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EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF STOCK THEFT IN DR. PIXLEY KA ISAKA SEME MUNICIPALITY

Sandile Clement Masuku

In terms of human sustenance, agriculture is the cornerstone of South Africa as it provides food to all citizens. The rearing of livestock is an important economic activity. Our dependence on livestock for daily consumption cannot be overemphasized. In 2020, the total income, generated from the sale of livestock, amounts to about 5.16 billion USD. While cattle sales alone amounted to about 3.12 billion USD, live chickens and sheep sales were in the region of about 1.01 billion USD. Due to high yielding revenue for the country, the government cannot afford to be complacent with fighting criminal activities, directed towards jeopardizing the economy, which is still reeling from the impact of the Covid 19 epidemic. The increase in stock theft cases in some of the provinces in the country, in particular Mpumalanga Province, is a cause for concern. This needs urgent intervention from all the stakeholders, involved in the fight against crime. This article examines the Factors contributing to an increasingly high rate of stock theft in Dr. Pixley ka Isaka Seme Municipality, Mpumalanga Province. The study employed a qualitative research approach that used semi-structured in-depth interviews to collect data. The sample consisted of 22 participants, selected through purposive sampling, who included farmers, herdsmen, Community Police Forum members, and community leaders. The study found that there are several factors contributing to a high rate of stock theft, among others are poverty, unemployment, and poor relationship between the South African Police Service, which as a result render community members reluctant to be involved in the fight against stock theft. It was also found, that there are no regular weekly or monthly meetings taking place. There are no awareness campaigns between the police and community members to discuss the stock theft trends in Dr. Pixley Ka Isaka Seme Municipality

Keywords: *community policing, stock theft, unemployment, Community, crime prevention strategy, organized crime, agriculture, livestock, economy*

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1. Introduction

Rural communities regard livestock as “living wealth”, and they are often their only source of income and sustenance. When their livestock is stolen many households and subsistence farmers lose their livelihoods. But these farmers are not the only ones who suffer on account of stock theft; it also has a serious impact on commercial farmers, and the red meat industry. Livestock theft is a crime, defined as a property crime and economical in nature. In theory, for this type of crime to be committed, three prominent elements must be present, namely a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian [1]. A livestock thief has a pseudo-personality type. It could be your next-door neighbour, customers, a local livestock farmer, or a livestock farm worker [2].

At the launch of the National Rural Safety Strategy (NRSS) in Bethlehem, the Free State, in July 2011, stock theft was declared a priority crime. It was revealed, that it was not easy to police stock theft, as it often entailed long hours, spent in the field, this includes staying in the field waiting for the crime to be committed. Geldenhuys [3] added that, over and above the investigation of stock theft cases, Stock Theft Units (STUs) also must deal with other issues, including finding stray animals and assisting in disputes over ownership and branding. Furthermore, it is believed, that stock theft is one of the most important challenges, faced by poorly resourced farmers, with the potential to cripple their livelihoods [4]. This is a problem because the impact of livestock theft is more economic in nature however there is another impact, such as the emotional impact on the victims that cannot be ignored. Economically, the crime affects the business enterprise of each livestock producer, irrespective of whether the producer is a commercial farmer or small-scale farmer and is the largest obstacle in sustainable livestock production and food security [5].

Stock theft is an emotional topic for farmers, but the full impact has not yet been realized. Most farmers seem to be apathetic towards the problem and only react when someone steals them. Most of the operations and patrols focus on the so-called runners who are responsible for stealing the stock. Farmers and the SAPS are using an enormous amount of energy, time, and resources to combat stock theft, but they are fighting a losing battle at this point [6].

South African Police Service reports on stock theft

According to the South African Police Service's last quarterly crime report for 2022, 7,446 incidents of stock theft were recorded between October 2022 to December 2022 [7]

Legislation

Game Theft Act 105 of 1991. Section 3 (1) of the Act states that:

Any person who- (a) enters another person's land with intent to steal game thereon or (0) without entering another person's land, intentionally disperses or lures disperse game from that land; or take away game from another person's land, shall be guilty of an offence... or that he wrongfully and unlawfully dispersed or lured away game from another person's land, it shall be presumed, that he had the intent to steal game or to disperse or lure away game from the land, as the case may be, unless the contrary is proved.

Criminal Law Amendment Act 59 of 1983 was enacted to amend the Stock Theft Act, 1959 with the following provisions:

– To empower a purchaser of stock or produce who in terms of an agreement of sale does not become the owner thereof merely by the delivery, to drive convey or transport such stock or produce along any public road as if he was the owner thereof.

– To further regulate the compensation for damage to or loss of stock or produce.

– To increase the penalties, associated with the contravention of the Act.

The authors highlighted that under South African criminal law, four essential elements of theft exist as follows:

1. Unlawful;
2. Appropriation;
3. Property;
4. Intention

In relation to the unlawfulness of the perpetrator, the taking of the property must be against the owner's will meaning no consent was given by the owner. Appropriation is when a person takes any property belonging to another person. A property is said to be appropriated when the thief behaves as if he or she were the lawful owner of the property and also deals with the property in the way an owner would. The property must belong to another because an owner cannot steal their own property. In relation to intention, the accused must intentionally effect appropriation, intending to deprive the owner permanently of his/her property or control over his/her property knowing that he /she is acting unlawfully in taking it [8].

The Stock Theft Act 57 of 1959 states that:

Acquisition of stock or produce from persons whose places of residence are unknown is unlawful (1) Any person who in any manner (otherwise than at a public sale) acquires or receives into his possession, or any auctioneer, agent or market master who receives into his possession for the purpose of sale, from any person who has no known place of residence, any stock or produce without obtaining at the time of delivery of such stock or produce to him a certificate, issued not more than thirty days before the delivery, from-

(a) the employer, chief, headman or subhead man of the person concerned or a deputy of such chief or an 'official witness', as defined in Chapter 1 of the Code of Zulu Law, as referred to in section 24 of the Black Administration Act, 1927 (Act 38 of 1927);

(b) a justice of the peace; (c) a policeman of or above the rank of sergeant;

(d) a dipping foreman;

(e) a stock inspector;

(f) two residents of substantial means of the neighbourhood, in which the transaction takes place; or (g) the person from whom such person purchased or acquired such stock or produce, giving a description of the stock or produce and certifying that to the best of his or their knowledge and belief such person is entitled to dispose of or deal with such stock or produce, shall be guilty of an offence.

Section 8 (1) of the Act deals with stock or produce on public roads and removal certificates. It states that:

– If you drive, convey or transport any stock or produce, of which you are not the owner, on or along any public road, you must have in your possession a 'removal certificate'

– This is issued by the owner or his duly authorised agent.

– it is an offence not to be in possession of such a certificate. [9].

What is the extent and worth of stolen stock in South Africa? There are more than 131 000 cases of stolen stock each year. A significant amount of stock thefts is not reported as farmers feel that nothing will be done in any case, which means that thousands more cases need to be added to these numbers. According to Statistics South Africa, the non-reporting of stock theft comes down to about 70.7 % of cases.

The value of livestock, stolen during 2019/2020, to be around R1 179 458 600. On average there are about 182 cattle, 282 sheep and 138 goats being stolen every day in South Africa [10, 11].

2. Literature Review

There are many factors contributing to the increased rate of stock theft in many areas of the world including South Africa. These factors include but are not limited to protests from aggrieved relation or workers, hunger, or economic depression, attempts to seek compensation or redress for some perceived losses like underpayment, wage deduction or deprived rest or a tendency for willful damage, unemployment, laziness, greed, bad company, racial discrimination, lack of fencing, poor branding technique, and in-born traits - kleptomania. Stock theft is a persistent problem in many countries in the African region. South Africa is also hit hard by the incidents of stock theft. This is posing a serious threat to the livelihood and food security of the country. It further causes significant stress to farmers, both financially and psychologically [12]. Many people in rural areas rely on their stock to make a living, including taking their kids to school and doing other tasks, in which their animals are used for assistance. [13] stipulates that Animals, such as oxen, donkeys, and horses, can be used to pull ploughs and other farming tools. In addition, animals, such as cattle, mules, donkeys, and horses, are used for many tasks around the farm, such as ploughing fields, loading wood, and fetching water. This is the life of many people living in rural areas. These agricultural thefts are making the agricultural sector a risky venture. This is problematic because many people in rural areas are forced to live on their land and migrate to urban areas to look for employment for them to survive. This is causing worse social problems and increases the crime level in urban areas as these people also find it difficult to find employment and adjust to the new life and new environment [14]. The major reason behind the increase in livestock theft thus appears to be poverty [15]. For this paper, the authors are focusing on poverty, carelessness and the consequences of stock theft.

2. 1. Poverty

Poverty is a major cause of many problems in the society. In the study, conducted in Lesotho, it was revealed that the paramount factor in the cause of stock theft is clearly poverty. This is said to be increasing if there is a poor harvest in regions where unemployment is high. Joblessness and poverty were consistently rated by respondents as the primary reasons for endemic theft [16]. It also indicates that as a result of stock theft many children leave school early, because parents cannot afford to pay for their schooling. With South Africa's unemployment increasing at this speed, one wonders if South Africa will not see itself facing more problems.

2. 2. Carelessness

Carelessness is also among the major causes of stock theft in many areas. Many people in rural areas do not brand their stock. Other stock owners do not count their stock regularly. They take time to report all stock theft cases. They do not keep a controlled stock register, especially the small-scale farmers. Some of the livestock do not stay in grazing camps they just roam around and stray. This gives effect to the routine activity theory. Routine Activity Theory focuses more on the location of the crime. This theory focuses on the presence of a motivated offender, a suitable target, and a lack of guardianship. The assumption within Rational Choice Theory is that criminal behaviour is the outcome of decisions, influenced by rational consideration; this theory considers the desires, preferences and motives of offenders and potential offenders [17].

Stock that is left unattended is vulnerable to being stolen since according to Routine Activity Theory, a crime can only occur in the absence of a capable guardian (livestock owners or herdsman) as it leaves a suitable target (livestock) unprotected against a motivated offender when they come together in time and space [18].

2. 3. Consequences of stock theft

a. Social impact

Nearly half of the livestock owners suspect that certain individuals in their villages are involved in the theft of animals – acting either as informants or as thieves. In many instances, the poorest of the poor who is living below the poverty line are stigmatized, because many farmers believe that those are the ones who are stealing their livestock as a matter of survival, which is not the case. Lending animals to other community members for ploughing is in steep decline. So are cultural activities and celebrations that involve the slaughter of animals. Cow dung is used for fuel in rural areas, but stock theft has reduced the availability and resulted in households resorting to wood for making fires. This has led to women and girls spending many hours a day collecting firewood in the forests. This exposes them to the danger of being raped and killed. Resorting to wood for fuel has led to deforestation, which has also caused major soil

erosion problems. Apart from this, deforestation, on the other hand, contributes to climate change, because the oxygen, produced by these trees, becomes less [14].

b. Economic impacts

Some authors [19] have argued that for one to understand the real impact of stock theft, it is necessary to calculate the direct cost of stock theft (the value of the stock lost), as well as the indirect cost of stock theft (the financial impact of loss-controlling practices). Some farmers have insured their livestock and each time they make a claim from the insurance company, their premium escalates. This eventually results in a financial loss for the claimant. The negative impact of stock theft on the income of households and the government has reduced livestock owners to a poverty level that places strain on the economy. The reason is that even if the livestock is recovered, it must be sold or slaughtered immediately to avoid transmitting possible diseases to other livestock that was left behind. Farmers are reluctant to invest in breeding cattle and households debate the merits of getting rid of their cattle [19].

c. Health Impact

Stock theft can be categorized into four types, namely,

The killers or freezer food, Professional stock theft, theft for Breeding Purposes and theft for Butcher. The two types of Stock thieves, mentioned above, (the killers or freezer food and Butcher), steal livestock for food purposes or slaughter and supply to their business. This means they don't need livestock, but they require meat. As a result, the stock will be killed on-site and only the required portion of it will be taken. The remaining carcass will be left where the incident happened. The part, which the thieves don't need, will be disposed of, with no supervision or any thought of what will happen to the disposed of carcass. This could pose a serious threat to the health and well-being of the community living in and around that area, especially those in rural areas since some of them still fetch water in the rivers. Such actions may result in air pollution (odours), water contamination, and disease transmission. The loss of income is likely to increase the consumption of inferior as opposed to normal goods by the affected household. Coupled with the loss of milk and meat for family consumption due to stock theft, such a loss of income implies a deterioration in the nutritional status of the household [20].

The novelty of the research

It is important for black South African researchers to conduct independent research on this important topic. As there are not many pieces of research, conducted in this area of study in the past. It will provide us with a balanced discourse and a pragmatic approach when it comes to looking at stock theft from multi-racial perspectives in South Africa. It is important to fill this academic lacuna because it makes all citizens able to migrate from the distorted or skewed debate surrounding livestock farming in South Africa.

3. The aim and objects of the research

The aim of the study is to contextualise the impact of livestock theft on farming communities in South Africa.

To accomplish the aim, the following tasks have been set:

1. Poverty Alleviation.
2. Using technology to protect livestock industry.

4. Materials and methods

This study employed a qualitative research approach utilizing semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The period of study for this study was 12 months, with twenty-two participants that were selected using a purposive sampling strategy and comprised police officials from three different police stations in the rural areas of the Dr. Pixley Ka Isaka Seme Local Municipality, farmers, herdsmen, Community Police Forum (CPF) members, and community leaders. Relevant monographs, reports, journals, and Internet publications constituted the sources of secondary data for the study. All ethical conditions were provided, guided by the Ethics Committee for Research on Animals (ECRA). In this trajectory, the Sisonke study of 28 April 2021 is pivotal informing us about some of the issues surrounding the importance of vaccination of the country. This animal study reported that for mRNA and JnJ vaccine showed no long term effect.

The data were collected through audio recordings and were transcribed and translated into English Language as topics and themes for examination by coding and grouping the data into related headings. The authors conducted all sessions and asked follow-up questions as needed. An interview schedule guided the authors using a model question format for all the participants. Interviews were conducted in the language of participants' choice, which was mainly isiZulu and English. The following procedure was adopted to ensure the credibility of the collected Data:

- The authors made an appointment with each participant at a time, which suited him or her.

- Explained that the information obtained would be treated with the highest confidentiality, since all participants remained anonymous, and the research is for academic purposes only.
- Asked permission to record the interview.
- Explained that the interview was structured and that probing questions would be determined by the information, given by the participant.
- Utilised a tape recorder to record the data in order to revisit certain answers when necessary.
- Interviewed in a quiet environment conducive for a conversation.

Both authors recognised the noticeable, grounded grouping of meaning, held by the participants in the setting. This involved decreasing the data to a practicable set of subjects to write into the final story-line [21]. Similar topics were clustered together, and the authors operated with a single cluster of topics at intervals.

5. Results and discussions

In relation to contributing factors, it was noted, that most of the participants mentioned poverty as the main or major contributor to stock theft. Participants mentioned that there is no school for skill development in the area, the education level is very low and those who wish to go to university, have no means to fund themselves.

– Another point to note is the contributing factor of the underpayment of the herdsmen. Herdsmen said they are paid R20, 00 per cow per month. It also depends on the farmer. If one decides to pay less, they just do that. The use of drugs amongst the youth is also another factor contributing to stock theft.

– There are no recreational facilities in the area, and as a result, the youth is not kept busy. Lack of grazing camps, lack of stock branding, lack of infrastructure, December stokvels, and racial hatred were also amongst other noted contributing factors.

Theme 1: What are the contributing factors to an increased rate of stock theft within the Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme policing area?

This question received adequate coverage from the study. The participants were diverse, and the same question was posed to all the participants. Participants mentioned several causative factors that increased the rate of stock theft in the Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme Municipality.

Many participants, like:

(Participants 1, 7, 9,17,18,19, 20, 21, 24, 25, and 26) *“Mentioned poverty as a major causative factor to stock theft in the area. However, some people commit stock theft out of greed. Many young people in the area are without employment. The area has no skills development centres, and there are fewer job opportunities, therefore these young people refuse to sit at home and die of hunger, so they go out and steal stock to survive. Some of them are used by the elders to steal the stock on their behalf”*

Other participants, like:

(Participant 4) *“Mentioned the use of drugs as another causative factor as many young people in the area use drugs”*

(Participant 2) *“Is of the view that lawlessness, less conviction rates, and the delay in the prosecution are the cause of an increased rate of stock theft. He mentioned that the person who was arrested in 2012, whose case is still pending trial, has committed four more cases of stock theft on his property. He further stated that the Stock theft unit is understaffed, therefore they do not respond swiftly to reported cases”*

(Participant 3) *“Emphasises the point that the culprits are released early and then continue with committing stock theft crimes”*

(Participants 8 and 11) *“Two herdsmen, mentioned the issue of grazing camps as a major problem to stock theft. The area is situated in a very big land mass, but they have no grazing camps. Only a few members of the community have herdsmen for their livestock. They normally just let their livestock run free without supervision. He further stated that as herdsmen they are underpaid as each herdsman is paid R20, 00 a month per cow. That means they must have a large herd of livestock to make more money, which then results in them as herdsmen not being able to look after the stock properly. Some of them leave the stock to go and work on other piece jobs and when they return the livestock has been stolen”*

(Participants 10) *“A herdsman believes that some farmers just don’t want to work with the police. They want to make their own decisions”*

(Participants 13, 15 and 16) *“Police officers, believe that community members don’t brand their stock. Since they don’t have grazing camps the stock loiters around and that opens a gap for thieves to steal and brand the livestock. He also mentioned that herdsmen are underpaid, which results in them stealing the livestock to supplement the money they get from their employers, especially those who are farm dwellers. The relationship between the farmers and the farm dwellers is also not good”*

(Participant 14) *“Believes that a major contribution to stock theft is the December stokvels. She believes that the stokvels organisers have a long list of beneficiaries who are promised meat at the end of the year. They then steal stock, so that they can cover all the beneficiaries on their list. She further stated that stock is also stolen killed and sold to the street vendors who sell food to motorist passing by, particularly truck drivers”*

(Participant 22) *“A prosecutor, stationed at Volksrust, is of the view that stock theft is because of racial hatred because white farmers own most of the land and the community has no land. Communities live in the township on small stands. These people then steal the white farmer's livestock, so that they can drive them away from the land they are occupying. He further stated that most of the cows, used for cultural rituals, such as weddings and funerals, are not checked, which in turn makes such rituals a lucrative market for stock thieves.*

There are a number of factors leading to the high rate of stock theft at Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme Municipality. Stock theft has far-reaching effects. Rural communities struggle to make out an existence from thin incomes in a harsh rural environment. Their stock is regarded as 'live wealth' and is often their only source of income and sustenance [22]. Hence, when their stock is stolen, the impact is far-reaching, costing many households and small-scale farmers their livelihoods. When the delicate economy of small-scale farming is disrupted, people flood to the urban areas causing worse social problems. Stock theft also has a serious effect on the red meat industry. If the community is involved, the above-mentioned problems can be eliminated or reduced to a lower rate [23].

Stock theft results in economic hardships. Both authors [24] argue that communities perceive stock theft as a significant cause of poverty and a factor that limits the growth of herds. Escalating stock theft and related violence have heavy social consequences, bringing fear and insecurity to ordinary people. The negative impact of stock theft on the income of households and the government has reduced livestock owners to a poverty level that places strain on the economy. Farmers are reluctant to invest in breeding cattle and households debate the merits of getting rid of their cattle [14]. It is against the foregoing, that the researchers supply the following recommendations, which can be used as a tool to deal with the problem of a high rate of stock theft in Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme Municipality. This problem does not only affect the said Municipality, but even other areas are also victims. The following recommendations can also be adopted and applied to other areas to deal with the scourge of stock theft.

Recommendations

Following the above results from the participants and the discussion above it is clearly apparent, that more issues needed to be addressed in relation to finding a lasting solution to stock theft. The researchers recommend the following:

a. Awareness campaigns

The public is unaware of several things, such as how the criminal justice system works, and the procedures to follow when you apply for the branding certificate. The public is also unaware when or at what age they are supposed to tattoo or brand their livestock. The authors recommend that in the community there should be a campaign to teach the public how to apply for a branding certificate and how and when to brand their livestock, because most of the livestock that is stolen, is not branded, and then later branded by the thieves, which makes it difficult to prove ownership afterward. There are also different types of branding that livestock owners in the Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme Municipality should be informed about. These methods are as follows:

- Hot-iron branding: The stock owner burns a mark on the skin of his/her animals with a hot iron. Calves younger than six months of age should not be branded.
- Freeze-branding: A branding mark can also be put on the animals by way of freeze-branding. Freeze branding is done by utilizing dry ice and alcohol; and
- Tattoo mark: Tattoo tongs and ink are used to mark the animals. Calves can be tattooed from one week of age [19].

b. The use of informers

The researchers also recommend the use of informants to gather more information on who is committing stock theft in the area. Using informers to combat crime is of vital importance and their value should not be underestimated.

c. Installation of Closed-Circuit Television Cameras

For those prominent farmers with enough means, the authors recommend the installation of cameras on their farms. As was mentioned previously, one of the big farmers had a camera, installed on his farm. Since then, he has experienced less stock theft and increased the recovery rate of the livestock, since it is easy to detect movements on the farm. This alerts other farmers to conduct roadblocks and do stop and search.

d. Herdsmen

Only a few farmers have herdsmen to look after their livestock. For safety, the authors recommend that livestock owners make use of herdsmen to look after their livestock. There must be a standardized payment policy for herdsmen since it was mentioned in the findings, that they are underpaid and, as a result, they resort to stealing for their employees, especially those who are farm dwellers and working on

the very same farm. One farmer mentioned that they even call their friends from the neighbouring communities to steal the livestock and then they share the money later.

e. Skill development centres

The area has no skills development area and, as a result, unemployment is driving the youth to commit a crime. The authors recommend that each area must have a skills development area to assist the youth with skills that they can use to create business and work opportunities for others. Since the area is mostly rural, such development centres should be aligned with the rural area's needs.

f. Resources

The stock theft unit has no resources. The authors recommend that reliable resources, such as bikes, SUV cars, and horses be provided, so that the detectives would be able to respond swiftly to reported cases no matter what weather conditions they face on that day. Cars, like land-Cruisers, would be ideal to respond to the incidents of stock theft since most of the roads are dirt roads.

g. Training

One of the Participants, a prosecutor, mentioned that the detectives are not competent when dealing with cases of livestock. Many cases are referred to for more information. Stock theft cases need specialised skills. The authors recommend that detectives undergo a specialised course or training to be equipped with more knowledge and skills.

h. Stock theft unit

The researcher recommends that each police station establish a stock theft unit. If that would not be achievable, the stock theft unit should be at the centre of all these police stations, which is Daggakraal. It is recommended, that it be at Daggakraal because it is a big area with a large grazing field. Furthermore, other police stations should have one detective who will liaise with the station where the stock theft unit will be based. More important to note is that police Operations must be approached by multidisciplinary teams including SAPS, crime intelligence, SARS, Department of Home Affairs and farm safety structures, Stock theft units are not up to the task to fight this problem alone because of poor leadership, shortage of staff and shortage of the necessary expertise.

i. Community Policing Forums structures (CPFs)

Some of the areas have no CPF structures, in the areas where there is no CPF structures the researchers recommend that they should be established for them to identify policing priorities with the police and have a joint identification and co-ownership of policing programmes in the area. The CPF should ensure control of crime-fighting programmes in the area, and they must be at the forefront. They must ensure police accountability to the community through meeting facilitation and calling of imbizos. The CPF should write monthly reports in the language, spoken by many of the community members, on the issues they have handled and solved in collaboration with the police. This will ensure that the community and the police are on the same page and understand what is happening in their neighbourhood. Police community forums have failed in South Africa because most of the black populace does not trust the police. They find it difficult to believe that the South African Police Service's brutal apartheid policing can be submerged into the role of community partnership or promoters of community forums. The wounds of the oppressive history of the police in South Africa were not fully healed before community policing was introduced by the promoters of it, hence we are faced with very poor attendance of citizens in these forums. Basically, community policing has come to a stalemate in South Africa [25].

j. Partnership

The SAPS in the Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme Municipality should facilitate and maintain a partnership between the community and the police, including the establishment of, and support for the functioning of CPFs; support the participation of CPFs in CSFs; facilitate communication between the police and the community; improving the rendering of police services to the community. There should be a joint identification of local policing priorities and co-ownership of problem-solving programmes. Police should conduct periodic reporting to the community (accountability), in conjunction with the CPF structures as well as facilitate and implement approved rural safety policies and strategies [26, 27].

Limitations of the study

1. The efficacy of the criminal justice system, as there are reports that crimes, perpetrated against livestock farmers, are not properly investigated. Some farmers have lost their lives in the hands of criminals.
2. The farming community is a very close-knit committee and may not want to speak to people outside their respective farming communities.
3. Government financial assistance is limited for average-income farmers.
4. Further research is needed to evaluate the problems, faced by livestock farmers.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, the researchers looked at the following:

- a. In the introductory part of the paper, the researchers present the research problem in relation to stock theft.
- b. Introduce the reader to the Stock Theft Act 57 of 1959 legislation.
- c. The researchers highlighted the trio contributory factors that may be held responsible for the increase of stock theft as follow: unemployment, poverty and carelessness.
- d. The shortcomings of the police in protecting livestock farming community were also highlighted together with impact of it thereof.
- e. The researchers provided the reader with a list of recommendations and taking into cognizance the limitations of the study.
- f. Stock theft needs to be treated as a serious criminal activity and all those who are either perpetrators or those abating the perpetrators should face the full might of the law.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest in relation to this research, whether financial, personal, authorship or otherwise, that could affect the research and its results, presented in this paper.

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Data availability

Data will be made available on reasonable request.

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Sandile Clement Masuku, Department of Safety and Security Management, Tshwane University of Technology, Staatsartillerie Rd, Pretoria West, Pretoria, South Africa, 0183
E-mail: masuksc@unisa.ac.za