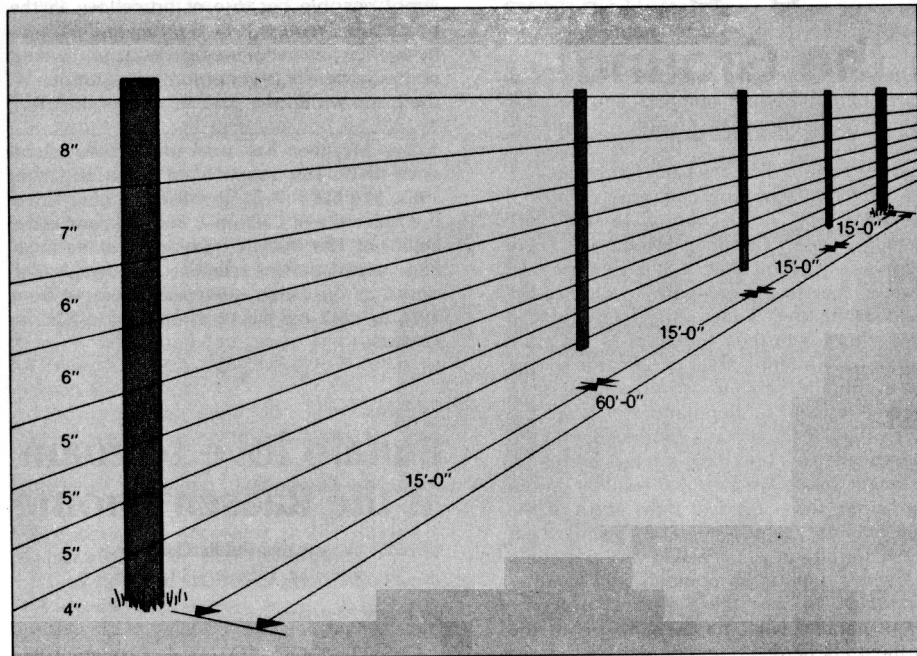


High-Tensile Wire Fencing



An eight-wire fence can substitute for four- or five-strand barbed wire fencing, and can be installed with line posts 60 feet apart with droppers every 15 feet for medium grazing.

The dream cattle fence would be one which could stop a bull at full charge, which would never rust, which required no maintenance, and which could be put up with no problems. That fence hasn't come along, but one which offers great strength with elasticity and durability at comparatively low cost is being introduced in this country by U.S. Steel. It is 12 ½-gauge USS Max-Ten 200 High-tensile fence wire.

In 1973 a New Zealand sheep rancher, John R. Wall, wrote U.S. Steel for some of the Type III galvanized wire to replace old fencing. U.S. Steel agreed to provide a few thousand feet for the experiment. It worked well, and some neighbors who had scoffed at him for not replacing with barbed wire began asking him to erect fences of the new wire for them.

The next year a severe thunderstorm uprooted a 14-inch-diameter elm tree which fell and pinned to the ground one of the fences Wall has installed. When Wall and the neighbor removed the tree, the wires sprang back to their position and had only to be restapled to the posts to repair the fence.

This type of wire has also been used in Australia and has been tested by state agricultural colleges, including Texas A & M University, and ranchers across the U.S.

U.S. Steel has published an informa-

tion and instruction book which gives specific details on the capabilities, characteristics, and necessary techniques for correct installation. Anyone interested in the fencing should write to England Distributing, Rt. 3, Bloomfield, Iowa 52537. There is a \$5.00 charge for the booklet. Texas dealerships are now being established.

The manufacturer's tests show that it has nearly twice the breaking strength of two-ply barbed wire. Each wire stretched

Strong—Durable—Elastic

to the recommended 250 pounds of tension will withstand at least 1,200 pounds of livestock pressure or cold weather contraction without losing its elasticity. Sheep do not like its spring-like stiffness and cannot spread the wire. Horses cannot weigh down the wire. There is no necessity for barbed wire to be incorporated into the installation. The spacing and number of the wires can be adjusted for various types of livestock.

The cost for a ten-wire fence is about the same as a five-strand, two-ply barbed wire fence and less than half the cost of woven wire fence of equal height. The fence must be grounded to provide protection from lightning or fallen overhead electrical lines.

Longevity is a desirable trait in any ranch installation. The heavier coat of

zinc on Max-Ten 200 extends the life of this wire up to 35 years in humid regions and more than 50 years in relatively dry climates.

The whole fence or only selected wires can be charged if one prefers electric fences. Use of this wire in an electric installation can allow as much as 150 feet between posts on level ground if "droppers" are installed between posts.

High-tensile wire fencing does have advantages, but it must be installed correctly for the entire system to work. Posts with specific treatments and sizes should be used. Chemically treated Southern Pine is on the list of suggested woods. Round pressure-treated wood posts have a high-strength to relatively low-weight ratio.

The manufacturer stresses the use of pressure-treated posts instead of those with only external treatment because of the longevity and because they are relatively straight with a tapered end. Pressure creosoted wood is especially recommended because of the additional fire-resistant characteristic.

Gate and corner posts must be very strong because they bear the tension. Instructions on installing the entire fence must be followed precisely, but especially in digging post holes for gates, corners, ends, and braces. One has to have the correct "lean" for the posts to maintain necessary tension. Gate, end, and corner posts should be six inches in diameter.

Line posts can be 4 inches in diameter. Post spacing is normally 16 feet, but on level ground it can be extended to as much as 60 feet on centers by installing

droppers between the line posts. The number of droppers depends on whether the grazing is light to heavy.

The manufacturer advises cattle owners to think through any future modifications they may want to make and discuss them with the dealer before placing an order. High-tensile wire fences can be easily designed for an electrical installation or converted later if advance planning is done before initial installation.

This type of fencing is comparatively new and requires a different type of installation and specific tools for the fence to perform as it should. Cattle owners should read all of the material on it before making a decision and certainly know all of the requirements before beginning an installation.