

Fire at Fur-Ever Farm Canada destroys equipment, sparks donation drive

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A fast-moving fire has destroyed a key outbuilding at a joint farm animal sanctuary and dog rescue in Mono, resulting in significant equipment losses and prompting an urgent appeal for community support.

The blaze broke out in Fur-Ever Farm Canada's garage and workroom on March 8, quickly consuming the structure and its contents. Embers from the farm's maple syrup evaporator managed to slip out of the machine, igniting a blaze that completely destroyed the workshop and everything inside.

Ashley Andrews, founder of Fur-Ever Farm-Canada, said that it was a freak accident that produced a blaze unlike anything she had ever seen.

"Everything in the garage went up like a dried Christmas tree; it was horrible," she said. "The flames were so big and so hot. It's nothing like I've ever seen in my whole 40 years of being alive, I've never seen a fire like that."

In an online statement on March 9, the organization informed its supporters that the damage was severe but that no one was injured, and it could have been much worse.

"Our garage and workroom caught fire, and we lost almost everything inside," Fur-Ever Farm Canada and Fur-Ever Able Dog Rescue & Rehab said in a joint statement. "This space held our tools, lawn maintenance equipment, standby generators, and many of the items we rely on to keep the farm running every single day."

While all people and animals were safely accounted for, the not-for-profit organization estimates more than \$70,000 in losses related to tools and supplies alone, not including the building itself.

The destroyed building had recently undergone upgrades, including a new roof and hydro installation completed two years ago. The fire also damaged the hydro line and destroyed a puppy transport trailer.

Several essential pieces of equipment used in daily operations were lost, including tools, lawn maintenance machinery, and standby generators.

Thankfully, by luck, some heavy machinery was spared.

"We were incredibly lucky in one way," the statement said. "Our tractor had been taken out earlier in the day for chores, otherwise it would have been lost as well."

Andrews extended her sincere thanks to the fire departments that responded to the fire.

"We are so grateful," she said. "Rosemont fire came out, Alliston, Orangeville, Shelburne, like everybody, there were so many fire trucks. The firefighters, they were just so sweet. They were so nice. They were working so hard, and focused on saving the buildings from not going up that had animals in them."

In the aftermath, the organization is working to replace critical items needed to maintain daily operations.

While insurance claims are underway, many essential tools are required immediately to continue caring for animals and maintaining

the property, so the farm is seeking any excess equipment in the community.

?We know times are tough for everyone, so we are not asking anyone to go out and buy anything new,? the farm said. ?But if you happen to have items sitting in your garage or shed that you no longer use, they would help us tremendously as we rebuild.?

The group has issued a public request for donated items, particularly used tools and equipment. Immediate needs include toolboxes, hand tools such as hammers, wrenches, and screwdrivers, as well as power tools like drills and saws.

Farm and yard equipment, including wheelbarrows, shovels, rakes, pitchforks, hoses, and extension cords, is also needed.

Larger items such as a portable generator, pressure washer, air compressor, and lawn maintenance equipment are also being sought.

For now, Fur-Ever Farm-Canada is focusing on recovery, meaning some upcoming programs and events may be put on hold, but Andrews stressed that doesn't in the slightest mean the farm will ever be closing. The mission hasn't changed.

?We're not stopping at all, that was never even remotely on our minds,? she said. ?We can't do our events because it's just very dangerous right now with the cleanup, and the building's smack dab in the middle of our property. But everything else can be fixed and rebuilt. It's just going to take some time to get there.?

Fur-Ever Farm Canada is an animal rescue that provides shelter and care for animals, relying on equipment and community support to sustain its operations. The loss of its garage and workroom represents a major operational setback as it continues its recovery efforts.

For more information on how to help, go to facebook.com/fureverfarmcanada.