Debris Disposal
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The storm of the century is now over, much of the snow has melted, and the clean-up and repair has begun. The $64 question then is what to do with all the damaged wooden structural members and the steel roofing. If only a little trimming of the wooden pieces is required and it is otherwise sound – no cracks or tears – then it may be salvaged and reused or repurposed elsewhere on the farm. Sections of steel roofing, truss plates, metal fasteners, etc. should be scrapped and taken to a recycling center. A quick google or yellow pages search will list scrap recyclers in your area.

Wood that cannot be salvaged should be taken to a landfill that accepts construction debris. Depending on when the barn was originally constructed and where the pieces were located – posts, girders, trusses – these materials may have been treated with some form of wood preservative such as creosote, pentachlorophenol (Penta), or Chromated Copper Arsenate (CCA) (the green stuff). Some of the CCA-treated wood may be so weathered or sun-bleached that the green tint is no longer visible. These materials should NEVER:

- be composted, chipped, or mulched
- be burned as toxic chemicals may be released as part of the smoke and ashes (fireplaces and fire pits included)
- be repurposed in areas where children play (picnic tables, playgrounds) or where food may be produced or stored (vegetable gardens, farm stands, etc.)
- be buried on the farm (ALWAYS take to a permitted landfill), especially creosoted materials

If the wood must be cut in order to remove it from the structure and make repairs then a dust mask, goggles, and gloves should be worn. Sawdust should be swept up and disposed of with the lumber. You don’t want the cattle licking up this material and having residues appear in the milk or meat.

After working with the wood, wash all exposed areas of your body, especially the hands, thoroughly with soap and water. Wash your work clothes separately from other household clothing before wearing them again.

For more information check out the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation’s (NYS DEC) website: http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8480.html. There are additional links there to the US Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) website. Stay safe, stay healthy.