



Fencing for Horse Paddocks & Anti-Chewing Protection

FENCING FOR HORSE PADDOCKS – What to consider!

A beautiful horse should be surrounded by a quality fence to protect it and keep it safe from injury. The fence should be strong and sturdy to survive the attentions of the horse for example: biting, chewing, kicking, pawing, barging etc.

So what should you consider when selecting a fence for a horse paddock?

- 🌳 Safety and suitability for the stock.
- 🌳 Temperament of the animals.
- 🌳 Number of horses or ponies to be kept in an area.
- 🌳 High enough to deter jumping over.
- 🌳 Low enough (at the bottom) to prevent foals or small ponies from rolling or crawling underneath.
- 🌳 Strong enough to prevent break throughs.
- 🌳 Discouraging to animals to lean through to graze .
- 🌳 Reflect the surrounding landscape and environment.
- 🌳 Financial budget for the project.

A suitable fencing option is a post and rail wooden fence.

- 🌳 The posts should be sturdy and set sufficiently into the ground to prevent them from falling or leaning over.
- 🌳 The treated or creosoted softwood rails should be strong and well maintained placed 1.5m - 3m apart with ideally three or four rails, with the lower rail running approx. 0.5m above ground level. Generally, for horses, a fence should be 1.08m - 1.38m high and for ponies 1m - 1.3m high.
- 🌳 Planning permission* should be considered and a general rule of thumb of when it is required for fences is when they are over;
 - 1m in height when adjacent to a highway
 - 2m anywhere else

- 🚩 Other options to border a paddock are available but not advised, for example:
 - Barbwire & sheep mesh are dangerous.
 - Hedges have tempting gaps.
 - Dry stone walls have a tendency to fall apart.

A timber fence is generally considered the safest and if they are well-constructed and maintained they will last a good length of time.

However a common problem with wooden fences around paddocks is that horses like to chew on wood!
Why?

- 🚩 Boredom / Frustration – If they are kept in stalls or a small paddock for long periods of time, secluded from other horses - they develop the habit to alleviate the boredom or frustration as there is little else to do.
- 🚩 Nutritional Deficiencies – When they are fed largely concentrates without fodder to keep them chewing over long periods of time or have vitamin deficiencies – they chew the wood to keep them busy or because they have pica (a taste for strange food stuffs).
- 🚩 Habit – Following and copying their stable and paddock mates they develop the frustrating habit.

Horses need to be allowed to live as naturally with other horses as possible, outdoors with plenty of grass / hay to nibble on – thus preventing the need for wood chewing. Horses are less likely to chew creosoted timber.

However outdoor turnout isn't always possible and in these instances measures are required to protect wood surfaces:

- 🚩 **Anti Chew Treatments** - Sprays, pastes or washes, which have bitter tastes, painted on to wood surfaces.
NB: These can be easily washed off in the rain and some horses don't notice the taste.
- 🚩 **Metal Prevention** – Wrap all outside corners of wood with galvanised sheet metal, so the horses can't get a start.
NB: Remember to keep the sharp edges of the nails down and file down the factory edge of the metal.
- 🚩 **Electrified Tape** – Run a band of high quality electric fencing along the top rail, it gives a startling shock, to deter the horse from future attempts, but is quiet safe. A cheap but very effective solution.
NB: However it is only effective as long as you remember to charge the battery or link to a mains!

* Please refer to our article 'Fence Heights and Establishing Boundaries' for more information