

Opal

**Agricultural &
Construction
Equipment**

January – June 2022

**Intelligence Development
Officer Scott Jeffreys**

&

**Intelligence Analyst
Luke Juffkins**



CONTENTS

- ▶ What ACE have done
- ▶ Key Crime Trends
- ▶ Partnership Working
- ▶ Emerging Threats
- ▶ What's Coming Up



WHAT ACE HAVE DONE

The ACE team continue to work with partners and policing taking actions on a daily basis to restrict and reduce the theft of agricultural and construction equipment. A summary of actions are shown below:

Arrests



Assisted more than 10 arrests



Arrests made as a result of ACE intelligence have resulted in **sentencing of organised criminals and a reduction of crimes**

Recoveries



Co-ordinated more than 20 recoveries



Total value of recoveries coordinated by ACE in excess of **£500,000**

International Co-operation



Engagement with foreign law enforcement



Made more than 100 stolen property reports to foreign law enforcement during 2022 **resulting in recoveries of stolen items**

Co-ordination



Co-ordination between policing and industry



ACE attend meetings with policing and partners to ensure **police are prepared for current threats and industry are offered guidance** around emerging methods of crime

WHAT ACE HAVE DONE – RECENT EXAMPLES

Arrests



In January 2022 a GPS thief was arrested as a result of an ACE notice. **£50,000 of stolen items were recovered** and the **suspect was sentenced** for these crimes. As a result of this action, **0 GPS thefts were recorded for a sustained period.**

In April 2022, ACE intelligence led UK police to intercept criminals travelling to export stolen plant machinery. **3 individuals were arrested** and an **organised crime group disrupted.**

Recoveries



In June 2022, **£80,000 of laser scanning equipment was recovered** from Heathrow airport **preventing export to Cairo.**

In March 2022, response officers **stopped a suspicious vehicle** after an ACE alert and **recovered a stolen mini excavator.**

ACE have worked successfully with industry partners on a number of occasions to **co-ordinate police attendance** when stolen machines have been recovered.

International Co-operation



In April 2022 ACE represented the UK in a **joint week of action at Europol** which resulted in **recovery of stolen items and arrests of organised criminals.**

In January 2022 ACE were able to **identify 3 Manitou telehandlers (£65,000 per machine)** which were suspected stolen by foreign law enforcement.

ACE have an ongoing operation where we have been able to **disrupt an OCG and recover several stolen items from over seas** after collaboration with foreign law enforcement.

Co-ordination



Theft of agricultural and construction equipment is **now included on regional tasking** for multiple forces as a result of ACE involvement.

A number of industry partners have been able to **implement security measures to prevent thefts on the basis of ACE guidance.**

Through a policing forum **ACE identified new methods linked with trailer theft.** ACE have shared the relevant guidance with police and industry.

PLANT MACHINERY THEFT

Trend

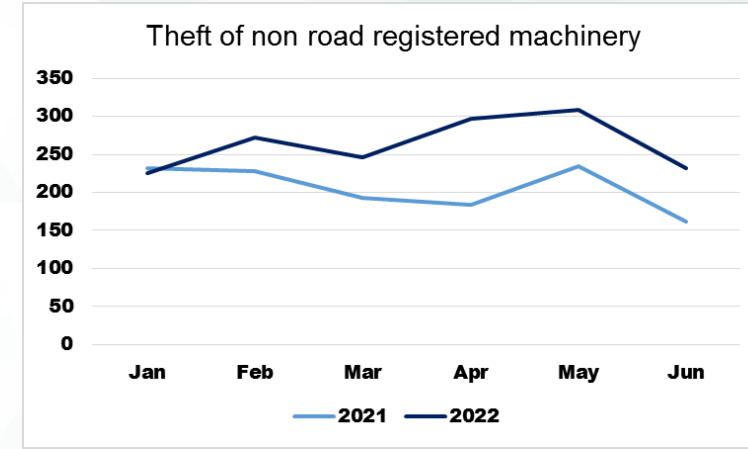
- Theft of non road registered machinery has **increased by 26%** during 2022 compared with 2021 (January - June) as crimes have now reached pre-COVID volumes. **It is expected that crimes will continue to rise** as a result of the ongoing issues with demand.

Methods

- Criminals are continuing to **target smaller machinery and specialist equipment** which is easier to move after theft. It is likely that overall plant crime has increased more than known as it is difficult to measure theft of equipment.

Response

- The ACE team will continue to extract figures from PNC on a monthly basis and continue to work to **improve our data collection via multiple sources**.
- When any emerging trends are identified ACE will continue to **share awareness documents** and co-ordinate police response through forums and guidance.
- ACE will continue to ensure an effective response through **forums, guidance and collaborative working**.



+ 26%
2021 vs 2022



PLANT MACHINERY STATISTICS

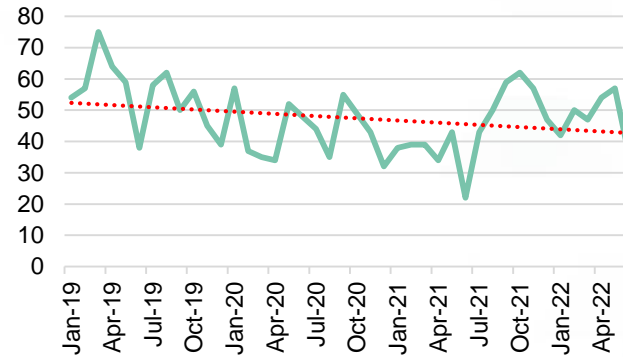


Excavator Theft



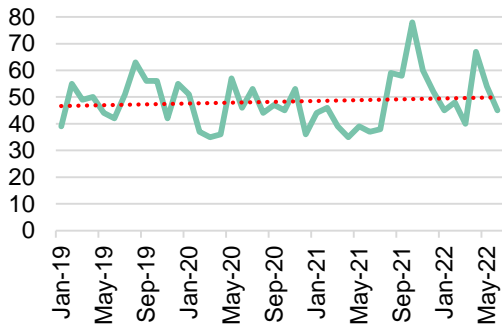
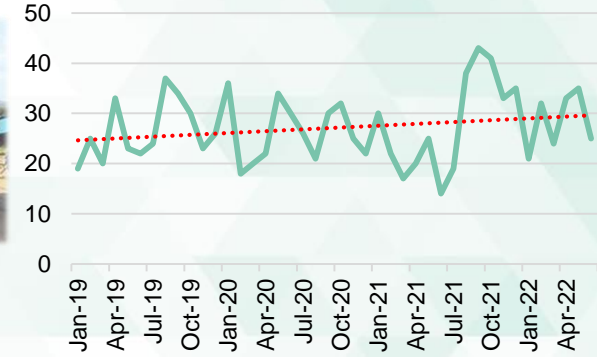
286 dumper thefts during 2022

Dumper Theft



170 telehandler thefts during 2022

Telehandler Theft

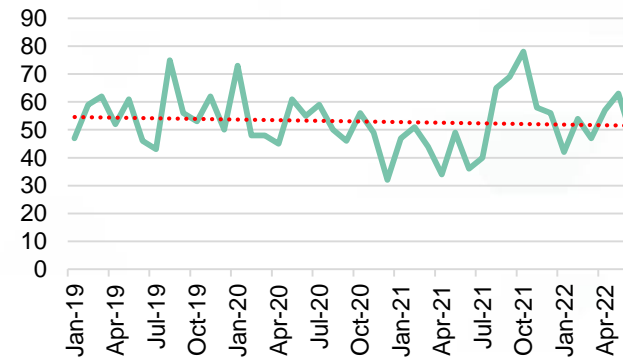


299 excavator thefts during 2022



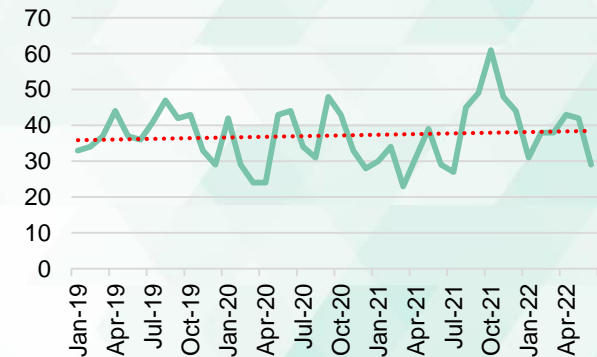
310 digger thefts during 2022

Digger Theft



221 roller thefts during 2022

Roller Theft



The line graphs above show monthly total of thefts for each machine type running from January 2019-June 2022.

FUEL THEFT

Trend

- There has been a **30% increase in fuel theft** during 2022 compared with 2021 (January-May) following the legislation change in April 2022 and increasing fuel prices.
- Thieves have been targeting fuel **from storage tanks, construction machinery and HGV's**.
- Thieves are known to use IBC tanks to assist in the removal of the fuel.



Action

- Police across the UK have taken decisive action including **arrests** relating to a **group involved in more than £1m of fuel theft**.
- Opal are members of the newly formed national **Fuel Theft Working Group** where we will discuss and review police response to fuel theft.

 **+ 30%**
2021 vs 2022

Response

- Opal are working collaboratively to develop a **fuel theft problem profile**.
- Opal are also working with **industry partners** to understand the full scale of the crime.
- For **prevention methods** please see the link below:
[Fuel Theft \(securedbydesign.com\)](https://www.securedbydesign.com)



TOOL THEFT

Trend

- Tool theft has been a long term problem. Criminals are **targeting high value tools** which can be easily re-sold within the UK and internationally using various online platforms. Tools frequently targeted include **angle grinders, electric drills and electric saws**.

Action

- **ACE are working with the National Business Crime Centre** to tackle tool theft and are reviewing a number of areas including: police response, prevention techniques and crime recording.
- We are also **working with industry partners** to explore security measures which could be implemented to reduce criminality.

Response

- ACE encourage all owners to **mark tools both overtly and covertly** as well as removing tools from work vans and storing in a secure location when not in use.
- ACE are also working with partners to develop and promote marking options such as Micro CESAR.



TRAILER THEFT

Trend

- Trailer thefts have been high throughout 2022. **Offences reached a record high in January 2022** and have **increased 69% compared with 2021** (January-June).
- Agricultural trailers including horse boxes and other livestock trailers have been targeted with Ifor Williams being the prominently stolen make of trailer.



Action

- The ACE unit have raised the issue of trailer theft with policing in national bulletins. The increased profile of this crime type as raised by ACE has been instrumental in achieving a **number of arrests**.
- ACE encourage all owners to **report any suspicious incidents to police** as this crime is often preceded by a site visit or unusual activity.



+ 69%
2021 vs 2022

Response

- ACE recently hosted a policing forum where we identified methods used in criminality nationally, (**including the use of drones by criminals to identify target trailers**) and shared best practice.
- **Multi-layered security** is the best way to deter theft of trailers. Owners should consider the security of the site, CCTV, forensic marking, installing trackers and also overt marking.



EMERGING TRENDS

Theft of Survey Equipment

There has been a **recent increase in targeting of specialist construction equipment which is likely to continue.** This includes theft of **survey equipment and GPS equipment** from construction sites. Demand for these items is increasing and it is likely that criminals will continue to diversify into this area.



Theft of Fuel

The increase in cost of living and fuel prices are likely to drive a further increase in fuel theft. New crime groups are likely to enter the space with new methods as the commodity becomes more desirable. Latest trends have seen offenders siphon fuel from construction machinery. ACE will continue to monitor emerging trends and share relevant advice. Opal are members of a Fuel Theft Working Group to discuss a police response.



High Demand

The high demand for construction items due to **supply issues combined with the current cost of living increase may encourage new criminals to enter this crime area.** ACE will continue to monitor emerging trends and raise with policing and industry where required. It is likely that any specialist parts in high demand or any parts that increase in value will be targeted.



WHAT'S COMING UP

Opal will host a **Serious Organised Acquisitive Crime Conference** on **12th-13th September 2022** in Cardiff.

For more information please follow this link:
<https://cjs.swoogo.com/SOAC2022>



The next ACE review document will be published in **January 2023** with notices around emerging threats and trends and relevant guidance shared when produced.

November 2022
Trivium

September 2022
SOAC Conference



Opal will once again represent the UK in a **joint operation with foreign law enforcement colleagues which targets cross border criminals**. The operation is highly likely to result in recoveries and arrests.

January 2023
ACE 6 Month Review

