

Department of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture



ELK FENCING GUIDELINES

In accordance with AS 03.05.075, the Department may issue an Elk Farming License for the farming of Elk to a person who “possesses facilities for maintaining the Elk under positive control.”

STANDARDS FOR POSITIVE CONTROL – A physical barrier must be provided to prevent Elk from escaping from a licensed Elk farm and to exclude wild ungulates. Perimeter fencing on an Elk farm must be constructed and maintained using adequate materials and workmanship strong enough to withstand animal impacts and tall enough to preclude escape by jumping. The applicant shall construct the fence using the standards provided or submit an alternate fence design as described in Section H. *The applicant must obtain written approval for any alternate design prior to construction of the fence.*

The Elk Farm license holder is ultimately responsible for confining the Elk on the farm, and inspection and acceptance of any fence design does not relieve the license holder from this responsibility. The completed perimeter fence must be inspected and approved by a representative of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources before an Elk farming license will be issued. The license holder will grant the Alaska Department Natural Resources permission to enter the property for the purpose of periodic inspections of the perimeter fence, as necessary. It is recommended that facilities for handling, restraining and testing Elk be constructed prior to obtaining animals in addition to the required perimeter fencing.

DEFINITIONS

Elk – An animal of the following subspecies of *Cervus elaphus*, which are indigenous to North America: *C. e. nelsoni*, *C. e. canadensis*, *C. e. roosevelti*, and *C. e. nannodes*.

Elk Farming – The raising and breeding of Elk as domestic livestock for commercial purposes, including the sale of meat, by a person who holds a current valid Elk farming license. This includes the lawful possession, purchase, sale, import, export of live animals, as well as the sale of meat and other byproducts of the animals.

Positive Control – A barrier, either constructed or natural, which confines Elk on the licensed Elk farm and excludes wild ungulates. A constructed barrier is considered to be a perimeter fence or other permanent structure designed to restrict the movement of Elk. A natural barrier may include a cliff or other impediment, which restricts the passage of Elk. However, unfenced waterbodies may not be adequate barriers for containing Elk.

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Perimeter Fence – A fence, approved by ADNR that provides confinement of Elk on the Elk farm held under an Elk farming license, prevents Elk from escaping confinement, and excludes wild ungulates.

FENCE STANDARDS

Perimeter Fence – The perimeter fence on a licensed Elk farm must be designed and constructed to meet the following minimum requirements.

A) General - The perimeter fence must be designed and constructed to insure the confinement of all Elk on the farm and to exclude other domestic livestock or wild ungulates. The licensee to insure that the standards are maintained must inspect it periodically. The fence corridor must be bladed smooth with gradual changes in elevation to allow for a tight fit of the fence to the matching terrain. There must be no steep embankments adjacent to the fence on either side that would allow an animal to gain an increased height in relation to the overall fence height. Trees on either side of the fence right-of-way that are likely to pose a hazard to the fence will be removed. Low spots that create gaps under the fence wire will be filled or blocked to prevent stock from escaping and prevent ungulates from entering the enclosure.

The fence should be constructed and installed in accordance with manufacturers recommendations and fence industry standards for workmanship.

B) Fence Configuration – the fence must extend a minimum of eight (8) feet above ground level. Preferred: high tensile woven wire game fencing specifically designed for confinement of ungulates, 96-inches in height. Other materials may be considered for construction as described in Section H. In regions of the state with heavy snowfall, it may be necessary to increase the height of the fence to allow for buildup of compacted snow in the winter.

C) Minimum Wire Gauge – 12 ½ gauge galvanized.

D) Posts - Posts used in fence construction must be stout enough to securely support the wire in the given soil conditions and maintain proper tension on the wire. Line posts must have a 4" minimum diameter, if wood, and a 2 3/8" minimum diameter if steel drill pipe, 3" minimum diameter if steel pipe. The portion of the wood post in contact with the ground must be treated to prevent rot. The line posts must be a minimum of 12 ft. in length with 4 ft. buried in the ground. Corner posts must be enlarged, anchored, and/or braced to provide solid construction. The maximum spacing between line posts shall be:

- 1) 25 feet, if high tensile wire is used
- 2) 15 feet, if conventional wire is used
- 3) 60 feet, if 10 ft. steel "T" posts are spaced every 15 feet between the line posts.

Closer line post spacing, additional posts or other measures, may be necessary to allow for uneven ground topography, unstable soil conditions, or heavy animal pressure. Bracing is recommended on both sides of water gaps, at corners approaching 90°, and at bases and ridgetops of steep slopes. Corner posts must be enlarged, anchored, and/or braced to provide solid construction.

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E) Fasteners – The fence must be attached to the posts by securing the horizontal wires to the posts, preferably on the inside (enclosure side). If wooden posts are used, the top 3 wires of the woven fence must be stapled to the posts. Thereafter, alternating wires must be stapled.

F) For steel posts, the fence must be attached by a wire tie (no less than 12 ½ ga., 9 ga. wire tie required for 2 3/8” steel drill stem) attached at both ends to a horizontal fence wire and encircling the post. The wire ties must be tightened sufficiently to prevent the fence from moving vertically. Beginning with the top wire, alternating wires must be secured for the top half of the fence. For the bottom half of the fence, at least one horizontal wire per foot of vertical fence must be secured, including the bottom wire.

G) Gates – Gate construction must meet or exceed the confinement standards of the adjoining fence. Each gate must have a secure means of latching and a means of padlocking for security. Posts on both sides of gate openings must be braced; H – braces are recommended.

H) Alternative Design – An applicant may propose an alternate design for fence construction. Alternative designs must be submitted with drawings and construction standards *with documentation demonstrating the successful use of the design in similar circumstances*. The Department of Natural Resources will review the proposed design and will grant approval for construction if the fence design meets or exceeds the standards required for confinement. The applicant must receive written approval for an alternate fence design from the Director of the Division of Agriculture, ADNR, prior to construction.