

**Subject:** Montana Hay Donations

**Story Summary:** Christmastime is bringing donations of hay and money to Montana ranchers who were in the path of summer wildfires. The fires depleted forage and caused major damage to fences and timberland.

**TRT:** 1:44

**Suggested lead:** Summer wildfires left western ranchers scrambling to replace forage and fences. Thanks to the kindness of others, they're getting help. Tom Steever reports.

**Suggested Supers:** Broadwater County, Montana  
@ :01

Cliff Cox  
Montana Rancher  
@ :17

Nancy Schlepp  
"I Care a Ton" coordinator  
@ :37

Virginia Knerr  
Broadwater County Extension Agent  
@ 1:04

Tom Steever Reporting  
@ 1:25

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| Cliff Cox points to where fire started<br><b>Broadwater County, Montana</b>  | SOT/<br>“The fire started on the very north end of it and within two days it burned all the way down here...”   |
| W/s smoke on mountain<br>Tight of timber/grass burn<br>z-in of smoke on mountain   | VO/<br>SUMMER WILD FIRES ARE A VIVID MEMORY FOR MONTANA RANCHER CLIFF COX. HE WAS AFFECTED MUCH LIKE OTHER WESTERN RANCHERS.  |
| <b>Cliff Cox</b><br><b>Montana rancher</b>   | SOT/<br>“Well, the immediate problem was that we lost a lot of pasture. We had to move our cattle out of the area and into some other grass that we normally go into later.”  |
| Cattle eating hay<br><br>Burning trees<br><br>Nancy at computer<br>Nancy w/mouse<br>MFBF web page  | VO/<br>THAT PUT PRESSURE ON ALREADY DROUGHT DEPLETED FORAGES. IT ALSO DESTROYED FENCES AND TIMBER. WORKING WITH STATE GOVERNMENT, THE MONTANA FARM BUREAU IS HELPING THROUGH A TAX DEDUCTIBLE PROGRAM CALLED “I CARE A TON.”  |
| <b>Nancy Schlepp</b><br><b>“I Care a Ton” coordinator</b>  | SOT/<br>“Their thought was, direct assistance would be the most effective and they came up with this program to bring together people who would like to donate.”  |
| Data base scroll<br><b>Tom Steever reporting</b><br>Tractor getting bale<br><br>Tractor w/bale<br><br>Train engines pass<br>Cliff gets post<br>W/s Cliff gets post<br>Cliff fixes fence<br>C/u of staple in post | VO/<br>THERE ARE PLENTY. 770 TONS OF DONATED HAY HAS BEEN DELIVERED WITH THE HELP OF DONATED TRANSPORTATION. THE PROGRAM ALSO SECURED DONATIONS OF FENCING SUPPLIES. DONATED LABOR FROM OTHER SOURCES HELPED TO REPLACE DAMAGED FENCE. THE EXTENSION SERVICE HELPS DETERMINE WHERE THE SUPPLIES |

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|   | SHOULD GO.   |
| <b>Virginia Knerr</b><br><b>Broadwater County Extension agent</b>                                       | SOT/<br>“My main goal here is to make sure that the producers with the highest need get the materials first.”  |
| Pan of hay<br><br>Nancy writes<br>C/u Nancy<br><br>Nancy answers phone<br><br><br>Cliff checking cattle | VO/<br>MORE THAN A THOUSAND TONS OF DONATED HAY IS WAITING TO BE DELIVERED. UNTIL FEDERAL MONEY ARRIVES TO HELP TRANSPORT THAT HAY, THE MONTANA FARM BUREAU IS DEPENDING ON FURTHER CASH AND MATERIAL DONATIONS. MEANWHILE MONTANA RANCHERS STRUGGLE TO FIND WORDS OF APPRECIATION FOR PEOPLE THEY’VE NEVER MET. |
| Cox bite<br><br>Cliff walks fence line<br>Tractor with hay bales passes                                 | SOT/<br>“It’s been a lifesaver for us, it’s just really help put us back on our feet to keep us going here. Donations have just really been a godsend.”  |
|   | VO/<br>NEAR WINSTON, MONTANA, I’M TOM STEEVER.   |

**Optional anchor out and graphic information:**

**Donations to “I Care a Ton” can be sent to:  
Montana Farm Bureau Foundation  
502 S. 13th Avenue  
Bozeman, Montana 59718  
or call:  
406-582-4105**