

Taking Care of Your Tobacco Barn maintenance tips from farmers

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The roof is the most important part of your barn. Barn roofing is typically metal and needs to be painted periodically. Loose metal must be nailed to hold it firmly in place. Wind can get under a sheet of metal and bend it or blow it away.

Inspect the barn for signs of **wood-boring insects**. Treat immediately.

Replace **siding** when it deteriorates to keep the weather out of the barn.

Keep **the doors** in good condition and secure, especially on the north side, which receives the harshest weather. Most barns have double doors over driveways with an overhead center bar for support—make sure all parts of the doors and the center bar are intact. If you have two sets of doors and one is bad, it is probably best to keep both sets open until they can be repaired. Do not let wind into the barn unless it can get out, or it can blow the barn down.

Keep vegetation away from the barn. Do not allow poison ivy or other vines to climb the siding. Do not allow trees to grow right next to the barn, and if seedlings appear, remove them when they are small. Existing trees growing up against the barn should be cut off at the ground. Their roots can be removed if they are not very large. Large trees will have large root systems, and grubbing them out could damage the barn. Consider spraying Roundup beneath sills once a year to keep vegetation down. Follow manufacturer's instructions—it is useless to apply Roundup unless some foliage is present.

Inspect **the sills and top plates** for signs of rot or damage. Repair siding or roofing that may be exposing the frame to water or weather. Cut out rotted or damaged sections and replace with good wood.

Inspect **wood parts of the structure that directly contact the ground**, such as ground-set posts that support sheds on the barn. Keep water from pooling around them. If the bases of the posts are deteriorated cut out the bad wood and install concrete or stone piers to support the cut ends.

Paint may lengthen the life of siding, depending on the type of lumber. Virginia pine will last quite well without paint. Loblolly pine siding will not. Poplar siding may fare better when painted.



An intact roof saved this neglected barn.



Doors in bad repair are left open until fixed.



Vegetation is damaging this barn.



Barn restored with appropriate roof and siding.