

Chair and Members, Standing Committee on Fire Protection
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Dear Members of the Standing Committee on Fire Protection,

I am writing to ask for changes to the National Farm Building Code of Canada. Thousands of farm animals across Canada have died in barn fires because of the failure of the Code to require regulations that prevent fires or provide an early warning when a fire starts.

On January 27, 2009 a fire took hold in four pig barns in southeastern Saskatchewan killing an unknown number of pigs. A Winnipeg Free Press article on January 02, 2009 reported that last year seven barn fires in Manitoba killed more than 30 000 pigs - about eight times more than the previous year. In 2007 more than 3 500 pigs died in six fires. One can only imagine the agonizing screams of terrified animals trapped with no escape from the smoke and fire. These are horrific examples of the inadequacies of the existing Code.

According to the Code, only farm buildings with high human occupancy, greater than one person per 40 square metres, are required to be fitted with sprinklers and smoke alarms. Many thousands of animals housed in restrictive caging in huge industrial farming operations make evacuation during a fire almost impossible.

The Ontario Office of the Fire Marshal has determined that the three primary causes of preventable fires are from mechanical/electrical failure, misuse of ignition source/equipment and design/construction/maintenance deficiency.

The Code needs to be amended to include sprinklers and alarm systems and to require that the primary causes of preventable fires be addressed. I am asking that an amended National Farm Building Code of Canada be considered at the next public review process to ensure that more stringent Fire Codes be developed for existing barns including the requirement to retroactively equip them with sprinklers, smoke alarms and alarms that detect ventilation failures and power outages and that a more comprehensive fire prevention Code be required for new barns. I look forward to a reply.

Sincerely,

Signature

Name (Print)

Address

City

Postal Code