

## Electric Fences

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Electric fences were installed on the Bressner Pasture in the spring of 1990 to separate one pasture into eight pastures. Twenty some years later most of the original electric fences are still there, but some of it needs to be redone.

Insultimbers were used on the east 4 pastures in 1990 and they have withstood burning every year. However, in the early years someone got the hairbrain idea that mowing the grass under the electric fence and around the posts would be a good deal! Maybe a better mower driver would have helped, but it was harder on the post when the mower hit them, than burning had been. That experiment only lasted one time. If you look at these posts today you would find a large percentage of them broken off about 2 to 4 inches into the ground. I haven't replaced any with the insultimbers post, but have put several of the "cheap" plastic and fiberglass post in to supplement the broken posts.

On the west side we used a 5 ½ foot by 5/8 fiberglass rod post. These posts were very quick and easy to install. However over the past 20 plus years, the weight of three high tensile wires puts a lot of downward pressure on the post causing them to move deeper, making the fence shorter, except in the draws where the posts come out of the ground. These posts have deteriorated over time and leather gloves are a requirement when handling these posts. Both polyethylene insulators and porcelain insulators have been used on the corners and I have had to replace more of the polyethylene than porcelain over the past 22 years.

A creek separates the two half sections, so each side is connected to different solar panel and charge. Solar panels have held up and still doing a good job. Deep cycle marine batteries are used and they usually last 2 to 4 years. Lighting arresters have helped, but if not replaced in a timely manner, a fence charger that takes a lightning hit is usually not fixed by replacing fuses!

In 1990 when we installed the first electric fences, we followed the recommendations of both of the companies that suggested making the top wire hot, middle wire a ground and the bottom wire hot also. This has sometimes caused problems when the deer attempt to jump over, only to get the top two wire twisted together, which has a major impact on shorting out the fence.

Year 2012 was the first time to rebuild any of the electric fences. When the east pond was cleaned out, the old fence was taken down. The fence between pasture 4 and 8 was moved to adjust to the new pond dam and to exclude cattle from having access into the pond. The old insultimber posts for approximately 1/4 mile were taken out and there were only two posts within that fence that were not broken. The original wire was reused and a new composite post was installed. This new post is called Pasture Pro. These are a 30-40% reclaimed wood flour with 60-70% polypropylene, and a small percentage of process additives such as pigments and UV inhibitors. The posts should last at least 20 years and were very easy to install. This should be interesting to see how they stand up to fire. With this new fence I made all three wires hot.