

# Securing Solar Fields Keeps These Local Contractors Busy



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better together

Courtesy of River Valley Fencing

Building exclusion fence around solar fields makes up about 50 percent of River Valley Fencing's overall business. Owner Dan Maltby began using high-tensile Bekaert woven wire deer exclusion fence because compared to chain-link, woven wire is 30 percent less expensive, goes up quicker, guaranteed to last decades, stronger and works well in tough terrain.

Aesthetics is one of many reasons Dan Maltby uses Bekaert's Solidlock® Fixed Knot exclusion fence, instead of chain link, when he builds a fence around fields of solar panels, orchards or botanical gardens.

“When people see an 8-foot-tall chain-link fence, they think of an industrial park or prison. This black fixed knot woven wire fence is a lot less obtrusive. It really fades into the background,”

explains the Deerfield, Massachusetts owner of River Valley Fencing.

Aesthetics matter. In the case of solar fields, before panels can be connected to the power grid, the field must first be secured by fencing. Solar fields can be located near residential neighborhoods, open meadows or farmland. “I get a lot of comments from neighbors who are concerned when they learn an 8-foot fence is going up. Once they see the finished product, they love it,” Maltby says of Bekaert's high tensile fixed knot exclusion fence.

Quality, long-lasting materials also matter, explains Orwell, Vermont fencer, Bob Almeida. “Time is money. The best

materials and equipment save man hours and labor.” As a small business owner, Almeida and his business partner work alongside their small team of employees. “Fencing looks like simple work. But there is actually a lot of skill to it. You need to be able to trust your crew. Our small team has worked together for several years.”



Courtesy of River Valley Fencing

Esthetics is one of many reasons Dan Maltby uses deer exclusion fence, instead of chain link, when he builds a fence around fields of solar panels, orchards or botanical gardens. Maltby owns River Valley Fencing, Deerfield, Massachusetts. Before panels can be connected to the power grid, the field must first be secured by fencing.



Building exclusion fence around solar fields makes up about 50 percent of Homestead Fence's overall business. Almeida began using Bekaert's high-tensile Solidlock® Fixed Knot exclusion fence products 15 years ago. Compared to chain-link, fixed knot woven wire is:

- Stronger
- Guaranteed to last decades
- 30 percent less expensive
- Installs quicker
- Works well in tough terrain

"Fixed knot ultimately conforms well to all types of terrain. Chain-link does not," explains Almeida. He goes on to share that his crew works in rocky terrain, on steep hillsides and even mountains. They also work year-round. Unlike chain-link wire, woven wire is designed to expand and contract with temperature extremes.

To help his small crew keep up with customer demand, Almeida invests in the best products and equipment. The exclusion wire he utilizes was initially designed for deer farms, explains Steven Sarson, Bekaert Fence Pro and Technical Support Manager. "We soon realized wire designed to keep deer in, which really puts fencing to the test, is extremely effective at keeping them out."

In addition to high tensile fixed knot, Almeida invested in a customized wire stretcher. Mounted to a skid-steer loader, the stretcher picks up 400-pound rolls of fence wire, stretching the wire around posts. The team uses a heavy-duty automatic fence staple gun and they rely on Gripple wire joiners to splice the fence together.

Gripple joiners are small, mechanical wire joiners that allow for a quick, permanent splicing of wire. To speed up the task



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even more, U.S. manufacturer Bekaert, began offering factory installed Gripple joiners on every line wire on most fixed knot products. "Because we manufacture the wire right here in Arkansas, we are able to make in-factory modifications to meet our customers' demands," Sarson explains.

When Almeida, Maltby and other fence contractors began asking for exclusion fence to accommodate at-risk wildlife, like the Northern spotted box turtle and other small animals, like raccoons, skunk and fox, Bekaert began manufacturing exclusion fence with three, 6-inch openings on the bottom, 18-inches of the woven wire.

Responding to customers' needs extends beyond products. Sarson is among a team of fencing experts available to answer questions through Bekaert's online Ask The Fence Pro or over the phone. As a small business owner, Maltby relies on Sarson for advice. Before investing hundreds of thousands in fencing equipment, he talked to Sarson.

"Steven is the one who told me to make sure I was set up to install deer exclusion fence because there is high demand for it," Matlby says. "He was right."

Today, exclusion fence makes up about 50 percent of Maltby's fencing business. "Every company has a website, but a website is nothing like talking to Steven Sarson who has 30-years' experience with wire and the fencing industry."

To learn more about exclusion fence or other Bekaert fencing products, or to talk with a fencing expert, visit <https://fencing.bekaert.com>.



Courtesy of Homestead Fence

Solar fields can be located near residential neighborhoods, open meadows or farmland. Bob Almeida, owner of Homestead Fence, Orwell, Vermont, stands next to a solar field located near a neighborhood and industrial park in Rutland, Vermont. Before panels can be connected to the power grid, the field must first be secured by fencing.