

# Just Because Your Fence Is Still Standing Doesn't Mean Flood Waters Didn't Cause Damage

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Replacing washed out fencing is one of many tasks farmers and ranchers impacted by spring floods worked to complete this summer. While replacing missing sections tops the priority list, before winter, landowners may also need to take a closer look at fence still standing.

"Flooding and standing water can do a lot of hidden damage to a fence," says Keith Taylor, a technical support supervisor with Bekaert, an American-made fencing company with manufacturing facilities in Van Buren, Arkansas. "Fall is a good time to inspect your fence. You don't want to wait until a snowstorm to discover your brace is no longer viable."

Taylor encourages landowners to begin their fence inspection by checking its braces.

**"No matter how good of a fence you installed, if you have a weak corner or post, that will be the point where the fence fails."**

If a wooden brace post is broken or shows signs of rot and decay and needs to be replaced, he strongly suggests round posts. "Don't use a square post. Round posts with all their growth rings intact have the strength of the tree," Taylor explains. Based on nearly 30 years' experience, he also recommends using brace pins instead of notches to hold the brace together.

While inspecting the fence line, Taylor says to keep an eye out for sediment, grass and other debris which floodwaters may

have washed up onto the fence. "I had customers tell me after the flooding, they had to dig their fences out. Get all dirt and debris off the fence," Taylor explains. This allows the wire to "breathe" and prevents corrosion.



Courtesy of Bekaert

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“If soil and plant material coat the wire it will begin to corrode. Areas covered with dirt and debris are the areas of the fence to rust first.”

He adds landowners should even check fence lines not impacted by standing water and flooding to make sure they are free of grass and other debris.

“Keeping grass and debris off the fence should be part of annual maintenance to increase the longevity of fencing.”

Coatings are another way to prevent rust. “If cattle producers have sections they still need to replace, consider investing in wire with protective coating. A class 3 or Zinc-aluminum-coated, high-tensile fencing requires less maintenance year-to-year,” Taylor says.

Coatings prevent corrosion because they contain another metals, like zinc or aluminum, explains Taylor, who spent the first years of his career with Bekaert working on the manufacturing floor. “These metals keep the fence from rusting because they will give themselves up to protect iron and steel.”

Another tip Taylor provides to prevent corrosion—don’t reuse rusty posts. “The worst thing you can do is use a rusty post. If a new fence is touching a rusty post, the rust on the post will begin to corrode the fencing wire,” he says.

If a T-post is rusty, Taylor says best practice is to replace it or paint it with a cold galvanizing spray or brush-on product. If you’re buying new, Taylor says producers will get the most value for their dollar with galvanized posts.

### Gripple system speeds up fence repairs

Fixing fence is labor-intensive. With all the other tasks that need to be wrapped up before winter, Taylor suggests producers who still have washed out or damaged sections left to repair or replace, speed up the process with Gripple technology.

Gripple, as part of the Bekaert Fencing System, is a joiner and tension system (**image A**) designed 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 the Bekaert factory fit with joiners (**image B**).

“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 get more maintenance tips or to watch a video demonstrating how Gripple technology works, visit <https://fencing.bekaert.com/> and search Gripple. And, to help determine how much material is needed to replace or repair a fence, Taylor encourages fencers to try out Bekaert’s online fence calculator, which can be found at <https://fencing.bekaert.com/en/fencing-calculator>.



Courtesy of Bekaert

Image A



Courtesy of Bekaert

Image B