

NOTE: The italicized text is annotated or added for clarification purposes.

Diane: Today is January 29, 2018. What is your name?

Bill: Bill Barby.

Diane: And where do you live?

Bill: Protection.

Diane: And, what is your occupation?

Bill: Rancher.

Diane: And, how old are you?

Bill: 64.

Diane: When did you first become aware of the Starbuck Fire hereafter referred to simply as “the fire”, in general?

Bill: That afternoon (*March 6, 2017*).

Diane: Where were you?

Bill: On the ranch.

Diane: And where is your ranch?

Bill: Southeast of Sitka, on the Cimarron River.

Diane: Did you see the smoke?

Bill: To the west, yes.

Diane: Did you know what was going on?

Bill: I knew they had a fire, and I knew it started in Oklahoma. I didn't feel very threatened, but when the smoke started coming over the ranch it started getting my attention.

Diane: So, did you evacuate from Protection, or were you mainly down on the ranch?

Bill: I was at the ranch all day for a couple of days, but my wife evacuated from the home in Protection twice.

Diane: And where did she go?

Bill: Coldwater, I think both times.

Diane: So, what were some of your thoughts and actions when you first realized that the fire was gonna come to the ranch?

Bill: When I first went down there (*to the ranch*) it was just smoky. The smoke was so heavy it made it look like night. And the fire was to the west and it had been going to the northeast, and I thought I was probably out of "harm's way." The head fires went on past us to the northeast. And just going down there, my first thought was that I could be trapped, because I had started out of there and then I started to go back in there and see if I could move some cattle. And, I thought I could be trapped and I debated a little bit about what to do, then I decided I really didn't have a choice, and I went on down in there. And I did not know at that time, until I was down in there checking on the cattle, a neighbor called and said the wind had shifted out of the north and turned the fire that was well past us (*had burned north east of us*), coming straight at me from the (*north*) east side of the ranch, which is eight miles east of the highway (*160 south of Sitka*). And, I wouldn't have expected it to come that direction at all (*The fire turned southeast when the wind changed and the wind blew from the north northwest. The side/flank fire burned sideways to the west*). And by that time, I was moving cattle to wheat pasture and taking evasive actions.

Diane: So, did you lose any cattle?

Bill: No, I got the cattle, the yearling cattle (*yearling cattle are calves that have been weaned of the cows and are about 1 year of age or less*) and moved to wheat pasture about a mile away on my neighbor. And then just by the grace of God, the fire came through the cows (*burned through the cows*). They were on the river, and I have no idea how they survived.

Diane: So, was the Monday night, evening, or Tuesday?

Bill: That was all Monday night. And it came off of me, burned off of me about daylight, and I hauled horses out (*off of the ranch*). And the next day about noon, the wind switched again and came from the west and came from the highway (*highway 160 south of Sitka which is east of Ashland 6 miles*) and started in (*the pasture land to the west of me belonging to my brother had not burned. The fire reignited to the west of me on my brother*). And of course, my part of the ranch had already burned, totally. But there was another 6,000 acres

between me and the highway that belongs to my brother, and it hadn't burned. Dave Redger, the Fire Chief, called and told me I'd better get out of there. I didn't get the message until that night. But, I didn't want out of there because I had a 4,000-acre black line (*grass that had burned*) behind me and I couldn't really have got out if I wanted to at that point. But the head fire came in from the west and burned up the rest of the country that hadn't burned. But by being there I was able to save some of my brother's cattle that were running from the fire.

Diane: So, when you moved cattle, did you do it by horse, or RV, or ...?

Bill: I just let them follow the cake pickup because it was getting dark and we had quite a ways to go, and there wasn't time to get a horse saddled and do that. And I don't think I could have moved them quick enough. Then I couldn't have got out of there, because the fire was right up on me when I got them (*the cattle*) on wheat.

Diane: And they all followed really well behind the cake wagon?

Bill: Oh yeah, they was hoping I'd feed them.

Diane: So then, everything to the east is burned, and then it's moving back from the west from the highway and coming back going east.

Bill: The next day.

Diane: Did you see any firefighters then, that day?

Bill: The second day some came down briefly, and I mean for like 15 minutes, and they had just started trying to put out a flank fire, and then they got a call and they left. And so, I really didn't have nobody down there. There was too much fire, and too much fire line, and there just wasn't enough firefighters to go around.

Diane: So, you moved the cattle down to the wheat. Then, did you move your brother's cattle onto wheat, too, or did you kind of move it from pasture to pasture?

Bill: On his, I had already burned, so I just simply moved his cattle over on my land that had already burned because the head fire was chasing his cattle and they were running from it. I simply just opened the gate and let them come on my place.

Diane: So, what all did you lose down there? Fences?

Bill: I lost all the grass. There's not much in the way of improvements, but there is a

headquarters with a building, and some machinery. And I was able to save all that the night before. Back fired around it, and I had a sprayer and I was able to get a black line (*burnt grass*) around it to protect it. And that took up most of my night, just trying to protect my little headquarters area.

Diane: Besides the wind shifting, did the temperature change in the night?

Bill: I don't remember. I remember on about 3 o'clock in the morning, I was filling the sprayer (*with water*) with a 5-gallon bucket for about the third time, and I was getting really tired. I remember that, ha, ha.

Diane: So, when the smoke came through, the smoke before the fire?

Bill: The next day when the smoke came from the west, it got so bad that I had to go in my little building to breathe. I couldn't breathe. That night, on Monday night, the smoke wasn't so bad that I didn't have any trouble dealing with it.

Diane: So, it wasn't real dark and black?

Bill: It was dark and black, but the head fire had went through, and at that time I was dealing with a flank fire, and it was moving a lot slower. Still, 12-15 ft. flames, but it was burning up everything in its path, but it wasn't nothing like the head fire.

Diane: So, you were able to keep the cattle away from the fire and keep them out on the wheat without them moving around?

Bill: Well, I just put them there and left because there wasn't any time to stay there (*because the fire was almost there and I needed to leave*). And I wanted to go check on the (*other*) cattle. But, that's the only cattle I moved was the yearlings. And the cows, by the time I went to check on them, the fire already came (*burned*) through them. I didn't see them, but it came across the river – down the canyons, across the river and it was in the meadow and no cows were in sight. And at that time, I didn't know whether they were dead or alive. I simply had to save myself and get out of there, get up to the headquarters and get my sprayer going and try to save the headquarters.

Diane: So, did you have a spray rig out there, and available water, a windmill or something?

Bill: Yes. Yeah, a tank, yeah.

Diane: So, do you have solar water?

Bill: Everything's solar out there.

Diane: Did you have any problem with that? Did you lose any of those?

Bill: Damaged some wires, but fortunately I didn't lose any fiberglass tanks or any solar panels. I'm very thankful for that. Really, the only thing that we lost was, all the fences had damage, and all the grass.

Diane: So, after the fire came through, did you have trouble containing the cattle?

Bill: Yes. Yeah, they went to Oklahoma, and to the neighbors, and they went everywhere. So, the first thing we did was come up with a plan to get one pasture enclosed, temporarily, just to put the cattle in to stop the drifting.

Diane: And then, what did you have to feed them?

Bill: We started getting donated hay by Wednesday, so that's what we started feeding them. On Wednesday, I started shipping a lot of cattle off the ranch, shipped all the yearlings down to Oklahoma to wheat pasture, like down in Central Oklahoma. And shipped half the cow herd away. Had friends take them in. And we shipped several truck loads to friends, and then kept the others there and just fed them hay.

Diane: All summer, mostly? Just a few days?

Bill: No. I just fed them until spring, and once they saw green grass they wouldn't eat hay anymore.

Diane: So, did it green back up pretty well down there?

Bill: The river (*the area along the Cimarron River is low land and is better soil and somewhat sub irrigated*) came back the quickest, and it allowed us to start grazing sooner by having the river. And then once the moisture came, everything started being better.

Diane: So, was there some water in the river, or is it dry?

Bill: There's water in the river.

Diane: So, is it a lot, or is it a stream?

Bill: It's pretty good. It's good for this time of year.

Diane: What's your most vivid memory of the fire?

Bill: Seeing that head fire coming so fast, and being in harm's way, and not knowing whether I was gonna make it and get the cattle moved or not. It was pretty close there for a little while.

Diane: So, you were down there by yourself?

Bill: Oh, yes.

Diane: Were you in contact with anybody while you were there?

Bill: I wasn't.

Diane: You only left to go to the headquarters, but still in that area. You didn't go back to Protection in those first couple of days?

Bill: No. I hauled horses out about daylight on Tuesday, and then I came right back, because we still had fires going, and still trying to save the headquarters – keep little fires from getting in on the headquarters and burning that.

Diane: So, where did you take the horses?

Bill: I just took them to town. I didn't know what to do with them. I took them to town and unhooked my trailer in front of my house. My preacher, him and his wife came and got them and hooked onto the trailer and took them to their place and kept them for a week until I had time to go back and get them.

Diane: So, you didn't have to worry about them that way?

Bill: Yeah, I just didn't have time to deal with them. When we needed them a couple of days later, they came over to help and they just brought my horse along with it, and when we were done they took the horse back.

Diane: So, we talked about getting donated hay. Do you know where that came from?

Bill: Yes. I was able to thank the people that sent it. There was a variety of people, and of course, some of it got directed through Ashland Feed & Seed. In one instance they had a card from a bank at Phillipsburg, and everybody signed it, and said they were praying, and had their names. And it was donated from the employees of that bank. And so, I was able to thank them. And then other people had friends send hay. And of courses, I kept track of everything.

Diane: So, when you got a donation of hay, what are we talking about, a big trailer?

Bill: Semi-loads.

Diane: How many bales?

Bill: I'm not sure, like, 35.

Diane: Were these round bales?

Bill: Yeah, 30-35 at a time, a variable of that. But yeah, very thankful to get it. And what was great, they brought it to the ranch, because we're so far out. I couldn't drive into Ashland and pick up hay and ever get the cattle fed on a timely basis. It's too far.

Diane: So, how many bales were you feeding a day after the fire?

Bill: It varied. And of course, as we got the cattle shipped away, probably four bales a day.

Diane: So, approximately how many cattle did you have there when the fire started?

Bill: About 300, and then we shipped – I guess we shipped them all away except for 100.

Diane: And then, later in the spring...

Bill: The others came back (*cattle came back to the ranch that had been shipped/moved to other ranches*). The cows came back around the first of June, and then, of course, the yearlings, the heifers came back once they were bred in August. The steers, they just went on to the feedlot in the fall. They never did come back to the ranch.

Diane: So, did you ever fear for your life, or feel like you weren't gonna get out of there on Monday night or Tuesday?

Bill: I never would leave. I wasn't too concerned about it. Once I got away from the head fire, I didn't feel like my life was threatened and there was too much to do to think about leaving. So, no. And even when your brother (*Diana's brother David Redger, the fire chief*) called the next day, I was like, I didn't want to get out of there. I didn't feel threatened, and I knew I couldn't leave at that point. I was okay except for just that one time when the head fire was so close.

Diane: Did you see other people during that time? Or, you were just out there on the ranch?

Bill: Oh, no. It's so remote, I don't see anybody down there.

Diane: So, did your brother come and check on his?

Bill: He came the next – on Tuesday afternoon. I was turning his cows back out of my pasture into his, and he drove up and kind of wondered what I was doing. And he was grateful that I was able to get them in there and save them. Because of the head fire it would definitely have probably killed them.

Diane: So, you've lived around this area and you know about range fires, and have seen wild grass fires at different times. Can you compare this fire to any of those fires that you've seen?

Bill: In my wildest dreams I never even thought the entire ranch could burn at one time. I never thought that was a possibility. I never considered it, never expected it, so, no, there's nothing I've ever seen like this. Even the Anderson Creek, as bad as it was, it just wasn't the same as what this was, with the speed and the high winds, and the ultra-low humidity.

Diane: Did you have anything to do with the Anderson Creek fire? Do you have any land in that area?

Bill: I had friends over there, and I went over. I was there. I took my sprayer over to help maintain a flank fire line. By the time I got there the wind shifted and made it a head fire, so I ended up going down to the friend's house and helping them evacuate. We got all that we could until the guy said, "Everybody leave!" because the head fire was gonna take the house. And it did; it burned it down. And so we all drove up the driveway and headed up to the county road and let the fire take it. And then I went back and helped some other friends build fence and do some repair work.

Diane: So, when you say you have a spray rig, how big is your tank?

Bill: There's 250 gallons.

Diane: So you can do somewhat to keep things safe for a while with that without having to reload?

Bill: Yes, and then I have a smaller one and a ATV, too. So, sometimes I'll take the small one. It depends on how rough the country is.



Diane: How far you need to go back in to where stuff is? So, I know that they have done some controlled burns in this area to get rid of cedar trees and stuff, right? So, how does that help maybe stop from having a wildfire like we've had?

Bill: We have a Prescribed Burn Association in that part of the county, and we've been getting more members. I've been doing controlled burns for the last three years, and last year, we were ready to do a controlled burn. We had the fire breaks in. We would have already had it done if the wind and the humidity would have cooperated. And, had that happened, what it does is, it creates a safe zone that would block the fire, and also it'd give me a place where I don't farm and I don't raise wheat. It would give me a safe place to put my cattle on where the fire couldn't kill them and it'd be a place for me to go to be safe, too. So, there's a lot of advantages. The main reason we started doing prescribed burns on the ranch was to kill the cedar trees, especially the little re-sprouts that come back along the river. We also burn up in the sand hills to suppress the sandhill plums and the sand sage, just to get it back to a manageable level where we can get more grass, and grow more foliage, and grow more cattle.

Diane: So, did this fire take care of the cedar tree regrowth, or will you have to do a controlled burn for a while?

Bill: We had just finished burning the river the year before, and the year before that. So, we didn't really have a problem. But we have some salt cedar, tamarix, and we can't get a fire to go back in it because there's no fuel. Well, this fire, with the speed and the velocity of it, it burned all the way through that and it was just amazing what it did to that stuff. I mean, we couldn't have done that with a prescribed fire, ever. And so, it was amazing. There was a lot of good that came from the fire, but unfortunately, there was a lot of harm that came too.

Diane: So, what did it do to the tamarix?

Bill: It just smoked it. It burned some of it off just right off the ground. All of it, it burned through it and reduced it a lot. Of course, it will come back, because it comes back from the root. But just the fact of getting it thinned out like that was pretty cool. And then we were able to go in with a helicopter and spray some of it while it was tender coming back. So, it gave us an opportunity then to kill some and do some controlling.

Diane: So, did the tamarix burn for a while? Or, just kind of a flash?

Bill: I don't know. I wasn't – you know, I didn't see it burning, but I think it just burned it up just like our hedge posts and everything else.

Diane: Took care of all of it. How would you describe your emotional response to the fire? And have you done anything to cope with what you know about the fire?

Bill: Well, I mean, somebody asked me if I had survivor's guilt because I didn't lose cattle. I said, no, not at all. And you know, I mean, my heart just went out to the people that lost cattle and lost homes, and very sorry for them. But as far as emotional, what we lost on the ranch, it was just time to kick in to getting a plan and taking action. There wasn't time to sit around and be emotional about it. It was just time to go to work.

Diane: So, did you have any volunteers come help you tear out fence and put fence back in?

Bill: Yes. Yes, I did. We had volunteers. We got some from the camp and then others were just friends that came, and that spread out over a fair amount of time and was able to get a lot done with the volunteers.

Diane: Did you have a lot of fence that needed to be replaced?

Bill: Yes. We had – about half had to be replaced and about half had to be repaired. There was 20 miles of fence.

Diane: So, did you take advantage of all the T-posts and posts that came, barbed wire that was donated, did you get some of that?

Bill: Some, yeah. When they called me and offered some, and Jeff Kay was really good about spreading that around. He called me and I came in and got posts and wire at different times, as he offered it. And yes, it was very helpful. Then we had a group come out of northeast Nebraska, and they came down, their community got involved and they came down with three gooseneck trailers full of post and wire and cement. And then the young people that drove, they came and stayed several days and helped, and they were very good help, and we got a lot done while they were here.

Diane: So, did you ever go eat at the camp when they were serving meals?

Bill: I never did. I was usually doing good just to get my helpers back in in time so they could eat.

Diane: So, are you done building fence?

Bill: We are. We're done.

Diane: And you got everything back like, pretty close to normal, or better?

Bill: Yes. Yes. Very thankful to have that done.

Diane: Did you take advantage of the (*Ashland*) Community Foundation and the KLA (*Kansas Livestock Association*)?

Bill: Yes, they were both extremely generous and very helpful. Without their help it would have been difficult to do, and we got that all done.

Diane: Yeah, I think so too. What affects, physical, financial, emotional, has the fire caused for the community, or the whole area?

Bill: Well, it sure has brought the community together. It's had more outreach than anything that I know of, that I can remember. And I think the community is building on it, and stronger for it, and it's just real impressive how that outflow of love was to those in need. And then how people across the country came and brought hay, and donated, and contributed financially. The whole thing was just, really, an amazing act of love.

Diane: So, can you perceive of anything positive that came out of the fire, besides that?

Bill: Besides the community being stronger? Well, the land, in my case, the land is better for it because, you know, it did a real purging on the brush, and it pushed that back.

Diane: So, what kind of soil do you have where you are?

Bill: Sand. It's sand. It's not supposed to be naked, and when everything was burned off it didn't look very pretty seeing it out there with its clothes off (*all the vegetation burned off*). We were very thankful we got the rain and it came back.

Diane: Did it blow? Did the sand blow?

Bill: Well, it's just one of those deals where you're busy, and the wind's blowing, and it was dry, and it probably did. It's just one of those things you just really – it's out of your control and there's so much more to do than go and watch it blow and cry over it. We just stayed busy focusing on what we could control, and by the grace of God we got the rain, and the grass came back very quickly and very healthy. And now we're in an extreme drought now, and we're very thankful for the grass that we have, and we're praying for rain now. Very critical that we get moisture between now and spring.

Diane: So, it's showing a lot of stress?

Bill: Well, it's just – of course, the grass is dormant this time of year, but if we don't have any rain it's gonna be a repeat of '11 and we won't grow any grass, and it'll be a very stressful – it's becoming very stressful to me already.

Diane: Yeah, because you can't really put any cattle on it, right, if it's not gonna be growing?

Bill: Well, in 2011, we simply ate off carryover grass, because it didn't grow. And I'm getting ready to start de-stocking now and start operating my drought plan. So, we'll just see what happens.

Diane: That's kind of that way. So, what can you do or have you done to prepare for another fire? Do you have some kind of a plan in place?

Bill: Well, we do. And, I have some steps written down to follow. If you'll give me just a second, I'll see if I can't pull those up. Well, I'll just try to do it from memory. There's about half a dozen of them. One is to know your escape routes. Another is to have a sprayer on hand, you can do that. Another one is, go to wheat pasture if it's available, because, you know, you can put machinery and cattle out there and people out there and save them. Another one is to do the prescribed burning to have safe areas on the ranch, and to stop wild fire. And another one was just to, you know, you can use the areas up next to the tanks where the grass is short, or it doesn't grow, as a safe area, too where there's not any fuel. So, there's several things that we can do in preparation. And having that in our mind, because it's hard to make too many decisions when you're in crisis, and it's good to have a plan in place and know what you can do so if that happens you can just automatically go to it.

Diane: So, where was your wife while you were out there?

Bill: She was in town, and she got evacuated that Monday night, and again on Tuesday.

Diane: Were you in contact with her? Did she know where you were?

Bill: I really wasn't in contact with her.

Diane: Well, you don't have good cell service down there, right?

Bill: We do have cell service. I just didn't have time to be talking. I think maybe I told her I was safe, and I had the horses loaded in the trailer and were ready to evacuate if I had to. And then I told her I was trying to save the building and the corrals, and different things. Yeah, there wasn't much contact. She just told me that she was praying for me, and I was very thankful of that. There wasn't much talking went on during that night.

Diane: So, when she evacuated, did she take anything special with her?

Bill: I don't even know. Ha, ha, ha.

Diane: Because, I know, some people just took the dog and the dog food.

Bill: I don't know that answer. But, that's one thing that we have talked about, is having a plan for the home, even though it's in town. As we saw it with Englewood and the fire went right through that town, from one side to the other. So, we're thinking about having something put together where we could grab it and go if it came to that, important papers.

Diane: And where stuff is, to grab. So, what about communities, what can they do to plan? Do you think we were well prepared for this?

Bill: No, I don't think we were well prepared at all.

Diane: What do you think we could have done different?

Bill: Statewide, I think they need to get more preparation out there with the forestry service. They weren't very well prepared, not very well funded. And as it comes down to the fire departments, even though Ashland community has an excellent fire department, they get short on money, and some more volunteers, more donations or money to help them have the quality equipment that they need so that they can respond, and not be broken down, and not run out of budget where they can't do the things that they need to do.

Diane: So, do you have any other thoughts about this experience? Anything that stands out in your mind?

Bill: I just pray I never go through it again. But, if it does happen, I think I'll be more prepared, mentally, and if it's not happening to me, it's happening to somebody else. I think I'll respond quicker to go help others and have some idea of what to do. One thing that our local Prescribed Burn Association is wanting to do is get with the local fire department and find ways that they could work with them. And the first thing they'd have to have is to be able to communicate with each other with radios, where everybody can be safe and they can take orders. But, they could be out there mopping up on the flanks and places where the fire department's trying to put out the head fire. The prescribed burn units could be doing a lot of help on the flank fires. We actually had two members of the Prescribed Burn Association that have real good spray rigs on their pickups. They actually put out the southeast corner of the Starbuck wildfire and ended up saving a home in the process. They had good equipment, and they were trained, and they did a real good job.

Diane: So, how many people do you have in this association?

Bill: There's six different ranchers.

Diane: And it's all in Clark County? Or, Clark and Comanche County?

Bill: It's Clark, Comanche, and Meade. And the Comanche part is just a couple, like myself and my neighbor, our land goes over into Comanche. But the members, they go all the way over west of Englewood, up towards Bucklin, still in Clark County, and then down to the state line. So, we cover a pretty large area.

Diane: So, was there a planned burn planned over at Meade County before the fire hit?

Bill: It was in western Clark County. We do burn plans, and they were planning on doing a burn, along with several other people in the Prescribed Burn Association. They had planned a burn and I was just days away from it. And, of course, you know, everyone's burns pretty well got taken care of. One fellow, we ended up going and helping him even up a pasture, by burning what didn't burn in the wildfire. They were getting the unburned part of the pasture burned so it could regrow and be able to graze it, and the cattle wouldn't over graze it. So, we did do a small burn, but it was all blacked in around us. It really wasn't too difficult.

Diane: So, is there a plan to do a burn this year?

Bill: We're gonna have a meeting next month, in a few weeks, and we'll find out. Some of the people to the west, if their whole ranches didn't burn, they possibly will be planning on it. I don't have the answer to that yet.

Diane: So, your ranch has come back, so that if you would get rain, things would be perfect, almost?

Bill: We lost plant crowns. We had dead crowns and they're still dead. We have come back amazingly well, but, it's still gonna take a few years for all the bare spaces and the dead plant crowns to fill in. And this is very important that we get the spring and early summer rains when the grass does most of the growing.

Diane: So, are there any people or agencies that proved most helpful during the fire, or after the fire? Any specific people that come to mind, or you heard about or that helped you? did you get to see the strike team firefighters that came?

Bill: No. No, I didn't see too much of anybody. I was kind of in a forgotten part of the

world down there. The people that – well, I mean we talked about the foundation (*Ashland Community Foundation*) and KLA (*Kansas Livestock Association*) being helpful, and the volunteers. And they continued to help for some time.

Diane: Do you keep in contact with the people that helped you?

Bill: I do. It's amazing. We had some K-State kids that came out on Spring Break, and I've had one of them call just in the last few weeks. She just called to see how the ranch had recovered, and she offered to come back and help fence. She's a pre-vet major, and I'm sure she didn't have time to do that. It was very nice of her to offer. And we had a number of people that came. A couple from Michigan that came. They stay in contact from time to time. There's a lot of the people that came really cared, and they have stayed in contact.

Diane: So, some of the cattle you own, you were able to get out of the area. Did you notice any stress on the cattle from fire?

Bill: Yes. Even the cows that somehow, and it was by the grace of God, lived through the fire, they had singed hair on them, they had cuts on them. I suppose that's from running from the fire, and running through the brush, I just don't know. But yeah, they had cuts and singed hair, and as we went to gather them and to ship them, just try to ride across the range with all the ash coming up. We couldn't breathe. The cattle couldn't breathe. It was just so important to get them, where we had the opportunity to get them off the ranch. It was so much better for them.

Diane: Was it necessary to medicate them, or doctor them some way after they were off the ranch? Or did they pretty much...

Bill: I didn't have to because I wasn't calving at the time, so I didn't have little calves. But people that had little calves had quite a bit of sickness and some death from that and had to medicate. I just wasn't in that situation.

Diane: So, you didn't lose any, even when they left here?

Bill: No, but I had some abort. And it had to just be from the stress they went through. That's something that we don't really have proof of, but it just makes sense that the stress just caused them to abort.

Diane: Or, did they have a calf and then it passed away? Died after it was born, or anything like that?

Bill: Most of them just came up empty, and they didn't have a calf, so they probably aborted their fetus at some point after the fire.

Diane: So, it wasn't a very successful calving season, huh?

Bill: Well, we had less calves than we had wanted.

Diane: Is there anything else you can think of?

Bill: No. Everybody has a story. It's been great to hear other people's stories because most of us were busy with our own problems. And as we came to hear some of the stories and see some of them in the paper and on Facebook, and then what we're doing here, it's great to see how other people went through it, and how God spared so many lives, and so many close calls. And then there's still a lot of tragedy. And how resilient people are to get through that, and building new homes, and just a very strong people out here.