

“ELECTRIC FENCE - GOOD OR BAD”

Over the years like many if not all areas of the world of Horses, electric fencing has its share of rumors and urban legends. People being electrocuted and livestock dying, lightning strikes caused by storms attracted to the fencing. Animals impaled on posts, along with many more such stories of how rotten and dangerous it is. Like most things we encounter in the world of Horses. All wrong and unfounded, plus some of it is just ridicules! Electric fencing is not only safe but very good for keeping livestock in. Along with unwanted predators and anyone else out! Most people think electric fencing is like in the movies, touch it and get cooked like a burger on a grill! The most powerful electric fence chargers are barely enough to hurt let alone kill! More often than not, if electric fence is involved in a Horse related accident. It is not the fencing; it is human error or poor installation and maintenance. Maintenance of this type of fencing is very simple and cheap. There are no statistics that show electric fencing attracts lightening more than any other type of fencing. Just sounds bad having electricity running in the rain or snow. Yet I have used it, my entire life without any troubles, or Horse injuries. I just always make sure my chargers are in great shape and my wires are not grounding out.

The terminology of electric fence.

“Charger” = The actual box that is powered by battery/solar /ac110, that provides the fence with an electrical charge.

“Insulators” = Plastic or porcelain wire holders that attach to posts and keep the wire from touching the post or the ground.

“Ground rod” = 8 ft. long solid copper rod driven in the ground to provide grounding for the charger.

“Posts” = Wood-steel-plastic, any thing that keeps the wire and the insulators off the earth.

“Fence checker” = Device that can tell you if the fence has an electrical charge running through it.

“Wire” = Stainless steel or galvanized 14 to 17 gauge wire.

“Lightening arrestor” = Device installed between charger and fence to prevent lightning from hurting your charger or Horses.

Electric fence is a nice way for keeping Horses in a pasture or certain area. They are portable units and fence kits for trail rides and traveling with Horses. What makes electric fence so handy is the ability to move it. Change it, add to it or subtract from it. Without much money or physical labor, no real strength or experience is needed to string it up and get it going. Cost is minimal, due to the fact that one or two wires of electric fence can be strung on a really old unsafe fence and provides wonderful protection.

All livestock can hear and smell moisture in the air or dew making contact with the electric fence wire. It is so slight and fast no human can detect it. Yet animals learn if the wire is “HOT”. The most important thing with electric fence is to make sure that no tall weeds or grass or branches come in contact with the wire. Yes there are chargers that boast shocking power through tall wet weeds. Yet any type of plants, posts, gates, rocks, equipment. Can take the real charge out of the fence, you want the fence to have the most

charge possible? So if anything touches it, they get a nice little "ZAP"! Once most Horses make that first contact, they never challenge the fence again.

Some people try to put the fence up without a proper ground rod. T-posts and rebar are not a good ground. Remember you are dealing with a very small low charge of electricity. The more you cut corners and the more you cheat. The less efficient of a fence you will have to protect your Horses. You should have three "REAL GROUND RODS"! Three tied together and slammed in the ground at least 7 feet deep.

Connect them with wire at a distance of 6 to 10 feet apart. See the charge comes into play, when something touches the wire. Then it touches the earth, the charger being grounded is what gives you the "ZAP"! Every charger comes with a detailed drawing on installing ground rods. Using insulators to make sure wire does not touch anything is very important. If a charger has to work too hard, it will burn itself out just trying to send an electrical pulse through the wire. This can be stressful if the wires are not protected from everything.

Electric fence chargers are measured by the term "JOULE". The higher number of joules, the more power the charger is. Most battery and solar powered chargers are less than 1 joule. Yet plug in the wall types can be 4 to 6 joules of power! The longer the fence, the bigger the animals the more joules you will want running through your wire.

Check out chargers and insulators at local AG stores. Ask questions, really check into it. You will find more electric fencing than you thought once you start to look for it. Some people put strips of cloth on the wire to make sure their Horses know the wire is there. Signs help people, yet I must confess, nothing is more fun than watching someone getting "ZAPPED"! Take care of your Horses and always learn as much as you can when it comes to fencing your Horses in.

BJ Rickard is back to working with Horses and their owners after 16 months of recovery. Many Horses and Horse owners are happy he is back to what he loves to do every day.

By BJ Rickard – The World OF Horses – Stall13.com
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