Small Scale Solutions for your Farm
Fencing

Do You Have Problems with:

- Patchy or uneven grazing

- Selective grazing, over or under grazed areas

- Livestock in streams, ditches, or ponds

- Livestock where they are not supposed to be

Fencing provides a barrier to animals and people to control and manage movement or limit access to an area or property.

Purposes and Benefits of Fencing

- Protect and/or control livestock or people from an area

- Improve management of pastures to

    o   Improve forage production and quality

    o   Improve livestock health, intake, and average daily gain/milk production

    o   Improve overall pasture plant and soil health

    o   Improve feed/forage efficiency

- Manage livestock groups and movement

Fencing

Ensure fencing is suitable for the type of livestock on your property and meets local and state fence laws. The plan and design of the fence should be use and site specific. Consult your local NRCS office on the most appropriate design for the planned purpose.

Fences are barriers that serve as a management tool.

Management of your grass resources is key.

Examples and Uses of Types of Fencing

External

A fence that keeps livestock in a designated area or on your property.

Internal

A fence that is utilized to provide permanent internal divisions within a pasture for:

* Livestock rotation or,

* Limit access to environmentally (resource) sensitive areas
  (e.g., streams, seeps, springs or wetlands).

Temporary

* Fence used to subdivide a larger field to smaller allocations that can be altered
  as needed to improve grazing efficiencies or planned goals or impact.

Your fencing requirements should be adjusted depending on your herd needs.

A Good Fence Plan and Design Will Include:

* A plan overview showing layout of fence and access.

* Details of fence installation including post spacing and wire spacing,
  bracing and gate locations.

* List material quantities and specific requirements.

* Use of permanent or temporary fence based on management objectives.

* Fence design that considers impacts to wildlife as appropriate.

* Provide for proper disposal of materials when fence construction requires
  the removal of existing fence materials to prevent harm to animals,
  people or equipment.

Example of fence to separate livestock

Example of fence for a lane

Some Maintenance Requirements You May Encounter Include:

- At a minimum, conduct inspection of fences after storms, wildfire or other disturbance events including ingress/egress that could cause damage to wire, posts, braces, and gates and jeopardize the integrity of the fence system.

- Repair or replace appropriate safety markers and signage as necessary for added visibility.

- Replacement of posts or fencing material as needed.

- Mechanical or chemical control of vegetation that compromises the integrity or life of the fence.

Many types of materials can be used to construct a barrier such as (woven, barbed, or electric) wire and can be constructed to be wildlife friendly. This should be based on the type of access control needed (animal size/type, wildlife, people).

Note: Always check for buried utilities before installing any fencing.

Example of temporary fence

Cattle on pasture

Technical and Financial Help Is Available

Whether you measure your farm in terms of feet or acres, your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office has experienced conservationists that can help you develop a Conservation Plan to conserve, maintain, and restore the natural resources on your land and improve the long-term health of your operation.

There is no charge for our assistance. Simply contact your local office to set up an appointment. You may also be eligible to receive financial assistance. Your NRCS office will explain any programs that are available so you can make the best decision for your operation. All NRCS programs and services are voluntary.

For More Information

Visit the Natural Resources Conservation Service or visit farmers.gov/service-locator to find your local NRCS office. You can also check with your local USDA Service Center, then make an appointment to determine next steps for your conservation goals.

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NRCS conservationist assisting small scale farmer with developing a customized conservation plan.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

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