

WALTERS FENCING

FREQUENTLY ASKED FENCING QUESTIONS

Why do you drive strainer posts instead of concreting?

Depth of set is the primary factor keeping a strainer post in the ground. Our strainer posts are driven to a bare minimum of 1150mm deep, and are also pinned with a full length second hand star post, driven at 10 -15 degrees off the vertical and screwed or welded to the bottom of the strainer post. This functions as a backup anti-jacking device and allows us to warrant our end assemblies against movement for five years. We have had numerous end assemblies not moved at all after twenty years.

Driving strainers allows fencing to commence immediately, with less travelling costs to the customer and significant labour reductions.

Isn't concreting stronger?

Not unless the soil is extremely unstable and requires weight of the concrete as an anchor. Concreting allows you to use smaller (less expensive) strainer posts, but requires more labour and the additional cost of concrete. Our driver allows us to drive into harder/rockier ground that we would not be able to dig. In soft ground, we have the capacity to drive post up to 2m into the ground, much deeper than we can dig.

Why do you tie barbed wires with a single tie on the narrow side of a star post and not the top slot?

Tying the barbs onto the narrow/single side of the post is recommended by Australia's leading wire manufacturer Waratah, and is in fact an integral part of their JIO post system. Not only does this create only one possible rust point instead of two, it allows falling branches to break the ties instead of the wire itself. We have often found that tree damage to our fences requires only replacement of the tie wires, with no re-straining or repair of the wires necessary. If the barbed wire is placed and tied in the slot at the top of the posts the edge of the slot will act like a guillotine and the wire will be cut if something falls on the barbed wire. Waratah stress that the slot is for manufacturing purposes and not for locating the top wire.

Why are plain wires tied off with only two wraps at the strainer post?

The reason we tie plain wire with only two wraps is that the wrapping section of the knot does not provide any extra strength beyond the first loop. We have tested knots under controlled conditions with a crane scale and found that knots with two or more wraps fail just as quickly as knots with only one wrap. Every kink or bend placed in a wire reduces its breaking strain, so the gentler the bend at the strainer posts the stronger the knot.

Why do you use a long wrap when tying barbed wire?

We wrap our barb knots with a long tail (200mm/8") wound around the wire under tension. Tests have shown that the intertwined barbs increase the load the wire can handle significantly.

Why don't you tie off wires at running posts every hundred metres?

The optimum straining distance for Waratah high tensile plain wire is 1500m. If the wire is tied off in short strain it dramatically reduces the ability of the wire to absorb shock loading and rebound. The wire in a short strain is more likely to break than the same wire in a longer strain. Traditionally the old style No.10 and No.8 wires had a lower tensile strength which meant they would stretch. The solution was to have short sections of fence that could allow the wire to stretch but still remain stock proof.

Why aren't your star posts close together at three metres?

Several reasons, cost being one. The main reason however is that modern high tensile wires rely on elasticity of the overall fence to withstand stock pressure rather than the post spacing. Old soft wires relied on posts being close together when the wires went loose. In a modern fence the shock loading of an impact on the fence is better absorbed if the star posts are further apart. 5m spacing of star posts is a compromise between cost, visual impact and strength.

Why are your gates not swung level, and are following the ground?

Swinging gates to follow the ground may not appear aesthetically pleasing to some, however allows maximum stock proofing with less chance for calves or lambs to escape under the gate. We have been utilising this technique for many years and found it results in less follow-up work to stockproof the gate. There is also the side benefit of significantly less or no earthmoving required to prepare a gateway.

Why are your gates side swung instead of centre swung?

Centre swinging a gate is popular on timber posts where the hinges are easier to adjust if done this way and if the gate is required to be swung level. With weld on gudgeons and the gates following the slope of the ground, side swing makes more sense. The best reason though is that the gate can be fully opened and tied back along the fence. This means no side load on the strainer post, causing the post to pull over in time, and that stock cannot become trapped behind the gate when moving paddocks.