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Dodge City Meat Plant Catches Fire: UPDATE

UPDATE:

A Cargill spokesman has said that the plant had already planned to suspend operations Christmas eve and Christmas day. Production will resume again on Thursday and the company says they will be fully operational on Friday.

The company's website says the Dodge City plant employs more than 2,700 people, making it the city's second-largest employer. It is the largest Cargill beef plant.

Cargill announced plans in late August to spend \$48 million on a new automated system at the Dodge City plant. The goal was to increase capacity sixfold, from the current 25,000 boxes of beef.

Fire erupted inside the Cargill meatpacking plant near Dodge City Monday night, and kept firefighters busy for more than five hours.

Capt. Mark Elder with the Dodge City Fire Department said the fire began around 9:00 p.m. in the kill floor area. Because the complex is so large, crews spent several hours trying to put out all the hot spots.

Elder says no one was injured in the fire. The plant was evacuated, and second shift was sent home early.

The Cargill plant is located about two miles outside the Dodge City limits, so Ford County fire crews are leading the work on the fire. A spokesman for Ford County Fire/EMS stated the fire may started from a heater.

AP/KAKE