

BULLET FENCE SYSTEMS

Don't fence me in: Rancher's invention saves time and money

Ron Goedecke's livestock fence needed mending, and he couldn't afford to hire a welder to come out to his 100 acres in Okmulgee.

Proving again that necessity is the mother of invention, he found a way to securely connect the fence pieces requiring only a wrench. In hindsight, Goedecke said, the solution was obvious: If a fence pole has the proper cap, it can be bolted into a matching bracket.

He worked on the prototype design a little more and took what he now calls Bullet Fence Systems to Oklahoma State University's Inventors Assistance Service a few months later. The agency helped him with preliminary patent searches, market analyses, manufacturing referrals and engineering analyses. Goedecke found the equipment necessary to manufacture parts by hand, although he still needs another company to handle the end galvanization process.

He launched Bullet Fence Systems at the Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association annual convention and trade show at the end of July. Goedecke said he's already gotten a few follow-up phone calls from potential customers. If market response is as strong as his projections, he said, it won't be long until he and his son can hire help. The hunt for investment capital will follow.

Tammy Ratcliff, spokeswoman for the Inventors Assistance Service, said Goedecke's story is a classic example of how great ideas can come from anywhere, although not all of them can make it to market. Ratcliff said OSU receives about 60 applications per year. The agency recently added Bullet Fence Systems to a short list of actualized clients, which includes Hide-A-Bow, a hunting camouflage product company now based in Topeka, Kansas; CDC Concepts, a specialty manufacturer and assembler in Norman; and ParaNano LLC in Edmond, which helps develop nanofiber research materials.

"Where's there actually a need, those products are typically the best and tend to be the most successful," she said.

While he takes his first marketing steps at conferences throughout the region – a week after OCA, he set up a booth at East Central Electric Cooperative's annual meeting – Goedecke is spending a lot of time trying to get approval from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for his patent-pending design.

The USDA gets involved in fencing decisions when a landowner seeks financial assistance through its Natural Resources Conservation Service. Once the federal government puts up its own money, he said, canonized standards start complicating matters. And the USDA prefers welding for sturdy fences. Fortunately, Goedecke has a background with the USDA; he retired from the department in 2015 after about 30 years as a conservationist.

"I still have some significant obstacles to overcome before this is readily accepted, but the people I talk with at conventions are really interested," he said. "Even more so among younger cattlemen and those who aren't already set in their ways about welding. It's something new and breaks with tradition."

[See the story in the 7-29-16 Journal Record](#)