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California fires: Goats help save Ronald Reagan Presidential Library

🕐 31 October 2019

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California wildfires

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A goat grazes in South Pasadena last month as part of fire prevention efforts

A hungry herd of 500 goats has helped save the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library from the California wildfires.

In May, the library hired the goats to clear flammable scrub surrounding the complex as a preventative measure.

The goats ate the brush, creating a fire break that slowed the flames and gave firefighters extra time to react.

The library near Los Angeles was threatened by the Easy Fire, the latest in a spate of fires causing evacuations and power cuts across the state.

The caprine contractors included Vincent van Goat, Selena Goatmez and Goatzart. They helped save exhibits including an Air Force One jet and a piece of the Berlin Wall.

"We were told by one of the firefighters that they believe that fire break made their job easier," Melissa Giller, a library spokeswoman, told Reuters.

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Goat grazing is one way of removing highly flammable brush

The goats were hired from a local company - 805 Goats - to clear around 13

acres of land.

Scott Morris started the company last November and charges around $1,000 (£771) per acre of land.

As California continues to have more wildfires, Mr Morris says he will need to double his herd to meet demand.

Another large southern California institution - the Getty Museum in Los Angeles - was also protected this week by scrub-clearing work carried out by staff.

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Goats from a ranch near the Reagan Library were also rescued from the Easy Fire

What has happened to animals caught in the path of fires?

Ranchers and volunteers have been scrambling to evacuate farm animals, carrying them away on trailers, dropping them somewhere safe, and then turning around to rescue more.

In some cases, when the flames move too quickly for trailer rescues, the animals are simply let loose in the hope they can escape on their own and be recovered later.

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People attempt to load a frightened horse into a trailer in Canyon Country

EPA

Ranches north of Los Angeles were evacuated as the Easy Fire spread

Along with their owners, pets have been displaced from their homes too, with many animals killed or lost.

The Pet Rescue and Reunification Facebook group - dedicated to **helping reunite pets with their owners** - is flooded with pictures of animals missing amid the fires.

Several shelters under threat of fires have also had to evacuate animals.

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A resident of Canyon Country evacuates her home with her pets

AFP

Budweiser and his owners, Sheila and John Pereira, are staying in a trailer in a Walmart parking lot after fleeing the Kincade fire

Of the more than ten active wildfires raging in California, the Kincade Fire in the north of the state is the largest, with more than 76,000 acres burned so far.

The governor has declared a state-wide emergency.

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Llamas stand in smoke from the Kincade Fire

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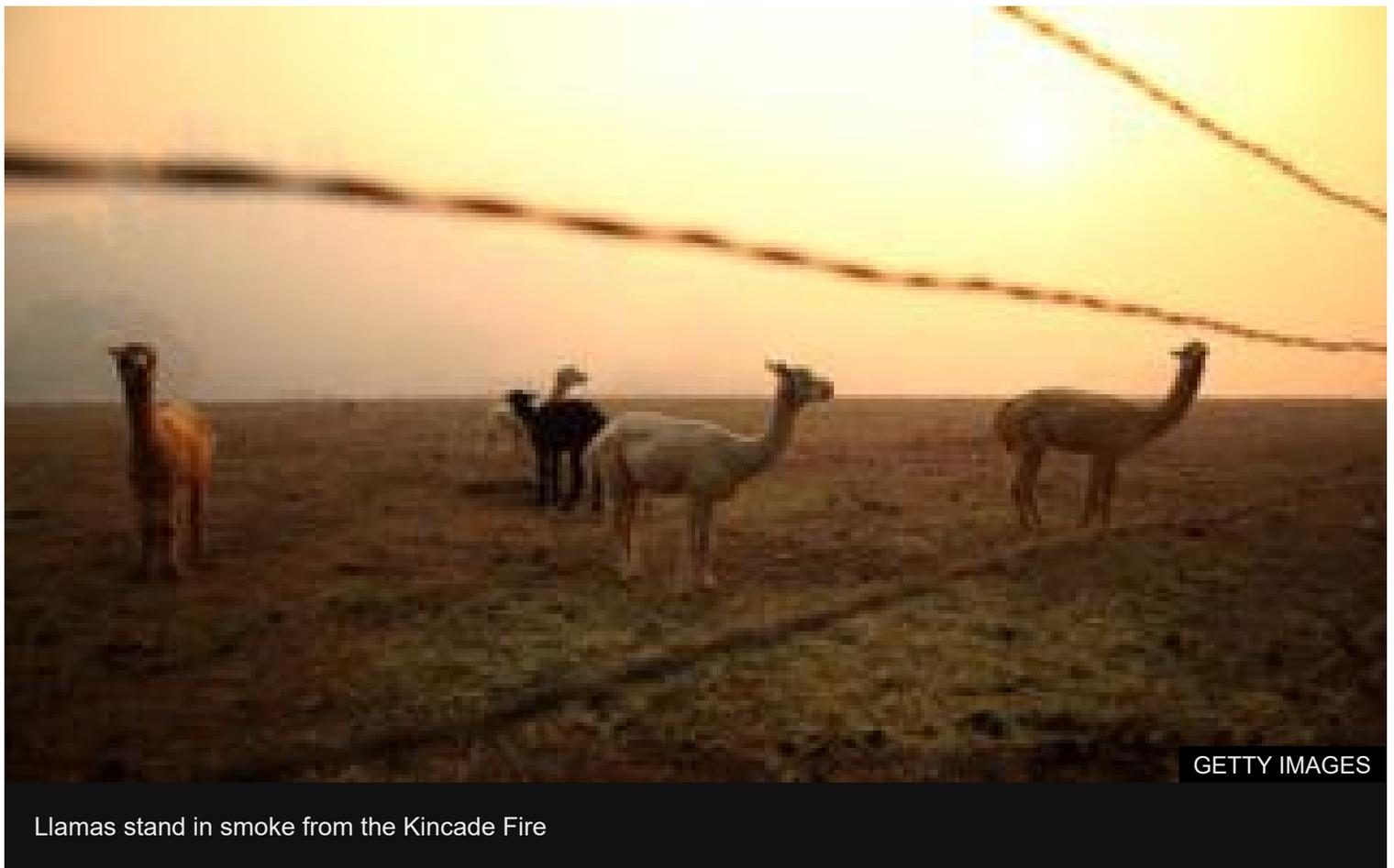
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