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Reward Offered for Metals Theft Information

The Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association (WPVGA) announced today that a fund has been established to offer a reward for information leading to an arrest and conviction of any individual or group for stealing metal like copper or aluminum from WPVGA member's farms.

The reward is in response to a rash of very bold thefts over the past several months ranging from wires off equipment and irrigation machines to metal culverts and other metal parts used in potato storage facilities.

The reward will pay up to \$10,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of people responsible for these thefts.

The WPVGA is also working on legislation requiring scrap metal purchasers to record basic information about people they are purchasing scrap metal from. The intent of the legislation is to deter the sale of stolen metal and to be able to trace back sales if necessary. The bills have been introduced in each house of the legislature and are awaiting committee action.

"The thefts have reached epidemic proportions" said Mike Carter, Executive Director of the WPVGA. "The WPVGA is fighting back by offering a reward, addressing the situation in the legislature and using all of our communication resources to insure that all growers and their neighbors know about the recent sudden increase of thefts. It is important that everyone in rural areas be especially vigilant and keep an eye out for suspicious activity around farm buildings and near irrigation units."

The WPVGA is a group of 143 growers of potatoes, sweet corn, snap beans, peas and other vegetables for processing who operate farms throughout Wisconsin.