

Rabbit-proof fencing

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Rabbit-proof fencing is the best long-term way of protecting your property, or parts of it, from rabbits.

There are two main designs:

- with netting buried 150 mm in the ground, and;
- with netting bent at the base to lay on the ground in the direction of approaching rabbits.

Rabbit proof fencing is a one-off operation and should last for up to 20 years where maintenance is adequate.

Netting fencing may be judged to be a cost effective long term control method when compared with current costs of ongoing of rabbit control works in rural/residential areas. It may be the only effective rabbit control option to contain rabbits in difficult terrain, or in situations where rabbit control by other techniques is difficult.

Controlling the movement of rabbits with netted fencing is the first stage of making a property rabbit-free.

Rabbit-proof netting fences are often initially used in specific circumstances such as the protection of relatively small, high-value enterprises, rather than extensive grazing enterprises.

It is an ideal opportunity to ensure fences are located in a manner which allows the most efficient property management. Fences should contain areas of similar management requirements (land capability) and proper location therefore is an integral part of any farm plan.

Fences may limit the movement of some native animals if you live near a bushland area. Contact the Department of Natural Resources and Environment for more information.

Minimum specifications

- Use of 105 x 4 x 1.4 standard rabbit netting. That is:
 - 105 mm width
 - 4 cm mesh diameter
 - 1.4 mm wire diameter
- Support fence able to withstand stock or native animal forces.
- Rabbit netting fixed so that it reaches at least 900 mm above the ground.
- Where netting is buried, it be done so to a minimum of 170 mm.

- Where netting is bent to lay on the ground surface it be held down with pegs, rocks or timber.
- Suitable rabbit-proof gates at all breaks in the fence

Construction

General fencing needs

- All posts to be 100 - 150 mm thick and at least 450 mm into the ground (either rammed, or dug in). End assembly posts need to be 150 - 200 mm thick.
- Spacing between posts and star pickets should be determined by soil type, topography and required strength of the fence.
- It is best to have fences erected by experienced or professional fencers.

Buried netting

- Figure 1 shows typical buried netting design where it is not necessary to cope with stock.

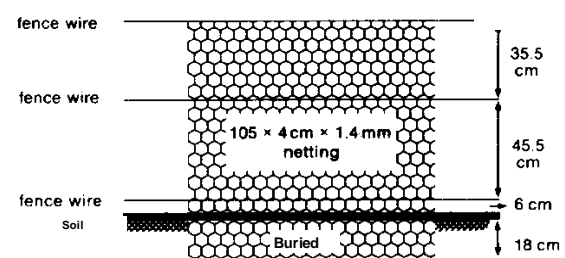


Figure 1 Typical design of a rabbit proof fence (buried base)

- Figure 2 shows a design which will serve as a stock fence as well.

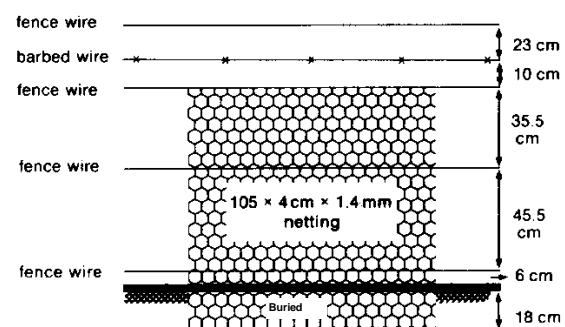


Figure 2 Typical design (with buried base) to also provide stock control

Netting secured at ground level

- While pegs, rocks or timber are initially used to secure the folded netting, pasture growth will eventually secure it to the ground.

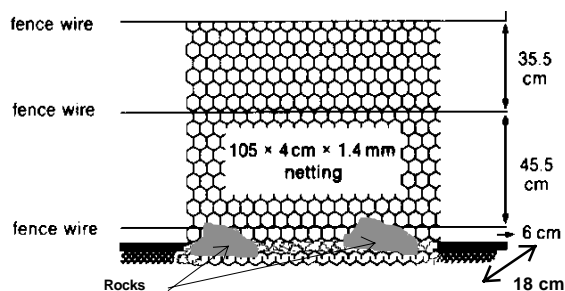


Figure 3 Typical design of rabbit proof fence where bottom part of netting is laid on ground

Gates

- Gates should be swung so that there are no gaps between posts and the gate. A correctly positioned bedlog will prevent rabbits moving under the gate. Diagonal stays should be protected by netting barriers.

Follow-up actions

- Once fencing has been successfully finished, follow up with other control techniques such as poisoning, fumigating, ripping and removing or destroying surface harbour to eradicate remaining rabbits within the fenced area.

Maintenance

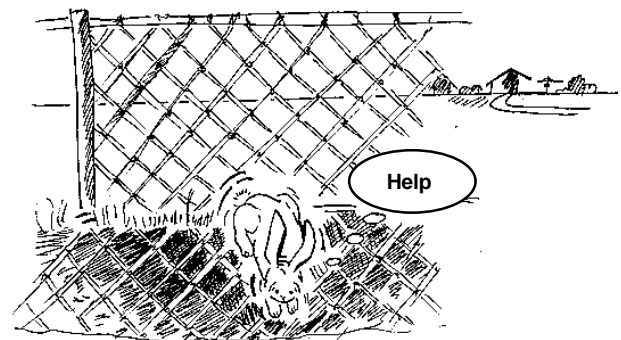
- Fences should be checked on a regular basis for any damage by stock, falling trees, wildlife or people.. Regular maintenance is essential to prevent rabbit reinvasion.
- Wombat gates may need to be installed where wombats are active

Further information

- Contact the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (see telephone directory for location of local office).
- Pamphlets on fence construction provided by suppliers of fencing materials.
- Land for Wildlife Note 31: *Rabbit control in wildlife habitat*.

Acknowledgments

Figures 1, 2 and 3 have been adapted from the New South Wales Agfact publication: *Effective rabbit control*.



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