





Well-built perimeter fences help secure horses and deter theft.

picture of the head. If possible, also take a rear view.

- Take close-up pictures of any unique, identifying characteristics such as a brand, permanent scar or white markings.

### **3** Establish an organized, easy-to-find proof-of-ownership file.

To save valuable time and frustration in proving ownership should a theft occur, keep on file:

- Registration papers (if horse is registered with a breed association);
- Dated bill of sale and/or breed association transfer-of-ownership paperwork;
- Photographs; and
- Description of mark or brand and written description of all unique characteristics.

### **4** Record the permanent brand or mark with the county clerk's office in the county where the horse lives.

The Texas Legislature encourages registering brands or marks, which can keep others from using your brand. Registration also helps

law enforcement officers and brand inspectors to communicate and determine ownership, and can speed the process of filing theft reports.

### **5** Secure barns, corrals or pens from the road with a good perimeter fence and well-built gates that can be locked.

Slowing a potential horse thief and/or making access to horses more difficult can deter theft significantly.



Lock gates to pastures that can be entered from the road.

## **6** If you plan to build a barn or corral, locate it away from the road.

Place facilities beyond your house if at all possible. They are less likely targets if they are more difficult to access and require thieves to pass a house.

## **7** Manage pastured horses to make theft more difficult.

- For safety as well as theft deterrence, never leave halters on pastured horses.
- Do not feed horses close to the pasture gate or near the road. Although convenient for owners, this practice actually helps potential thieves. Hungry horses will congregate around the usual feeding area, making them easy to catch.
- Keep pasture gates locked.
- Check on pastured horses regularly and vary the time of your trips to the pasture.

Absentee owners sometimes don't realize for several days that their horses have been stolen from pastures.



Avoid the temptation to leave halters on pastured horses.

## 8 Do not hang halters and lead ropes on stall fronts, corral gate posts or anywhere in the open.

Secure halters in a locked tack room or feed room.

## 9 Permanently identify and lock up expensive tack.

Consider having your driver's license number engraved on the underside of saddles, expensive headstalls and other valuable items. While it will not prevent theft, locking the tack room does deter it by increasing the time a thief must be on your property.

## 10 Make horse and livestock trailers inaccessible, hide them from view and be able to prove ownership.

- Use commercially available locks to secure the hitch on a bumper-pull trailer. Many gooseneck trailers can be padlocked.
- Park trailers in a barn or somewhere hidden from traf-

fic to make it harder for thieves to determine what is available and when or if horse owners are home.

- On commercially manufactured trailers, know where the VIN or serial number is located (frame, tongue, etc.) and have that number on file.
- Know and record your trailer's license plate number.
- Take and file photographs of your trailer.

## 11 Use signs and warning posters where appropriate.

To signal to potential thieves that the owner is informed, active and aware, post such notices as:

- No trespassing signs;
- Security system signs; and
- Farm or livestock association membership signs.

## 12 Install motion-sensor lights.

Motion-sensor lights turn on when they detect activity in strategic areas.

Note: If horses are on a lighting program (i.e., 16 hours of daylight, 8 hours of darkness), be careful about where motion-sensor lights are located. Something as simple as the family dog can trigger the light to come on and could interrupt efforts to maintain the photoperiod effect for brood mares and show horses.

## 13 Talk to local law enforcement authorities about the value of dogs and other animals in deterring theft.

Thieves dislike dealing with dogs. However, consider that dogs also require management.



Deter theft by locking up halters and lead ropes.

