



Power Fencing for Sheep and Predator Control

Designing the Power Fence

High power electric fencing is the tool farmers prefer for controlled grazing. It is much less expensive and more effective than conventional fencing. There are many different styles of fencing possible. However, over the years, they have evolved into three main types.

1. Permanent fence

A permanent fence is one designed to last 20 to 50 years with little or no maintenance. It can consist of either pressure treated wood posts using high strength permanent insulators or Insultimber self-insulating posts. The wire is 12 1/2 ga. (2.5mm) Class 3 smooth galvanized high tensile Power Wire. This wire is designed for electric fencing to allow easy knots and insulator ties.

Generally, for predator control, 5 or 6 strands are sufficient for most locations; the fence being 36" to 42" high. The wires should alternate: one strand live, the next grounded, and so on. This way, the predator will receive the full shock even if it jumps through the fence. Keep in mind, though, that in winter or during very dry conditions, the grounding can be poor. The "live - ground" fence, then, will still handle these situations. This type of fence has proven to be very successful against coyotes, wolves and bears. Internal fences can be 4 or sometimes even 3 strands depending on stocking rates. However, if there is a serious predator problem, using 5 or 6 strand internal fences discourages the predators from moving from field to field should they get through the perimeter fence. Typical cost for a 5 strand Insultimber high tensile fence is less than \$0.40 per foot.

2. Portable fence

A portable fence is one that is moved at least once per year. When building a portable fence, it is important to consider the frequency that the fence will be moved so you can plan for future convenience. Steel posts and insulators are an economical solution if the fence is moved infrequently. However, shorts where the electrified wire touches a steel post are more common with this style of fence. Plastic electrified mesh has been used for many years but it is expensive and tangles easily. Multiwire treadins with Polytape are much lighter and easier to use and are rapidly replacing the mesh. Polytape and Polywire are popular in situations requiring stock training & control. On long distances or for predators, high conductivity Turbo Tape and Turbo Wire are available. They conduct

electricity much better than conventional polywires. The Polywire or Polytape can be easily rolled up on geared insulated reels for fast moving and compact storage of the fences.

3. Offset brackets on existing fence

Most farms already have conventional fencing. It is very easy and economical to reinforce the existing fencing with one or more strands of high tensile Power Wire attached to the fence with Offset Brackets. The Offset Brackets can be attached to the existing fence wire or easily driven into the posts.

They hold the hot wire 12" away from the conventional fence wire, greatly reducing the chance of shorting. For sheep control, usually one wire around the inside of the fence about 12" off the ground is sufficient. For predator control, one wire 6" off the ground on the outside and one wire at the top of the fence are often enough. More may be added if the situation demands, i.e. coyotes jumping through the fence.

Energizers

These fences will not work unless there is sufficient power on the fence. Sheep are quite resistant to electric shock and need a powerful energizer to control them. Predators such as coyotes are very motivated and will test a fence daily.

If the energizer is to run on batteries (with or without a solar panel to keep the battery charged), a B160 is the absolute minimum sized energizer that should be used. The more powerful B260 has been specifically designed for sheep, predator and other higher power situations. If you have electricity available to run the energizer, then the 110 volt M1500 is the best choice for sheep and predators. Although there are many other models available, you can't have too much power to keep sheep and predators under control. It is the energy in the pulse that keeps the fence effective.

Conclusion

Livestock can be trained to the fence; predators cannot. The fence must be that much better and the shock that much stronger if it is to be used for predator control.



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