

Electric Fence Basics

- Go to a class or work with a fencing expert to learn about how to set up electric fence.
- Be smart when spending money. Cheap materials break, wasting time and energy during repairs and chasing animals back into their areas.
- Spend money on a good charger. Choose a low-impedance fence charger from a dependable supplier that provides adequate voltage.
- Buy a good fence tester.
- Invest in reels.
Watch this video to find out what makes a good reel and how to care for them.
- Take time to ground the fence properly. Poor grounding leads to a weak fence.
- Train animals to the fence before putting them in. This ensures they know what touching the fence means and teaches them never to do it again.
- The more wires, the better the charge. Poly tape, wire and braid work because they have small wires woven together to carry the charge.
- Wire placement is important. Consider the size of the animal's head and place wires close enough together that the animal can't get its head between the wires. Placing a second wire at the nose level of offspring encourages them to stay in the fence, too. Keep wires at least 5 inches apart to prevent shorts.
- Dry soils reduce fence charge. Hot or live wires rely on soil moisture to carry the charge through the ground and complete the connection. Dry ground has little to no moisture. Using a positive-negative setup or increasing the number of ground rods along the fence length can help in rocky or sandy soils that tend to be drier. A positive-negative setup is when hot (positive) wires are attached to the charger and ground (negative) wires are attached to the ground rod. When the animal touches both wires, it completes the circuit.
- Check the fence often. Keep watch for down limbs or heavy vegetation touching hot wires. Making sure it's working means animals won't test it.
- Ask questions. When encountering problems, reach out to local Natural Resources Conservation Service or Soil Conservation District staff or a local cooperative extension agent to get answers.

