**Bonus Episode Arson Prevention v1**

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/qgdfz2g0t08w73r/Rural%20crime%20-%20bonus%20arson%20ep%20v1.mp3?dl=0>

**Will:** Hi and welcome again to Ahead of the field with me, Will Evans.

This is another of our short bonus episodes exploring a specific issue in more detail with an expert from NFU Mutual. We're joined here by Tim Price, one of NFU Mutual's experts on rural affairs. We're going to be talking about the issue of arson within the rural community particularly, relevant at this time of year with the harvest in.

Tim, one of farmers greatest fears is a fire. How much of a risk is it?

**Tim:** Well NFU Mutual's claims statistics show that fires tend to peak in August through September and into the autumn months. And the reason for that is simply that there are huge amounts of stored straw and hay at that time. And while the main cause of fires is electrical faults the second highest is arson. So it's well worth thinking about the risk of arson when you're siting straw sacks and thinking how you can protect your machinery and your livestock. And if there is an attack how to act to protect lives, both of people on the farm livestock and to protect the property as well.

**Will:** So what proportion of fires are started deliberately and what can farmers do to reduce the risk?

**Tim:** Well most years it's about a third of all farm are fires started deliberately. And these tend to be in the big stacks of straw that are put up after harvest. Farmers want them to be near the roads because then they're easy to transport when they sell them on to the livestock sector. But that also puts them more at risk from arsonists. So when you're planning where you are going to put your straw, think if there's anywhere you can put them that's accessible by lorries but not to near the roads and sort of prying eyes and also see if you can make several stacks rather than one great big one to reduce the risk of the whole lot going up. Avoid storing machinery around it. It used to be a tradition to put you combine next to the straw stack - not a good idea.

And also think about is it worth fencing it off because it may deter children especially from coming on to have a bit of a fun episode lighting matches and then seeing the whole thing go up. But the big risk with arson is that it's started by individuals who get some sort of kick from seeing the fires and if they do one will do another one. And it's these copycat type scenarios that really do worry people because you can get half a dozen or more fires in a single area and until they're caught it really does put farmers on tenterhooks to see if they're going to be targeted next.

**Will:** Thanks Tim. And if you've enjoyed this bonus episode please do subscribe for your normal podcast app. And that way you won't miss an episode. And whilst you're there, please do leave us a review as well.