figure would have been considerably lower if only opening windows had been taken into account. Furthermore, in the Eastern Cape study the fact that the security doors and gates were unlocked was taken into account when considering the effectiveness of the measure, but not in the national study. The discrepancy in the figures is therefore likely to be larger than indicated in the table.

These figures may be significant when the preventative effect of security measures on farm attacks is evaluated, because the national survey only included farms which had been attacked, while the Eastern Cape survey included all farms in a specific area. One is therefore tempted to say that the figures indicate that attacks tend to occur on farms where the security is not so good.

This may well be the case, although Col. Schoeman stresses that the security measures on farms differ widely from area to area and even within the same area. It is also difficult to make direct comparisons without knowing what the incidence of farm attacks in terms of

the number of farms is. The incidence of farm attacks in the Eastern Cape Karoo can be established very accurately. They had an average of about 3.4 attacks per year on the 1614 farms during the period 1995 to 2001. A farm therefore has a chance of about .2% (one in five hundred) of being attacked in any specific year. However, it is very difficult to calculate the incidence of farm attacks nationally in this fashion, since it is unknown how many farms there are and how many are inhabited.

THE NEED FOR SECURITY

The two national surveys by Chief Joint Operations and the two surveys by the Eastern Cape office of CIAC, confirm what investigating officer after investigating officer has told the Committee, namely that on many farms security measures are totally inadequate or even non-existent. It is probably the single most important aspect which needs urgent and immediate attention, irrespective of what the underlying causes of farm attacks might be. It does not matter whether farm attacks are politically or racially inspired, or whether they are motivated by the hunger for land or by the socio-economic plight of the underprivileged, or whether they are merely manifestation of greedy, criminal behaviour: proper security measures are essential.

There may be several reasons for this state of affairs. Firstly, traditionally farms used to be regarded as safe havens, compared to the crime ridden urban areas. There was a time when farmers could leave their property without even locking the door but that is no longer the case. This applies especially to the white farming community. In fact, there are indications that a white farmer and his family may be more at risk than his counterpart living in a small town or a village. There are no definite statistics available, but several commanding officers of Serious and Violent Crime Units are of the opinion that a white farmer has a far greater chance of being murdered than a white town dweller.⁴ Yet many of those white farmers still harbour the view that, because they have a right to feel safe on their own farms, they have no personal responsibility towards their own safety. (Unfortunately, it is impossible to draw a comparison between city dwellers and farmers.)

Secondly, it is often said that proper security is expensive and that many farmers simply cannot afford it. There can be no doubt that the best of the security systems are very expensive, both in terms of installation costs and in terms of running costs. On the other hand, some security measures are cheap, and some in fact cost just about nothing at all. There is therefore no excuse for not being security conscious.

Thirdly, some persons have even expressed the view that security systems may be counter-productive, because they lead the would-be attackers to believe that there must be a great deal of money or firearms which need protection on the property. This is clearly a fallacy, since if the theory was correct, one should leave all the windows open and the doors unlocked.

Fourthly, many farmers think they can rely on their firearms for protection against farm attacks. The problem is that most farm attacks are sprung as a surprise and usually at a moment when the victim is unarmed. Furthermore, it is not often that the rest of the

⁴ Interviews with Supt. Mabula, North West Serious and Violent Crime Unit, Capt. Koekemoer, Limpopo SVCU and Capt van Zyl, Mpumalanga SVCU, on 2003-02-10

farmer's family, especially his wife and daughter, are proficient in the handling of firearms. Also, some firearms, such as hunting rifles, are not suitable for self-defence. It is a legal requirement that weapons not carried on a person must be safely stored in a safe. It may not be so easy to get hold of a firearm when it is really needed.

Fifthly, the argument is raised that no security system is impenetrable. They point to cases where even electrical fences around the homesteads did not deter the intruders and they say other forms of security help even less. The fact of the matter is that the criminal will follow the course of least resistance. Of course no security system can be completely effective, but it will make life more difficult for intruders. As we have seen above (*see p 00*) criminals follow the route of least resistance, and if things are made too difficult for them they will look for other softer targets.

A corollary to the above argument is the fact that not all farm attacks take place inside the house. In fact, from the official report of CIAC on farm attacks during 2001 it appears that only 50.8% of all farm attacks are initiated inside the house, 29.2% start outside the house, while the rest (20%) take place at a gate, in the fields somewhere on the farm, at the farm shop or office, etc. This does not mean that house security becomes less important. Furthermore, many of the security measures will also assist in curbing attacks outside the home, and in respect of the others certain precautionary measures can also be taken.

The Committee was told by a prominent representative of the Transvaal Agricultural Union that suggestions for better security would not be a solution to the problem of farm attacks, because that would not remove the root causes. (It should be mentioned immediately that that particular organisation has in fact done much to promote security on the farms.) The fact of the matter is that there is no grand solution to the problem. The problem is multi-faceted and should be tackled in a multi-faceted and multi-disciplinary way as well. From a security point of view, however, it is irrelevant whether farm attacks are caused by common criminality, the desire to drive the farmer off the land or for any other sinister reason.

If it is accepted that the greater majority of farm attacks are the product of common criminality, it follows that farm attacks will only be stopped effectively when crime in South Africa as a whole is eliminated. That will never happen, and there will always be farm attacks. One can only endeavour to curb farm attacks as much as possible. Even if it is accepted that farm attacks are largely due to some hidden force with political motives, that is clearly not something that can be tackled in the short term. In the short and medium terms at least, upgrading security on the farms is the single most effective way to resist the scourge of farm attacks.

Many farmers, like many other citizens of the country, say that it is the Government's responsibility to curb crime and to protect them. It is irrelevant whether this is true or not: the fact is that the Government cannot do this. Farmers must care for their own protection: that is the warning going out from many quarters.⁵

Until now the Commandos have played a major part in the pro-active as well as reactive support of the farmers against farm attacks. It was announced on 2003-02-17 by the Minister for Safety and Security that the commando system was to be abolished and their

⁵ See 'Boer moet self vir beskerming sorg' in *Lanbouweekblad* 2002-07-22

functions were to be taken over by crime prevention units of the police.⁶ Widespread concern has been raised by various people, but especially organised agriculture, that the withdrawal of the commandos would leave a vacuum in rural protection and that the police has neither the capacity nor the experience to take over this function. The assurance has been given by SAPS that this will never happen: the change-over will take place over six years, and the police will only take over if they have the capacity.⁷ The fact of the matter is that no-one can say what will happen, but it would be naive to assume that a change of this magnitude will take place without a hitch.

The studies referred to above all indicate the type of security measures that farmers should be looking at. Some suggestions made by the Eastern Cape CIAC office are to be found in CIAC's 1999 report on farm attacks⁸ During 2001 the SAPS, SANDF and Agri SA, with contributions from TAU, jointly issued an excellent booklet 'National guidelines for farm and smallholding protection'. Recommendations for improving farm security have also been made in several other publications. In a series of very instructive articles in the *Landbouweekblad*, written by C. van Rooyen with the assistance of J. Geldenhuys, a security and self-defence expert⁹, and various other persons, some important aspects of farm security are discussed. These ideas will be discussed below.

A good farm security system will include proper security fencing with lockable gates, effective watch dogs, alarm systems, burglar bars, etc. Personal safety may be further ensured by effective radio communication, cellular telephones, firearms and self defence training. A security network with the security forces and neighbours is important, as is the involvement of other farm residents and especially the employees. Safety conscious habits are also important.

Furthermore, other factors which may increase the risk of farm attacks should be identified. A single resident on a farm is a more likely target for an attacker, as are elderly people. A farm shop or stall, or simply selling farm produce out of hand, poses an increased security risk. The fact that the farm is situated near a major public road or a railway line may entail an increased risk. An area where criminals and gangs operate, such as an informal settlement, may pose a security threat. Obviously, when there is an increased risk from whatever source, the security measures have to be stepped up.

Some of these measures are discussed below. It is impossible to implement all of them and to do so will make daily life on a farm intolerable. Some measures may simply be impracticable or too expensive. If there is one point of criticism that can be levelled against some of the publications mentioned above, it is that they sometimes appear too demanding, causing the farmer to throw his hands into the air in despair. It may be better to have a few measures which are fully implemented rather than a whole series which are not adhered to and which only create a false sense of security. Furthermore, some measures are relatively cheap, and some cost literally nothing. Some are easy to implement and amount to little more than changing one's habits very slightly. One should therefore never be heard to say that it is not possible to implement security measures. The farmer should do what is practicable and affordable.

⁶ See p 320.

⁷ Radio interviews with Mr Kiewiet Ferreira of Agri SA and Com. Johan Burger, RSG, 2003-02-20.

⁸ See CIAC *Attacks on farms and smallholdings* (Report No 1 of 1999, compiled by Supt J.C. Strauss)

⁹ He also made verbal submissions to the Committee - see p 210.

SAFEGUARDING PROPERTY

Fences and signs warning against trespassing on the farm

This may sound petty, but from a criminological point of view signs indicating territorial ownership of property are important.¹⁰ Warning signage brings to the attention of an intruder that he is entering private property, that security measures are in place and that trespassing will entail sanctions. It serves as an indication to potential troublemakers that the people who live there care for their property and safety, and that they are vigilant and willing to defend property, life and limb. The same applies to warn intruders that there are dogs guarding the property. All other things being equal, the criminal will choose the target without the warning signs, since it appears less risky.

Related to this is the requirement that the property should have a properly maintained boundary fence. It also sends out a strong signal to the potential intruder to keep out. Yet especially smallholdings tend to neglect this aspect. In areas where vandalism is rife, keeping the fence in good repair may be very difficult, yet it is necessary to do so if at all possible.

Safeguarding farm roads and gates

Some farm attacks take place at gates and other places where the victim has to stop or slow down. Usually the attackers would lie in ambush and surprise the victim. Such an ambush may take place either when the farmer is leaving or upon his return to the homestead. Most of these attacks are also robberies, the most popular items stolen being firearms, money, cellular telephones and, very often, the vehicle itself. In a few cases revenge seems to have been a motive, but even there robbery was also committed.

During 2001 only some 3.7% of all farm attacks were of the kind described above, but although the frequency of this type of attack is not very high, they are usually very dangerous, often resulting in the death of the victim. The attacker has to disable his victim, and he also has to have time to make his get-away. He assumes that the victim is armed, so the latter is often shot without any hesitation. This type of attack is also usually carried out when there is only one person in the motor vehicle. It therefore is a particularly dangerous form of farm attack and one that should be guarded against as much as possible.

In the Botes case study¹¹ the victim was ambushed at the farm gate when she was on her way to work in town. Her assailants knew her movements and when they could expect her. They lay in waiting in the tall grass next to the road before jumping up and overpowering her. She was killed and robbed of her vehicle and other valuables. There are several other examples as well. In another case study¹² the farmer's wife was on her way to church when she had to slow down for a hole in the road near a gate. There were two men standing next

¹⁰ See Crime Information Analysis Centre *Identifying and addressing farm attack risk factors* (compiled by Insp P.d.J. Cronjé, Eastern Cape, 2001)

¹¹ See p 61.

¹² See p 127.

to the road, and the one simply shot her. Luckily the shot only went through her arm and she was able to race away.

Areas in the immediate vicinity of gates or places where potential attacks may take place should be cleared of shrubs and trees and even tall grass that may hide attackers. If the area is still considered unsafe, the farmer should consider installing a motor-grid so that it is not necessary to stop. Special attention should be paid to suspicious persons in the vicinity of the gate. If there are any, he or she should be ready to take defensive or evasive actions. It may even be necessary to turn around or to drive straight through the closed gate – it may save his or her life.

Security fence around homestead

It was found that 50.7% of the farms attacked during 1999 did not have a fence and gate around the house, let alone a security fence.¹³

From a criminological perspective a proper security fence (with a securable gate) is important. It not only puts the area around the homestead out of bounds for strangers, but it is an important first line of defence against criminals, because it will increase the real and the perceived effort needed by the criminal to reach the house.¹⁴ It not only makes it difficult for an intruder to get in, but it may also make it difficult for him to make a quick escape if things turn sour. The fence can either enclose the farmyard or merely the homestead.

For the fence to be effective, however, access control must be exercised throughout the day. The gate is therefore as important as the fence and if it is left unlocked, it is quite useless. This may be very difficult if the farmyard is enclosed because workers have to move to and fro all the time, and it may be better to concentrate on the homestead. If the gate also provides entry to a motor vehicle, it may be dangerous to stop and get out of the car at night, and it may be better to have a remote control system.

Obviously a security fence and gate can be very expensive items. The best type from a security point of view is an electrified fence. This should not be the type that can kill or injure people, but rather one that is linked to some form of alarm. It is pointed out that this type of fence may be cheaper than the standard security fence, which may be snipped in any case even if it is of the razor wire type. Vegetation around an electrical fence needs to be controlled to prevent a short circuit. Trees and other objects that may enable an intruder to jump over the fence, whether electrified or not, must be removed.

The reality, however, is that some people simply cannot afford a security fence. But some fence is better than no fence at all. An ordinary fence can also serve a useful purpose, even if it can be scaled by an intruder. It can, for example, serve the purpose of controlling the watchdogs inside. The actual height of the fence or the nature of its structure is then not as important as its ability to keep the dogs inside. It has been argued that even if one has the best guard dogs, they are worthless if they can be lured away from the home in any way.¹⁵

¹³ See p 282.

¹⁴ See Crime Information Analysis Centre *Identifying and addressing farm attack risk factors* (compiled by Insp P.d.J. Cronjé, Eastern Cape, 2001) p 12.

¹⁵ *ibid*

It is true that even the best security fence and gate cannot always be effective. There has been at least one farm attack where the intruders dug underneath a perfectly good security fence to gain entry, and the farmer was killed. If the system is combined with other safety measures such as dogs or security lights, however, it can be extremely effective.¹⁶ If the farmer in question had dogs in the yard, the outcome might well have been different.

Watchdogs

A good watchdog is one of the most important but also the most underestimated complimentary security resources on a farm. It hardens the target, acts as a deterrent to intruders, and also serves as an early warning system.¹⁷ Yet in some 60% of all farms attacked during 1999 and 2000 there were no or inefficient watchdogs.¹⁸

Watchdogs are probably the cheapest form of security, because many people have dogs in any case. They can not only serve as an early warning system that something is amiss, but if properly trained, they can attack the intruder and protect their owner. In an article in the *Landbouweekblad*, it is said that any dog is suitable to be trained as a watchdog.¹⁹ A small dog may not be able to defend its owner well, but it can still detect the presence of intruders. The ideal would be to have two large dogs and two smaller ones, but obviously this is not always possible. The dog should be trained by a knowledgeable person, however. Ideally the owner and the dog should be trained together.

If formal training is not possible because of time and money constraints, a young dog can still be educated to be a good watchdog.

- From a young age the dog should be taught not to bark unnecessarily, but at the same time to praise him when he barks for a good reason.
- He should not be taught to become accustomed to strangers, e.g. persons coming to buy farm produce.
- The dogs should have free access to the house. If the house is off limits for them, they may not enter even if the owner needs assistance inside.
- The dog should be taught to enter the house first when the owner arrives home from somewhere else.
- One large dog can be taught to accompany the owner on the bakkie to protect him.
- The dog should never be punished with a stick, since he will learn to fear such a weapon, even if used by an attacker.
- Dogs should be made accustomed to gunshots, otherwise they will run off at the sound of firearms.

Both Joint Operations and the CIAC refer to the fact that geese could also be utilised as an early warning system.

¹⁶ See 'Heining en spreiligte is noodsaaklik' *Landbou-weekblad* 2002-08-04.

¹⁷ See CIAC (Eastern Cape) *op cit* p13

¹⁸ See p 366

¹⁹ See 'Hanteer waghonde reg' *Landbouweekblad* 2002-04-12

Security lights

Good lighting is a very effective crime deterrent in any environment, as it increases the risk of an attacker being noticed while approaching the house at night.²⁰ If there are no watchdogs, it is essential that security lights be fitted. The quality and location of the lights are important, however, as is the fact that they remain switched on through the night.

One may also place movement sensitive lights at strategic points. Not only are they a deterrent to intruders, but they can also warn the farmer of danger. For obvious reasons this type of lighting is not so effective when they can be activated by dogs or other domestic animals. In that case the movement sensors can be attached to the outside fence rather than to the house.

When the farmer is going out and expects to return only after sunset, the security lights should be left switched on. Light sensors which switch the lights on automatically when darkness falls are also useful.²¹

Security lighting is probably one of the cheapest security measures available, and there really is no excuse for not having any.

Burglar proofing

Obviously a house with proper burglar bars is far more difficult to enter than a house without them and all the security agencies stress their importance.²² Yet some 53.2% of all farm houses attacked during 1999 and 2000 did not have effective burglar proofing. In the Eastern Cape survey some houses had some burglar bars, but not in front of all the windows. There were several cases where entry was gained through an unguarded bathroom or toilet window at the back of the house.

Ideally the burglar bars should cover not only the opening windows but all windows. When the owners are not present, and sometimes even when they are present, farm attackers have no qualms about breaking any window to gain entry to a house, irrespective of whether it can open or not, as unlike urban homes, the sound of breaking glass is irrelevant.

If there are no burglar bars covering all the windows, some alarm system is essential.

Security gates at the door

Some 55.7% of the houses attacked during 1999 and 2000 did not have security gates at the doors at all.²³ Security gates at the doors serve the same purpose as a security fence, but they are even more important since a breach of security at this point leaves the victim with less reaction time. The importance of security doors and gates is also emphasised in the

²⁰ See CIAC (Eastern Cape) *op cit* p18

²¹ Crime Information Analysis Centre *Attacks on farm and smallholdings* 1999 (compiled by Supt J.C. Strauss)

²² See 'Hou boosdoeners uit die huis' *Landbouweekblad*. 2002-04-26

²³ See p 366

Landbouweekblad articles and by the CIAC.²⁴ Again, like the front gate, an unlocked security gate is as useless as no security gate at all.

The security gate serves two purposes: it not only protects the door from being opened with a key or even by breaking it down, but it also protects the occupants of the house when they have to answer the door bell. In a case in the Eastern Cape, someone knocked on the door. The housewife thought it was the domestic worker, but when she opened the door she was overpowered by an attacker.

It is also strongly advised that bedrooms be shut off from the rest of the house by means of security gates or at least locked doors.

Control over keys should be exercised and keys hanging on a key board should not be labelled.

Alarm systems

The *Landbouweekblad*²⁵ described an alarm system as an indispensable component of the farm security system, the absence of which can render all the other safety measures useless. That may be overstating the case, but there can be no doubt that an alarm system can be very effective.

There are two basic types of alarm systems. The one is the stand-alone system, which may switch on lights or set off a siren. The other is the monitored system, which is linked to a security firm or neighbouring farms, with an armed response capacity which can react to the alarm. Research has shown that regardless of the large number of false activations, an alarm system is one of the most effective crime deterrents in an urban environment. Although its effectiveness might diminish with the bigger distances in rural settings, the monitored alarm, as opposed to a stand-alone system, is still an important security measure.²⁶

Capt. Cronje is somewhat critical about the stand-alone system on the farm. The Committee is not so sceptical. Even if it merely sets off a siren, that in itself may cause the intruder to run away, as will be seen from the case study referred to below. It may also alert the other people nearby, such as farm workers or even the neighbouring farmer.

The alarm may be activated in various ways. There may be an infra-red eye, placed in strategic places in the house, to detect movement. There may be magnetic contacts at the doors and windows. There may also be sensors to detect shattering windowpanes. The alarm may also be linked to the electrified security fence around the house. Finally, one or more panic buttons installed at strategic points, e.g. at the front door or next to the bed, is essential. The *Landbouweekblad* article refers to a case study where the couple were overpowered immediately after entering the house and disarming the alarm. The husband was shot twice but the wife managed to push the panic button, causing the attackers to flee. It saved their lives.

²⁴ See 'Hou boosdoeners uit die Huis' *Landbouweekblad* 2002-04-26

²⁵ See 'n Alarmstelsel is goud werd' *Landbouweekblad*, 2002-07-05

²⁶ See CIAC (Eastern Cape) *op cit* p 17..

Some alarm systems have been developed specifically for farms. The Transvaal Agricultural Union formed the Bobaas Security Service, which has developed a very sophisticated system with various safety features.

During some farm attacks attackers break into the homestead on the farm while the farmer and his family are out. The attackers then wait undetected in the house for the farmer to return, when he would be ambushed and overpowered as he enters the house. This may happen typically on a Sunday morning when the farmer and his family attend church in town, although it frequently happens during the week as well, e.g. when the farmer is out to work or has gone in to town on some business.

The reason why this happens may be that the intruders believe there is money hidden away somewhere, or cannot open the safe to get to the weapons that they believe are there. They then need the farmer to show them where the money is or to open the safe. This type of farm attack often is very violent. The attackers may torture the victims because the victims refuse to cooperate or because they are not being believed that there are no money or weapons. Furthermore, the victims are often killed under these circumstances.

It is therefore clear that a farmer and his family are very vulnerable on their return home. They enter the house not suspecting anything wrong, and are then overpowered. Obviously the presence of dogs may not only be a serious deterrent to would-be intruders, but their behaviour may also warn the farmer on his return that something is amiss. As we have seen above dogs are almost indispensable guards on any farm. Unfortunately there are examples where there were dogs on the farm and the intruders managed to gain entry to the house in spite of the dogs. If the dogs are killed or poisoned, it would immediately put the returning farmer on his guard. The dogs may be drugged, however, and their behaviour not so out of the ordinary as to draw the attention of the farmer. Other precautions should therefore be taken as well.

One solution that may be very effective would be some alarm system to warn the farmer that there are intruders in the house. There are some alarm systems available that would serve this purpose. Some are expensive to install and to maintain, such as those sending a radio signal to a control point that will elicit a response from an armed security guard. Obviously these systems can only be used in certain areas, and may be more suitable on smallholdings than on farms. Other alarm systems are more simple and cheap, such as a siren, which may in itself scare off the attackers, and attract the attention of employees on the farm or even alert the neighbours, if they are near enough.

A system that the Committee believes will not only be relatively cheap but also very effective, would be a silent warning to the farmer outside that there is someone in the house. This may, for example, be a light that the farmer switches on when he leaves, and that switches off when the alarm is triggered by an intruder. This will enable the farmer to escape or to summon assistance. The intruder may be unaware that his presence has been detected but if he is alerted as well, it does not matter. The Committee does not know whether such systems are available commercially, but are convinced that it will be possible to manufacture a suitable instrument. It is certainly something that should be investigated by the relevant authorities and by the farmers' societies, and the necessary advice given to the farmers.

PERSONAL PROTECTION

Self-defence

As mentioned above, the series of articles in the *Landbouweekblad* have been written with the co-operation of Mr. K. Geldenhuys, a self-defence expert who is in fact a previous world champion in the ju-jitsu discipline. It is therefore understandable that self-defence receives a very prominent place in the articles. Several articles are devoted exclusively to this subject.²⁷ There can be no doubt about the expertise of Geldenhuys. Various self-defence techniques are explained clearly and understandably in detail, and the Committee is of the view that, if applied correctly, these techniques may well be life-saving measures. Some of the techniques do not require great physical strength and are such that they may be utilised by females and elderly people alike.

The Committee has serious reservations, however, whether self-defence of that nature should normally even be attempted by anyone who is not thoroughly trained, unless it is a matter of life and death. If self-defence is not applied effectively, it may well be counter-productive and result in serious injury or even death to the victim. The techniques can usually only be mastered properly by receiving training from an expert, and then by practising the techniques thoroughly. The Committee therefore advises potential victims to undergo such a course in self-defence.

No doubt circumstances may arise that make it necessary to for the victim to fight for his or her life, whether he or she may have mastered any of the self-defence techniques or not. Often there is some reason why the attacker wants to kill the victim: he may not want to be recognised, or he may require time to make his get-away. In other cases victims seem to have been killed for no rhyme or reason. Either way, the victim must do what he or she can to survive.

There are many cases where the attacker was fought off with firearms or any other weapon that came to hand, and there are examples of remarkable bravery being shown by victims, both young and old. Sometimes the attacker is shot by the farmer, himself perhaps heavily wounded, and in one instance the attacker was actually stabbed with a knife by the wife of the farmer with whom he was engaged in a life and death struggle. (The attacker later succumbed to his wounds.)

Farmers should also learn basic first aid techniques.²⁸ First aid is not difficult to learn and many institutions supply free pamphlets and even give free training. Similarly, each household should have a first aid kit for emergencies.

Firearms

Obviously a handgun can be carried for personal safety, provided that one knows how to use it and, more importantly, only if one is psychologically prepared to shoot someone and

²⁷ See 'Sielkundige voorbereiding noodsaaklik' *Landbouweekblad* 2002-10-25; 'Self-verdediging is soms al uitweg', *Landbouweekblad* 2002-11-2; and 'Basiese tegnieke kan lewe red' *Landbouweekblad* 2002-12-06.

²⁸ See 'Basiese kennis kan 'n lewe red' *Landbouweekblad* 20002-08-16.

possibly kill in self-defence.²⁹ If one is not proficient in the handling of firearms, one should receive training to do so or otherwise get rid of the weapon.

The Act on Arms and Ammunition, No 75 of 1969, and the Act on The Control of Firearms, No 60 of 2000, require that weapons must be safely stored by the owner.³⁰ A strong safe which meets certain standards is required. The safe has to be secured to the wall and/or the floor. A simple metal box is not sufficient. Except for weapons for self-defence, moving parts and ammunition for firearms should be stored separately from the weapons themselves.

If the firearm is intended for personal self-defence it is not of much use when locked away. It should be carried on the person. The farmer and his wife should arm themselves when they leave. Note, however, that if the weapon is not carried on the person it must be safely locked away. If it has to be left in the car temporarily, it still has to be safely stored. The owner must take all reasonable precautions, preferably locking it away in the boot of the car without attracting attention. It may be necessary to install a safe in the car, which must also meet with certain stringent requirements.

If the farmer leaves for an extended period of time, all other firearms may be left in the custody of the police, if there is any possibility of their own safe being opened or removed. The law also provides that a licence holder may also another's weapon, provided that he has the written authority of that other person. The particulars of the owner, the caretaker, the firearm and the time for which the weapon must be looked after, are required.

The important question obviously is under what circumstances a firearm can be used by the victim of a farm attack. There can be no doubt that a farmer can protect himself and other persons against a farm attack by any means necessary to do so, including the use of firearms. The following requirements must be complied with, however:

- The attack must be aimed at a person, not property.
- The attack must have begun or be immediately imminent.
- No more violence than is necessary may be used to stop the attack.
- The violence may only be directed towards the attacker, not an innocent bystander.

The golden rule, however, is always to use the minimum force reasonably required and reasonably available under the circumstances.³¹ There must also be a measure of balance between the harm suffered or likely to be suffered by the victim. This does not mean that a weapon can only be used to avoid being killed. If there is no other way to avoid being seriously injured or raped, then shoot, and even kill, if necessary.

The right to kill someone when making an arrest has recently been severely restricted by the Constitutional Court. A person may only be killed during an attempt to arrest him if he is reasonably being suspected of having committed a crime of violence, and even then all efforts should be made not to kill him. Furthermore, if he can be arrested later, e.g. where he is known to the person trying to arrest him, he may not be shot. In fact, the law in this regard is so complicated that it may be better for a person not to shoot at somebody merely

²⁹ See CAIC report no 1 of 1999 p 17.

³⁰ See SAPS et al *National guidelines for protection of farms and smallholdings*, p25.

³¹ Ibid p 22

for the purpose of making an arrest, unless he or she is well acquainted with the legal requirements. Members of the security forces, commandos and police reservist units obviously have such training.

All this means, for example, that a farmer should not shoot at an intruder, even inside the house, unless he has reason to believe that the intruder is about to attack him or his family. If the intruder simply runs away he should not be shot at. There is, however, nothing to stop the farmer from firing warning shots, as long as they are not aimed at the intruder or in his general direction.

Mental preparedness

One article in the *Landbouweekblad* stresses the importance of mental preparation for the effective application of self-defence techniques.³² This important article refers to the state of shock that overpowers the victim of a sudden physical attack. It describes the physiological and psychological changes that take place in the victim, and how it can cause him or her to act irrationally or even to be unable to act at all. The right mental approach can reduce the effects of shock during a farm attack, thereby increasing the victim's chances on survival. It requires regular mental training, involving visualisation of crisis situations.

There is another facet of mental preparedness, however. There are many examples of victims both young and old who either resist the attacker even when they are in a hopeless situation or otherwise they aggravate the attacker in some other way. Sometimes such resistance pays off. On the other hand there are also many instances where it is clear that the resistance by the victim probably was the direct cause of his or her death, in the sense that the attacker reacted by killing him. In one instance an aged farmer threw a hammer at an armed intruder. The hammer missed its target, but not the bullet fired by the intruder.

There are also many examples of victims who become aggressive, if not physically then at least verbally. In many cases that was the cause of serious injury or even their death. Many of the farm attackers interviewed state that the verbal abuse or other aggressive language caused them to become aggravated and cross.³³ In his submissions to the Committee on 2001-06-19, Col Barry Schoeman refers to a remarkable case where a tape recording was made by chance of the conversation between an elderly woman and the man who attacked her and her husband. What happened was that the woman was busy making a tape recording of something else when they heard a noise on the veranda. When her husband went outside to investigate, he was overpowered and forced into the house. A conversation between the attacker and the wife then followed which could only have led to the attacker being more aggressive.

Some of the prosecutors and investigating officers interviewed were of the view that it is often the elderly people who are most upset by the intruder. Most of the victims of farm attacks are white, while most of the attackers are black, which gives a racial aspect to the problem of farm attacks. Many of the elderly victims grew up under a dispensation where a black person was not allowed inside their homes, unless it was as a domestic servant. It is almost unavoidable that they may say the wrong thing when they are confronted by a

³² See 'Regte ingesteldheid kan slagoffer red' *Landbouweekblad* 2002-10-2

³³ See p 198.

black, armed intruder, who may threaten them, order them about and even hurl insults at them.

The Committee is also of the view that mental training is as important as physical training when it comes to self-defence techniques. However, the Committee feels that there is an equally great need for the training of farmers and other residents on how to handle a situation where it would be wise not to resist or to try to exercise any of the self-defence techniques. In perhaps the greater majority of cases it would be better to submit to the demands of the attacker. Very often the attacker is armed with a firearm or other dangerous weapon. For the average person it would be simply too dangerous to put up a resistance. Furthermore, there are usually more than one attacker and, as is recognised in the Landbouweekblad articles, it is very difficult for an individual to defend him or herself.

Elsewhere reference is made to the fact that security guards are less likely to be injured or killed during a cash-in-transit robberies than farmers during a farm attack. It is remarkable, bearing in mind that cash-in-transit robberies are commonly perceived to be extremely violent.³⁴ Part of the reason for this may be the fact that security guards receive specific training on how to handle such situations, not only in terms of defending themselves physically, but also how to handle the mental aspect. That training is non-existing as far as farmers are concerned.

The police and other organisations often give advice to potential highjacking victims. They should try to remain calm; they should never offer resistance; their hands should be visible to the attacker all the time; they should not make sudden movements; they should get out of the vehicle slowly and do what the attacker says; they should hand over the keys; they should not look at the attacker unnecessarily or create the intention that they want to be able to identify the attacker later; etc. The same type of advice should be given to potential farm attack victims.

The booklet 'National guidelines for farm and smallholding security' (p 15) gives advice on what to do in case of a farm attack:

- Do not panic but rather try to think clearly.
- Make alarm or summon assistance as soon as possible, even if it may later prove to have been unnecessary.
- Do not go looking for the intruder, especially not outside; if you are in a room, rather lock the door.
- Do not try to arrest the intruder or offer resistance unless you can do so effectively.
- However, if circumstances are such that you have to protect yourself, do so by whatever means possible and do not hold back.
- Evaluate the situation and think how you can escape or summon help. Do not try to escape unless you can do so effectively.
- Do not talk or behave aggressively towards the attacker, even if provoked. Rather try to talk him into leaving.
- If the attacker demands the keys to the safe or vehicle, hand them over without resistance.

³⁴ See p 335.

- If you have already summoned help, tell the attacker and show him the radio or alarm.
- Try to note the clothing and other features of the attacker for later identification, but do so unobtrusively.

Alertness

Alertness is absolutely free, but of all safety measures it is probably the most important. The reason is that each safety measure has its own limitations – they can never provide complete protection. Furthermore, half of all farm attacks occur or is initiated outside the safety of the home. Often the farmer or his wife will be unarmed and there will be no dogs around. The only thing that can protect them from disaster may be their attentiveness.

There are several farm attack cases where the farmer or the wife went outside, even at nighttime, to investigate a noise, and they would then be attacked. In the case mentioned above, the farmer went out to investigate a noise on the veranda when he was overpowered. In several ambush cases, the intruders entered the house by breaking a back window in the absence of the owners. If the latter had noticed the broken window they might not have become victims.

The Committee can cite case after case where a little attentiveness might have averted the tragedy that followed. In one of the case studies the Committee undertook, the dogs had been barking all night. The next morning the farmer, unarmed, went up the nearby hill to investigate a strange fire. He was killed and his wife was killed minutes later.

Arriving at and leaving the farm

As said above, farmers are especially vulnerable when leaving or arriving back on the farm. Many farmers are attacked when they stop or park their vehicles, and many are attacked by intruders who are being surprised inside the house or who may be waiting for the farmer in an ambush.

Farmers should know the state of the farmyard and house when leaving, and take note of any changes upon his return. The behaviour of the dogs may betray the presence of strangers or may indicate that they have been drugged or poisoned. The farmer can use many items to indicate tampering, such as the position of a lock.

External lighting is important. At night the farmer should have a good torch light. The farmer may drive or walk around the house to look for signs of entry such as a broken or open window.

Safety habits

Safety procedures are a matter of habit. They are free of course and they need not be elaborate. The booklet ‘National guidelines for protection of farms and smallholdings’ offers many safety tips.

When at home watch out for:

- Strangers visiting the farm on some pretext, or wandering around in the vicinity.
- Strange vehicles in the area.
- Strange behaviour or uncommon barking by the dog.
- The unexpected death of a dog.
- Signs of the presence of trespassers, such as tracks, fire places or empty food cans.
- Possible signals left by prospective attackers for their accomplices, e.g. a bottle on the gate post or a plastic bag tied to the fence.

When answering the door:

- Grown-ups should answer the door.
- Make sure the security gate is closed or at least that the security chain is in place.
- Do not open the door fully and do not stand in the door opening.
- The person outside should be identified before opening the door and especially before allowing him inside.
- Be wary of persons in uniform and do not be misled by a well-dressed person.
- Documents can be received through the security gate or the letter flap, or with the security chain still in place.

Many victims of farm attacks are really killed for no rhyme or reason. They are often aged and frail, and quite unable to defend themselves against the usually strong young men who attack them. Many of these people are seriously injured or killed, even though they may fully submit and have given all the information that the attackers require. There are cases where the violence is quite gratuitous and unnecessary, and in some cases the attackers seem to wait for the victims and to ambush them with the sole purpose of killing them.

When arriving back home:

- Do not get out of the car before surveying the area. At night a torch must be used for this purpose. This also applies when opening the gate for the car or the garage door.
- Take note of anything unusual, such as the garden gate standing ajar or the dogs being uneasy or sluggish.
- Walk around the house to look for signs of intruders, such as a broken window or disturbed curtains.
- Let the dog enter the house first.
- If there is a female present she should remain in the car with the doors locked until everything is safe.

When driving:

- There should be a two-way radio or cellular telephone in the car.
- There should be an inflated spare wheel and basic tools in the car.
- Try not to drive around alone and if possible take a dog along.
- Take a firearm along if you are proficient in handling it.

- If the car breaks down and you cannot fix it, summon help and lock the doors. It may be better to hide outside some distance away, watching the car.

HIGH RISK FACTORS

Where certain factors are present, the risk of a farm attack increases dramatically.

Elderly people

There can be little doubt that the aged are very vulnerable to farm attacks.³⁵ Their senses are not as sharp any more, and they are frail and cannot defend themselves. They are injured more easily and they often suffer bone fractures and similar injuries. Many of them are poor and do not think they will be attacked. They are usually religious and believe that the Almighty will protect them. They often live alone on the farm after their partner has passed away. Some have become quite fatalistic, not caring what happens to them. Most importantly, many of them grew up on a farm and in a virtually crime free era and cannot visualise themselves being attacked.

This vulnerability is borne out by the statistics. During 2001 some 3.1% of all victims were under 20 years of age, 16.3% were between 20 and 39 years, 18% were between 40 and 59 years, 13.1% were between 60 and 79 years and 1.8% were 80 or over. This means that 46% of victims were 50 years or older and 28% were 60 or older. The percentages vary from area to area, however. The Eastern Cape, for example, there seems to be a higher ratio of elderly farm attack victims. In fact, half of the victims of farm attacks in the Eastern Cape Karoo are older than 50 years. In the Eastern Cape survey the age of the person who was head of the household was used as the determining factor, since that was the person who would normally make decisions concerning security. For the purpose of the report they were divided into groups of persons younger than 60 and persons who are 60 or older.

The fact is that in many areas it is extremely dangerous for aged people to live alone on a farm or smallholding. In the Eastern Cape one elderly couple (the husband is 83 years of age and the wife 74), have been attacked no fewer than six times over the last few years. They live near an informal settlement, they have little security and they are hard of hearing.

If possible, therefore, elderly people should be persuaded to move to a safer environment. It must be accepted, however, that many do not have the financial resources to move. In some cases, because of the vulnerability to farm attacks and land-invaders, the market value of the farm has decreased to such an extent that it cannot be sold economically any more. Some have bought the farm or smallholding as a retirement home, and they have no reserves to make another change. Some who bought the property when it was completely secluded, now find that it is flanked or even invaded by informal settlements. One has to accept that some cannot afford expensive security systems, but it is sad to see how many elderly farmers have little or no security at all.

³⁵ See 'Bejaardes `n maklike prooi' *Landbouweekblad* 2002-03-29

Solitary residents

Like elderly people, persons living alone are especially vulnerable to farm attacks.³⁶ Very often the farmers living alone are also aged, perhaps having lost their wives and not wanting to move. Some widows also live alone.³⁷ In 19% of the farms visited in one survey, there was a female on her own.³⁸ However, the solitary may be attacked irrespective of their age. Furthermore, he or she is at risk even with very good security systems in place. Bachelors, widows, widowers, divorcees, hermits, single farm managers and farm guards are often specifically targeted by farm attackers.

Very often, even when there is more than one person living on the farm, the attacker would wait for one to be alone before striking. This applies especially to women who are being left alone on the farm. In almost half of those cases where the woman was found to be alone on the farm the doors and gates were standing open as well. In some interviews the attackers said that they had waited specifically for the husband to leave before attacking the wife. In one case the couple had decided that one of them should always be on the farm because they had not installed proper security systems yet. The attackers knew of this practice and waited till the wife was alone.³⁹

Farm stalls and shops

Experience has shown that a farm stall or shop is an open invitation for a farm attack, often with tragic results.⁴⁰ Robbers know that there is likely to be money in the shop or stall, and they have no difficulty in gaining entrance under the pretext of being a customer. Many security measures are irrelevant and there are often ample opportunities for the robber to catch the shop attendant off-guard. Yet some security measures, such as security bars separating the shop attendant and the customers, can be implemented. It should also be borne in mind that the shopkeeper is particularly vulnerable when he opens or closes the shop.

Farmers selling farm products such as milk, meat or vegetables to outsiders are also vulnerable. Sometimes the housewife bakes bread or confectionary to augment the income. This means that prospective robbers have a valid reason to be on the farm, where he can reconnoitre or even carry out an attack right away.⁴¹

Investigating officers in the Northern Cape also refer to the dangerous practice of some farmers of selling liquor or even running a *shebeen*.⁴² No doubt it also occurs in other parts of the country. Since the income derived from such practices is usually hot money and dangerous to bank, these farmers are likely to have large amounts of money in the home.

³⁶ See CIAC (Eastern Cape) *op cit* p 20

³⁷ *ibid*

³⁸ See CIAC *Attacks on Farms and Smallholdings 1999* (compiled by Supt J.C. Strauss)

³⁹ See the Transell case, p89.

⁴⁰ See CIAC (Eastern Cape) *op cit* p 21.

⁴¹ *ibid*

⁴² Interview with investigating officers in Kimberley on 2001-10-05

Money and other valuables

Large amounts of money should not be kept on the farm.⁴³ The farm workers and other residents should know that, in case they are asked by strangers or even intimidated into telling. There are many cases where farm attackers somehow got hold of information about large amounts of money on the farm. The same applies to other valuables, and in one instance the Committee has come across, the attackers were specifically looking for diamonds.

As mentioned previously, farm attacks usually occur randomly on any day of the week, with the exception of Fridays, the probable reason being that wages are often paid out on Fridays. Attacks are often carried out when the farmer or manager is making up the wages. There are several recorded cases where the farmer drew a large amount of money at the bank, e.g. to pay wages, and was then followed back to the farm by the attackers and robbed at a gate or when he arrived.⁴⁴ Some farmers may find it possible to pay the employees by cheque or to deposit the wages directly into their banking accounts.

Repeat victimisation

Often people think that because they have been attacked once it will not happen again. However, research has indicated that persons and businesses victimised once have a greater risk of falling victim to crime again.⁴⁵ This may be the result of the success of the initial crime, which cause the criminal or other who have heard about it to try again, or it may be because the initial crime has left the place more vulnerable, e.g. where a broken window has not been replaced.

It may also indicate that the person or place victimised is at high risk and that the security measures are not adequate. In the case of an elderly couple who were attacked six times within the space of a few years, the security measures on the smallholding were non-existent. The husband had a firearm, but he was robbed of it at least three times. Although they lived a very modest life, it turned out after their deaths that they were well-to-do people who could afford a good security system. The surprising aspect of the case is that they died of natural causes.

It is also a feature of repeat victimisation that the subsequent crimes may become progressively more serious than the previous ones.

Proximity to major roads, railway lines and criminal areas

In his report, Capt. Cronje also identifies the danger in a farm being situated near a place that may be a breeding ground for criminals, or near a major arterial road or a railway line.

The proximity of areas in which large numbers of criminals may reside is a large risk factor. The role that townships, informal settlements, former homelands, trust land and other areas where the social structure of society has been eroded, play in crime in the

⁴³ CIAC *op cit*

⁴⁴ See cases referred to on p 51.

⁴⁵ See CIAC (Eastern Cape) *op cit* p 10.

traditional commercial agricultural sector has already been well established by other research. Such areas have distinctive social and physical characteristics that support criminal life styles. Furthermore, farmers represent the only relatively wealthy targets for criminals in the rural areas.

Farms situated near main roads are exposed to far more preying eyes looking for criminal opportunities. Research has shown that criminals prefer shorter trips to crime targets rather than longer ones. It also makes for a quick and safe escape from the scene of crime.

Similarly a railway line may pose a threat. The deterioration of the railway system has led to large- scale vandalism and theft of railway property, creating a focus point for criminal activity right on the doorsteps of neighbouring farms. The farmers also do not know, and have no control over, the persons who live or walk on railway property.

Communication

In very many farm attacks the telephone lines are cut. It is therefore essential that farmers should have other means of emergency communication, apart from the landline telephones, so that contact can be made with security agencies, security firms or neighbouring farms. In the 1998 Eastern Cape study, it was found that 83% of the farmers in a specific region had some alternative means of communication: 56% had a short wave radio, 26% had a marnet or nearnet radio system and 15% had a cellular telephone.⁴⁶

No device has had a more favourable impact on the safety of vulnerable persons than the cellular telephone, both in cities and in the country, at home and on the road. Persons at risk should therefore be encouraged to have a cellular phone on them all the time. It can store emergency numbers which can be dialled immediately. It is an expensive means of communication, but some “pay-as-you-go” cellular phone contracts are relatively cheap if used only for emergencies. Unfortunately, many farms in isolated areas do not have cellular phone reception. Nevertheless it may still be useful while travelling to and from the farm.

Battle indicators

These are signs next to the road leading to the farm, placed there by the would-be farm attackers or their accomplices to indicate the way to the particular target or to indicate whether it is propitious to carry out the attack. They may be a branch placed at an odd angle next to the road, a cold drink bottle placed on a fence post, a plastic bag tied to a bush, etc.

There is a difference of opinion amongst the security forces (police and military personnel) as to either the reliability of battle indicators as a sign of an impending farm attack, or of the frequency at which they are being used. Some investigating officers absolutely scoff at the idea, while others have been converted after seeing some examples. It is obviously something that will usually be utilised by gangs perhaps operating in separate units, whereas it is clear that the greater majority of farm attacks are not carried out with this degree of planning and preparation. Furthermore, even if the farmer notices something

⁴⁶ See CIAC *op cit*.

odd, it may turn out to be completely innocent. Nevertheless it is not something that should be ignored.

These signs may be difficult to detect. Most farmers, however, know every piece of the road to the farm in detail, and he usually notices anything unusual immediately – a branch next to the road at a place where there are no trees, a cold drink can perched on top of a pole, perhaps with sand inside to prevent it from being blown off.⁴⁷

Farm workers and other employees

Unfortunately it sometimes, although fortunately not often, happens that farm workers or previous farm workers turn into farm attackers. In some cases this may be, at least partly, the result of bad relations between the farmer and the worker. In other cases, however, the motive of revenge can be completely excluded: the farm worker simply turns out to be a criminal. It is therefore essential that the farmer makes certain about the persons that he employs. The employment of foreigners without the proper working documents is especially dangerous. That may be a high risk factor.

Farm workers themselves are often the target of farm attackers. They may get attacked while working at the home of their employer. This would typically be a domestic employee who is overpowered in the house. Farm workers also get attacked in their own homes, either to rob them directly or to facilitate the robbing of the main homestead. Even if they do not get attacked themselves, a farm attack on their employer may be a very traumatic experience for them as well.⁴⁸

Apart from that, the involvement of the farm workers is essential for the safety of the farmer and his family as well. They not only can be an important link in the security network that can prevent farm attacks, e.g. by providing information on strangers in the vicinity, but they can summon help or render assistance after an attack on the main homestead. This means that they should also be treated in such a way that their loyalty is ensured. Good labour relations are therefore essential.

Farm workers have many problems of their own. Apart from the threat of a farm attack, they also have to deal with other crimes affecting them especially. These are mostly social fabric crimes, such as murder, rape and serious assaults, which are often the result of the socio-economic situation. Many also have a constant fight against poverty. It is in the farmer's interest to look after the general well being of the employees.

Many victims of farm attacks are really killed for no rhyme or reason. They are often aged and frail, and quite unable to defend themselves against the usually strong young men who attack them. Many of these people are seriously injured or killed, even though they may fully submit and have given all the information that the attackers require. There are cases where the violence is quite gratuitous and unnecessary, and in some cases the attackers seem to wait for the victims and to ambush them with the sole purpose of killing them. In other cases, however, there may be a rational explanation for the violence. The attackers may feel it is too dangerous for them unless the victim is disabled or even killed. They

⁴⁷ If a farmer is uncertain about a possible 'battle indicator' he can contact Col Barry Schoeman at the SANDF, telephone no (012) 355 3024

⁴⁸ See p 144.

want to make their get-away without being caught, and they may feel that the victim may raise the alarm too soon. Finally they also do not want to be identified later by the victim.