

Forest Fire Damages Held Down In Spite Of Record Number in 1930

While North Carolina was setting up a drought record in 1929, a high mark in the number of forest fires occurring in the State was established. A total of 3,596 fires, the largest number in the eight-year period of records of the State Forest Service, was reported from the 45 co-operating counties last year.

The report showed an estimated damage of \$545,481 from forest fires in these counties for the year which burned over 305,529 acres. Area burned over, however, was somewhat lower than for the smaller number of counties co-operating in 1926, also a period of extremely dry weather and bad fires. The damage total, on the other hand, is considerably lower than for the years 1923, 1924, 1926 and 1928.

Last year, the forest land under protection amounted to 10,025,370 acres, the largest since fire control was inaugurated in the State. The 305,529 acres burned over represents 3.04 percent of the total under protection. In only three years was the percentage of the area burned over less than in 1926. These included the favorable years of 1928 and 1929 when the fire hazards were considerably less and the amount of rainfall much higher; and 1927 when the percentage was only slightly lower, being 3.01 percent.

The fact that the warden force, in the face of the tremendous handicap of extreme dryness was able to keep the average fire to a small area in comparison with the territory protected is evidence of the value of the service and the increased efficiency of the organization. That the wardens were able to make such a good showing in a year when conditions were against them proves that without efforts to check the unusually large number of flames, the damage would have been incalculably larger.

Considering the fact that fewer than one percent of the total of fires originated from natural causes, it is readily seen that the primary problem is still education. Of the 3,596 fires occurring during the year, only 32 were ascribed to lightning, the only source not traceable to human causes. The remainder were preventable.

Chas. H. Fiory, assistant forester in charge of fire control, in an analysis notes a reduction in the number originating from "brush burners" and "lumbering." On the other hand, "inconsideration" and "smoking" grew as sources of fires in

comparison with the average for the eight-year record period. He thinks that many of the fires credited to smokers were started by hunters.

The report showed 157 prosecutions for violations of the forest laws, and 353 people paying the costs of suppression of fires for which they were responsible. Also 33 landowners paid suppression costs of fires starting on their property.

One of the most encouraging features of the report is that 5,399 fire fighters volunteered services in fighting the fires.

During the year, a total of \$39,709 was sent in controlling fires occurring in the co-operating counties. The cost of fighting the average fire was \$11. The individual lesson from this is that the public paid \$11 for each careless act resulting in a forest fire. This should be a proper regard for public concern to awaken the conscientious of every person in forest fire protection.

Two Things Essential In Corn Growing

Proper plant food and plenty of moisture are two things essential in growing profitable yields of corn this year.

"In this part of the country, we have sufficient rainfall to make two or three average crops of corn every year, but the rainfall does not always come when it is needed," says C. R. Hudson, veteran farm demonstration worker at State College. "The problem then is to catch this rainfall and retain it for use in dry weather. This means deep breaking of the land, the turning under of clover crops two or three weeks before planting, and the maintaining of a moisture-saving mulch. After the corn is up, deep cultivation will cause heavy loss of moisture and will seriously injure the corn after it is from one to two feet high."

Mr. Hudson says using a turn plow for cultivating corn is little short of criminal. It destroys a large percentage of the small feed roots and throws up ridges that dry out quickly. Every good corn grower cultivates his crop shallow and on the level but often enough to keep the soil loose on top.

If a cover crop is turned under early before planting the crop, it will help to save moisture and will furnish humus and some nitrogen. One reason why corn yields in North Carolina are so low, in Mr. Hudson's opinion, is the lack of cover crop turned under.

Then, too, he says it is never advisable to put all of the fertilizer under the corn at planting time. Use

the split application. Otherwise much of the plant food may be used up before the corn needs it most. The nitrate of soda is best applied when the corn is about two feet high. Earlier applications do not pay so well.

It is impossible to produce a good crop without a plentiful supply of plant food and sufficient water to dissolve this food and carry it up into stalks where it is needed, he concludes.

Grow Some Corn For Hogging Down

Having a good crop of corn to hog down by pigs fattened between January 1 and March 1 will make that time pigs can be carried until the new corn is ready and will then make sufficient growth to market around September 1 when the market is highest.

"An early maturing variety of corn will be sufficiently mature to turn the hogs on by August 1 in most of the State laying out of Italeigh," says W. W. Shay, avian extension specialist at State College. "If this corn is sowed for a yield equal to the capacity of the land, an inter-planted crop will reduce the yield as shown by results of this and other experiment stations. If the corn is supplemented with fish meal, the amount of pork produced will be increased over that produced without such supplementary feed. Hogs cannot balance their feed with standing corn and soybeans only and if they did, they would be worth one or two dollars less per hundred pounds owing to the resultant soft or oily condition of their bodies."

Judging from present indications there will be more corn hogged down this year in North Carolina than during any previous year, says Shay. This is an economical way to harvest a good crop of corn, will save considerable labor and will leave much valuable fertility in the ground.

However, corn to be hogged down should not be inter-cropped with soybeans. Not only does this depress the corn yield but eating soybeans lowers the quality of the pork to the packer. He penalties soft-bodied hogs. Soybeans also depress the acre yield of corn. The more soybeans produced, the less corn and the less hard pork, Mr. Shay says.

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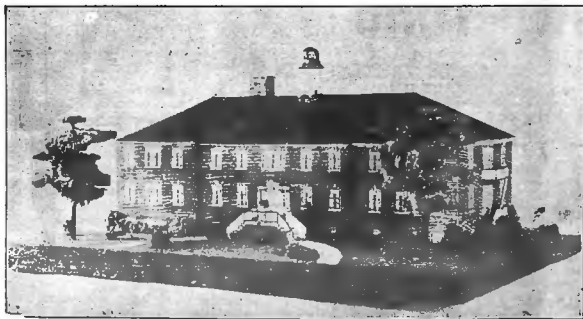
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