

FARM PRACTICES

STRUCTURES

Description

Farm structures may be used to house livestock, grow farm products, protect equipment and farm supplies, and store wastes.

Barns are usually large buildings used to house livestock. Livestock is housed for a number of reasons: to shelter animals from the elements, to increase productivity and efficiency, and to make animal handling easier.

Barn design varies throughout the province. Barn design depends on the type and quantity of livestock to be housed, the space they require, and the local climate. Barns can be built of various construction materials. The environment within a barn can be controlled by natural or mechanical ventilation. Appropriate methods of collecting and removing wastes generated within a barn must be included in an overall design. Wastes may be handled as a solid, semi-solid, or liquid.

Farm buildings are given separate status within the *National Building Code*. This is because they are subject to a low human occupancy load, are often located in remote areas, and are often special in nature with respect to the occupancies involved. Implications of the separate status afforded agricultural buildings are published in the *National Farm Building Code of Canada*. The *Code* sets out minimum requirements in matters affecting human health, fire safety and structural sufficiency. *The BC Building Code* requires all farm buildings within municipal districts to conform to the national code. Farm buildings outside municipal and regional districts jurisdiction are exempt.

Any activity designated as a farm use or other use permitted in the ALR, includes the construction, maintenance and operation of a building, structure, driveway, ancillary service or utility necessary for that use.

Activities and Operations

Feed Mills

Livestock producers may mix their own feeds using an on-farm feedmill. Mixing is usually done during working hours.

Livestock

Livestock may be kept in barns year-round or kept on pasture or range for fair-weather months. Barns can be naturally or mechanically ventilated. Barns located close to neighbours' residences should have their fans hooded to direct exhaust air down towards the ground. Exhaust fans should be located on sides of buildings facing away from urban buildings. For animals put outdoors adequate fencing and containment is essential.

See Farm Practice: [Animal Care and Handling](#)
[Farmstead Maintenance](#)
[Livestock at Large](#)
[Ventilation](#)

Removal of Soil or Placement of Fill

As necessary, soil removal or placement of fill is part of the permitted use. For specified farm and non-farm uses, including the construction and maintenance of greenhouses, farm building or structure for use in an intensive livestock operation or for mushroom production, an aquaculture facility, or a composting facility, with conditions, and where the removal of soil or placement of fill exceeds 2% of the area of the parcel, a 'Notice of Intent' must be submitted to the Agricultural Land Commission. Proposals under the 'Notice of Intent' may be allowed with terms and conditions set by the CEO of the Commission or require an approval of the Commission.

Related Farm Practices

Other farm practices that pertain to structures include, but are not limited to, the following:

Manure Storage and Use

Wastes generated by farm animals must be removed on a regular basis from the barn and/or their immediate living area. Wastes can be transferred to a storage area separate from the barn or contained in a storage area under the barn.

See Farm Practice: [Farmstead Refuse](#)
[Manure Storage and Use](#)

Legislation

Information on federal and provincial legislation can be found in Appendices B and C. Acts, regulations and bylaws that regulate or may affect structures use include, but are not limited to, the following:

Federal

National Farm Building Code of Canada – governs structural design, fire safety and health consideration in farm buildings

Provincial

British Columbia Building Code – provides authority to design farm buildings under the National Farm Building Code of Canada

Local Government

Applicable building bylaws and permits

Publications

Publications that provide further information on structures include, but are not limited to, the following (refer to Appendix D for details):

BCMAFF Farm Building Plans, Factsheets and Publications

Canada Plan Service Plans and Publications

National Farm Building Code of Canada