

# Wild dog facts

## Exclusion fencing—electric

Good fences can reduce livestock predation. They are most effective when used in conjunction with other methods of damage control such as baiting, trapping or livestock guard animals. However, they cannot exclude all wild dogs as some eventually learn to climb higher, dig deeper, or take advantage of damaged fences to gain entry. The larger the area, the more difficult it is to exclude all predators.

Most wild dogs readily pass over, under, or through conventional livestock fences. A dog's response to a fence depends on its experience and motivation.

Both conventional netting fences and electric fences are used to control stock and exclude animal pests. The Wild Dog Barrier Fence, which is several thousand km long, is an example of an effective conventional fence.

Electric fences have also been widely used to exclude predators with some success. For example, they have been used in Africa to exclude elephants from crops, and in North America to protect livestock from coyotes, wolves and bears.

In Australia, they have been used successfully to protect sheep, goats and other small livestock from wild dogs. They are usually constructed of smooth, high-tensile wire at a tension of 90–135 kg. The original design for controlling predators consisted of multiple, alternately charged and earthed wires, with a charged trip wire installed just above ground level about 20 cm outside the main fence to discourage digging.

The number of wires and the spacing between them vary considerably, with 7-, 9- and 13-strand fences all being used with varying success. Thirteen-strand fences tested by the United States Department of Agriculture were found to be the most effective in keeping coyotes out of sheep pastures.

Electric fences are easier to construct on flat terrain and the amount of labour and the installation techniques required vary with each type. For example, high-tensile wire fences require adequate bracing at the corners, particularly over long spans.

The top wire should be live or neutral to prevent shorts caused by kangaroos twisting the wires. The second wire is live and so if a short occurs between live and neutral wires, the neutral wire becomes live as it is not earthed, maintaining the integrity of the electric fence. As wild dogs quickly find gaps under the bottom wire and soon learn to dig under the fence, these areas can easily be blocked with a piece of netting attached to the bottom earth wire.

Adding one or more electric wires to an existing fence can increase its effectiveness in controlling livestock and deterring predators.

A charged trip-wire placed 15–20 cm above the ground and about 20–25 cm outside the fence will often prevent wild dogs from digging and crawling at the base of the fence. If they are climbing or jumping a fence, charged wires can be added to the top at various spacing and offset outside the fence. Fence manufacturers' offer offset brackets making installation easier.

Maintaining electric fences in good order can be time consuming. It is necessary to maintain wire tension, remove excessive vegetation under the fence, and repair damage caused by livestock and wildlife.

## Further information

Further information is available from your local government office, or by contacting Biosecurity Queensland (call 13 25 23 or visit our website at [www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au](http://www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au)).

