

Rendering

- Acceptance will depend on number of animals, condition of animals, and whether the dead animals can be separated from debris. Fire damaged animals are not acceptable for rendering.
- Producers should have their licensed collector and insurance adjuster assess the situation.

Landfill

- Acceptance at the landfill may be limited or require special approvals. Only a few Ontario landfills accept deadstock in emergency situations, and the disposal of dead cattle can only occur at federally permitted facilities.
- Producers should pre-arrange the disposal of deadstock with the operator.

On-farm burial or Composting

Burial may be the only feasible choice in the event of a fire, where steel, concrete, or other materials mixed with the deadstock make it unfit for rendering or composting.

- Provincial regulations governing burial or composting must be observed. Deadstock may be buried or composted on site, with or without debris.
- Burial and composting are restricted on some soil types, and in areas subject to flooding.
- Ontario requirements restrict the amount of deadstock that can be buried in one pit to 2500 kg.
- Deadstock composting sites in Ontario are limited to a footprint of no more than 600 m², and no more than 600 m³ of composting material may be present at one site. More than one site may be established.
- Barn fire mortalities generally compost quickly, although it is imperative that the appropriate substrate type and volumes are used in the process. Composting will require on-going management. Regularly monitor the site to ensure compliance with deadstock and environmental regulations.

Incineration

Incineration means the burning of deadstock in a specially designed unit that ensures the burn temperatures in order to limit the air emissions.

- Where incineration is permitted, installation and operation must meet regulatory standards.
- Due to the high cost of construction and operation, incineration is not used to a significant degree, particularly in emergency situations.

For more information on deadstock disposal options, check with your provincial Agricultural department.

In Ontario, producers should contact the AICC for further information or in the event that these requirements cannot be met. OMAFRA and the Ministry of the Environment have established a process for identifying an alternative disposal method in the event of an emergency.

In Ontario, contact OMAFRA Toll Free: 1-877-424-1300 during business hours, or the Ministry of the Environment's Spills Action Centre at 1-800-268-6060, after hours.

OMAFRA Fact sheets:

- Emergency Disposal of Deadstock On-farm - <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/deadstock/facts/emergency.htm>
- Deadstock Disposal On-Farm - http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/deadstock/facts/disp_onfarm.htm
- Composting of Livestock and Poultry Mortalities - http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/deadstock/facts/info_03-083.htm
- Burial of Deadstock - http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/deadstock/facts/info_burial.htm



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OFAC is the voice of animal agriculture, representing Ontario's livestock and poultry farmers and related businesses. Working together to advance responsible farm animal care.

Contact OFAC at: (519) 837-1326 www.ofac.org

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Insurance

1. **Immediately contact your insurance company for assistance and guidance.** Read the policy carefully. Insurance policies contain numerous conditions and exclusions. Insurance agents/brokers encourage producers to acquire insurance coverage for:
 - a. covering buildings
 - b. animals (both owned and non-owned)
 - c. business interruption
2. The fire department will investigate to determine the cause of the fire. Your insurance company will also want to know the cause, and may send its own investigators to go over the scene and interview you and your staff.
3. **Keep an off-site back-up of ALL farm records,** inventory and breeding records. Farms without sufficient records will have difficulty making an adequate insurance claim. Requirements include a barn description, a statement on the square footage, animal and equipment inventory, and more. Keeping an up-to-date photo inventory of your entire barn, interior and exterior is recommended.
4. Photographs and videos are vital: take your own photos in addition to any taken by your insurer.
5. Documented third party inspections by a veterinarian or government animal specialist can help in the event of disputes.
6. Have your accountant or bookkeeper attend all meetings with the claims adjuster.

For more information on dealing with livestock and barn fires:

- Ontario Farm Animal Council, www.ofac.org
- A comprehensive website of technical farm animal welfare related information including a searchable research database, www.livestockwelfare.com

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Dealing with the aftermath of a livestock or poultry barn fire

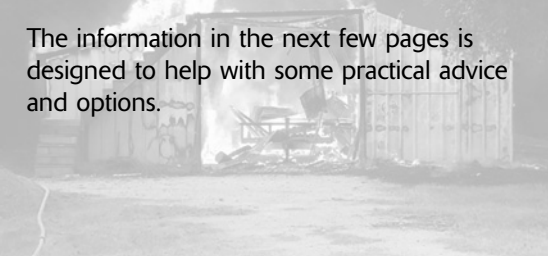
Dealing with the aftermath of a livestock or poultry barn fire

Farm fires are always devastating events - and having livestock or poultry on those farms increases the challenge. According to the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association, farm fires pose a special threat. Farms tend to be isolated and rarely have access to well-equipped urban fire departments or to large quantities of water. Barns are also highly flammable and can quickly burn out of control. As a result, economic losses due to fires in farming are severe and out of proportion to the number of fires that occur. For example, the Office of the Ontario Fire Marshall reports that of the approximately 9,000 structural fires in 2005, 143 involving barns or animal facilities amounted to nearly \$24 million in estimated losses. These findings are similar in other provinces.

No amount of precaution will entirely rule out the chance that a fire may start, so it's important to be prepared to deal with the aftermath of a barn fire.

Decisions will vary depending on the type and numbers of animals involved, season, provincial regulations and other circumstances.

The information in the next few pages is designed to help with some practical advice and options.



Assessing the Situation

Having an emergency plan prepared ahead of time will help in dealing with a fire. Before making any decisions and rushing into action, begin by assessing the situation. Follow a rational well-thought out plan. Don't plan alone: call in a vet, family member or another producer to help with planning decisions. In what can be overwhelming circumstances, the plan can be divided into three parts: immediate, short term, longer term.

Here are a few questions to guide you through the process:

1. Start with an inventory. What are you dealing with? Live animals? Deadstock? Both? How many?
2. If you have live animals on the farm:
 - a. Are they injured? Do they have smoke inhalation damage?
 - b. Do they require veterinary treatment? Euthanasia?
 - c. Do they need alternative housing? Feed? Water?
 - d. Can they be moved?
 - e. Can they be sold?
3. Who can help? What manpower and services are needed to implement the plan?
4. Who do you need to contact? Insurance agent, veterinarian, hydro, feed company, deadstock collector, transporter, livestock buyer, processing plant, creditor, commodity group/marketing board, provincial Agriculture Ministry?

Things to know about smoke inhalation

- Animals are very susceptible to smoke inhalation damage at any level of exposure.
- Smoke inhalation and stress damage may take up to two days to appear. If housing is available, survivors should be held at least two days if there is smoke exposure so an accurate assessment can take place.
- Chemicals released during the fire could damage the lungs or contaminate the animal. Lung or stress damage also could lead to condemnation of carcasses.

- Damage caused by smoke inhalation is costly to treat and the prognosis is generally poor. These animals should be euthanized.
- Animals that were not in the barn, but were close by, should be checked for smoke inhalation and injuries.
- Provide as much fresh air as soon as possible following exposure and if possible humidify the air with a pressure washer or sprinkler/misting system.
- Seek the advice of your veterinarian.

Signs of smoke inhalation damage and chemical contamination: Singed hair/feathers, burns, noisy or difficulty breathing (shortness of breath), coughing, changes in vocalization, black or grey saliva, change in skin colour or unconsciousness.

Dealing with Surviving Animals

Relocating Animals

Unaffected animals may be moved to another barn or location.

- Things to consider include bio-security, space allowances, feed and water availability, long-term prognosis of animals' health and welfare, labour requirements, market potential, and economics.
- Alternative housing for large numbers of animals is limited.

Possible options include:

- Connecting or neighbouring barns
- Sales or assembly yards
- Event facilities that aren't in use
- Weather permitting, gates or fencing could be set up in nearby fields, yards, or empty bunker silos.
- Ensure areas are safe and secure and that animals can be easily monitored, fed and watered.

Marketing

Unaffected animals can be sent for processing or for dispersal. This reduces the burden of caring for animals on the people who are trying to deal with the aftermath of the fire.

- **Seek the guidance of your insurer if considering this option.**

- Producers should contact their receiver(s) immediately or contact their commodity group for assistance in arranging marketing and transport.
- Animals should be sent directly to a processor. Animals that aren't at market weights may need to be shipped to a processor specializing in cull or off-sort animals.
- Some livestock buyers have experience in dealing with emergencies and can provide advice and assistance to move animals quickly.
- Sales barn operators can help in emergency dispersal sales.

Special Considerations for Gestating and Birthing Livestock

Have a plan in place for handling livestock that have recently birthed, may begin to birth or are due to birth within a week. By federal law, animals likely to give birth cannot be transported.

- Livestock in early gestation may be accepted by a receiver under emergency situations. Determine and arrange this with a buyer directly.
- Holding a dispersal sale for breeding stock and dairy animals may be an option.
- Extreme circumstances may dictate the need for euthanasia or aborting pregnancies.
- Veterinarian advice and assistance may be required.

Euthanasia

Animals may need to be euthanized. When making these decisions, consider the animal's well being and its quality of life if it survives. If in doubt, consult with your veterinarian.

1. Assess the animals and rank them according to those that need attention. Animals in pain with severe injuries or burns should be euthanized immediately.
2. Smoke inhalation damage and chemical contamination are untreatable. Animals showing signs of such exposure should be euthanized.
3. Producers should refer to euthanasia guidelines or the farm protocol that has been developed with their veterinarian that details methods, equipment and people needed to deal with euthanizing the various sizes or types of animals on their farm.

4. Although poultry and pigs seldom survive barn fires, producers should be prepared to be able to deal with euthanizing large numbers.
5. Have a backup plan in case euthanasia equipment is destroyed or trained staff is not available.

For more information, see the OFAC decision chart, "Should this animal be loaded?".

Deadstock Disposal

Removing dead animals from a barn is a difficult task - physically and emotionally. Mass mortalities, when large numbers of animals die as a result of a barn fire, require having enough people and the proper equipment to make this job more manageable.

Even in an emergency, it is imperative that deadstock be handled responsibly and in compliance with provincial and federal regulations.

In most provinces, producers have 48 hours to dispose of dead animals in an acceptable manner. In the case of a fire, this would be 48 hours from the time of the animals death, or for up to 7 days, if the animal is being held for post mortem or loss adjustment. If mortalities cannot be disposed of within 48 hours, they may also be kept in cold storage for up to 14 days, or frozen for 240 days. Check with provincial regulations.

Ontario producers seeking an extension need to contact OMAFRA's Agricultural Information Contact Centre at 1-877-424-1300.

Disposal options may include both on-farm or off-farm locations and methods. Acceptance of the deadstock at off site locations, such as renderers and landfills, are at the operator's discretion. **It should be noted that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency has special requirements for the transport and disposal of dead cattle.** Please refer to its website for further information at www.inspection.gc.ca.

Transportation of Deadstock

Under Ontario regulations, producers may transport their own deadstock to regulated off-site location, or they may use the services of a licensed collector.

The deadstock must be transported in a leak-proof container, out of public view, and the container must be able to withstand repeated cleaning and sanitizing after delivery. This is important for biosecurity purposes.