West Virginia Pasture Management

Fencing Materials

Developed by Roger L. Nestor, WVU Extension Service/SCS
for W.Va. Grassland Limited Resource Farmer Program

What
A variety of fencing materials are available in West Virginia to enhance effective grazing management.

Why
Grazing management in West Virginia is usually limited by the lack of effective fencing.

Types of Fencing
1. Barbed wire
2. Woven wire
3. Boards
4. High tensile wire--electric
5. High tensile wire
6. Wooden rails
7. Polywire & polytape--temporary electric

How They Compare
Barbed and woven wire along with boards and wooden rails are traditional fencing materials and are generally more costly to build in both time and materials. A newer group of materials are the high tensile wires that may be constructed with or without being electrified. Temporary electric division fences may be constructed of polywire or polytape and used in conjunction with a permanent electric high tensile fence or independently with their own electric fence charger. The newer generation of fencing materials require learning some new techniques in fence construction. End assemblies must be properly done with no "shortcuts." Depending on the terrain, the number of posts can usually be reduced by about one-third. An investment in a variety of tools for high tensile fence construction may be necessary, which may be unacceptable to some producers.

The longevity of any fence depends on the quality of the materials and the construction methods used. Many farms have many of the posts and other materials that can be used for fence construction.

High-tensile electric fences using a low amperage-high voltage energizer require the least maintenance. The wire is strong enough to withstand most falling trees and crossing deer. It is flexible enough to return to its normal shape after objects are removed from it.

The polywire and polytape materials are plastic twine/tape with small wires braided through them to conduct electricity. They are lightweight, can be handled like twine, are reusable, and offer a vast array of quick fencing options.

Barbed and woven wire and the wooden materials can be expensive but, when properly built, often last a long time.
Where to Get Help

For more information about fencing materials, contact your local office of the Soil Conservation Service or the West Virginia University Extension Service. They are listed in the telephone directory under "U.S. Government" and "West Virginia," respectively.

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Rachel B. Tompkins, Director, Morgantown, West Virginia. Published in Furtherance of Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914.

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