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## Got Goats? Check Out These Fence Recommendations

Goats are extremely intelligent and have insatiable curiosity. This can make them prone to mischief, eager to explore and expert escape artists. Having the proper fence can spare owners a lot of headaches.

Goats are smart, maybe even too smart for their own good. Their intelligence, paired with their insatiable curiosity, make them prone to mischief, eager to explore and expert escape artists. Bobby Gaines and his family know just how much mischief goats can get into. He and his family have two on their small Georgia farm: Oreo, an American Pygmy, and Chester, a Registered Nigerian Dwarf.

“Oreo sure liked to run. She was constantly getting out. We’d have people come from all over, even from across the state line, to help us chase her or wrestle her and get her back in.”

Recently, Gaines put up Bekaert Sheep and Goat Fence, 1348-4 with a Bezinal® coating. “Now,” he says, “we don’t have that problem.”

Whether you’re raising goats for meat, milk or just because they’re fun to have around. As Gaines can attest, it’s important to have the proper fencing in place for them.

### Just Have Goats?

“Goats are naturally inquisitive,” Steven Sarson, Technical Support Manager at Bekaert explains. “They love to stand over by the fence to see what’s going on. You can have 10 acres of land, and they’ll all be over by the fence. They regularly try to put their heads through it or wiggle their nose in it.” Sarson says that’s why the most important consideration when putting up a goat fence is the size of the vertical openings.

If you only have goats in the pen, as Gaines does, Sarson recommends Bekaert Sheep and Goat Fence, 1348-4. This is Bekaert’s most popular wire for sheep and goats and has openings that are four inches square. “This prevents the animals from being able to put their heads through the fence at all,” Sarson says.

### For Other Animals With Your Goats

If you have other animals in with your goats, like cattle or horses, Sarson recommends Solidlock® Pro Fixed Knot 1348-3 with its three-inch vertical openings or 1348-12. 1348-3 is small enough to keep the goats’ heads from coming through and

are designed to not damage their hide due to the design of the S-knot. 1348-12, on the other hand, does allow goats to be able to put their heads through the openings, but it provides enough space for it to be able to turn its head and get it back in.

### Predator Prevention

The low cost of Bekaert Sheep and Goat Fence, 1348-4, along with ease of installation and wider post spacing, make it the optimal choice for fencing in goats. It’s small opening size also ensures that predators are not able to get through it to attack your animals.

Gaines recalls the tall wooden fence he had before his Bekaert fence. “We’ve got a lot of fox and coyotes down here. They were able to easily get through that. It had some busted up barbed wire in the gaps and just wasn’t much of a deterrent. There’s a lot of opossums, too. They’d sneak in and steal our chicken eggs.” Gaines says that since he put up his Bekaert fence,

**“There hasn’t been a single predator that’s been able to get through that fence.”**

Gaines says this gives him and his five children peace of mind. “We’re pretty protective of all of our animals, and of course, we’d be sad if anything happened to any of them, but especially our rooster, Cluck Norris. My kids would be devastated if something happened to him.”

### What Not to Use

Sarson says not every type of fence is optimal for goats. “What we don’t recommend is using a fence with a six-inch vertical opening,” he explains. “The problem with that size is that the opening is big enough for goats to stick their heads through, but isn’t big enough to allow them to pull it back out again. So it’s easy for them to get stuck. If you happen to see them stuck



Steven Sarson, Technical Support Manager, recommends using an S-knot or fixed knot (pictured) for goat fences. “The S-knot’s smooth design resists snagging fleeces while still providing structure needed to stand up against buckling and sagging,” Sarson says.

in the fence and get them out, you may turn around a few minutes later and see that they’ve done it again. Or worse, you don’t see them until it’s too late.”

### Post Spacing + High Tensile

Aside from the size of openings on the fence, another consideration when putting up fence for goats is the spacing between posts. Sheep and goat fence is typically installed using an eight to ten-foot post space. The Bekaert high tensile sheep and goat fence can be installed using a 12-foot post spacing. When using high tensile woven wire like the Solidlock® Pro, Sarson says, “You can go 20 to 30 feet between posts, depending on stocking densities, terrain and location. As an added bonus, that wider spacing means using fewer posts, which ends up lowering the total cost overall. You can put a better fence up for less money.”

Sarson also suggests using high tensile for goats because of the nature of the wire. “It’s more springy,” he says. “It gives with impact and doesn’t elongate, which helps prevent injuries to your goats.”

### Knot Selection

When considering knot choices for goat fence, Sarson favors either an S-knot or fixed knot. “The S-knot, found on Bekaert’s Sheep and Goat fence, is the same knot that’s found in horse fence. It provides a one-piece vertical stay wire, which is always a very good option.” The S-knot’s smooth design resists snagging while still providing the structure needed to stand up against buckling and sagging.

Sarson explains that, “The fixed knot uses a third wire that ties a knot at the crossover points. This design also has a one-piece vertical stay wire. Both the S-knot and the fixed knot are much more resistant to sliding from side to side than a standard hinge joint, which means it’s much harder for the goats to put a hole in it.”

### Wire Placement and Height

No matter what type of animals need to be contained, Sarson drives home the importance of keeping the wire on the same side of the post as the animals. “That way, if they push it, the posts, braces and fence do their job and resist the animal

pressure. If you put the wire on the outside of the fence and the animals push on it, the only thing holding that fence in place is the staple. This can cause the staple to loosen, which can then cause the wire to become loose, allowing the animals to possibly escape.”

Most goat breeds should not be able to clear a 48-inch fence. However, Sarson also recommends placing a strand of electrified smooth wire at the top of the fence as a further deterrent to keep the goats from attempting to rub against it or jump over it. Some producers also add an electrified offset wire a couple of feet off the ground to keep goats away from the fence.

### Happy, Healthy and Safe

Even though they’re a bit mischievous, goats are fun to have around and a great way for children to learn responsibility. That’s why Gaines is eager to get additional goats on his property. “We’re also planning on getting a miniature donkey. We want to have a whole menagerie.” To keep all those animals contained and safe, Gaines is planning on putting up more Bekaert fencing around the perimeter of his property, rather than just the goat pen. “We have this huge area in the back and side of the house where I can put a whole herd of different kinds of animals,” Gaines says he plans on using Bekaert again because he likes how well it protects his flock.



Bobby Gaines’ American Pygmy goat, Oreo, would regularly get out through his old wooden fence (pictured). Now that he has Bekaert Sheep and Goat Fence, 1348-4, he says she isn’t able to get out anymore.

As Gaines knows well, goats are a rewarding animal to have on a farm or just a few acres. Their inquisitive nature makes them entertaining to watch. However, as he has quickly learned, having a fence that helps to curb that nature can provide goat owners with peace of mind that their animals will stay happy, healthy and safe.

To learn more about how Bekaert can help you with your goat and other livestock fencing needs, send your questions to Bekaert’s Ask The Fence Pro feature or check out Bekaert’s website: <https://fencing.bekaert.com>.