

# Fence Installation: Do It Once, Do it Right

Whether you are looking to build a new pasture paddock or protect your prized fruit and vegetables from deer, building a new fence can be a daunting task. Luckily, fence expert Steven Sarson says creating a detailed plan for your fence before you start installation is the best way to do it once and do it right. Sarson has been helping acreage and farm owners plan and build high quality fences for more than three decades, 20 years of which he's been a Fence Pro at Bekaert Fencing.

## **Determine Your Purpose: Deer, Horses, Cattle and More**

One of your first planning steps, Sarson says, is to clarify your true goal. "Are you working to keep something in or keep something out?" he recommends asking yourself. "Knowing if you're building an enclosure or an exclusion fence kicks off the entire planning process."

If your goal is to keep the deer out, build a fence for height but not necessarily super strength. A fixed knot wire, like the Solidlock<sup>®</sup> fixed knot style from Bekaert Fencing, is an ideal exclusion fence.

For horse enclosures, visibility and strength are key. Sarson recommends a wooden top rail (board) or coated top wire to add visibility.

For horse paddocks, it's important to guard against entanglements. "You'll want to consider a non-climb fence to

protect horses' small hooves," Sarson adds. "Fencing with small, consistent openings of two inches by four inches works well."

Cattle require the ultimate in containment and strength. Sarson recommends a fixed knot fence design built using treated wood posts or a combination of treated wood, pipe and T-posts. Multiple strands of barbed wire or smooth wire with electric are also excellent choices. He notes that Bekaert Fencing offers accessories for any combination.

## **Product Specs to Consider**

There are a multitude of material options for building new fence, notes Sarson. His advice is to get familiar with the basics.

### **Wire Type**

Most simply, wire fencing products are manufactured using either high tensile wire or low carbon wire. Low carbon wire is easy to work with and fairly forgiving. However, low carbon wire is prone to elongating, sagging and has a much lower breaking strength compared to high tensile wires.

High tensile wire is made with higher carbon content increasing the wire's strength, reducing elongation and minimizing the need for future tensioning and repair. This also means high tensile wire can be installed using fewer posts than low carbon fences.

"With breaking strengths exceeding 1,250 pounds — 30% stronger than low carbon wire — high tensile is the best option for livestock," explains Sarson.

### **Knot Type**

Knot types vary based on the fence's use and the type of work it's meant to do — animal containment, animal exclusion, decoration, etc. Sarson notes the following are three of the most common knot types for your acreage fencing project.



## Map Out Your Plan

Determining how much fencing material you need is a critical step in doing fence once, the right way. To map out your fence and create an all-encompassing supply list, Sarson recommends the Fencing Calculator, a free online tool based in Google Earth from Bekaert Fencing.

“You can actually go in and you drop points around the pasture that you want to fence. The site tells you the length of your fencing project, how much wire you need, and how many posts you need based on the type of project. You can set all these specifications, and it’ll actually print you out a shopping list,” explains Sarson.

## Know the Rules

An often overlooked step in building a brand new fence is determining zoning and right of way rules. It is important to know the guidelines for how close fences can be to the road. Sarson recommends contacting county officials before constructing new fence lines along highways.

## The Extra Yard to Last for the Long Haul

Regardless if your fence is for enclosure or exclusion, Sarson says one way to make your fence last longer is to purchase wire with a protective coating.

“Purchasing wire with a high-quality coating increases durability and longevity,” notes Sarson. “For example, the exclusive Bezinal® + UV coating from Bekaert Fencing has been proven to increase the life of high tensile fences, sometimes up to several decades.”

## Paying For Your Fence

A cost-share program from NRCS or the USDA may be available to help defray the cost of a fencing project. The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) helps farmers and ranchers repair grounds damaged by natural disasters and to help put in place methods for water conservation. A conversation with your local Farm Service Agency office may be in order to determine eligibility for this or other programs. <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/conservation-programs/emergency-conservation/index>

## You’re Ready for Install

By spending time preparing your plan and selecting the right materials for your goals, Sarson says the installation process will go more smoothly and require fewer trips back out for additional materials.

**“Make a plan and work the plan,” Sarson says. “If you need additional help working out your plan, I am here to help.”**

Bekaert Fence Pros are available to answer any fencing question, big or small. Submit questions at <https://fencing.bekaert.com/> contact and a member of The Bekaert Fence Pro team will respond within 24 hours.



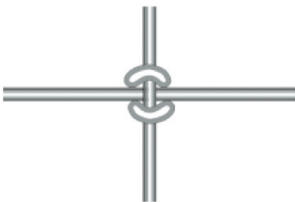
### Barbed Wire

Popular for cattle fences, barbed wire consists of two wire strands twisted together and starred with 2- or 4-point barbs at intermittent distances, usually 5 inches. A 3-inch barb spacing can be used for predator control.



### Fixed Knot

The best all-around choice for various types of livestock, fixed knots are durable and resistant to animal damage. Fixed knot construction is a top choice for professional fence installers because it adds strength and supports increased post spacing, says Sarson.



### S Knot

The smooth construction of the S Knot protects animals’ skin and coats. Sarson recommends this fence style as one of the best no-climb fences with solid containment for horses as well as goats, sheep and llamas.