



Sun Photo By Jim Davidson

Fast thinking on the part of State Hospital employees saved the dairy cattle, but the fires in the hayloft proved to be impossible to extinguish. Firefighters from the Jamestown Fire Department made a

vigorous initial attack, then pulled back to keep the structure cooled throughout the night as the hay burned itself out.

Nine fire units at the scene

Hospital barn, hay destroyed

By Sun Staff

A Monday night fire at the North Dakota State Hospital dairy barn destroyed approximately \$25,000 worth of stored alfalfa, according to hospital officials.

Nine units from the Jamestown Fire Department were at the scene for most of the night controlling the blaze, said a fire department spokesman. State Hospital fire officials were keeping watch on the dairy barn Tuesday morning.

Fire and state hospital officials said they were uncertain how the fire started. Fire department officials will likely conduct an investigation into the blaze.

There were no reported injuries to livestock in the area. The State Hospital has a herd of 70 milk cows.

Hospital employees were able to rescue all livestock including several kittens who were trapped by the smoke and fire. Leonard Haitsch helped remove

all the cattle and then remembered the kittens. He went back into the smoking building and hauled the little cats out. Haitsch and the cats were unscathed.

This is the third time fire has struck the T-shaped barn, which has a concrete base and quonset top. A similar fire occurred at the barn four years ago, said Henry Lahaug, acting hospital superintendent.

The fire apparently started in the upper portion of the barn where the hay was stored. Lahaug said there were 250 tons of hay in the barn, with each ton valued at \$250. The hay, however, was insured.

"Part of the structure is completely ruined," said Lahaug Tuesday morning. "The east wing of the barn is completely wrecked."

The alarm was called in around 8:45 p.m. Monday but by the time fire

department officials arrived, smoke was coming from the upper portion of the structure.

"The fire department poured on a lot of water but it didn't seem to help," said Lahaug.

Hay had been stored in the barn throughout the summer, said Lahaug. The hay loft was completely full when the fire started.

Lahaug said a temporary arrangement will have to be worked out in order to keep the dairy herd. Hospital officials were dealing with that problem Tuesday morning.

When the last dairy barn fire occurred, Lahaug said the cattle were hauled to a nearby dairy farm.

The hay crop stored in the barn was estimated as a total loss and Lahaug said the hospital will have to buy some hay for this winter.



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Pearl Bertsch, left, Henry Lahaug and Clara Hartmen rounded up the lucky survivors.