

Criminal Investigation,

Seventh Edition

Chapter Nineteen

Agricultural, Wildlife, and Environmental
Crimes

Dimensions of Agricultural, Wildlife, and Environmental Crimes

- The actual losses of crimes involving agriculture, wildlife and environmental crimes are not known.
 - Approximately \$10 million worth of avocados are stolen each year.
 - Nationally rustlers steal about 20,000 cattle worth \$12.1 million.
 - Dinosaur skeletons selling for \$500,000.00 are stolen.
 - A tank of bull semen can sell for up to \$10,000 can be stolen.
 - The Forest Service estimates that it may suffer losses of up to \$100 million every year.

Wildlife Crimes

- Major Threats to Wildlife:
 - Accidental release of chemicals.
 - Illegal dumping.
 - Oil spills.
 - Land erosion.

The Specific Rules of Investigations

- Livestock theft and investigations are specific. Individuals such as “brand inspectors” exist who identify specific brands and assist with such investigations. While the laws vary from state to state, most states allow investigators to stop individuals transporting livestock and seek the following:

The Specific Rules of Investigations

- Livestock theft and investigations are specific.
 - Bill of sale.
 - Certificate of consignment.
 - Brand inspector's certificate.
 - Shipping or transportation permit.

Wildlife Crimes

- Poachers and Poaching:
 - The out of season killing of wildlife. The animal carcass can be sold for meat, parts sold as trophies.
 - Techniques to combat such crimes include general patrol, vehicle check stops, and other activities.

Environmental Crimes

- Individuals can make profits by contracting to dispose of hazardous materials and then disposing of the material illegally. Most states have laws that cover the following:
 1. An identification and listing of hazardous wastes. Typically, state laws give themselves some flexibility by noting that hazardous wastes include, but are not limited to, those that they specifically identify.

Environmental Crimes

2. The establishment of permit and license systems regarding various types of hazardous waste, including their T/S/D.
3. A manifest or shipping-paper system that tracks hazardous waste from its cradle to its grave.
4. The identification of responsibilities of the generators and transporters of hazardous waste.

Environmental Crimes

5. Requirements for hazardous-waste management facilities, such as proof of financial reliability.
6. Compliance evaluation programs that grant warrant-free access or right of entry to inspectors.
7. Designation of enforcement authority and criminal penalties.

Environmental Crimes

Officers/investigators should look for:

1. Dead vegetation along creeks, rivers, and channels that flow through manufacturing, chemical, or other businesses.
2. Reports of large fish kills.
3. Abnormally discolored water.
4. Unusual truck activity at odd hours and locations, such as abandoned buildings.

Environmental Crimes

Officers/investigators should look for:

5. New reports of persistent chemical odors.
6. Tankers discharging their contents into ravines, water systems, or alongside roads.
7. Secretive activity, including bulldozers operating at night.
8. Smells that burn the eyes, nose, mouth, or skin.

Environmental Crimes

Investigative Considerations:

1. How reliable is the complaint?
2. Is there immediate and substantial danger to health, human life, and the environment?
3. Are there public records – such as those recording real estate transactions, identifying corporate officers, and vehicle registrations – that would provide investigative leads?

Environmental Crimes

Investigative Considerations:

4. What is the best way to initiate the investigation?
5. What investigative obstacles are anticipated?
6. What legal obstacles may arise?

The End