

DEVELOPING FENCING FOR GRAZING SYSTEMS

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Expectation is founded on faith, and in faith lays opportunities. I suppose as we look at most farming operations most changes occur from force not by choice. What I propose today and hope to convince most of you; is that here is an opportunity to make more profit, if you're willing to change and have faith that it will work.

Most of us have heard of, if not practiced, rotational grazing for a long time. The question many ask, "Is it worthwhile?" Does better grazing management make me any more money and what does it take to do a better job of grazing. I hope to at least provide some insight as to answers to that question.

I want to talk about the types of fencing systems available and what some of the materials cost.

Rather than trying to prove how much various systems improve profits, I am going to narrow down the cost associated with a few options and let you decide if it will pay in your system or one you may be considering.

As we start this process we must define our parameters. Let's use a 40 acre field with 25 cow/calf pairs as a base to start. In order to give you a conservative answer, I want to use high material cost, knowing you may be able to do better.

4-5 inch wood corner post	\$5.00 each
High Tensile wire	1 to 2 cents per foot (55 to 75 dollars per roll)
Polywire	2 to 3 cents per foot (23 to 40 dollars per roll)
Step-in posts	89 cents to \$3.00 each

Our field is 1325 ft square containing a little over 40 acres.

Option 1. Suppose we divide this field twice, once each direction, giving us 4, 10 acre paddocks with one water point in the center.

Using polywire	2650 ft @ .03 per ft	\$79.50
Step-in posts	88 @ \$3.00	<u>\$264.00</u>
	Total	\$343.50

Or, \$8.59 per acre or 11 pounds of gain on calves or stockers.

Option 2. Same as one but, using High Tensile wire and a few wood corner posts

Wire	2650 ft @ .02 per ft	\$53.00
Step-in posts	80 @ \$3.00	\$240.00
Wood Post	8 @ \$5.00	<u>\$40.00</u>
	Total	\$333.00

What does this mean in terms of farm profit?

Research at the University of Kentucky and many other places shows that by dividing a continuous grazed field into 2 to 4 paddocks will increase the gain per acre from 150 to over 300 pounds per aces. If it costs 11

pounds per acre to install the system and you get even 150 pound gain, you do the math.

You can use about any material cost and any calf price, charge 20 dollars an hour for your time, and the way I look at it: fence development Pays..... BIG TIME!