By Jan Schultz
The Imperial Republican

A series of diesel fuel thefts in the Imperial area recently are targeting farmers.

According to Chase County Sheriff Kevin Mueller, thefts from three different farmers have totaled 1,900 gallons as of Tuesday this week.

He believes the thefts are related.

“Our opinion is that they are stealing the fuel and using it in semi-trucks in the area,” the sheriff said Tuesday.

They have some leads and continue to investigate, he said.

The first report involved the theft of 1,000 gallons from a farmer north of Imperial who had just had his 1,000-gallon tank filled. The theft was reported Nov. 7, Mueller said, but could have occurred anytime since Oct. 25 when the tank was filled, he noted.

The thieves also stole the pump right off the tank, and appeared to have pulled right up next to the tank to drain it. It had been padlocked and the electricity was off, according to the report.

The loss was valued at $4,000.

Two calls came in Tuesday this week reporting similar thefts.

The first involved 400 gallons of diesel taken from a pair of combines and a tractor parked in a field southwest of Imper-ial.

The combines and tractor had just been filled in preparation for moving to another field, according to Mueller. The theft was discovered as the farmer was moving them and ran out of fuel.

In addition, hand tools were stolen and lights broken out on the combines. Value of that loss was over $1,600.

It’s believed the theft occurred over the weekend. Tracks from a vehicle and fuel tank were seen next to the equipment, Mueller said.

Another call to the sheriff’s office came in Tuesday afternoon, this time from a farmer in northeast Chase County.

The loss of 500 gallons, valued at $2,000, occurred last week. According to the report, 250 gallons were stolen one day and another 250 the day after.

Sheriff Mueller said the thefts are occurring at night.

He asks that people be watchful for vehicles pulling fuel tanks at night and if any other suspicious activity is noticed to call the sheriff’s office at 308-882-4748. Get a license plate number if possible, he said.