

WILDLIFE FENCING

What to Consider

By Lisa Kopochinski

An extensive agricultural fencing project by Ridgeline Fencing LLC utilized Bull Barn Fence Factory's fencing for paddocks and pastures.

PHOTO COURTESY OF RIDGELINE FENCING LLC

Much information and expertise required when building wildlife fences.

Choosing the right fence for any industry can be challenging, and wildlife fencing is no exception.

For landowners who need to keep their property and livestock safe, there are many things that need to be taken into consideration. Keeping livestock and property assets safe, however, doesn't always end with securing them in the field.

For example, in open range states, protecting property from free ranging livestock is the responsibility of the landowner. Instead of thinking about keeping your cattle in the fence, you may need to consider how to keep open range grazing cattle out.

There are many more considerations to guide the best fit for the application.

John McConnell is the owner of Bull Barn Fence Factory, a company he founded in 2020 in Blairsville, Penn. He says the first things to consider are the types of animals one is dealing with and what you're keeping in and what you're keeping out.

"Also, keep in mind the terrain and the primary purpose of the fence. Those details will help you select the best fence for the job," he adds.

PREDATORS: WHAT TO CONSIDER

Fencing can keep predators and nuisance wildlife at bay. Sometimes

keeping unwanted visitors out is as simple as running electric through the fence.

For example, many types of bears can be deterred by a jolt of electric. When burrowing animals are problematic, Bull Barn Fence Factory's Marauder fence — an apron fence system developed in Australia — deters entrance by having an apron of fencing that is designed to fold and lay flat against the ground so that animals can't dig through. The company also has a former game warden on staff who guides Bull Barn Factory's manufacturing for specific wildlife considerations.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BULL BARN FENCE FACTORY

Exclusion (or marauder) fencing is all about providing maximum resistance to impact damage. Bull Barn's woven wire features high-tensile line wires and one-piece vertical wires joined with the unique fixed knot.



PHOTO COURTESY OF STRAIGHT SHOOTER GAME FENCE

This image shows a fence that is highly visible to wildlife, with a wide swath provided from the tree line to the fence. This fence is also high enough that deer won't try to jump over it.



PHOTO COURTESY OF STRAIGHT SHOOTER GAME FENCE

This image of the same fence as the one pictured at left shows how it is being used for games containment as an inclusion fence. Same fence: two different goals.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

There is an array of other environmental issues that need to be taken into account when building wildlife fences. These include the following:

- **Ocean salt/highway salt** — *galvanization*: Salt quickly corrodes metal, making adequate galvanization essential. Class 3 galvanization lasts 2.5 times longer than Class 1, with Class 3 coatings lasting up to 30 years.
- **Weather conditions** — *galvanization, tensile strength*: Areas with significant snow and rainfall should use a higher galvanization level. Low carbon fence elongates with climate pressure, animal pressure, and vegetation. High tensile holds up better under such pressures.
- **Trees/limbs** — *tensile*: Fence in wooded areas can be harder for animals to see. When possible, moving the fence away from the tree line increases visibility and helps reduce animal collisions. High tensile wire holds up to downed trees and limbs much better than low carbon wire.
- **Hills/rivers** — *filling in gaps*: When fencing over uneven spans, consider the length of the span from post to post. Consider whether a filler needs to be placed under the fence line to contain livestock. High tensile wire can be stretched further than low tensile and will hold its shape without elongating over time.

Digger McDivitt, a fence building expert with Bull Barn Fence Factory, says the company's most popular fence is its Fastlock Knot, "as it weighs less than fence made with other knot configurations, which helps to control the costs. With Fastlock, we can design a fence that is safe for animals."

With the company's main clientele being distributors and contractors



PHOTO COURTESY OF BULL BARN FENCE FACTORY

Deep tension curves in a fence such as Bull Barn's provide a strong stretch with an even pull, but the company still tests every run to ensure equal tension from line wire to line wire.

across the U.S., he adds that electric fences are popular and serve as a psychological barrier.

"Combined with woven wire (physical barrier), it makes for the most secure fence. Electric fences are designed to shock — not injure or kill the animal."

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

When asked about what environmental concerns are being taken into consideration when manufacturing wildlife fencing, McConnell highlights woven wire fence, which is made of steel and is recyclable.

"In fact, most of our products include recycled steel products. Regarding considering the wildlife in an area, we are happy to consult about the best ways to handle the concerns of fencers. We even have a former game warden on staff who has wonderful insights about the impact slight modifications of fence can have on the animals in a given area."

Adds McDivitt, "We are an eco-friendly company and recycle

all the metal scrap generated in production."

The company also notes on its website that:

Where deer and antelope and other ungulates travel, studies have found that "woven wire topped with barbed wire was found to be the most lethal type of fence."

When wildlife can't get through a fence, they frequently try to jump over it, and, especially for young ones, they can get entangled in the barbed wire. When possible, allowing animals to use established travel paths can provide safer passage and avoid fence damage. However, making fence visible can go a long way to increasing the safety level of whatever fence you use. Raising the fence off the ground allows animals to pass under.

"Bull Barn Fence Factory makes a mesh with a 12-inch-wide opening that can allow smaller woodland animals to coexist with woven wire fence," says McConnell.

Additionally, the company notes that sometimes the safest



These three images show 2,000+ feet of Bull Barn 13/48/4 fence installed by Ridgeline Fencing LLC. The project involved tying into old fence from a previous contractor, dividing pastures, and adding several new paddocks.

"Wildlife friendly fencing considers the local habitat and movement patterns of the wildlife that will be impacted. What the landowner is protecting — livestock, crops, and other assets, such as solar arrays — is always top of mind. Factoring in the needs of the local flora and fauna can make the fence more useful and durable."

— Digger McDivitt, fence building expert
Bull Barn Fence Factory

wire adds durability and strength for a long-lasting fence. Bull Barn Fence Factory also offers polycarbonate coated high-tensile, barbed wire, and smooth wire to design wildlife friendly and livestock safe fencing."

Adds McDiggan, "Wildlife friendly fencing considers the local habitat and movement patterns of the wildlife that will be impacted. What the landowner is protecting — livestock, crops, and other assets, such as solar arrays — is always top of mind. Factoring in the needs of the local flora and fauna can make the fence more useful and durable. We have an experienced staff that can help weigh the best options for a long-term wildlife friendly fence." ■

thing for wildlife is to exclude them entirely and avoid the temptation to pass through.

Exclusion fencing, according to the Wyoming Wildlife Friendly Fencing: is "A 7-wire fence 72-inches high [which is] adequate for elk. Deer, on the

other hand, require a higher fence of 84-inches."

"We make 7-foot and 8-foot-high woven wire fence that can protect valuable property," says McConnell. "Our exclusion fence made with high-tensile, class 3 galvanized

ABOUT BULL BARN FENCE FACTORY

Bull Barn Fence Factory was founded in Blairsville Pennsylvania in March of 2020. The business emerged from a desire to provide better access to quality woven wire products throughout the northeastern United States and beyond. With a focus on better service to our customers, Bull Barn has quickly grown and solidified itself as a reliable manufacturer of Class 3 Galvanized woven wire products. The company focuses on four key areas for their materials: longevity, strength, stability, and low maintenance.

Learn more at <https://bullbarnfence.com>.

