Farm Building
Buying Guide

This guide aims to give you the knowledge to ask the right questions when buying a farm building so that you get a building that is properly fabricated, constructed, safe and most appropriate for its intended use

RIDBA
Rural & Industrial Design & Building Association

NFU

Basic facts

- Agricultural buildings are exempt from Building Regulation control provided they are more than 1.5 times their own height away from any building with sleeping accommodation and have a fire exit less than 30 metres from any point within the building.
- There is a voluntary British Standard that farm buildings should be built to. The standard is known as BS5502 and defines the most appropriate standards for ensuring lifespan, design, fabrication and safe stressing limits.
- Agricultural buildings smaller than 465m^2 may not require full planning permission. For further advice ring NFU CallFirst (0870 845 8458).
- In 2013, the Construction and Products Regulation (CPR) comes into force. This Regulation requires all construction products to be CE marked and defines structural specifications through a European standard (EN), for example, the EN for steel frames is 1090.

CE Marking

- A CE mark on a building product is a declaration by the manufacturer that their product is compliant with the CPR and the minimum requirements of EU countries.
- By 2013 all steel, concrete and timber frames used in the UK will have to be CE Marked.
- The marking will require the frame manufacturer to correctly design the building to the relevant standards and to have a factory quality control system in place which complies with the requirements of the relevant EN.

What do you need the building for?

Don't just buy on cost, consider:

- Lifespan of building.
- Frequency and number of people likely to work inside.
- Amount and value of animals and machinery likely to be inside.
- Energy efficiency and potential for renewable energy generation (e.g. building orientation for optimised solar panel efficiency).
- Other environmental regulations which may control the design of new and existing buildings (such as Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control which impacts on pig and poultry farms above 2,000 finishing pig places over 30kg, more than 750 sow places or over 40,000 poultry places).

BS5502 Design classifications

Class	Maximum amount of time a person is likely to be inside the building (calculated over a year)	Maximum distance to a classified road or house	Minimum design life (years)
1	More than 6 hours a day at a density greater than 2 person per 50m^2	Less than 10m	50
2	Not exceeding 6 hours a day at a density of 2 persons per 50m^2	10m	20
3	Not exceeding 2 hours a day at a density of 1 persons per 50m^2	20m	10
4	Not exceeding 1 hours a day at a density of 1 persons per 50m^2	30m	2

(Correct December 2011)

The higher the class number the greater the risk that the building will collapse under wind or snow loads. The table above should be used as a guide and if the building is going to contain valuable material, machinery or stock, consideration should be given to designing to a higher standard (lower class number).

> **You should strongly consider specifying that your building is fabricated and erected in accordance with BS5502**

Self builds

- If you choose to construct the building yourself, you still need to include safeguards to make sure the job is conducted safely e.g. safety nets and edge protection, with harnesses being used as a last resort.
- Only appropriate equipment/ machinery for the task should be used.
- Workers must be competent and trained to erect buildings and work at height.

Insurance

When considering new builds you should consult your insurance company as they may have a view on the building's construction and siting.

Loading

- Consideration should be given to the amount of snow loading which may occur and if the building requires strengthening. This will be a particular issue for buildings in exposed or high locations.
- Ensure that any non-environmental loads such as grain, crops or silage are correctly designed for.
- If you are thinking of installing renewable energy on your building, for example solar panels or wind turbines, make sure the building can support this extra weight (including snow load where applicable). You should not assume that every building can take this extra loading without strengthening.

Contractors

- Only use contractors which are reputable and competent in health and safety, RIDBA may be able to help find one in your area.

- Both you and the contractor have legal obligations for health and safety and these cannot be passed to each other by contract. Ensure you ask contractors to provide you with information on what safety precautions they are taking and a copy of their method statement.

Construction

- Even if you are employing a contractor, you still have certain responsibilities including providing relevant site information (e.g. any risks you are aware of such as asbestos and electrical cables) and checking suitable management plans are in place. Adequate welfare facilities also need to be provided, but not necessarily by you.

- If the construction will take more than 30 days, you or the contractor need to provide the HSE with an F10 Notification of Construction Project form.

Warranty

- If you decide to build the building yourself or use a sub-contractor, you may need to check this with the frame manufacturer as it could void your warranty.

Further information

This advice has been prepared by NFU and RIDBA, together representing farmers and growers in England and Wales and industrial and farm building contractors in the UK.

Visit www.ridba.org.uk or call 01449 676049 to find a RIDBA member in your area.

Contact NFU CallFirst on 0870 845 8458 for legal and planning advice on farm buildings.

RIDBA Rural & Industrial Design & Building Association

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