Woven Wire Fencing Installation Guidelines for Deer Exclusion

These guidelines accompany NRCS Connecticut Practice Standard 382 – Fence*. All fence installations shall be in accordance with that Standard, which is available from the Connecticut Electronic Field Office Technical Guide (e-FOTG) - www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/efotg*

Woven wire fences are fairly expensive and difficult to construct, but require very little maintenance and are highly effective at excluding deer (Fig. 1). Woven wire fences for deer exclusion shall be 10 feet in height. Start the fence with rigid corner assemblies and place 14- to 16-foot-long posts approximately three to four feet in the ground. Line posts should be up to 20 feet apart for deer. Corner, gate and brace posts (Fig.2) should be spaced 8-10 feet apart, and set 36 inches in the ground. Installation should be done following the manufacture's recommendations to ensure effectiveness and durability.

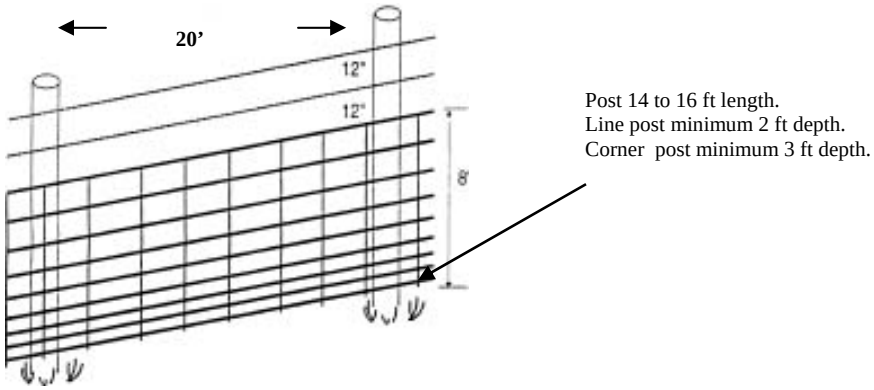

Figure 1. ***Woven wire fence.*** *An 8-foot-high, vertical fence is usually constructed from one 8 foot section or two 4-foot sections of 6 x 12 inch wire mesh (joined with hog rings). Two or more strands of smooth or barbed wire, spaced 12 inches apart, are added to the top of this structure extending the overall height to 10 feet or more.*

If 14 ft posts are not commercially available, 10 to 12 foot post may be used. The height of the fence may be extended by using 3/8-inch fiberglass or metal rods (Fig.3), which will hold 2 strands of wire above the woven wire fence. Wooden posts are available either treated or untreated. If using untreated posts, you should select tree species that are resistant to decay such as black locust, red cedar, Osage orange, or catalpa. Wooden posts should be 6 inches or larger in diameter for corner posts and 4 inches or larger in diameter for line posts. Wooden line posts should be set at least 24 inches in the ground.

Galvanized steel T-post may also be used for line posts (Fig. 4). When using steel T-posts for woven wire, it is recommended that every 4th to 7th post be wooden. Steel T-posts have a flange at the base for added stability and studs or grooves that support the wire. T-posts should be buried past the flange.

Figure 2. *Example of corner/gate post installation*

Woven wire should be installed on the outside of the post (deer side). In cases where there are obstructions, the woven wire may be installed on the inside of the post (crop side).

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Gate style and material may vary as long as the height and tightness of the fence are maintained. The bottom of the fence should be at ground level. Deer can go under gaps as small as 6 inches. Fill dips with gravel, soil, stones, or other suitable material. Trees should be avoided to protect their health and to avoid future fence stability problems.

Figure 3. *Use of extension to reach desired fence height*

Figure 4. *Example of galvanized steel T-posts used as line posts*

References:

Controlling Deer Damage In New England Orchards. University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension.

Fencing to Protect Stored Hay from Deer and Elk. Montana Guide fact sheet MT200108 AG 10/2001, Montana State University Extension Service.

http://www.kdfwr.state.ky.us/fencing.asp. Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources.

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/springfield/deer-elkfences.html. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.