

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, EGBC, BOABC

File No: 18-0038

INTERPRETATION

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Interpretation Date: January 21, 2020

Building Code Edition: BC Building Code 2018

Subject: Fish Farm Warehouse as a Farm Building

Keywords: fish farm, farm building

Building Code Reference(s): 1.4.1.2. – definition of farm building

Question:

Is the 1995 National Farm Building Code the applicable code for the design of a 2-storey warehouse that contains fish rearing tanks for a salmon farming operation?

Interpretation:

Yes (with conditions)

Article 1.4.1.2. of Division A defines a *farm building* as follows:

*Farm building means a building or part thereof that does not contain a residential occupancy and that 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. (See Note A-1.4.1.2.(1).)*

Note that “**land devoted to the practice of farming**” is determined by the local Zoning Bylaws.

Notes to Part 1 – A-1.4.1.2. includes the following statement regarding Farm Buildings:

*Farm buildings as defined in Article 1.4.1.2. include, but are not limited to, produce storage and packing facilities, **livestock** and poultry **housing**, milking centres, manure storage facilities, grain bins, silos, feed preparation centres, farm workshops, greenhouses, farm retail centres, and horse riding, exercise and training facilities.*

Farm buildings may be classed as low or high human occupancy, depending on the occupant load.

*Examples of farm buildings likely to be classed as **low human occupancy** as defined in Article 1.2.1.2. of the National Farm Building Code of Canada are **livestock** and poultry **housing**, manure and machinery storage facilities and horse exercise and training facilities where no bleachers or viewing area are provided.*



Patrick Shek, P.Eng., CP, FEC, Committee Chair

The views expressed are the consensus of the joint committee with members representing AIBC, EGBC and BOABC, which form the BC Building Code Interpretation Committee. The Building and Safety Standards Branch, Province of BC and the City of Vancouver participate in the committee's proceedings with respect to interpretations of the BC Building Code. The purpose of the committee is to encourage uniform province wide interpretation of the BC Building Code. These views should not be considered as the official interpretation of legislated requirements based on the BC Building Code, as final responsibility for an interpretation rests with the local *Authority Having Jurisdiction*. The views of the joint committee should not be construed as legal advice.

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Examples of farm buildings that would be classed as other than low human occupancy include farm retail centres for feeds, horticultural and livestock produce, auction barns and show areas where bleachers or other public facilities are provided. Farm work centres where the number of workers frequently exceeds the limit for low human occupancy will also be in this category.

It is possible to have areas of both high and low human occupancy in the same building provided that the structural safety and fire separation requirements for high human occupancy are met in the part thus designated.

A warehouse that contains fish rearing tanks would be considered as "housing of livestock" which meets the definition of farm building as well as the definition of low human occupancy.

If there are any uses within the warehouse that could have higher human occupancy as described above, the warehouse would not be eligible for use of the 1995 Farm Building Code.

It should be noted that NRC is proposing to update the 2020 NBC to include a new major occupancy classification Group G Division 2 for farm buildings that includes facilities for cultured fish and shellfish.

It should also be noted that NRC is proposing to update the requirements for large farm buildings in the 2020 NBC and 2020 NFC as noted below:

NATIONAL BUILDING CODE OF CANADA (NBC)

Large Farm Buildings (Part 2)

Introduces technical requirements for large farm buildings into Part 2 of Division B of the NBC. The four Sections introduced focus on general technical requirements and classifications, fire protection and occupant safety requirements, structural design requirements, and heating, ventilating and air-conditioning (HVAC) requirements, respectively.

NATIONAL FIRE CODE OF CANADA (NFC)

Large Farm Buildings (Parts 2 and 4)

Introduces technical requirements for large farm buildings that address the inspection of mechanical and electrical equipment, the control of flammable gases and vapours, and the storage of flammable and combustible liquids.



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