

Forest Fires Nationally Hit Low; Numbers Increase in Northeast

Forest fires were held to a record low of 83,400 nationwide in 1957, breaking the 100,000 mark for the first time, the U S Department of Agriculture announced today.

The statistics compiled by USDA's Forest Service are based on reports from its field offices, State Foresters, the Department of the Interior, and the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Last year's record compares with 143,000 forest fires in 1956 and 200,800 ten years ago in 1947. The area burned was almost halved dropping from 6,605,900 acres in 1956 to 3,409,000 in 1957. Ten years ago fires burned 23,225,932 acres.

MUCH CREDIT FOR the 1957 record is due the American public. USDA commended three programs for outstanding contributions to forest fire prevention. One is the Smokey Bear Campaign sponsored by its Forest Service and the State Foresters under the leadership of the Advertising Council.

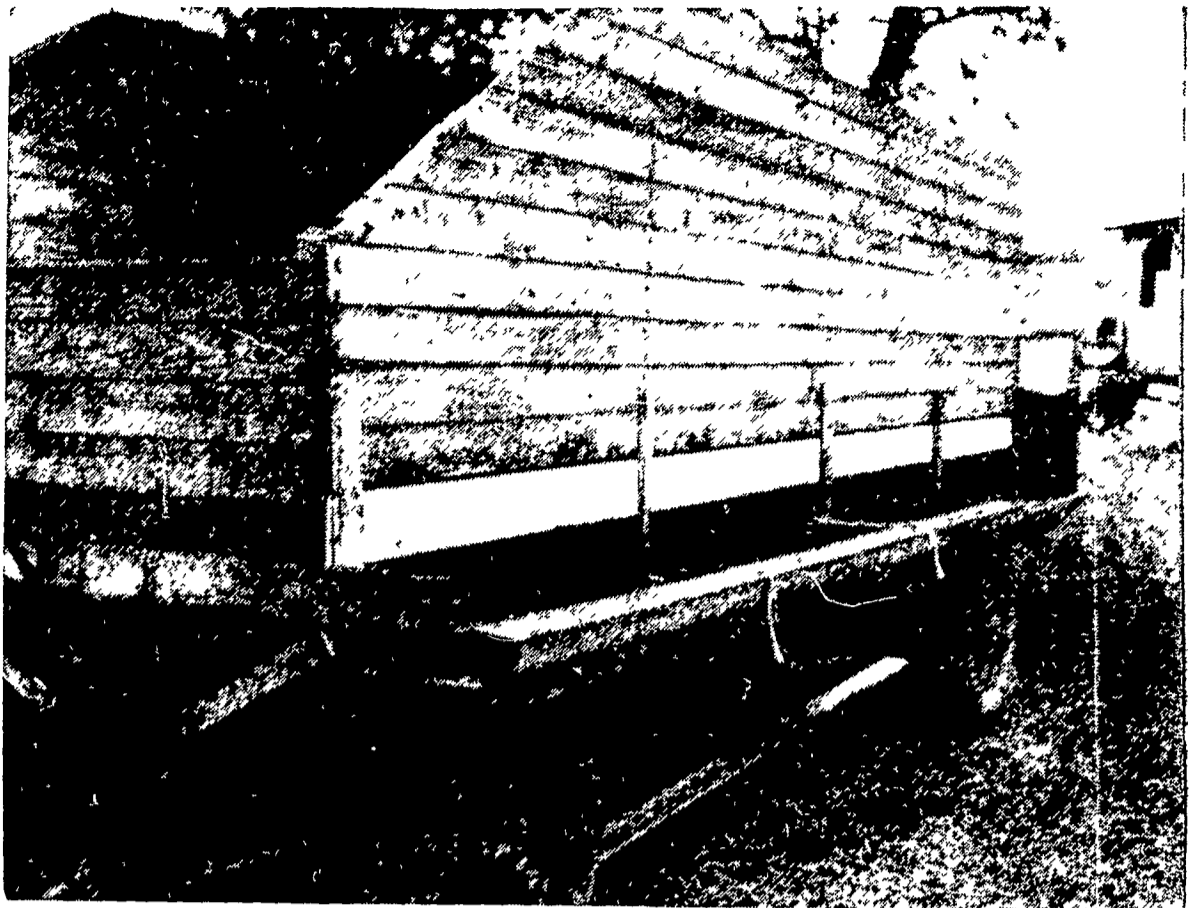
Another is the Keep Green Programs conducted by forest industries and the states. The third is the work of the American Forest Assn in spearheading the Southern Forest Fire Conference in New Orleans two years ago which did much to decrease fires in the South.

The combined efforts of these organizations have made people

fire prevention conscious. In appreciation of their work the president of the American Forest Products Industries, the president of the American Forestry Assn and the Chairman of the Board of the Advertising Council were given special recognition at the White House.

THE GREATEST REDUCTION in the number of forest fires occurred in the South where 44,190 were reported in 1957 as compared to 102,700 in 1956. While weather conditions were favorable to low fire records generally, the fire fighting agencies believe that the southern Forest Fire Prevention Conference of 1956 in New Orleans contributed greatly to the reductions. At the conference representatives of law enforcement agencies, women's clubs, industries, state conservation agencies, and other leading individuals discussed mutual problems and possible solutions.

Law enforcement efforts adopted after the Conference caused incendiary fires in the South to drop from 20,800 in 1956 to 11,760 in 1957. States and even counties have held their own forest fire prevention conferences and have come up with active prevention programs which they publicized locally. As a further effort, the Southeastern Fire Compact was activated last fall whereby the ten states from—Virginia and Kentucky, south, and east of the



NO HANDLING OF green chop is required by using this self-feeding wagon designed and built by Jesse Stoltzfus, R1 Paradise. Stoltzfus fills the wagon with chop in the morning and pulls it into the lot for the animals to feed. One or two boards can be removed at the bottom to

allow the grass to fall down. Already planning an improvement, Stoltzfus says that if a deeper trough were provided, there would be less waste from the animals pulling chop out and onto the ground. (LF Photo)

Mississippi River, can exchange men and equipment in case of emergencies, thus strengthening control programs.

THE SEVERAL HOT spots

around the country last year however, indicate that the fire control job is not over. New England and New York last May had to close the woods because fires were so numerous. The fire record for the year in the Eastern region, Maine through Kentucky, showed an increase in the number of fires from 15,000 in 1956 to 19,400 in 1957.

Alaska, not included in the totals above, had one of its worst years with 264 fires burning 4,718 372 acres.

Pennsylvania fire numbers almost tripled, jumping to 1,254 from 562 in 1956.

Debris burners were the No. 1 cause of fires in 1957.

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