Tips for Installing Fence on Tough Terrain

BEKAERT

better together

Hillsides, curves, dips and rises ... when a fencing project veers into tough terrain, installers can keep their fence on track with tips and strategies from Steven Sarson. With nearly 30 years of experience in the fencing industry, he's seen it all.

"Proper installation techniques allow us to put up fence in every type of terrain," Sarson explains.

As a Bekaert Fence Pro and Technical Support Manager, Sarson spends his days providing advice, answering questions and leading fencing demonstrations to teach farmers, ranchers and contractors installation techniques for the long run.

"It's my job to take the guesswork out of fencing," he says.



As a Bekaert Fence Pro and Technical Support Manager, Steven Sarson spends his days providing advice, answering questions and leading fencing demonstrations to teach farmers, ranchers and contractors, installation techniques for the long run. **Start with a plan:** Before purchasing wire, posts, staples and other fencing supplies, Sarson encourages installers to put pen to paper and map out their project.

"It doesn't need to be fancy. Spending a few minutes before the project begins to identify challenging sections or establish where gates will be needed saves time and frustration."

To ensure you have enough materials on hand for the project, Sarson encourages fencers to try out Bekaert's online fence calculator, which can be found at https://fencing.eolou/ater

https://fencing.bekaert.com/en/fencing-calculator.

Dips and rises: Maintaining even tension along the entire length of fence can be tricky when fencing along dips and rises.

To achieve equal wire spacing and tension at the top of every rise and bottom of every dip:

- 1. Drive a post on all high spots and in all dips
- 2. Staple all high spots first
- 3. Staple all dips
- 4. Staple all remaining posts
- 5. Staple every wire on posts in high spots and in dips

For example, Sarson explains if there are two high spots with a dip in the middle, first staple the wire to the two posts located on the high spots. Then, pull wires down to the post in the dip and staple those wires. Remember to staple all wires in dips and rises. "It is important to staple every wire on the post in the dip and the posts on the rise to keep the spacing between wires equal as it makes the transition from high to low or low to high. This also prevents wires from pulling in one direction or the other."

Keep all staples loose: Loose staples are important to maintaining equal tension throughout the entire length of fence. The space between the staple and post allows for wire to expand and contract as temperatures fluctuate. And breathing room gives wire the flexibility it needs to rebound when animals push against it.

On a typical line post, Sarson recommends stapling or clipping the bottom two, every other wire and the top.

"This keeps animals from pushing the top wire down or the bottom wires up," Sarson says.

When fencing on a steep grade think perpendicular not plumb: On a steep hillside, fence posts should be driven perpendicular at a 90-degree angle to the ground.

On steep grade, if the post is driven straight up and down, the low side of the post cannot be driven into the ground as deep as the high side. And wire will not be spaced equally.

"When I first learned to fence on a hillside, my mentor asked me, 'what is the longest side of a square?' The answer is the diagonal,'" Sarson says.

"Think of fencing on a steep grade like hanging a gate on a hillside. If your posts are plumb, the gate will gap. The same concept applies to the fence. You want your fence to follow the line of the terrain smoothly."

Curves: Extra posts, spaced about 6-to-10-feet apart, are necessary when fencing on a curve. When driving the posts, Sarson suggests slightly leaning each post about 3-inches against the curve. Staple the wire to the outside of the curve. "If fencing a left-hand curve, lean the posts to the right, and the opposite for a right-hand curve. This keeps the wire's tension tight against the post instead of pulling away from the post."

Rocky soil: The right tools make all the difference in efficiency and effectiveness when fencing in rocky terrain. Sarson recommends a rock auger or, if driving posts by hand, a rock spike. Drive posts into pre-drilled holes.

Sandy soil: Driving posts in sand presents a different challenge. "The only thing we can do in sandy or soft soil is

drive the post deeper," Sarson says. In sandy or soft soils, Sarson recommends driving the post at least an extra foot. For example, when using wood posts on a 4-foot fence, the posts would typically be installed a minimum of 3 ½-feet in the ground. In sandy or soft soil, the depth would increase to a minimum of 4 ½-feet. If using pipe, drive posts at least an additional 1-foot.

Questions? Ask a Fence Pro: Need more advice for your fencing project? Reach out to Sarson and Bekaert's team of fence pros at the Ask the Fence Pro link found at https://fencing.bekaert.com. Find more tips, techniques and fencing best practices at Bekaert's YouTube channel Fencing.bekaert.com/youtube.



Keep all staples loose: Loose staples are important to maintaining equal tension throughout the entire length of fence. The space between the staple and post allows for wire to expand and contract as temperatures fluctuate. And breathing room gives wire the flexibility it needs to rebound when animals push against it. On a typical line post, Bekaert Fence Pro and Technical Support Manager, Steven Sarson recommends stapling or clipping the bottom two, every other wire and the top.