

Thinking of Building a New Livestock Barn?

New Construction Checklist

If you have thought about adding livestock or poultry to your farm, you've come to the right place. The Coalition to Support Iowa's Farmers (CSIF) is here to help farm families raise livestock responsibly and successfully, which means you don't have to go through this process alone.

There are several crucial planning steps that need to be taken prior to and during construction. The steps listed below are general guidelines to help livestock farmers grow successfully and responsibly. For confidential and personalized assistance in answering any of these questions or others, please call 1-800-932-2436.



STEP 1: Finding the right site location

Finding the right site can be a challenging process. While selecting sites for livestock and poultry barns, please consider the:

- » Size of barn and manure holding structure capacity
- » Availability of land for nutrient utilization
- » Distance to surface water or wells (water sources)
- » Presence of karst (rock) terrain or alluvial (flood) soils
- » Distance to neighbors
- » Prevailing winds (in the summer, Iowa winds are typically from S and SE)
- » Proximity of site to right of ways, roads, bridges, lakes, streams and wetlands
- » Proximity to businesses, churches and cemeteries
- » Proximity to public use areas, such as parks and campgrounds
- » Proximity to water and electric utilities
- » Opportunities for future growth on the site
- » Establishment of a windbreak through CSIF's Green Farmstead Partner program

STEP 2: Assessing regulatory compliance

It can be very difficult to understand and interpret all of the rules and regulations that will impact your farm with the addition of livestock. CSIF staff can work beside you to help you understand what needs to be done on your farm.

- » Calculate the number of Animal Units (AU)
- » Determine "adjacency" to other confined animals
- » Determine if a Manure Management Plan (MMP) needs to be filed with DNR
- » Determine which permits are required, if the site will need to go through the Master Matrix and any waiting periods
- » Submit a Construction Design Statement
- » Determine if a Storm Water Discharge Permit is necessary
- » Understand applicable concrete standards
- » Determine if DNR will perform a site inspection
- » Determine how dead animals will be disposed of
- » Understand any and all fees that will need to be paid
- » Determine if an NPDES permit will be needed
- » Understand and obtain any applicable county building and/or driveway permits
- » If you are growing an existing site, take into consideration the age of barn(s)

STEP 3: Determining nutrient management and manure management plans (MMP)

Take these things into consideration when finalizing your nutrient and/or MMP:

- » Requirements for new farms with 500 or more animal units
- » Soil test/grid map
- » Nitrogen and phosphorus limitations
- » Topography and soil conservation compliance
- » Separation distances for manure application and/or incorporation

- » Manure applicator certification/training
- » Manure application methods with detailed records
- » Easements/agreements
- » Transportation limitations (bridges, weight limits)
- » Emergency response plan
- » Annual updates and fees

STEP 4: Neighbor relations

Although sometimes overlooked, neighbor relations is one of the most important preparation steps.

- » Notify neighbors once you know the site meets and exceeds regulations
- » Exceed all required separation distances when possible
- » Communicate your plans with neighbors at least four weeks prior to the start of site work and earth moving
- » Update interested neighbors about your farm and family
- » Describe new technologies and best management practices
- » Discuss modern manure incorporation methods and timing
- » Offer to notify neighbors before incorporating animal nutrients
- » Consider providing road dust control for close neighbors
- » Sincerely listen to neighbors' concerns and respond to them in a timely fashion
- » Do business locally whenever possible
- » Be respectful and responsible – character counts!



STEP 5: Construction and planning

New construction planning is a lengthy process. Consider the following:

- » Give yourself at least eight months from site selection to completion
- » Visit other barns and ask questions of other site managers
- » Plan ahead – consider excavation requirements, driveway locations and proximity to water resources & utilities
- » Ensure proper paperwork is on file with the DNR and county officials. Make sure appropriate documents are kept on site and determine if weekly inspections are needed for job site runoff.
- » Stay accountable – others may do the work but owners/managers must remain accountable
- » Get weekly updates from contractors or builders
- » Do your homework – the lowest construction bid may not be the best
- » Demand quality – well-built and well-maintained barns will last 25+ years, so ask a lot of questions about barn design
- » Finish final grade and landscaping as soon as possible after construction is complete

STEP 6: Determining available farm resources

Take these questions into consideration:

- » Do you produce enough grain and forage to feed your livestock?
- » Have you looked into local feed by-product opportunities?
- » Do you have sufficient equity and borrowing capacity to expand?
- » Do you have a long-range budget, cash-flow and repayment plan? What kind of return on investment do you expect?
- » Do you have sufficient labor to add additional livestock?

For more information, visit www.supportfarmers.com or call 1-800-932-2436

About the Coalition to Support Iowa's Farmers

The Coalition to Support Iowa's Farmers (CSIF) is a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization launched in 2004. Member organizations include the Iowa Cattlemen's Association, Iowa Corn Growers Association, Iowa Farm Bureau, Iowa Pork Producers Association, Iowa Poultry Association, Iowa Soybean Association, Iowa Turkey Federation and Midwest Dairy Association.

The Coalition has assisted more than 1,500 farm families who raise livestock, dairy and poultry choose good sites for new barns and feedlots, follow all rules and regulations, protect air and water quality and enhance neighbor and community relations. The organization does not lobby or develop policy.

Farmers wanting assistance are encouraged to contact the Coalition at 1-800-932-2436 or go to www.supportfarmers.com. There is no cost for CSIF's services.