

# Pasture Fence Construction Budget

Constructing new fencing can be a large cost for landowners and livestock producers. However, the peace of mind and security provided by new pasture perimeter fences, interior dividing fences and sound corral facilities can also be very valuable. There are many different methods and materials used to construct farm fencing. Each method varies widely in cost and ease of construction. This guide focuses on some common types of fences constructed across the Midwestern United States. All prices and inputs reflect conditions as of April 2026 and were gathered from name-brand fencing supply companies when available. Labor cost estimates assume a skilled farmer or landowner completing the work themselves with a moderate amount of mechanization and an unskilled hired helper.

## Perimeter fences

Perimeter fencing is the single largest infrastructure investment for many pasture-based operations. Perimeter fences are typically built with woven wire, barbed wire, smooth high tensile wire, or some combination of the three. This guide considers all these fence types, specifically 47-inch woven wire fence with a top barbed wire, five-strand barbed wire fence and five-strand electrified smooth high tensile fence. Tables 1, 2 and 3 outline the materials and labor needed for 1,320 feet of each of these fence types constructed on gently rolling terrain with one 20-foot-wide gate. Table 4 compares the costs for each type assuming that steel pipe corner and end posts were installed with a hydraulic post driver into unprepared soil.

**Table 1. Woven wire fence construction budget, driven corner posts (1,320 feet).**

Item	Type	Quantity	Unit	Price (\$)	Total (\$)
Corner or anchor posts	3.5-inch-by-8-foot steel pipe	5	post	54.00	270.00
Corner and anchor post braces	steel pipe h-bracing	3	brace	73.20	219.60
Gates	20-foot pipe gate	1	gate	250.00	250.00
Woven wire	47-inch woven wire	4	roll	350.00	1,400.00
Barbed wire	4-point barbed wire	1	roll	130.00	130.00
Line posts	6-foot t-post	80	post	6.50	520.00
	2 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> -inch pipe post	20	post	19.20	384.00
Fastening hardware	t-post clip	6	bag of 100	6.00	36.00
	pipe post wire clip	3	bag of 100	28.00	84.00
Labor	total	22.5	hour	27.50	618.75
Machinery and tools	cost per man-hour	22.5	man-hour	50.00	1,125.00
<b>Cost category</b>			<b>Project total (\$)</b>		<b>Total per foot (\$)</b>
<b>Labor and tool cost</b>			\$1,743.75		\$1.32
<b>Material cost</b>			3,293.60		2.50
<b>Total cost</b>			5,037.35		3.82
<b>Adjusted total cost<sup>1</sup></b>			<b>\$5,202.03</b>		<b>\$3.94</b>

1. Adjusted total cost, figured at 5% of calculated costs, compensates for changes in terrain and construction conditions. The budget reflects construction costs on gently rolling terrain with few rocks and no stream or ditch crossings. Labor costs are not affected by the calculation.

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**Table 2. Five-strand barbed wire fence construction budget, driven corner posts (1,320 feet).**

Item	Type	Quantity	Unit	Price (\$)	Total (\$)
Corner or anchor posts	3.5-inch-by-8-foot steel pipe	5	post	54.00	270.00
Corner and anchor post braces	steel pipe h-bracing	3	brace	73.20	219.60
Gates	20-foot pipe gate	1	gate	250.00	250.00
Barbed wire	4-point barbed wire	5	roll	130.00	650.00
Line posts	6-foot t-post	80	post	6.50	520.00
	2 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> -inch pipe post	20	post	19.20	384.00
Fastening hardware	t-post clip	4	bag of 100	6.00	24.00
	pipe post wire clip	2	bag of 100	28.00	56.00
Labor	total	20.5	hour	27.50	563.75
Machinery and tools	cost per man-hour	20.5	man-hour	50.00	937.50
<b>Cost category</b>		<b>Project total (\$)</b>		<b>Total per foot (\$)</b>	
<b>Labor and tool cost</b>		\$1,501.25		\$1.14	
<b>Material cost</b>		2,373.60		1.80	
<b>Total cost</b>		3,874.85		2.94	
<b>Adjusted total cost<sup>1</sup></b>		<b>3,993.53</b>		<b>3.03</b>	

1. Adjusted total cost, figured at 5% of calculated costs, compensates for changes in terrain and construction conditions. The budget reflects construction costs on gently rolling terrain with few rocks and no stream or ditch crossings. Labor costs are not affected by the calculation.

**Table 3. Electrified 5-high tensile wire fence construction budget, driven corner posts (1,320 feet).**

Item	Type	Quantity	Unit	Price (\$)	Total (\$)
Corner or anchor posts	3.5-inch-by-8-foot steel pipe	5	post	54.00	270.00
Corner and anchor post braces	steel pipe h-bracing	3	brace	73.20	219.60
Gates	20-foot pipe gate	1	gate	250.00	250.00
Wire	12.5-gauge high tensile wire	2	roll	174.00	348.00
Line posts	1-inch-by-6-foot fiberglass post	40	post	7.20	288.00
	2 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> -inch pipe post	10	post	19.20	192.00
Fastening hardware	2-inch cotter pin	3	bag of 100	21.00	63.00
	pipe post wire clip	1	bag of 100	28.00	28.00
	anchor post insulator	15	insulator	1.40	21.00
Tensioners	ratchet style	10	tensioner	3.75	37.50
Fence energizer	110-volt 12-joule fence charger	1	charger	475.00	475.00
Ground rods	6-foot	4	rod	35.00	140.00
Labor	total	19.5	hour	27.50	536.25
Machinery and tools	cost per man-hour	19.5	man-hour	50.00	975.00
<b>Cost category</b>		<b>Project total (\$)</b>		<b>Total per foot (\$)</b>	
<b>Labor and tool cost</b>		\$1,511.25		\$1.14	
<b>Material cost</b>		1,717.10		1.30	
<b>Total cost</b>		3,228.35		2.45	
<b>Adjusted total cost<sup>1</sup></b>		<b>3,314.21</b>		<b>2.51</b>	

1. Adjusted total cost, figured at 5% of calculated costs, compensates for changes in terrain and construction conditions. The budget reflects construction costs on gently rolling terrain with few rocks and no stream or ditch crossings. Labor costs are not affected by the calculation.

**Table 4. Summary of construction costs for three pasture perimeter fence types, in dollars.**

Cost category	Woven wire + barbed wire	Five-strand barbed wire	Electrified high tensile
Labor and tool cost	1,743.75	1,501.25	1,511.25
Material cost	3,293.60	2,373.60	1,717.10
Total cost <sup>1</sup>	5,202.03	3,993.53	3,314.21
Total cost per foot	3.94	3.03	2.86

1. Total costs represent the “adjusted total cost” as reported in Tables 1 through 3; therefore, the figures here do not sum.

## Customizing fence construction budgets

The fence construction budgets presented in this guide can be customized in the [Pasture Fence Construction Cost workbook \(XLSX\)](https://www.missouri.edu/media/wysiwyg/Extensiondata/Pro/AgBusinessPolicyExtension/Docs/pasture-fence-budget.xlsx) (extension.missouri.edu/media/wysiwyg/Extensiondata/Pro/AgBusinessPolicyExtension/Docs/pasture-fence-budget.xlsx). Use this tool to input material types and costs, labor rates, the hours of labor required, and the overall size and specifications of the project being planned. Fence construction is a highly detailed task that is done differently from farm to farm and year to year, and although extremely flexible, the model is not infinitely variable. Customizing the workbook will provide a more accurate estimate for your project.

## Electric interior divider fence

Electric interior fencing provides an economical, flexible solution for implementing rotational grazing or managing livestock on crop residues where permanent, fixed fences are absent. A two-strand electrified fence with step-in fiberglass posts measuring 1,320 feet in length is budgeted in Table 5. Note that this fence is meant to be portable. The materials purchased for this fence can be used elsewhere on the farm while livestock are not present in the original location. The initial cost of materials reported here will be spread over the life of the materials, but the labor expense will be incurred each time the fence is moved.

## Corral fencing

Corral fencing is an important consideration when building or remodeling existing confinement or livestock handling facilities. Table 6 shows a sample budget for constructing 500 feet of corral fencing made with used 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch diameter pipe posts,  $\frac{7}{8}$ -inch sucker rod laterals with 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch pipe top rail, and four heavy duty 12-foot gates, suitable for cattle.

The construction methods used to build corral fencing can vary. There can also be differences in costs based on the choice and price of materials and in the methods used to install the fence.

**Table 5. Electric interior fence construction budget (1,320 feet).**

Item	Type	Quantity	Unit	Price (\$)	Total (\$)
Anchor posts	treated wood posts	3	post	12.00	36.00
Anchor post insulators		6	insulator	1.40	8.40
Wire	polywire	2	roll	65.25	130.50
Line posts	4-foot fiberglass step-ins	40	post	4.10	164.00
Gates	wire with plastic handle	1	gate	24.00	24.00
Labor	total	3.8	hour	27.50	103.30
Machinery and tools	cost per man-hour	3.8	man-hour	50.00	187.81
Electrifying system	ground rods	3	rod	35.00	105.00
	wire spools	2	spool	49.00	98.00
	110-volt 12-joule fence charger	1	charger	475.00	475.00
Cost category	Project total (\$)		Total per foot (\$)		
Labor and tool cost	291.11		0.22		
Material cost	1,040.90		0.79		
Total cost	1,332.01		1.01		
Adjusted total cost <sup>1</sup>	<b>1,384.05</b>		<b>1.05</b>		

1. Adjusted total cost, figured at 5% of calculated costs, compensates for changes in terrain and construction conditions. The budget reflects construction costs on gently rolling terrain with few rocks and no stream or ditch crossings. Labor costs are not affected by the calculation.

**Table 6. Corral fence construction budget (500 feet).**

Item	Type	Quantity	Unit	Price (\$)	Total (\$)
Corner or end posts	3.5-inch-by-8-foot steel pipe	6	post	54.00	324.00
Line posts	2 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub> -inch-by-8-foot steel pipe	456	foot of pipe	2.75	1,254.00
Fence materials	7/ <sub>8</sub> -inch sucker rod	100	25-foot stick	16.50	1,650.00
	2 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> -inch steel pipe	500	foot of pipe	2.40	1,200.00
Gates	12-foot heavy-duty bull gates	48	total gate width	33.00	1,584.00
Labor	total	64	hour	27.50	1,760.00
Machinery and tools	cost per man-hour	64	man-hour	50.00	3,200.00
Cost category		Project total (\$)		Total per foot (\$)	
Labor and tool cost		4,960.00		9.92	
Material cost		6,012.00		12.02	
<b>Total cost</b>		<b>10,972.00</b>		<b>21.94</b>	

## Limitations

Tables 1 through 6 represent rough cost estimates to build fencing in nearly ideal conditions. Conditions on your land or operation could make your costs significantly different. Labor rates can significantly change the cost of a fence construction project. They can vary based on whether you are using a professional contractor or a hired general laborer or are installing it yourself. The labor rate used in this guide represents a skilled individual leading their own project with an unskilled hired helper.

Most farm owners and operators requiring fencing all have a different definition of a “good” fence. For this reason, these budgets may not perfectly align with an owner’s expectations for a particular fence project. In general, a straight, continuous stretch of fence is the least expensive, fastest and easiest to build. Each additional corner, end, gate and water gap will add additional time and expense to a project. The budgets presented here assume a straight fence with minimal add-ons or terrain features.

## Fence removal and site preparation

The estimates for new fence construction do not include the cost of removing an existing fence or any trees or brush that has grown up in fence row. The cost to remove a fence varies based on its condition and the amount of vegetation surrounding it. For clean but deteriorated fences, hand removal with a tractor and

loader assisting can be quick and inexpensive. However, vegetation removal costs exponentially more as the size and quantity of trees and brush increases. A fence with small trees and brush can be cleared with light equipment, such as a skid steer, relatively quickly. A bulldozer or excavator might be needed to remove and pile large trees, costing \$200 or more per hour and taking several hours to remove a quarter mile of fence.

## Summary

Fencing is an important and significant capital investment for pasture-based livestock operations. As with other capital investments, knowing the costs before investing is important. By estimating fence construction costs before starting a project, farm owners and operators can make informed decisions about the most economical pasture layout for their operation.

University of Missouri Extension offers these resources about fence law, fence system design and general fence construction:

- [Missouri Fence and Boundary Law Reference Guide](https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/g810)  
(extension.missouri.edu/publications/g810)
- [Managed Grazing Systems and Fencing for Distribution of Beef](https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/eq379)  
(extension.missouri.edu/publications/eq379)
- [Dairy Grazing: Fence and Water Systems](https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/m190)  
(extension.missouri.edu/publications/m190)