

# Five Tips to Prepare the Barn for Winter



Late fall is a perfect time to prepare the barn for winter. The days are usually cooler, and many insects have left the area or died off. Perfect conditions for getting the barn ready for use over the winter. In our barn, the sheep and goats have access all year long. During hot summer days, the shady, earthen floor barn is cooler. The fiber flock chooses to take the afternoon siesta in the cool barn. Now, with only a few days left before Daylight Savings time ends, and shorter darker days arrive, it's time to make sure the barn is ready to provide comfort and shelter for the animals during bad weather. Here are some things we do to prepare the barn for winter.

# Deep Clean the Stalls to Prepare the Barn for Winter

Remove the bedding from the summer and fall and all manure that has fallen through the bedding. Use [agricultural lime](#) or stall dry products to dry up any wet spots. Since our cold weather is still a ways off for our region, we can put down a layer of clean dry straw and the animals will be warm enough for now. As the season progresses, we add more dry straw, remove any wet areas from urine or spilled water. Eventually, as the deep winter weather hits, the goats and sheep have a nice deep bedding layer in the stalls.



## Dust the Walls, Light Fixtures and Rafters

Dusting is my very least favorite of all chores. I tend to put dusting off in the house, [chicken coop](#) or barn until I

absolutely have to! I use a broom to reach as high as I can. Of course, our barn walls are higher than I can reach but I can make a dent in the accumulated dust. Clean around the light fixtures. This is extremely important as dust can be a fire hazard. Make sure the light bulbs are clean, and while you are up there, might as well change them out. It's easier to do while you aren't shivering in the cold. Make sure that the lights are working now, before the dark afternoons arrive and you can't see what you are doing.

## **Water Hoses and Stock Tank De-Icers**

Leaky old hoses that barely reach the tanks are not fun at all. Trying to use these hoses when the water is frozen and your fingers and toes are too, is miserable. Check the hoses you depend on to get water to the barn. Replace or add on to the existing hose length and make the task easier. Buying a hose reel that empties the hose each time, keeps the hose from being full of ice. (another way to empty the hose each time is to drag one end of the hose up a hill and let the water drain out, then coil the hose.) Our property has only one farm pump and unfortunately, it is not near the barn. We depend on hoses to get water to the animals.



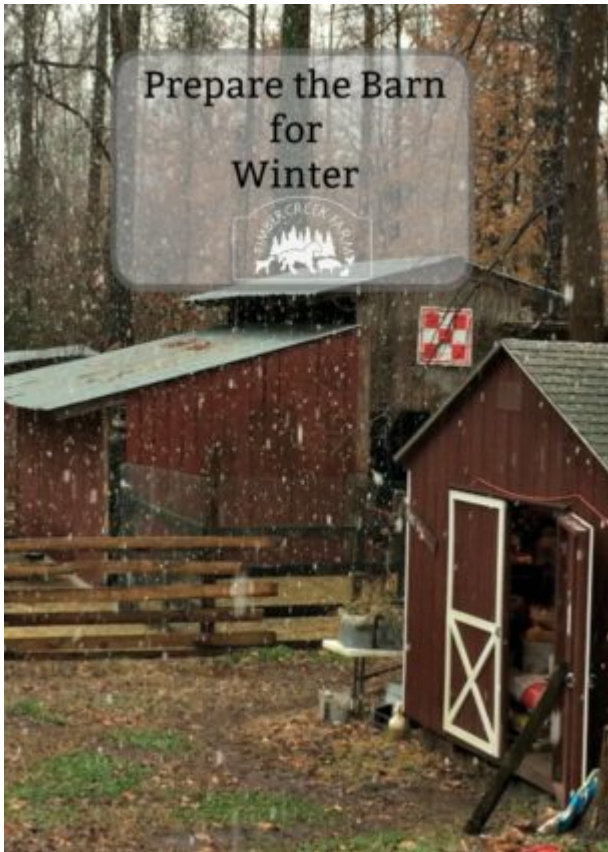


If you didn't use the stock tanks over the summer, check for leaks before winter arrives. [Stock tank de-icers](#) are great if you have the electrical supply needed to run them. We keep one or two running in a stock tank and refill the animals buckets from that tank. If we need to, we can run more of these but usually our winters are not too extreme. In any event, check that your de-icers are working well and that the cords are not chewed or frayed.

## The Feed Room

From the first chilly fall evening, rodents will be looking for extra food. Your feed room can offer them an extravagant buffet meal. Being rodent free is an important step to prepare the barn for winter. Sweep up spilled feed and store feed in metal trash cans or metal bins with tight fitting lids. Plastic bins can be chewed through by rodents. If you [store hay](#) in the feed room, keep it elevated on pallets for better air circulation.

While you are in the feed room, check your [farm first aid kit](#) and replenish supplies as needed. If I leave the first aid kit open, I will find that mice have entered and eaten the gauze and other products. I store my first aid products in a cooler now with a tight fitting lid.



## The Barn Structure

Depending on the type of animals you house, you might have a closed barn. Check that the structure of the walls and doors is good. If you are sheltering horses, preparing the barn for winter may include stocking up on sawdust, or bags of dry shavings. Stall doors and barn doors will [keep your dairy goats and horses warmer](#) and out of drafts. The end doors on your barn may have been opened all summer. Check that the doors are working and closing properly before a storm hits the area. Replace any loose boards on stalls.

Getting ready for winter is so much easier when we aren't playing catch up during a winter storm. What tips would you

add that could help someone prepare the barn for winter?  
Please add your ideas in the comments section.

For more ideas on winter readiness read these posts from fellow homestead bloggers

[How to Ready Your Barn for Winter](#)

[How to Prepare for Winter on the Homestead](#)

[and How to Prepare Your Chicken House and Barn for Winter](#)