

# Handy Device for Dispensing Barbed Wire

**ROGER R. KERBS**

*Range Research Technician, Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station,<sup>1</sup> Forest Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Rapid City, South Dakota.*

## Highlight

A barbed wire dispensing device that is held vertically in the rear stake pocket of a pickup truck was constructed for about \$6.00. This device frees one man of a two-man crew to

<sup>1</sup>Central headquarters maintained in cooperation with Colorado State University at Fort Collins. Research reported here was conducted in cooperation with the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology at Rapid City. Received September 25, 1971.

do other work, and reduces the possibility of wire entanglements.

A major problem while unrolling new barbed wire from a spool is an oversupply of wire, and the inevitable entanglement. Corrective actions result in lost time and—often—wire cuts and scratches. A device described here fits on the back of a pickup truck and dispenses wire as needed. The device can be constructed for about \$6.00.

The dispenser was modified and improved from a “makeshift” device used by Bob Albin, Range Technician, Wall Ranger District, Buffalo Gap National Grassland.

The dispensing device was constructed from the following materials:

- (1) Steel plate— $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick by 14 inches square.
- (2) Steel pipe—1 inch diameter by 22 inches long.
- (3) Channel iron—2 inches wide by 6 inches long.

The steel pipe is inserted through a 1-inch-diameter hole drilled through the center of the steel plate. The section of channel iron is then welded to the plate and pipe (Fig. 1).

The barbed wire dispenser functioned very well on both short and long spans of new fence construction.

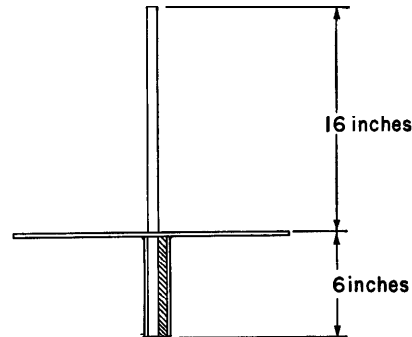


FIG. 1. All-metal barbed wire dispenser, made of 2-inch channel iron welded to  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch plate and 1-inch pipe.

One worker could handle all wire-dispensing situations regardless of topography. The dispenser can be moved easily from stake pocket to stake pocket on either side of a pickup. A bank of two or more dispensers constructed across the back of a pickup saves considerable time in dispensing several strands of wire at a time (Fig. 2).

Friction is the working element of the barbed wire dispenser. The weight of the spool of wire on the  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch dispenser plate causes enough friction to control the rate of spin of the spool as wire is unrolled. In contrast, a horizontally mounted dispenser does not create enough friction to control the dispensing rate, especially if a barb becomes caught on the spool. When the barb under tension suddenly becomes free, the wire spool spins excessively



FIG. 2. With the vertical dispenser, friction keeps some tension on the wire, and prevents spin-caused entanglements.

and causes a time-consuming entanglement.

Where fence had to be built across a deep draw or ravine, the vehicle was parked near one edge, and a worker

pulled the loose end of wire across. Without a vertical dispenser, either two workers would be required to carry a rotating spool of wire between them across the rugged ravine, therefore being more susceptible to injury, or one worker would have to remain near a horizontal dispenser to prevent entanglements while the other worker pulled the wire across the draw.

During construction of 4 miles of 4-strand barbed wire fence, no entanglements occurred while using the vertical wire dispenser. One worker was thus freed from the wire-stringing aspect of the project, and at the same time hazards of handling barbed wire were reduced.

An earlier version of the dispenser, made with a rotating  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch plywood base plate, was not entirely satisfactory.