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4-H & YOUTH



ENVIRONMENT



AGRICULTURE



FOOD

CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE



UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

EXTENSION

CULTIVATING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Renovating Old Barns for Efficiency & Produce Safety



- Fill-in gutters and smooth out barn floors so that you can keep the floor clean and easily use wheeled equipment such as hand trucks and pallet jacks, to move heavy loads more efficiently.



- Floors should slope towards drains. Drains should be at least 6" wide and accessible for cleaning. The drain in the image above is deep enough to let sediment from wash lines and root washers settle, and is wide enough for a shovel for easy cleaning and removal of accumulated sediment.



- Although beautiful, old fieldstone walls invite rodents, insects, and molds and should be covered. Consider leaving space behind false walls for access in case repairs are needed.
- Insulation can be added to walls and ceilings for warmer work conditions and creating storage space for winter squash.





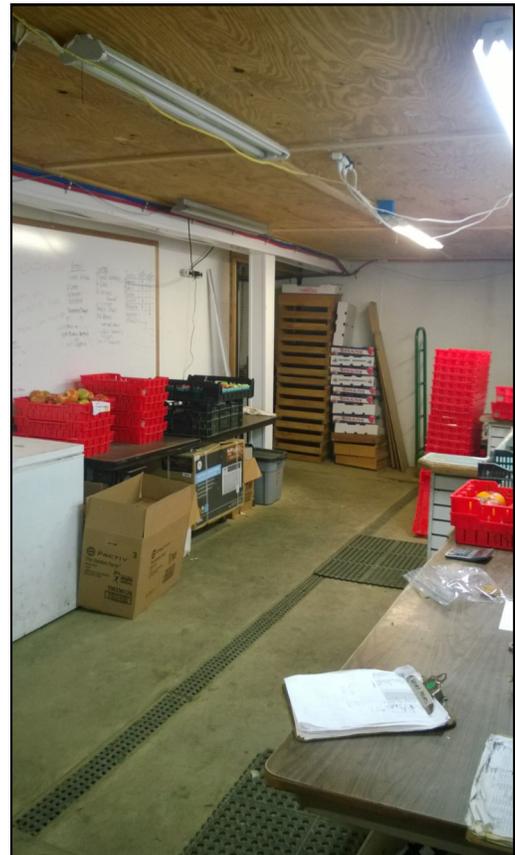
- Ceilings should be covered with a cleanable material and free of cracks through which debris could drop into food. If the area is dry and well ventilated, plywood can be used. Insulating ceilings can make a more comfortable work space in the colder months.



- Replace old wiring with new conduit. Outlets should be moved overhead or to areas where outlets and cords will be away from water.



- Lightbulbs should have covers so that if they shatter, glass will not harm workers or fall into produce. Vapor bulbs, shop lights or sleeves for fluorescent bulbs are all options.



- Walls in areas that will get wet or are not well ventilated should be covered in a cleanable material, such as plywood painted with a washable paint, metal sheeting or FRP (Fiber-Reinforced Plastic/Marlite) wall panels.



- A number of strategies can be used to make dark barns lighter and warmer. Adding polycarbonate panels or windows to south facing walls (especially high up on walls to catch the angle of the light in the winter) can significantly increase both light and warmth. Painting walls and ceilings with a white washable paint will brighten dark spaces.



- Overhead garage doors can be used to replace sliding barn doors. They will provide a tighter seal, and do not have to be shoved out in winter for access.



- Adding a loading dock can make a huge difference in terms of efficient loading of vehicles and reduced physical strain.



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