



The Bull Sheet

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A word from Tom

Volume 2, Issue 3 Jun 2010

Hi Everyone,

Newsletter Spotlight

It has been a busy month for me locally. I have been occupied with the GPS around the Manawatu and Rangitikei mapping and marking out grazing systems.

In this issue:
Martin Oppenheimer Interview
The most common cause of poor performing electric fencing.

Early June saw me spending a couple of days in Auckland. I am a member of the [80-20 circle](#), a group run by Tom Poland, some of you will be familiar with Tom from his previous business, entrepreneurs success programme (ESP). When I first joined up with 80-20 I was extremely sceptical about whether it was right for me. I felt my business was very different from most. I had different clients and the usual rules did not apply. I had good value from ESP so decided to go to the first on line session of 80-20 and see what it was like. The reality was, after listening to the group for an hour or so, that although my business was unique and my target market unique, the concept of what I was trying to achieve was pretty much the same as everyone else. In a nut shell I had to get my product in front of my ideal clients. The same as everyone else in the group.



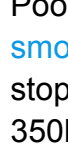
Tom Chisholm
B.Agr

What occurred to me was that I was approaching the group in the same way that many farmers often approach grazing management systems. When I am out at field days, or sometimes over a beer in a country pub, I will hear farmers say my farm is too dry, too wet, too rocky, too steep, too whatever. They are right in that their farm is unique, the mistake they make is not understanding that [the principles for maximising production from pasture are universal](#). The implementation is customised to the environment, the operator objectives and making the solution unique in the same way that my results from 80-20 will be unique to my business.

Winter is a time when you have a great opportunity to set high standards with your electric fencing. You can retrain stock from bad habits as conditions are in your favour. It is also a time when you have a lot of expensive pasture that you can loose if you don't have your fences working well. This month I have a look at the most common fault I see in electric fence installations.

Martin Oppenheimer is our interview subject this month. Check out the link to his video below.

Talk to you next month,



Tom Chisholm

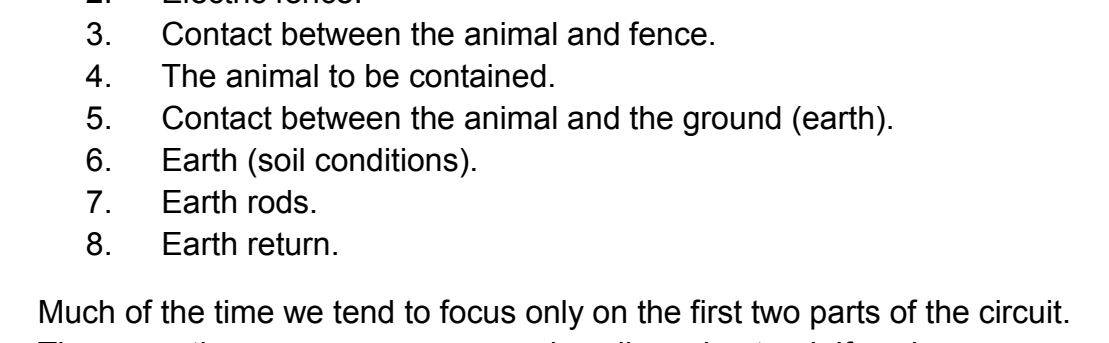
The most common cause of poor performing electric fencing.

This is often a time of year that a bit of fencing maintenance gets caught up on. During the winter feed is at its highest value and stock are often on restricted intakes. [Hungry stock, limited feed and underperforming fences make a recipe for disaster](#).

Poor power is something you ignore at your peril. [Electric fencing is all smoke and mirrors](#). There is no way those wires are going to physically stop the animals I found that out early in my farming career when 140 350kg+ rising two year old bulls ended up socialising in a corner, lots of mud, not much grass, and a whole lot of bad habits to correct. The class of stock you run may not have the catastrophic downside of stock injuries or even deaths as can be the case with bulls fighting, but the [loss of control once stock start to escape can be very expensive and time consuming](#).

The best way to fix poor power is not to let it happen in the first place. At this time of year you generally have reasonable soil moisture and fences are not overly challenged with plant overgrowth touching them and creating shorts. [Winter is a great time to get your fences in order and get some valuable credit in the animal training bank so you can get through less favourable conditions when soils start to dry out](#).

The diagram below shows the elements involved in an animal getting a shock from an earth grounded electric fence system.



From the electric fence energiser a complete circuit is required to make the Agdesign bull "light up" with a shock. In the same way that your lights don't work when the switch is turned off, if one part of the circuit is not working correctly then the bull will not light up. The components of the circuit are as follows:

1. Power lead out.
2. Electric fence.
3. Contact between the animal and fence.
4. The animal to be contained.
5. Contact between the animal and the ground (earth).
6. Earth (soil conditions).
7. Earth rods.
8. Earth return.

Much of the time we tend to focus only on the first two parts of the circuit. These are the areas we can see and easily understand. If we have conductive wire with good joins and good insulation with no shorts, we will have a good fence system. This is only true if the other elements of the circuit are working well.

[The most common area where electric fence systems do not work well is their earth system](#). If you have tested you unit and fixed any faults in the fence and your power is still low then you need to test your earth.

Testing the earth:

1. You need to short out the fence out. You should do this a minimum of 100 meter from the unit or earth system. An outrigger on a steel post fence will be excellent for this. Failing that some steel posts in the ground will do the job. You should be able to get your fence voltage down to 0.2-0.3 kV on your fence tester.
2. Place your fence tester earth pin about a meter or so away from your earth pegs. You should not be getting a reading greater than 0.2kV from your earth. If you are then you need to improve your earth system.

Some key points to consider with your earth system:

- Your earth system should be wired up to the same specification as your power lead out i.e. under gates should be insulated and all joins clamped. Make sure you have good quality clamps on your earth pegs.

- If you don't have a good damp area close to your unit you may need to have a lead out to a wet area that will create a good contact with the soil.

- Old bore casings make great earth pegs. Do not use working bores, this can create issues with current in the water and stock not wanting to drink.

- Do not use mains power earth pegs. If you use mains earth pegs you run the risk of the two systems crossing over. Fence shocks through you mains power or worse mains shocks through your fence!

- Do not use an earth system for more than one fence energiser. Electric fence units are designed to have a pulse that is safe for animals and humans. If you connect two units via the earth system the pulse may not be safe.

[If you need advice about your earth system or any other component of you electric fencing system call Agdesign today.](#)

Martin Oppenheimer Interview

This months interview is with Martin Oppenheimer from Walcha in NSW. Petali Has a Merino stud as well as a commercial sheep and cattle operation.

Martin is Chairman of the Australian wool growers association.

To see the video [click here](#) or on the picture below.



If you have Google earth on your computer copy and past the coordinates below into the "fly to" box under search on your screen. It will take you to the Petali gates.

-30.834874°, 151.539350°