

FIRE LOSS ON THE FARM

ABOUT THREE-FOURTHS OF LOSSES ARE DUE TO EASILY PREVENTABLE CAUSES.

These Facts and Total Absence of Fire Protection Call For Greatest Care and Watchfulness on Part of Farmers.

Over one-half of all fire losses is due to carelessness and easily preventable causes; on farm about three-fourths.

Farm property is insured at only a small part of its value, seldom more than two-thirds, so that the losses, over and above insurance paid, are relatively larger than in cities. The loss of lives in fires is also larger in the country.

These facts and the total absence of fire protection call for the greatest care and watchfulness on the part of the farmers.

Let us consider some of these needless and preventable fire losses in the order of their importance.

Lightning leads the list in number, although it has been demonstrated that a good lightning rod system, properly installed and well grounded, is an almost sure protection.

Defective flues and stovepipes, stoves near wood, and over-heated stoves are responsible for the large majority of farm residence fires. This is also true of fires reported to us as "cause unknown," as the additional tell-tale facts are usually given, "started in attic" or "started near chimney."

Annually quite a number of lives perish in these fires, sacrificed on the altar of carelessness.

Every chimney flue should have an area of not less than sixty-four inches, and should be lined throughout with fire brick, hard burned terra cotta, or fire-clay lue lining.

Careful inspection and prompt repair of defective flues, and asbestos or metal protection for all woodwork near stoves and pipes would reduce this sacrifice of lives and property to the minimum.

Children playing with matches are responsible each year for quite a number of these fires, and the sacrifice of several young lives, although matches could and should be kept from children.

Smokers' carelessness is responsible for many of these fires, and will continue to be until farmers and their help refrain from smoking in and around barns and near grain, hay and strawbacks.

Mrs. O'Leary's cow is about the only critter that has moved from Chicago onto the farm, and she is up to her old tricks, kicking over the lantern, which, of course, could have been safely hung up.

Quite a number of fires are due to engines stationed too near stacks and buildings.

Carelessness with gasoline calls for its toll of lives and property; so does kerosene used in starting and quickening a fire.

Just a few prevention suggestions:

Because of the absence of all fire protection, fireproof construction of farm buildings, especially residences, is of prime importance.

Farmers are not limited to a small building site, and it is folly to place the buildings so close together that fire in one of them can make a clean sweep.

The time is coming when the substantial farmer will plan for an adequate water supply for domestic use and for fire protection. All, surely, can afford a ladder to reach the roofs, some fire buckets and a few chemical fire extinguishers, which can be bought for a few dollars.

Locking doors at night will keep out the tramp and his dangerous pipe.

The automobile should be housed in a separate shed; so also should gasoline.

Most important of all, however, is eternal care and watchfulness.—T. M. Purtell, State Fire Marshall, Missouri.

Battle of the Herrings.

The battle of the herrings was the comical name given to a fight between an English force and a French detachment not far from Orleans in 1429. The English were conveying a large quantity of supplies, mainly herrings, for it was Lent, to the army that was besieging Orleans. The English had 1,600 men, the French 6,000. The former repulsed the assailants and saved the herrings, so the battle was named in honor of the supplies.—London Telegraph.

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