

Effective Rural Farm Fencing

Careful planning is the key to starting a rural farm fencing project no matter the type of rural fence you plan to install, whether timber, steel or concrete posts and stays are used for the construction.

Many fencing structures can easily fail if the contour of the land and soil type hasn't been properly considered prior to erecting a fence and in particular a poorly planned end assembly will be where the problem begins, and this doesn't even take into account the quality of the materials being used.

Here are a few questions to ask yourself when planning your next rural farm fencing project:-

What does this fence need to do?

Is it going to be impacted from animals or machinery, even unintentionally?

Does it need to stay well tensioned all the time to be effective?

Is the landscape contour or soil type going to be challenging to this fence over the long term?

Have there been any failures with my previous fence projects?

What did I do wrong (if not sure then ask an expert) – this will ensure you won't have the same problem because sometimes it does come down to physics!

A couple of tips to consider:

- ✓ Use a double wire loop around an angled assembly and three loops around a H brace or boxed end assembly to counteract the force that is created by the wires when they are tensioned through the rest of the fence. This force can cause lifting or twisting of the end or corner posts if the end assembly hasn't been constructed correctly.
- ✓ The stay (or brace post) length can also have a big impact on the stability of the end assembly, so ensure that the stay is as long as possible and not positioned too high or too low on the end or corner post. The high end of the angled stay should generally be positioned at between half and two thirds of the way up the end post, whereas a box assembly (or H Brace) stay will be towards the top of the end post and the first inline post. The stay (or brace) length should be at least double the length of the exposed end-post.
- ✓ Ensure the size of the end or corner post is sufficient for the job (height and thickness), small posts used for big loads don't work so it pays not to skimp in this area particularly if you are going to have heavy loading or impact such as in mechanically managed vineyards, orchards or if you have feisty cattle or horses!
- ✓ Ensure the corner or end post is long enough to have at least 1/3 buried in the ground, more if it is a sandy or an unstable soil type, and a larger diameter post will better withstand the ground conditions when tension is applied to the fence on completion.
- ✓ If using treated timber posts – don't notch or drill through them as they are only surface treated and this will expose the untreated timber which will reduce the life of the post or weaken them considerably.
- ✓ Corner posts and the assemblies attached to them are the backbone of your whole fence so if these fail then chances are the entire fence won't be too effective either!
- ✓ Time and money can be easily wasted through having ongoing repairs and this is often not taken into account – not to mention the inconvenience of having a fence that just isn't doing its job!

Additional products that can assist with rural fence installation and longevity:-

ViceBite stay brackets can be used to join the stay (brace) within boxed or angled end assemblies, and will assist in retaining the life of the post plus will make the installation process much faster and easier. Some fencing jobs require two people but the ViceBite bracket can reduce this back to one person! ViceBite can be used with all timber types and are ideal for vineyards, general fencing or animal enclosures.

ViceBite brackets bite into the timber using the moulded teeth on both faces of the bracket so the need for screws and nails is greatly reduced, and the teeth hold the brackets position horizontally and vertically even under extreme conditions.

Recycled plastic posts are now becoming more widely available and have proven very effective for fencing (although not as affordable as timber at this point) but have benefits when being used for electric fence projects. Examples of this can be found at www.ViceBite.com.au where horse paddocks have been set up utilizing the plastic posts and brackets which have been installed now for three years without any repairs being required.

Further fencing questions can be answered by the ViceBite team, by contacting their office on 03 50222219 or emailing info@vicebite.com.au.