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From the Selected Works of Kimberly J. Sawtelle

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Barn leveled, nine head of cattle lost

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DOVER-FOXCROFT, MAINE

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Damages: \$200,000

Barn leveled, nine head of cattle lost

by Kimberly Sawtelle

DOVER-FOXCROFT - Irving Patten of East Dover is on the come back trail this week after losing a large dairy barn, milk room equipment and nine head of cattle in a spectacular fire last Tuesday, Sept. 27. The estimated loss of animals, equipment and buildings will run in the neighborhood of \$200,000, according to Fire Chief Joe Guyotte.

Animals surviving the fire were temporarily housed at the Richard Varnum place in Sebec. According to Patten, a barn has been leased in Bradford where the cattle will stay until spring when construction can begin on a new barn and separate silo.

Tuesday's fire was called in to the Piscataquis County Sheriff's Office at 11:42 a.m., according to Guyotte. After arriving at the scene of the fully involved blaze, fire fighters called for back up from Guilford and Sangerville departments and began efforts to contain the barn fire and prevent flames from spreading to the nearby Patten home.

Both Guyotte and Patten stated that the fire apparently started near the second motor of a hay conveyor. The motor was located in the loft, near the barn's back wall. Patten said he felt the fire could have been caused by some hay chaff getting around the motor's shaft and causing the machinery to overheat.

According to Patten, he and a two man haying crew, Peter Patten and Paul Hall, had completed unloading a truck of hay only moments prior to the fire being spotted. "The fire could have been going when we were there and we just didn't see it," said Patten. "There was a (wall) of hay in the middle of the barn that we couldn't see past."

Shortly after Patten and his crew returned to a field located on the other side of a hill from the farm, the fire was spotted by Herbert Hazlett, who had stopped by the farm to speak with Patten, according to Guyotte.

Guyotte said Hazlett stopped to talk to Paul Chambers, who was painting

the house, before preparing to leave. As Hazlett was driving out of the yard he looked toward the barn and saw smoke, Guyotte said. Yelling to Chambers to notify the fire department, Hazlett ran into the barn and began unhitching stock.

After calling authorities Chambers came to aid in the release of animals, carrying several of the younger livestock out of the barn, said Guyotte. By the time Hazlett released the last animal, Guyotte said, the barn ceiling started collapsing mid-way of the tie-up.

Within 15 minutes of the fire being reported the 36 x 200 foot structure was completely engulfed in flames, according to Guyotte. Tank trucks from Guilford and Sangerville helped to haul water from the Hamilton farm pond on the Range Road and from John King's

farm pond. Forty-two men, ten pieces of fire fighting equipment and an ambulance responded to the scene. No injuries were reported to have been suffered by any of the men battling the blaze. Fire fighters remained at the scene throughout the remainder of the afternoon and evening as a precautionary measure. Guyotte said remains of hay stored in the barn's mow continued to smoke and smolder as late as Monday afternoon, Oct. 3.

Tuesday's fire was the second time in a little over a decade Patten lost his barn and animals. The first fire, in the early 1970's, was suspected to have been started by a transient who was smoking in the barn's loft, said Patten. That blaze occurred well after midnight and killed 27 head of cattle, said Patten.

Included in the losses caused by last week's fire, was one horse and all its

harnesses and riggings, nine heifers and a 24 x 24 milk room that contained several thousands of dollars of equipment including automatic washers, milking machine washers, a 15,000 pound capacity refrigerated storage tank, pipe line and pumps.

Patten, who sells his milk to Grant's Dairy, said construction on a similar-sized barn will begin sometime next spring. The barn will be only for livestock, however, said Patten, in light of his two losses. A separate silage storage building will be constructed apart from the livestock buildings.

Between now and spring, Patten said he would be purchasing feed to take place of the hay he lost in the fire. Patten said he has two storage bunkers of feed which were untouched by the blaze. Patten is continuing to provide milk for Grant's Dairy.



KATY DEITZ with her Morgan Mae, recently won several ribbons in the Eastern States Exposition for 4-H horse committee members. She is shown with the tack box that every participant had to have with their horse. Deitz is the daughter of Leonard and Marcella Deitz of Atkinson. (Foss)

Deitz brings home 4-H awards

by Virginia Foss

ATKINSON - Katy Deitz of Atkinson has recently returned from the



PATTEN'S DAIRY BARN was completely leveled by fire Tuesday morning, Sept. 27. Lost in the fire were nine heifers, a horse, tons of feed and thousands of dollars in milking equipment. Forty-two firemen from Dover-Foxcroft, Sangerville and Guilford reported to the scene of the blaze which was reported at 11:42 a.m. (Roberts)

Elected officials agree

in communications