

High Tensile Wire & Coatings Increase Longevity & Cut Costs

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Talk to any cattle producer, and more than likely fencing won't come up as a task they look forward to. Build with high-tensile wire and ensure it's protected with the right coatings, and you'll have a fence that will last a lifetime, explains Keith Taylor, one of many fence pro supervisors with Bekaert, an American-made fencing company.

"My grandpa put in this fence when I was 10, and it is still in good shape and hasn't rusted," says Taylor of the high-tensile, barbed wire surrounding his cattle pasture. "Investing in good quality fencing products saves over the long run—because the fence lasts."

In the years since Taylor purchased his family's farm from Grandpa William, he hasn't needed to make many repairs because high-tensile wire can take wear and tear from livestock and weather.

"Even when a bull pushes against it, the fence doesn't sag because high-tensile wire snaps back—it only has three percent stretch compared to low-carbon wire which has about 13 percent stretch," explains Taylor, who was born and raised on the farm where his dad and grandpa raised Angus cattle.

Because Grandpa William believed in buying local, the high-tensile wire was made by Bekaert, at their manufacturing plant only 30 miles away in Van Buren, Arkansas. "This fence is truly an American-made product. I'm proud of our plant. With 400 employees, we are the largest fulltime employer in Crawford County," says Taylor of the company that has been manufacturing fence since the 1880s.

When Taylor compares high-tensile wire to low-carbon, he knows what he's talking about. He started working in Bekaert's manufacturing facility 27 years ago. "I started out in the production side of the plant. I've done everything—from running a protective coating line to operating every production fence machine—pretty much everything it takes to make this product and get it to market, I've done."

In his current role, Taylor spends much of his time traveling across the U.S. hosting fencing seminars where he provides hands-on, installation training to fencing contractors and their teams. Today, he's on his way to a Beef Cattle Short course in College Station, Texas, where he's assisting with a workshop for a group of Texas A&M University students and cattle producers.

Cost-per-foot or mile

"When I'm talking with livestock producers, the first thing I tell them is unless they like fencing and fixing fence, buy products that will last. It will save you time, and it will cost less per foot," Taylor says.

Then, he explains the science behind the strength and durability of high-tensile wire.

Tensile strength is the resistance of steel or another material to break under pressure.

As Taylor explains, the greater the tensile strength, the smaller the gauge and lighter the weight, which reduces cost-per-roll, risk of sag and number of fence posts needed to complete the project.

"Tensile strength is tough for some to wrap their head around because the gauge is smaller, meaning the wire is thinner, yet it is stronger, lasts longer and requires fewer posts," Taylor explains. High-tensile barbed-wire can withstand 25 to 35



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Taylor is pictured with the high-tensile barbed wire fence his Grandpa William put up on his family's farm in the early 1970s.

**- Keith Taylor
Technical Support Supervisor**



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Buying fence products that will last, saves time and money. Tensile strength and protective coatings are key to a fence's longevity. Tensile strength is the resistance of steel or another material to break under pressure.

percent more pressure before breaking than conventional-style low-carbon barbed wire. "Cattlemen will look at the high-tensile barbed wire and say, 'There's no way that skinny 14-gauge high-tensile barbed wire can be as good as that 12.5-gauge low-carbon wire.' That's when I put it into the tensile wire machine and break it. Education is so important."

Protective wire coatings also impact a fence's longevity. And coating strength depends heavily upon climate. "In the Eastern U.S., or down south where I live, there is a lot of moisture and humidity, so I suggest the strongest coatings available. Whereas in the midwest or west, where the climate is dry, a fence may only need a Class 3 or 1 coating," Taylor says.

Protective coatings prevent rust and corrosion, protecting a fence's wire and accessories because they contain another metal, like zinc or aluminum, that will give themselves up to protect iron and steel.

High-tensile wire fencing products and protective coatings have been available since the late 1970s. Grandpa William put up his barbed wire fence in the early 1980s. Although the technology behind high-tensile wire hasn't changed, some new features make fencing easier—especially when you're short on help.

"Finding good help is one of the biggest complaints I hear from

livestock producers and fencing contractors, so I recommend they buy fence with Gripple technology which Bekaert has adopted as part of its offerings," Taylor says. "Time is money, and this technology replaces cumbersome knots and crimps to make installation up to five times faster."

Gripple is a joiner and tension system developed to simplify the entire process of installing, maintaining and repairing all types of wire fencing. Joiners can be purchased individually, and used with any type of fencing wire, or producers can purchase rolls of wire from Bekaert factory-fit with joiners.

"Gripple technology is like a zip tie for fencing. It is a joiner and tensioner in one. It cuts down on time and makes it much easier for one person to join two rolls of fence or replace a section of fence," Taylor explains.

To learn more about Gripple technology and determine the fencing products you need to build a fence that will last, visit <https://fencing.bekaert.com>. To help determine how much material is needed to replace or repair a fence, the website also features an online fence calculator, which can be found at <https://fencing.bekaert.com/en/fencing-calculator>.

"No one wants to build a fence more than once. Invest in good products from the start and your fence will last," Taylor says.



Some high-tensile barbed-wire can withstand 25 to 35 percent more pressure before breaking than conventional-style low-carbon barbed wire. "Cattlemen will look at the high-tensile barbed wire and say, 'There's no way that skinny 14-gauge high-tensile barbed wire can be as good as that 12.5-gauge low-carbon wire.' That's when I put it into the tensile wire machine and break it. Education is so important," explains Keith Taylor, one of many fence pro supervisors with Bekaert, an American-made fencing company.