

Lesson 5: Fence Mending Techniques

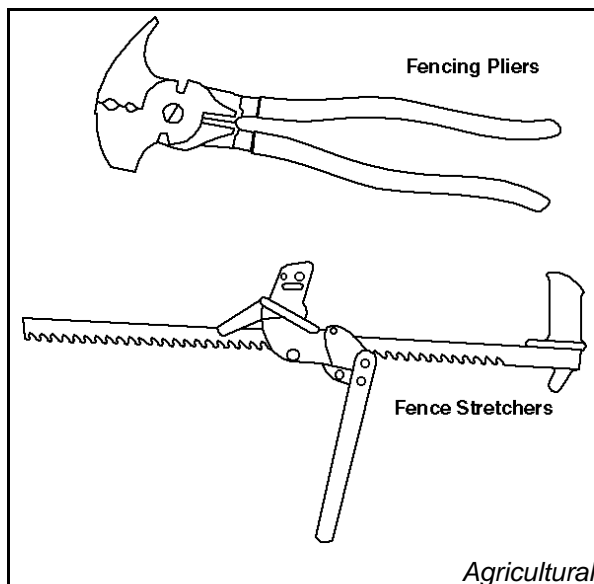
Lesson 5: Fence Mending Techniques

Fences are stationary but they do get worn and broken. Repairs are generally simple, requiring a little time and a few materials. However, replacing the fence may be necessary if it is extremely worn or has extensive damage, such as that caused by age, neglect, floods, or tornadoes.

Tightening Fence Wire

Wire will loosen over time due to animals pushing against it and other stresses. If the posts are sturdy, the wire may be tightened in one of two ways. One method involves stretching the wire at a post, while the other involves stretching the wire in the middle of the fence line. In the first method, the wire is detached from an anchor post and loosened at the line posts. The next step is to stretch the wire at the anchor post as discussed in the preceding lessons. It can then be reattached to the posts. The second method involves cutting the wire in the middle of the fence. The fence stretchers are attached at this point, and the wire is stretched. Then the ends of the wire are spliced together. The tightened fence may require new fasteners but will likely give many years of continued service.

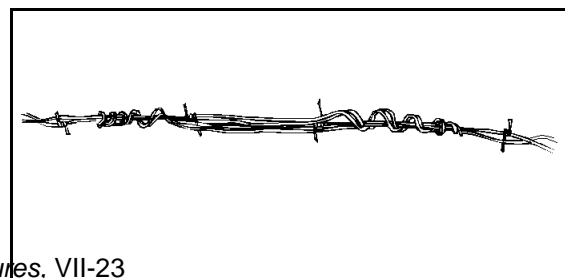
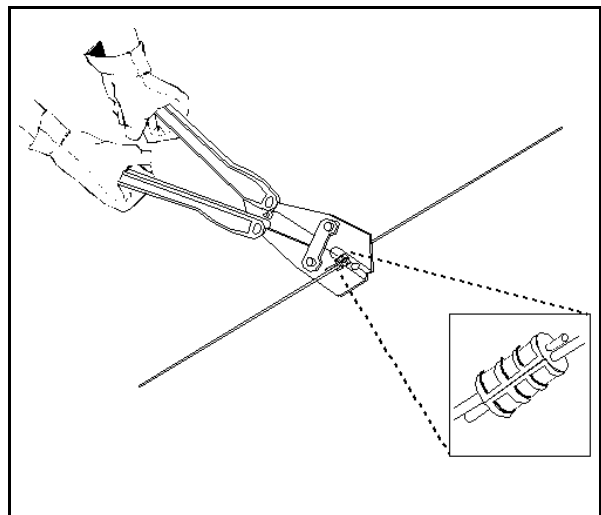
Tools for Mending Broken Wires



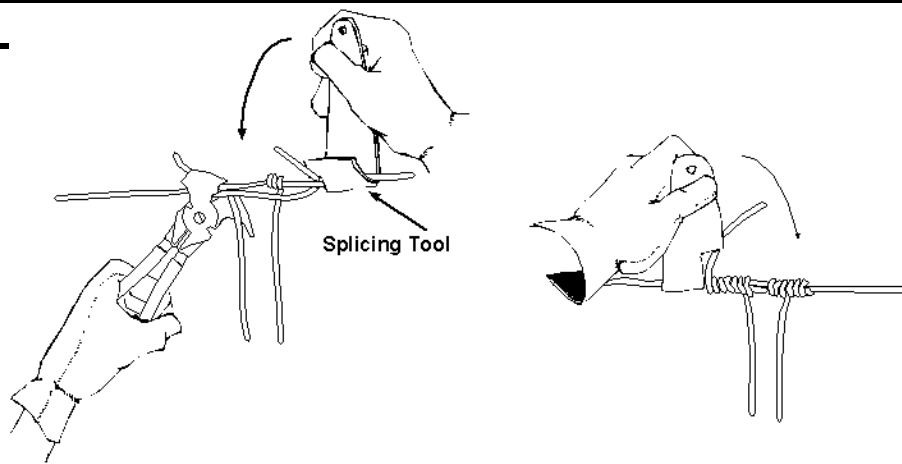
Fixing fences calls for few tools, including a claw hammer for driving staples, fencing pliers, fence stretchers for pulling the wire together, and specialized splicing tools, such as a sleeve compressor or woven wire splicing tool. Fencing pliers can replace both of these types of tools if only a small amount of repair is needed. However, they are not as convenient or fast as the other tools for more extensive repairs. Fencing pliers and fence stretchers are shown in Figure 5.1.

Methods for Splicing Fence Wire

For barbed or smooth wire, the preferred method of splicing is a crimp splice using a metal compression sleeve, shown in Figure 5.2. Both ends of the wire are threaded through the sleeve. The sleeve is then pressed together tightly using the fencing pliers.



Fencing



This type of wire may also be twisted together in a wrap splice with some degree of success. Figure 5.3 is an illustration of one type of wrap splice. One way to make a wrap splice is to make a loop in one wire by wrapping the tail of the wire around the wire several times. The other wire is passed through the loop and then bent back and wrapped around itself several times. This type of repair seldom produces as tight a bond as a compression sleeve. Lacerations to the hands are also more likely when performing this type of splice.

Repairs to woven wire usually involve a process similar to that shown in Figure 5.4. The wires are simply twisted together tightly using a splicing tool or pliers. These splices may cause lacerations to the hands, so heavy gloves should be worn to perform this type of repair.

Replacing Posts in Existing Fence Lines

Posts that have been broken or damaged by rot should be replaced. The wire is detached from the post, which is then removed from the ground.

Sometimes posts can be loosened by rocking them back and forth, and they are then pulled out by hand. Posts may also be removed using post pullers or a jack.

Sometimes a post breaks off at ground level. If possible, the new post is set to one side of the old post. If positioning the post in this way is not possible, digging up the old post is

necessary before a new one can be set in the same place.

After the old post is removed, the new one is set in place using the same methods for setting posts that are utilized when a fence is constructed, as discussed in Lesson 2 of this unit.

The person setting the posts in an existing fence line should be careful, since she or he will have to work in close proximity to the existing wire.

Summary

Fence repairs are frequent in agricultural settings.

Loose fence wires can be tightened either at an anchor post or in the middle of the fence line. Only a few tools are necessary to mend broken wires, which can be fixed using a metal sleeve compressor or by twisting the wire together in some way. If posts in an existing fence line need to be replaced, they should be removed, and new posts set in their place.

Credits

Ramsey, Dan. *The Complete Book of Fences*. Blue Ridge Summit, Pa.: TAB Books, Inc., 1983.

Selecting Wire Fencing Materials (G1191). University Extension agricultural publications, 1993.