NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

FENCE (FEET)

Code 382

DEFINITION

A constructed barrier to contain, exclude or control livestock, wildlife, or people.

PURPOSE

This practice may be applied as part of a conservation management system to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Exclude livestock or big game from areas that should be protected from grazing.

2. Confine livestock or domesticated wildlife on an area.

3. Subdivide grazing land to permit use of grazing systems.

4. Protect new seedings and plantings from grazing.

5. To regulate access to areas by people.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

On any area requiring control or exclusion of livestock and/or wildlife control is needed or where access to people is to be regulated. Natural barriers may be used instead of constructed fences if they give adequate protection and serve the intended purpose.

CRITERIA

NOTE: Specific program guidance may be more restrictive on a number of these criteria. Refer to program manual for specific program requirements.

Fencing materials shall be of a high quality and durability, and the construction performed to meet the intended management objectives.

Fences shall be positioned to facilitate management requirements. Standard or conventional (barbed or smooth wire), suspension, woven wire, or electric fences shall consist of acceptable fencing designs to control the animal(s) or people of concern and meet the intended life of the practice.

Height, number, and spacing or wires will be installed to facilitate control and management of the animal(s) and people of concern.

Height, size, spacing, and type of posts will be used that best provides the needs for the style of fence required, and is best suited for the topography of the landscape.

> Note: Material and installation not included in standard must be equal to or exceed the standard specifications. Criteria for **"legally tight"** standard field fence can be found in Chapter 359A Iowa Code. See Attachment 1.

CONSIDERATIONS

Consider installing fences in locations that will facilitate easy maintenance. Avoid installing fences under the drip line of trees and/or water crossing.

Consider kind and behavior of livestock and/or wildlife and their movement.

Consider location and adequacy of water facilities.

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Consider topographic features and location of livestock management, handling, and feeding facilities.

Consider needs for improved grazing management and the development of potential grazing systems.

Consider landscape resources and soil erosion potential when planning and constructing fence on steep slopes.

Follow all federal, state, or local fencing codes or regulations.

Consider expected/needed lifespan of fence and whether permanent or temporary fencing will meet the needs.

When using electric fences, training areas should be used to condition livestock to fences. Select a well-fenced area and construct an electric fence across, or around, the area to allow animals to come in contact with the electric fence. Normally, a minimum of 12 hours of exposure to the electric fence is required. Most animals will be trained fully in 48 hours.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications are to be prepared for specific field sites based on the specific objectives for each site or planning unit according to the criteria and considerations described in this standard, and based on the NRCS National and State Fence Standards and appropriate state or local statutes or laws.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Routine inspection of fences should be part of an on-going management program. Inspection of fences in the spring after snowmelt and after storm events is needed to determine if weakness, breaks, or malfunctions have affected the intended use of the fence.

Maintenance and repairs will be performed as needed to facilitate the intended operations of the installed fence.

Electric fences will be regularly checked to determine the voltage on the fence. If voltage is not sufficient, determine the cause and correct it. During dry weather, ground rods may need water applied to the soil around them.

Maintain proper tension on the fence wires.

Clear brush from fence lines to reduce voltage loss. Remove fallen limbs. Overhanging trees and limbs should be trimmed or removed as needed to prevent their falling onto the fence.

Electrified floodgates must be maintained and kept clear of debris. During extended flooding periods, switch the floodgates off.

Warning signs will be posted on power fences at 100’ intervals in areas that people have easy access to the fence, such as along roads, development areas and in farmsteads.

REFERENCES

Planning Fences, American Association for Vocational Instructional Materials.

Building Fences, American Association for Vocational Instructional Materials.

Many fencing companies also have reference material available for use. When looking at their recommendations, keep in mind that they are in the business to sell a product.