

Stop the Live-Burnings!

Trapped in Canada's barn fires



Canadians for the Ethical Treatment of Food Animals, P.O. Box 18024, 2225 West 41st Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V6M 4L3 www.cetfa.com



Trapped within their metal gestation crates, these sows had no hope of escape from the Cluny Colony, Alberta

Manitoba saw an eight-fold increase in the numbers of animals killed during barn fires in 2008: 30,500 animals burned to death, predominantly pigs. Of the pigs who burned to death, many were sows confined to metal gestation crates as shown above.

In Alberta, a staggering 15,000 pigs burned alive at Cluny Colony in Cluny, on July 31. And a further 2,400 pigs burned alive in Derwent, Alberta on August 17. **These losses bring the numbers of animals killed in barn fires in Canada to 49,500, 19,000 animals more than 2008 and only eight months into the year.**



Perhaps because animal deaths in barn fires have been highest in Manitoba, the provincial Fire Commissioner's Office proposed a new farm building code which would require new barns to have some fire protection.

The eyes of the country are on Manitoba and what is decided could set a precedent for the rest of Canada. However, while the effort in Manitoba is appreciated, there are major short-comings with the proposed code.

The Problems

1. The regulations would only apply to NEW barns, leaving existing barns without protection. Because of the moratorium on the building of new hog barns, the legislation would mean very little to Manitoba's farm animals.
2. The classifications proposed (*F2 - Medium Industrial*; or *F3 - Light Industrial*) would not even require fire alarms as the criteria for their use is based on human occupancy only, requiring 75 workers before they are mandatory. Due to the highly industrialized nature of these barns, fewer than 10 workers are needed, thereby excluding almost all barns from requiring this minimal protection. Also, retrofits would not be required to existing barns, meaning most animals would continue to be at risk.

The Solution

CETFA representatives met with senior staff of the Fire Commissioner's office and requested the following for the new farm building code:

1. A classification of *F1 - High Risk Industrial* is needed, because only then will the highly flammable nature of these barns be reflected. Pig waste contains hydrogen sulphide and methane – highly combustible and explosive gasses.
2. Mandatory, legislated retrofitting to existing barns with smoke detectors and sprinkler systems. Since almost all barns now have automatic watering systems, the sprinkler systems could easily be linked. Retrofits have never before been required, but because Manitoba has a unique crisis, strong action is required to stop the live-burnings.

While Manitoba Pork continually complains of economic difficulties, the *Winnipeg Free Press* reported that Manitoba pork producers have each received on average \$285,000 in bail-out money this year alone. Surely some of this funding could be put towards protecting their remaining investments. Those who do so will also see a reduction in their insurance costs, recouping money spent for retrofits.

A further \$57 million federal bail-out for the pork industry was recently announced by the federal agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz. CETFA, Animal Alliance of Canada, and the Canadian Coalition for Farm Animals urge the federal government to make fire prevention measures, such as smoke detectors and sprinkler systems a condition of receiving funding.



The bodies of trapped sows ruptured during the Cluny Colony barn fire, expelling internal organs and unborn piglets.



This pregnant sow attempted to escape her metal gestation crate

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Please, contact the federal minister of Agriculture Gerry Ritz to voice your concerns. Ask him to protect these animals by ensuring smoke alarms and sprinkler systems are retrofitted into existing hog barns, where risk of fire is greatest.

The Honourable Gerry Ritz
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Sir John Carling Building
930 Carling Avenue
Ottawa, ON K1A 0C5
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To see footage from the Cluny Colony fire where 15,000 pigs burned alive, young pigs frantically piled, and sows attempted to escape their crates, go to:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gz270bj4o0Q>.

Please post the above link on your Facebook page and forward to your contact list. Change will only come if we demand it.



Lone pig crushed under metal girders



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