

# Be Prepared: Having a Plan Before a Fence Project Can Spare You Headaches Later

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A horned [goat and sheep fence with six-inch spacing](#). It sounds like the beginning of a joke, but it's a serious recipe for disaster. Installing the proper fence for your animals is vital for not only keeping them contained but is an important factor in keeping them safe as well.test

## Safety and Security for Your Herd

So, it stands to reason that a quality fence is one of the most important investments animal caretakers can make. But there is more to fencing than simply driving posts in the ground and fastening wire. There are several considerations to think about before a single post-hole is dug. What are your plans for that area in the future? Are you corralling [goats](#) or [horses](#)? Will you institute rotational grazing? [goats](#) or [horses](#)? Will you institute rotational grazing?

Having a plan for your fence project is the first step in a successful installation. Deciding which fence is best for your livestock needs will depend on a few factors. Safety is one of them.



## Priority one

"Animal safety is priority one," says fencing expert, Keith Taylor. That means choosing the right type of wire for your animals. "You can't keep horned sheep or horned goats in a fence with six-inch spacing. They'll push their heads through it and get their horns caught. They can't get back out. Then they're stuck," Taylor says. The fence also must be tough enough to endure animals running into it, without injuring themselves.

With a multitude of options, choosing the right fence for your project can be daunting. This will depend on which animal you are trying to contain. For instance, Bekaert's Non-Climb Sheep and Goat Fence is designed to keep sheep and goats from escaping. Due to its 4 x 4 mesh openings, this fence would keep your herd safely inside your property. It is also a safe product, with its smooth S-knot, which protects your sheep or goats from injury.

Select the best fence that meets your livestock's needs by paying attention to the characteristics of each fence. What wire is used for the fence? Is it high tensile or low carbon? What knot type does it have? How tall is it? Which animals does it exclude or contain?

Bekaert has a wide variety of fences for different livestock. It still can be hard to decide which fence is best. Taylor recommends [reaching out](#) to Bekaert's Fence Pro team. "People can email questions that they have about each product to meet their animal needs. We answer those questions daily." It's also important to not only consider the animals you're keeping but to also think about those you don't want in. For instance, [to keep deer out](#), Taylor says, "You definitely need a high fence to do that. That should be part of your planning: what am I trying to keep in and what am I trying to keep out."

## Look ahead

"Look at the long term," Taylor says. Will you need to cut the pasture in half at some point? Decide where you might want to put gates, but also, where you might want future gates. Will you have cattle grazing in one season, and horses in another or will you have them all together?

**"Really study the layout of upcoming projects. Not only the project that you're working on now but upcoming projects that you're going to look at in the future."**

Understand what you want to do with your land and how you would like to move your livestock across your property. How does that affect the way you plan your fencing project? This is valuable to consider for any future installation.

## Planning Your Fence Project



## Map It Out

Once you've decided what type of wire you need for your project and future needs for your property, it's time to map it out. You can start with a sketch, or use helpful planning tools like aerial maps of your property which you can get from the [US Soil Conservation Service](#), the [US Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service](#), your local agricultural Extension service, or private aerial survey firms. These resources can help when planning your fence project. When laying out your plan, mark assignments for pastures, hay, crops, buildings, water accessibility and obstacles.

Taylor recommends using Bekaert's [online fencing calculator](#) to map your area which uses Google Earth and the user's inputs to map out your project and assists in developing a list of materials needed. "You can go in and you drop points around the pasture that you want to fence. It'll tell you the length of your fencing project, how much wire you need, and how many posts you need based on recommendations or personal preferences. You can set all these specifications, and it'll print you out a shopping list." That way you can get exactly the right materials in just the right amount.

Make sure you purchase your tools and materials early. Tools such as stretcher bars, pullers, chains, staples, and Gripple joiners are necessary for any fencing project and make the process smoother.

"A good set of cutters or pliers is a must when working with [High Tensile wire](#). A stretcher bar and a good set of stretcher bar pullers make life easier when stretching fence and working with woven wire. [Gripple products](#) make building fence much easier and faster," Taylor says.

These fencing tools can be purchased online or [from a local dealer or shop](#).

## Know the Rules

When fencing near a highway, it's important to know the rules for how close fences can be to the road. "It shocks me how different things are from region to region," Taylor says. "Every county can be different." Contact your county officials for proper guidelines for your area.

## Gear up

Once your plan is in place, it's important to make sure you have the right gear for the job. Taylor is adamant about safety, "Always safety first. Be sure to have a good pair of safety glasses and leather or cut resistant gloves." Even smooth wire can be sharp.

A good pair of work boots will also be beneficial. "Rolls are heavy. To drop one on your foot will make for a bad day," Taylor laments.

With your safety gear on, gather all the materials and tools you need to start the fencing project.

Want installation tips? Contact Sarson and other Bekaert Fence Pros through Bekaert's [Ask The Fence Pro](#) feature. Find more tips, techniques and fencing best practices at Bekaert Fencing's new [YouTube channel](#).

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