

Farmstead Planning

When planning a new building or adding to an existing farmstead, you must consider such things as:

- site drainage
- services (lanes, power, water supply, waste disposal)
- security
- space allowance for future expansion
- separation distances for snow and wind control, ventilation and disease control
- distance separation from residences for control of noise and odours
- municipal regulations
- distance to wells, surface water, catch basins

See the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs website for Fact sheets, Best Management Practice documents and publications pertaining to the planning of farm buildings and manure storage structures.

Check with your local municipality early in the planning stage. The construction of a livestock facility is usually permitted only in agricultural zones. In addition, setback distances from roads, lot lines, neighbouring houses and land uses often restrict the location of a livestock facility. Usually these setback distances are based on Minimum Distance Separation formulae and take into account:

- number of animals on the site before and after the proposed expansion
- type of livestock
- livestock and manure management system
- type of manure storage structure

The Minimum Distance Separation calculations can be used to determine the potential for livestock or poultry production facilities at that location. Using MDS, it is possible to determine the buffer zones needed for various sizes of operations and see if there are conflicts. Because of these buffer zones, larger parcels of land have more potential for establishing and expanding livestock and poultry operations.

Summary

Planning is critical in the process of constructing a farm building in Ontario. Municipal building officials are enforcing farm building construction to a larger degree. It is important to know what the building inspector expects from you. Anticipate that you will be asked to comply with regulations pertaining to the following:

- Ontario Building Code
- National Farm Building Code of Canada
- Nutrient Management Act
- Lightning Rods Act
- Gasoline Handling Act
- Pesticides Act
- municipal zoning bylaws
- siting of livestock buildings and manure storage structures using Minimum Distance Separation formula
- various other codes in effect

Always allow extra time in advance of your starting date to ensure that the requirements have all been met.

Regulation is important to ensure that siting and safety issues are addressed. Proper consideration of these items in co-operation with your contractor and building official will, in most circumstances, result in a building project that will integrate well with your current livestock operation or farmstead.

Do you know about Ontario's new Nutrient Management Act?

The provincial Nutrient Management Act (NMA) and the Regulation 267/03 regulates the storage, handling and application of nutrients that could be applied to agricultural crop land. The objective is to protect Ontario's surface and groundwater resources.

Please consult the regulation and protocols for the specific legal details. This pamphlet is not meant to provide legal advice. Consult your lawyer if you have questions about your legal obligations.

For more information on the NMA call the Nutrient Management Information Line at 1-866-242-4460, e-mail nman.omafra@ontario.ca.

Fact sheets are continually being updated so please ensure that you have the most recent version.

Related Links
[Canada Plan Service](#)



City of Belleville Building Section



Farm Building Permits Ontario Building Code 2006

Introduction:

Whether building new or modifying an existing farm building, you must consider building code regulations. Farm building construction in Ontario is primarily regulated by the Ontario Building Code, 2006. As a farm owner in Ontario, you are responsible for obtaining a building permit for all agricultural construction projects. Manure storage facilities, grain bins and silos all are defined as “farm buildings”, and along with all other farm structures, also require building permits. For structures that store nutrient materials, Ontario Regulation 267/03 of the Nutrient Management Act, 2002, establishes mandatory construction protocols to follow.

Farm Buildings and the Ontario Building Code

The Ontario Building Code, 2006, allows farm building construction to be regulated by the National Farm Building Code of Canada, 1995 (NFBC). The National Farm Building Code provides additional requirements beyond those found in the Ontario Building Code. In some cases the code requirements are lower for farm buildings.

For the purposes of the Ontario and National Farm Building Codes, a farm building is defined as follows:

Farm Building means a building or part thereof which does not contain a residential occupancy and which is associated with and located on land devoted to the practice of farming and used essentially for the housing of equipment or livestock, or the production, storage or processing of agricultural and horticultural produce or feeds.

Another term that often applies to farm buildings is “low human occupancy”. This is defined as a situation where the occupant load is not more than one person per 40 m² (430 ft²) of floor area.

Ontario Building Code, 2006

This is a regulation under the Ontario Building Code Act, based to a large extent on the National Building Code of Canada, 2005.

The Ontario Building Code was written to protect the public from injury due to building failure, and to address health and safety requirements. Because of the increasing complexity of building projects, there is an increased need for building regulation. Building departments in municipalities throughout Ontario enforce the provincial and national building code requirements related to farm buildings.

The building official is required to make several site visits at various stages of construction. It is the responsibility of the owner, or contractor if appropriate, to notify building officials at these critical stages. In the event that the required inspections are not called for previously enclosed work may need to be exposed to permit inspections.

Smaller structures that follow normal construction practices do not need an engineer's design. Municipal building inspectors may ask for drawings prepared by a professional engineer in larger buildings or more complex situations.

The following are some circumstances where the building official will require additional engineering designs:

- Unusual soil conditions for foundation or footing design, or where footing construction or excavation will influence the foundation system of another structure. For example: building a second tower silo beside an existing one.
- For structures that are heavily loaded. For example: an elevated wet-holding bin and its supporting frame commonly used in a grain drying operation.
- For the design of structural components that go beyond standard design tables available for farm structures. For example: doorway headers or lintels spanning wide openings.

Most farmers want a durable and strong structure. Often, large additional costs are not necessary to provide adequate structural strength. You do, however, need a structurally sound building design and an experienced, knowledgeable builder. In many circumstances, the contractor can provide the building design.

The Canada Plan Service (CPS) provides standard plans and leaflets describing various aspects of farm building construction. These plans/leaflets are organized into 10 plan series, representing various commodity groups. OMAFRA engineers within the Environmental Policy and Programs Branch can often provide conceptual information, but are not able to provide custom designs for unusual situations.

In Ontario, the Canadian Farm Builders Association is an organization of farm building contractors who have agreed to conduct building projects according to a common set of standards that meet the requirements of appropriate building codes. Contractors that provide service to farmers are encouraged to join this organization. For the benefit of workers on the site, encourage your contractor to take all necessary safety precautions. Where a farmer is deemed to be the contractor or constructor, the farmer assumes all the inherent responsibilities as defined in the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Regulation for Construction Projects. For projects valued over \$50,000 a Notice of Project must be sent to the Ministry of Labour. All construction projects are subject to inspection by the Ministry of Labour.