

Be Prepared: Having a Plan Before a Fence Project Can Spare You Headaches Later

With over 130 years of experience under their belt, Bekaert's team of Fence Pros is readily available to answer any questions. Questions submitted on Bekaert's Ask a Fence Pro are responded to within 24 hours.

A horned goat and fence with six-inch spacing.

It sounds like the beginning of a joke, but it's a serious recipe for disaster. Installing the proper fence for your animals is vital for not only keeping them contained, but is an important factor in keeping them safe as well.

So it stands to reason that a quality fence is one of the most important investments animal caretakers can make. But, there is more to fencing than simply driving posts in the ground and fastening wire. There are several considerations to think about before a single post-hole is dug. What are your plans for that area in the future? Are you corralling goats or horses? Will you institute rotational grazing?

Priority One

"Animal safety is priority one," says fencing expert, Keith Taylor. That means choosing the right type of wire for your animals. "You can't keep horned sheep or horned goats in a fence with six-inch spacing. They'll push their heads through it and get their horns caught. They can't get back out. Then they're stuck," Taylor says. The fence also has to be tough enough to endure animals running into it, without injuring themselves.

With a multitude of options, choosing the right fence for your project can be daunting. Taylor recommends reaching out to Bekaert's Fence Pro team. "People can actually email questions that they have about each product to meet their animal needs. We answer those questions daily."

It's also important to not only consider the animals you're keeping but to also think about those you don't want in. For instance, to keep deer out, Taylor says, "You definitely need a high fence to do that. That should be part of your planning: what am I trying to keep in and what am I trying to keep out."

Look Ahead

"Look at the long term," Taylor says. Will you need to cut the pasture in half at some point? Decide where you might want to put gates, but also, where you might want future gates. Will you have cattle grazing in one season, and horses in another or will you have them all together?

"Really study the layout of upcoming projects. Not only the project that you're working on now but upcoming projects that you're going to look at in the future."

Map It Out

Once you've decided what type of wire you need for your project, it's time to map it out. You can start with a sketch, or use helpful planning tools like aerial maps of your property



It's important to choose the right type of fence for your animals to ensure their safety. When fencing close to a road, be sure to know your state and county's rules.

which you can get from the US Soil Conservation Service, the US Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, your local agricultural Extension service, or private aerial survey firms. When laying out your plan, mark assignments for pastures, hay, crops, buildings, water accessibility and obstacles.

Taylor recommends using Bekaert's online fencing calculator to map your area which uses Google Earth and the user's inputs to developing a list of materials needed. "You can actually go in and you drop points around the pasture that you want to fence. It'll tell you the length of your fencing project, how much wire you need, and how many posts you need based on recommendations or personal preferences. You can set all

these specifications, and it'll actually print you out a shopping list." That way you can get exactly the right materials in just the right amount.

Know the Rules

When fencing near a highway, it's important to know the rules for how close fences can be to the road. "It shocks me how different things are from region to region," Taylor says. "Every county can be different." Contact your county officials for proper guidelines for your area.

Gear Up

Once your plan is in place, it's important to make sure you have the right gear for the job. Taylor is adamant about safety, "Always safety first. Be sure to have a good pair of safety glasses and leather or cut resistant gloves." Even smooth wire can be sharp.

A good pair of work boots will also be beneficial. "Rolls are heavy. To drop one on your foot will make for a bad day," Taylor laments.

As for tools, Taylor says, "A good set of cutters or pliers is a must when working with High Tensile wire. A stretcher bar and a good set of stretcher bar pullers make life easier when stretching fence and working with woven wire. Gripple accessory products make building fence much easier and faster."

To learn more about planning in order to get the most out of your fence, head to fencing.bekaert.com.



Before installing fence, it's important to survey the area to be fenced and layout maps. Bekaert's online fence calculator is a beneficial tool for getting the right amount of wire for your project. Consider future uses for your land as well as what your current needs are.

