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## **Made in Manitoba: Confined farm animals not considered occupants, so excluded from fire protection; more than 60,000 burn alive past 19 months**

**Winnipeg:** Sentient animals – with a value far greater than simple property – are not considered building “occupants,” so are not afforded minimum fire protection in Manitoba, according to a proposed farm building code.

Fire alarms would only be required when there are 75 employees. Most barns employ fewer than ten workers, yet can house 5,000 pigs or 25,000 birds – fully sentient beings who suffer horrifically during fire. In the past ten days alone, Manitoba has seen three barn fires accounting for the deaths of more than 30,000 animals.

As [footage](#) taken at one of the fires shows, many of the dead animals are sows confined in metal gestation crates with no hope of escape. “Manitobans are exasperated with the weekly reports of massive numbers of animals dying in fires,” said Twyla Francois of Canadians for the Ethical Treatment of Food Animals.

Representatives of three farm animal advocacy organizations (Canadian Coalition for Farm Animals, Canadians for the Ethical Treatment of Food Animals and Animal Welfare Manitoba), along with a local fire fighter, met with senior staff of the Manitoba Fire Commissioners’ office yesterday to address the barn fire crisis.

The proposed farm building code will apply only to new barns. Existing barns, which are most at risk for fire, will be grandfathered and not required to comply with new standards. “New farm building standards are an important beginning, but the proposed standard falls woefully short of adequately protecting animals,” says Stephanie Brown, Canadian Coalition for Farm Animals. “It’s time real and concrete improvements were made to existing barns to ensure the live burnings stop,” Brown said.

A ready solution exists in NFPA 150, the *Standard on Fire and Life Safety in Animal Housing Facilities*, developed by the National Fire Protection Association, an international organization established in 1896. The NFPA code calls for barns housing Category A animals (those crated or confined) to have smoke alarms which automatically trigger sprinklers.

The new Manitoba farm building code proposes a F2 or F3–(Medium Hazard Industrial or Light Hazard Industrial) standard. “Only an F1 classification (High Hazard Industrial) would accurately reflect the massive amount of waste and excrement which in the case of pigs, at least, contains hydrogen sulphide which is flammable, and methane, which is highly flammable and explosive,” said Ms. Francois.

“Given that every hog farm in Manitoba has received an estimated \$100,000 - \$300,000 in government bailout funding, surely some of this can be put towards protecting their remaining investment. It’s the humane and logical thing to do,” Ms. Francois said.

“Today marks the final day for public input into the proposed Manitoba farm building code, but it will not mark the last day that animals are burned in barns. This ‘Made in Manitoba’ crisis requires decisive solutions, including sprinklers and smoke alarms at the minimum,” said Ms. Brown.

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Further information: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jVE-5J6ri8k>

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