

Identify the **HOT SPOTS** in your barn to proactively reduce the risk of fire

Pierre-André Meunier for Progressive Dairy

Most of the electrical fires on farms can be prevented with appropriate preventive initiatives. Thanks to technology, farmers can now monitor their electrical network 24-7 and make sure they detect any anomaly before it causes important losses like fires or interruption of operations. Be aware of these common hot spots to proactively reduce the risk of fire on your farm.



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REPLACE EXTENSION CORDS ▶

We strongly recommend to only use extension cords temporarily. Prolonged use of extension cords causes wear and tear, creating critical faults and hot points. Use commercial, not household gauge extension cords. Store them away from the herd to minimize corrosion and replace them if they are frayed or damaged. Common signs of overuse or malfunctioning cords are overheating and melted plugs.



KEEP COMBUSTIBLES AWAY FROM LIVESTOCK ▼

Hay, straw and oil will feed a fire. To reduce risk, store liquid fuels, feed and bedding materials in buildings that don't house livestock.



▲ HARDWIRE OR USE WATERPROOF PLUGS AND OUTLETS

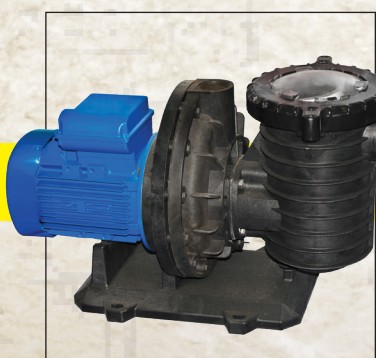
To avoid corrosion, hardwire as many electrical connections as possible. Light fixtures, wall fans and receptacles are hard to maintain if they're in out-of-reach places, and will attract dust and cobwebs. If plugs and receptacles are used, install waterproof NEMA 4X versions that are designed to hold up in dusty, humid livestock barn environments.



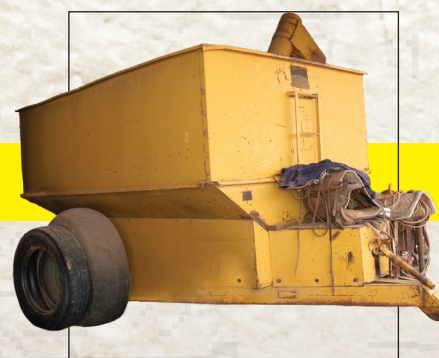
OTHER AREAS TO LOOK OUT FOR ON THE FARM:



Silo unloader



Well pump



Bale handling/chopping/bedding



◀ CLEANING AND FARMING GO HAND IN HAND

Cleanliness is your friend. Keep lights, electrical equipment, panels and motors free of cobwebs and dust. If you're welding, grinding or using a cutting torch, make sure the floor is clean before starting to work and ideally, shield the area with a blanket or keep the area wet. Shop vacs are a great option for keeping enclosed spaces clean. In open areas, a leaf blower is a good way to regularly blow off equipment, pipes and light fixtures.

KEEP AN EYE ON HEATERS ▶

Make sure all natural gas or propane-fired heaters are approved for the location and professionally installed to code. Keep a close eye on milk house heaters in particular since they are used in a very humid environment. Be sure to install NEMA 4 equipment. Suspend electric heaters, such as heat lamps with chains or other non-combustible material.



BE PROACTIVE TO MITIGATE FIRE RISK:



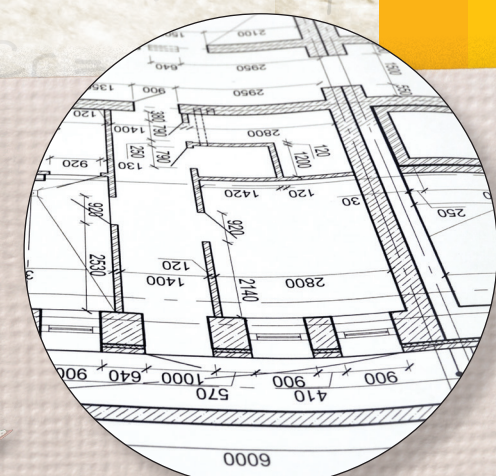
USE A FORWARD-LOOKING INFRARED CAMERA

It's a handy way to do a thermal inspection of equipment and systems in your barn to identify invisible threats. These devices are a relatively inexpensive purchase, or can be borrowed from Farm & Food Care Ontario.



WORK WITH YOUR INSURANCE PROVIDER

Many insurance companies have experts in fire prevention or risk management specialists who can assess a barn to identify risk areas and highlight invisible risks. Generally, this is a free service offered by your provider.



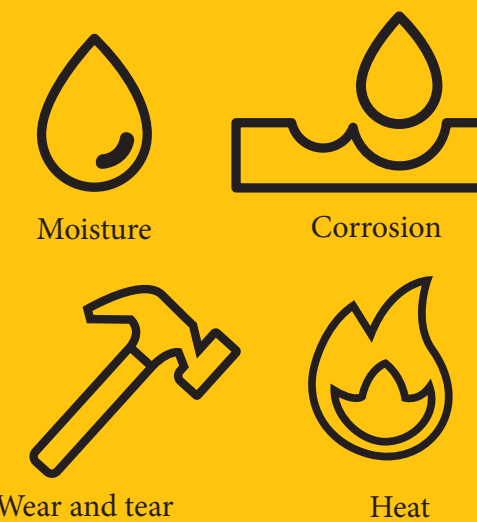
FIRE SEPARATION AND SUPPRESSION

Where practical, consider fire separation and suppression in farm building construction. This could include fire separation in confined spaces of large structures, to the rafters during construction, and installation of fire-rated fire walls and doors in higher risk areas. You may also consider fire suppression systems in areas of higher risk.

Understand your farm's electrical system to prevent problems



COMMON RISK FACTORS:



ELECTRICAL PHENOMENA/ HOT POINTS:

These three electrical phenomena may cause hot points, which can ignite a fire or cause equipment malfunction.



Short circuits



Arcing



Ground faults