



**BLAZE**- Burning trash got out of hand Thursday afternoon and an outbuilding burned to the ground before North Raeford firemen extinguished the blaze. The fire flared up at a home on the Blythe Dairy Farm west of the city.

## Accent On Agriculture

Rising marketing spreads continue to account for a major share of the increase in retail food prices. Government reports show that for all of 1975, rising marketing spreads accounted for almost three-fourths of the rise in retail food prices.

Similar trends are apparent in the Government's market basket figures. The retail cost of a market basket of food produced on American farms rose to a record of \$1,876 in 1975 over 1974 -- an increase of \$126, only \$35 of it went to the farmers who produced the food included in the market basket.

The remaining \$91, which amounts to 72 percent of the increase, went to middlemen who process, transport and sell the food. These figures do not necessarily mean that the middleman is making huge profits from retail food sales. Much of the increase in marketing and retail costs are due to government-fed inflation and increased labor costs in the food business -- all the way from the farm to the consumer's table.

The steady rise in retail food prices, however, is in the face of declines in the market prices of cattle, hogs and broilers from the highs of last fall.

The parity ratio for 1975 also reflects the decline in some farm prices. The parity ratio for 1975 averaged 73 percent, the lowest in four years, according to preliminary estimates by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The ratio averaged 81 percent in 1974, and 88 percent in 1973 when prices of major farm commodities, including cattle, hit peak levels. The ratio was 74 percent in 1972 and 70 percent in 1971.

While some economists discount the parity ratio as a measuring stick of how well farmers are doing because they say it is outdated, the ratio accurately reflects the downward trend of net farm income.

One thing for certain from all these figures is that farmers are not to blame for the increase in retail food prices in the past several years.

## SCS Activities

The following is a letter received from James H. Canterbury, State Resource Conservationist, directed to all District Conservationists in North Carolina.

"We have just received new information from the U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service regarding the Farm Pond Fish Stocking Program. The information provided is as follows:

"On April 16, 1975, we wrote to you advising of the impending policy on fish distribution which would preclude providing fish for private farm ponds. We advised you at that time that we would not

provide fish for this purpose after the spring of 1976 and that applications received after Aug. 31, 1975, would not be honored.

However, the above policy has not yet been finalized; and, pending final approval we will continue the Farm Pond Program at least through the spring of 1977. Consequently, we will process fish applications through Aug. 31, 1976, with subsequent stocking in the fall of 1976 and the spring of 1977. Fish applications received in our office since Aug. 31, 1975, have been held in a pending status, but we are currently in the process of notifying these applicants that their requests will be filled during the 1976-77 stocking season.

The finality of the Aug. 31, 1976, cutoff date is contingent upon action of the Department of the Interior. Continuance of the Farm Pond Program for another year does not represent a relaxation of the Fish and Wildlife Service's effort to reduce expenditure of resources in an area where the benefits accrue mainly to the landowner. The Service will endeavor to place its resources in the areas of broadest public benefit, and therefore applications for private waters will receive the lowest priority assignment for available fish.

We apologize for the uncertainty of the present situation; however, we feel we must react according to prevailing circumstances.

This should alleviate the immediate problem of fish availability and will give commercial fish producers additional time to increase production. We will keep you informed of any changes in this position by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

For further information please contact your local conservationist, Furman O. Clark, whose office is in the post office building in Raeford.

## Cotton Activity Topic Of Meeting

Highlights of current National Cotton Council activities will be featured during a meeting in Laurinburg Mar. 1, beginning at 6 P.M. in the Holiday Inn.

Marshall Grant, Garysburg, chairman of the North Carolina State Unit, will preside. The meeting is one of a series being held across the Belt, and Grant urged all people who have an interest in cotton to attend.

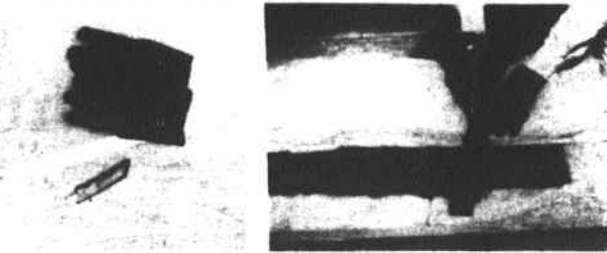
The program will include reports on cotton's competitive situation, export opportunities, improving public attitudes toward cotton, developments in production and marketing, research and merchandising effort being carried out by Cotton Incorporated, and Council Washington activities.

Reports will be given by Council staff members.

## Wrecks Total 16

Sixteen accidents, including one fatality, were reported to the highway patrol in January, according to the monthly report. 20 accidents were recorded for January, 1975.

Total number of accidents for the district, which includes Richmond and Scotland counties, was 84. One fatality occurred in Scotland County.



1-2-3 -- Insulating your attic and realizing savings on heating and cooling costs is as easy as one, two, three. Start with a sharp knife and a straight edge to cut into the proper lengths.

## Attic Insulation Easy

By Willie Featherstone  
Assistant Agricultural Agent

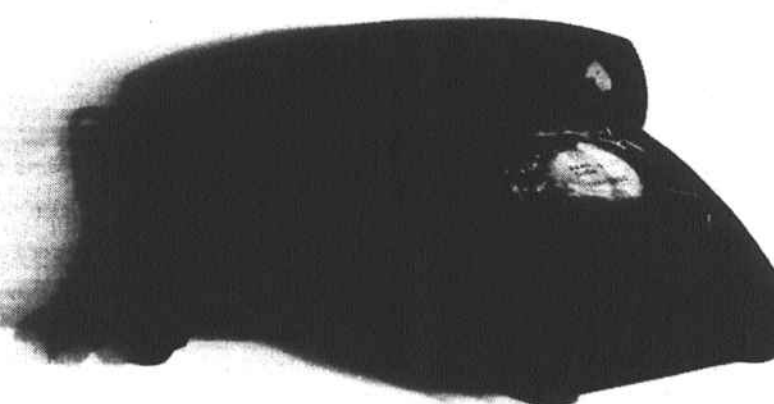
Installing attic insulation is an easy do-it-yourself project that can reduce home energy and fuel waste up to 30 per cent. The only tools required are a sharp knife, a straight-edge and measuring rule,

and a pair of gloves. Actual installation is simply a matter of unrolling the insulation, cutting it into the required length and then placing the material between the joists on the attic floor. For further information contact the Hoke County Extension Service at 875-3461.

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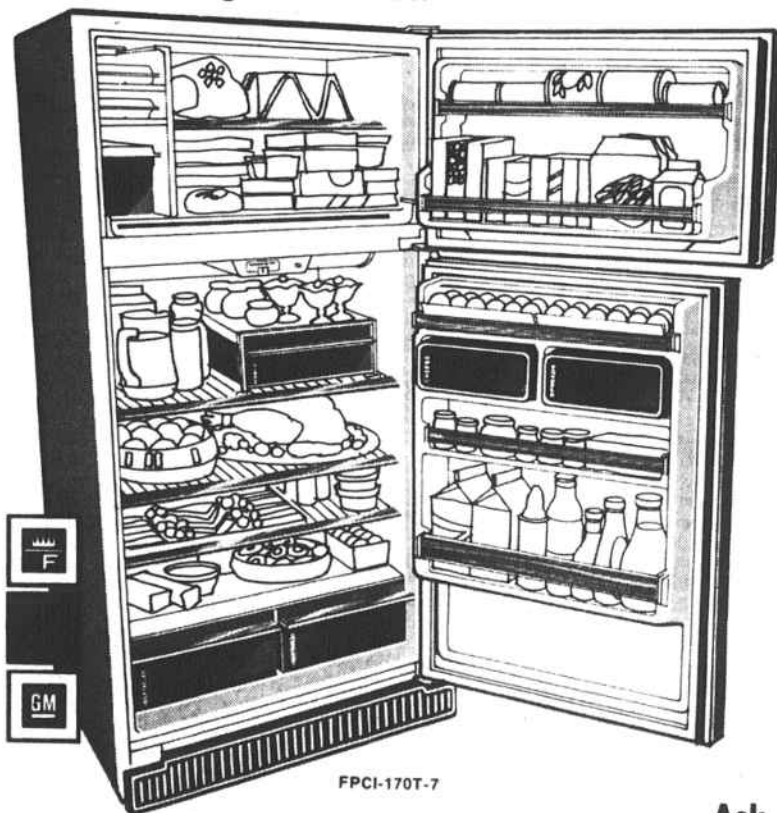
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