

# Duplin Times

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## Farmers Angered Over Tobacco Program

By Emily Killete  
Tobacco poundage leasing prices have raised fears and anger among local farmers planning their 1983 crop. Duplin farmers say they are facing a cut in their tobacco allotments, plus an estimated 10-cent jump in leasing costs.

More than nine million pounds of Duplin's tobacco quota was leased in 1982. This season only six million pounds will be available for lease and transfer in the county, said David English, Duplin Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Service director. ASCS figures indicate 2.5 million pounds of tobacco had been leased Jan. 28 and farmers are eligible to lease and transfer poundage until April 15 for the 1983 crop.

"Leasing prices are too high," Dennis Smith, a farmer from Smith Township, explained. "Sixty cents is the tops I'll pay for tobacco poundage this year. My operation is set up to house 100 acres of tobacco, but this year it will be cut to 30

acres." Smith owns a 35,000-pound allotment, an equivalent of 15 acres; he leased the remaining poundage for a 100-acre tobacco crop during past seasons. The 1982 crop yielded Smith a market average of about \$1.67 a pound.

The Duplin Tobacco Advisory Board and county AES agent, J. Michael Moore, determined local farmers spent about \$2,439.50 to produce an acre of tobacco. The acre brought a market price of \$3,749.76, and an average profit of 62 cents per pound. The figures compiled by the Duplin Tobacco Advisory Board, a panel of 15 farmers, and the Extension office, were for farmer-owned allotments; lease prices were not included as a production expense.

"Ninety percent of the allotment holders are looking for the high dollar," Albertson farmer and member of the Duplin County Board of Commissioners, C.C. Turner said. "Farmers are in competition bidding higher and higher against each other. It's all gone crazy."

Turner's 1983 allotment is down and he expects to raise only as much as 75,000 of his usual 100,000-pound crop. He leases all but 28,000 pounds of the tobacco crop and estimates his leasing costs to rise as high as 65 cents a pound this year. Last year's leasing costs peaked at 55 cents, he said.

Duplin has 4,190 tobacco allotment holders. Only an estimated 1,200 farmers actually produce the county's tobacco crop. The remaining 2,990 lease their poundage to producers, ASCS director David English said. Tobacco farmers in Duplin explain the increased costs of leasing, 1983 allotment reductions and the increased assessment tax make the tobacco stabilization program unattractive to the producer.

"I voted for the tobacco program last year, but if I had it to do again today I won't," Dennis Smith said. "I think the program should get production prices back in line with what we're being paid for our tobacco." Farmers feel they do not

have control of the stabilization program because of the ratio of allotment holders to the number of actual producers, the farmers explained.

"They (Congress) should let the farmers know in the fall what the program will be so we can plan for the coming year," Turner said. "I am one vote against 10, because I lease from 10 different allotment holders. If I had to vote on the program today, I'd vote against it."

"The non-active allotment holder is pricing himself right out," Dempsey Smith, retired farmer from Smith Township, said. "I have to have more money for my expenses, but the farmer needs an equal amount for his costs; there has to be a happy medium." The retired farmer leased his 1983 poundage at a lower price than many allotment holders and expressed hope for the continuation of the tobacco program. "Many tobacco farmers are paying a price I know they can't afford to lease poundage."

## Crop-Swap Plan A Hit With Area Farmers

If Southeastern North Carolina farmers are a representative sample, farmers across the nation are signing up for the corn and wheat diversion and payment-in-kind (PIK or crop-swap) programs in large numbers.

The Duplin County Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service office was crowded all day last week on Monday, the first day of the new PIK or crop-swap sign-up, with farmers either signing up or seeking information to determine what they should do. The ASCS administers the crop production control programs.

David English, county ASCS director, said at least 75 farmers sought explanations of the program and 23 signed up for the basic PIK program. Twelve entered bids of a percentage of their crop they would accept to idle all of their corn land this year. The county ASCS committee will determine what bids, if any, to accept, March 18.

Under PIK farmers can reduce acreage and receive payment in grain. The sign-up period will continue to March 11, English estimated

more than 100 farmers came to the office Monday.

"Same of our farmers may have thought it was just a one-day thing after hearing the newsbroadcasts this morning," he said. "But they have until March 11 for the corn and grain programs."

While talking with ASCS staffers, James Sauls Jr., a Duplin farmer and real estate man, observed, "Whatever you do, I want to leave as much of it (acres) idle as I can." His comment brought nods of agreement from several farmers standing at the clerk's counter in the office lobby.

Sauls added, "A good thing about this PIK program is it might reduce the grain surplus and that will reduce costs. It costs the taxpayers a lot of money to pay for grain storage."

The PIK program is aimed at reducing the government's huge surplus of grain and bringing supply in line with demand.

Under the program, farmers must agree not to grow up to half of their base acreage of corn, rice, wheat,

sorghum grain or cotton. They will receive certificates for a specified amount of these grains in return.

They can sell the grains or use them, but the grains won't be released until the normal harvest period of the crops involved, English noted.

By the end of fiscal 1983, the nation will have nearly 5.5 billion bushels (150 million tons) of surplus grain, the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates.

Farmers must agree to participate in the regular diversion or set-aside programs before becoming eligible for the PIK program, English pointed out.

Duplin County has one of the largest acreage bases of corn among Southeastern counties, with 87,523 acres. It has a county average yield of 74 bushels per acre.

Under the regular program, English said, participating farmers must reduce planted acreage of corn by a minimum of 20 percent.

He explained: Assume a farm had a corn base of 100 acres and the farmer took the minimum 20 acres out of

production. The farmer would receive a deficiency payment of 21 cents a bushel times the yield (assumed at 70 bushels for the example) times the acreage planted—21 cents times 70, times 80 or a total of \$1,176.

The farmer would receive, on diversion of 12.5 percent of the planted acreage (10 acres in this case, or half of the diverted or idled acres), a payment of \$1.50 per bushel times the yield times 10 percent of his base acreage, totaling, in this example, \$1,050, in addition to the deficiency payment of \$1,176, English explained.

Under the PIK program the farmer could agree to take an additional 10 to 30 percent of his base corn acreage out of production. He would receive certificates worth 80 percent of his normal yield, English added.

In the example, English said, the average yield of 70 bushels per acre times 80 percent would equal 56 bushels per acre of PIK diversion.

Farmers are being offered a similar program for wheat with different diversion figures.

## Kenansville Area Chamber Of Commerce Sixth Annual Meeting

A positive approach to improve community service through economic progress and cultural growth was the theme of newly-elected Chamber President Douglas Judge at Friday's sixth annual Kenansville Area Chamber of Commerce meeting held at The Country Squire.

Judge charged the new officers, directors and members with maintaining and continuing the excellent record of continued growth in the Chamber's membership and to progress in other areas. He named project chairpersons and committees for the coming year.

Speaker at the banquet was State Representative Wendell Murphy. Murphy gave details on the Safe Roads bill, better known as the "Drunk Driving Bill." He stated he believed there may be changes in some areas of the bill, but believes there will be a Safe Roads

## Brother-In-Law Of Kenansville Women Beaten In Theft Dies Of Injuries

JACKSONVILLE - The owner of an auto repair shop, beaten in a robbery Wednesday night, died early Thursday of head injuries.

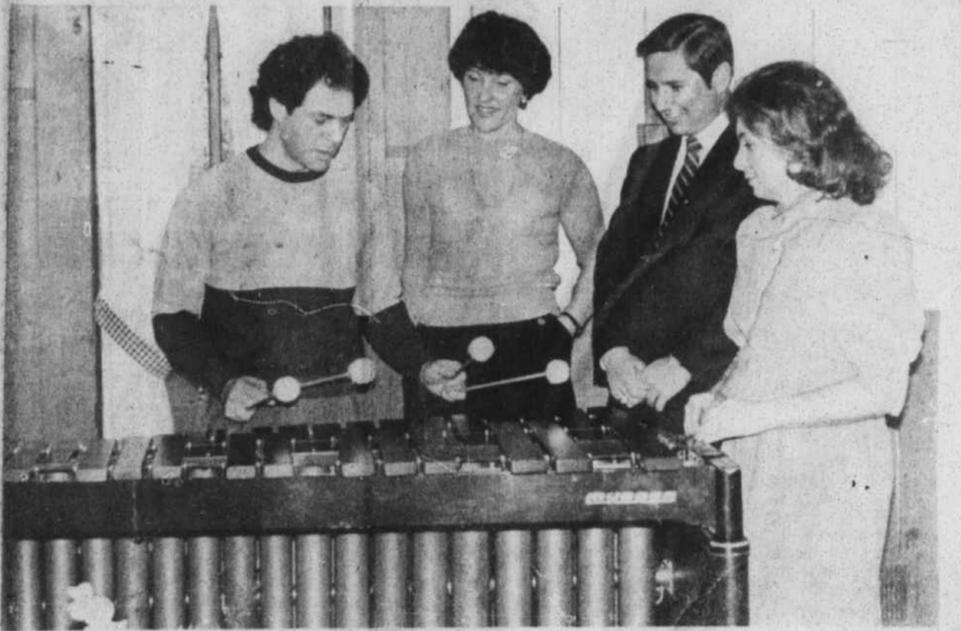
Authorities said Harry Fountain, 56, owner of Harry's Wheel Alignment, was found in the shop by his son-in-law about 10:30 p.m., after Fountain's wife called to say he hadn't come home.

Onslow County Sheriff Billy G. Woodward said Fountain was conscious when found but was so confused that he could not talk about what happened. He was taken to Onslow Memorial Hospital, where he died at 3:36 Thursday morning.

Woodward said the robber, who took Fountain's wallet, apparently entered the shop through the back door.

Authorities have put together a composite drawing of a man wanted for questioning in connection with the murder.

Fountain is the brother-in-law of Macy Brinson of Kenansville.



DUPLIN COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL CELEBRATES ITS FUND DRIVE MONTH - As Leigh Howard Stevens demonstrates his marimba to Arts Council board members and fund drive chairman, the Duplin County Arts Council revs up for its month-long fund-raising campaign. Wendell Murphy is this year's over-all chairman of the drive. Area chairpersons will be announced next week. "All of our monies raised go towards programming and visiting artists

in our county," stated Merle Creech, executive director. The fund drive kick-off will be Sunday, Feb. 13 in the courtroom of the Duplin County Courthouse in Kenansville at 3:30 p.m. Left to right are: Stevens (CART artist visiting Duplin), Merle Creech, N.C. Representative Wendell Murphy, fund-drive chairman, and Cindy Watson, residency director for CART.



Truck operated by Dill Smith



Car driven by Lloyd Hamilton

Photos by Lynda Stroud

## Head-On Hurts Two, One Faces DUI Charge

An Albertson man was charged with driving under the influence and carrying an unsealed liquor bottle in his car after a Thursday morning head-on collision on N.C. 11 left him and the driver of a lumber truck in critical condition.

According to Highway Patrol trooper Randy Ham-

monds, a 1978 Mercury driven by Lloyd Ransom Hamilton of Route 1, Albertson, veered left of the center line approximately four miles south of Pink Hill.

Hamilton's car struck a 1962 Ford truck driven by George Dillon Smith, 40, of Pink Hill. The truck went 30 feet down an embankment and hit an oak tree. The truck's load of lumber

crushed the cab and pinned the driver and his two passengers.

Smith is in critical condition in the intensive care unit of Duplin General Hospital. Hamilton is in critical but stable condition.

The truck's passengers, Frank Gordon, 46, and James King, 46, both of Pink Hill, were treated and released.

## Duplin Man Convicted In Rape, Assault Case

Russell Holden, 27 of Warsaw, was convicted of rape and assault on a female by and Duplin County Superior Court jury last Wednesday.

Holden was sentenced to

12 years in prison on the rape charge and two years on the assault charge by Judge Bradford Tillery. The sentences will be served concurrently.

Holden appealed and was returned to the Duplin

County Jail in lieu of \$50,000 bond. He was charged with raping a 19-year-old woman in Warsaw Sept. 16. She testified that she thought Holden was a policeman because he had a portable red light in his car.



NEW BUILDING AT JSTC - James Sprunt Technical College has an attractive new addition to its campus, a 2,400-square-foot general purpose storage building. The 60x40 facility is a pre-engineered building by Pascoe and was built by Jackson Builders, Inc. of Goldsboro. The Duplin County commissioners allocated the \$43,875 over a two-year period to construct the facility. Robert Lee, business manager at JSTC,

stated that this building is providing much-needed storage space which allows the college to store equipment and supplies which in the past took up space in the instructional area. Lee further stated that the new building has improved security and improved the appearance of the campus. Matthew Merritt (left), JSTC building maintenance superintendent, and Robert Lee (right), JSTC business manager, inspect the new storage facility at JSTC.