Running barbed wire

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RUNNING BARBED WIRE
A STEADY HORSE CAN HELP

When writing to express his appreciation of the Journal, Mr. C. Overheu of Pingelly, gave these hints on rapid erection of a barbed wire fence. He writes:

May I add something to the fencing notes which appeared in recent issues? I once had to erect 28 miles of fencing carrying two barbed wires and found that the services of a quiet old cart-horse saved us much time and labour. With the aid of the horse, two men could run and strain miles of wire in a day.

One needs a staunch horse that will hang to a pull, but in these days when horses of any kind are scarce, the idea could probably be adapted for use with a tractor, or even a motor-truck.

A full reel was then placed in position and the wires joined and the man with the horse then moved on until he was signalled to stop.

When sufficient wire was run out, the man at the reel would tie it to the strainer post and the horse would be used to strain it tightly.

To hold the wire, we had a pole with a deep narrow V cut in the end. As the horse pulled the wire past a strainer post, the V would be engaged behind a suitable barb and the pole used as a lever to hold the wire jammed against the post while a few staples were hammered in. The wire would then be given a turn round the post and another staple driven in to make it secure.

The wire was thus in one continuous length with a turn round each strainer post, so there was not cutting needed as each length was joined to the previous coil.

One needs a code of signals for stopping, starting and slacking off. We used an old gun for signalling when the man with the horse went over a hill. The man at the coil fired a shot when the wire was nearly run out and he needed time to change to a full coil.

The equipment used consisted of a slab of timber about two inches thick and measuring about 24in. by 15in. with 1in. hole in the centre. This was used in conjunction with a crowbar.

The reel of wire was placed on the slab and the crowbar passed through the holes in the reel, through the hole in the slab and then driven into the ground.

The wire was strained in 20 chain lengths. The method was to attach the end of the wire to the horse’s swingle-tree and then to lead the horse along the line until the reel was almost empty.

The plant specimen forwarded from Tammin recently was identified as Bathurst Burr (Xanthium spinosum).

This is the first record of Bathurst Burr from the Tammin district although the plant has been established for some time in the Eastern Goldfields. Efforts are being made to prevent the spread of the weed outside the Goldfields areas as Bathurst Burr is liable to cause serious economic losses in the wool industry. The burrs adhere very rapidly to wool and when present in large numbers make it necessary for the wool to be carbonised.

It is suggested that the vicinity in which the plant was found should be kept under observation, particularly after rain, as seeds of Bathurst Burr will remain viable in the soil for a number of years.
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