

Large hay fire out but still being monitored

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The hay bale fire was very near an oil tank battery. Photo by Lowell Stanley

MOSCOW (AP) — A fire that burned for more than week and destroyed thousands of hay bales has been extinguished but workers are still watching for hot spots at the southwest Kansas company, officials said.

The fire, which started May 28 near Moscow and was considered extinguished by June 5, destroyed an estimated 38,000 hay bales mostly owned by Abengoa Bioenergy, The Garden City Telegram reported.

The Kansas Department of Emergency Management's preliminary investigation indicated the fire was caused by lightning but that has not been confirmed.

"The cause is still undetermined and is under investigation," Kevin Doel, spokesman for the Kansas Fire Marshal's Office, said in an email to The Telegram. "The total loss is over \$2.5 million, which includes hay bales and hay sheds."

Chris Standlee, executive vice president of Abengoa, said company personnel will continue to

watch for hot spots.

“The fire is out. There are no flames, but what we’re doing is making sure we spread everything out really well and grate it out and make sure there are no hot spots or anything like that. It’s just kind of a long process. It’s a tough thing to do, but we’re going to be done with that in the next couple of days,” Standlee said Wednesday.

Cleanup of the site will begin once it is determined no more hot spots exist, Standlee said.

The company lost about 16 big stacks of hay, with each stack holding between 2,500 and 3,000 bales. Each of the stocks is about one day’s production, so Abengoa lost 16 days of seed stock, Standlee said.

Cattle Empire also lost one stack of hay in the fire.