

Senate ag committee protests proposed gas allocation

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Seventeen members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry have sharply protested a proposed natural gas allocation rule that they say could imperil essential food production.

On a motion by Senator Walter D. Huddleston (D-Ky.), the Committee recently voted to send a letter of protest to Charles M. Curtis, chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. This agency is developing curtailment rules called for under the Natural Gas Policy Act of 1978 to be used in the event of future gas shortages.

The letter charges that interim curtailment rules published by the Commission fail to comply with the 1978 Act or previous Congressional attempts to assure priority treatment for agricultural uses of natural gas.

"We do not accept the idea that the agricultural priority section of the Natural Gas Policy Act can be ignored,"

the senators' letter said. "That section was purposefully and carefully drafted to assure American agriculture a high priority in natural gas allocation.

"It is our belief that the failure to provide an agriculture priority and 100 per cent of current essential needs would be illegal as well as inappropriate, considering the importance of food and agricultural

production to the economy of our nation and the welfare of our and the rest of the world," the letter said.



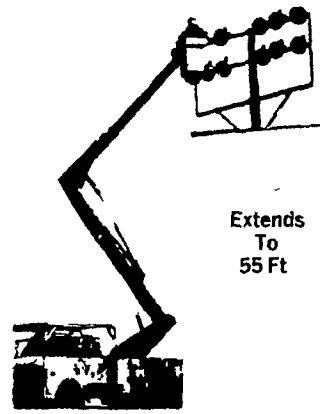
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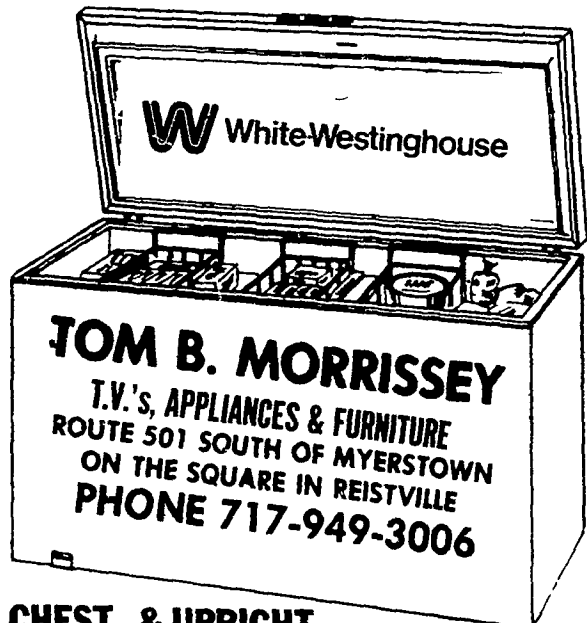
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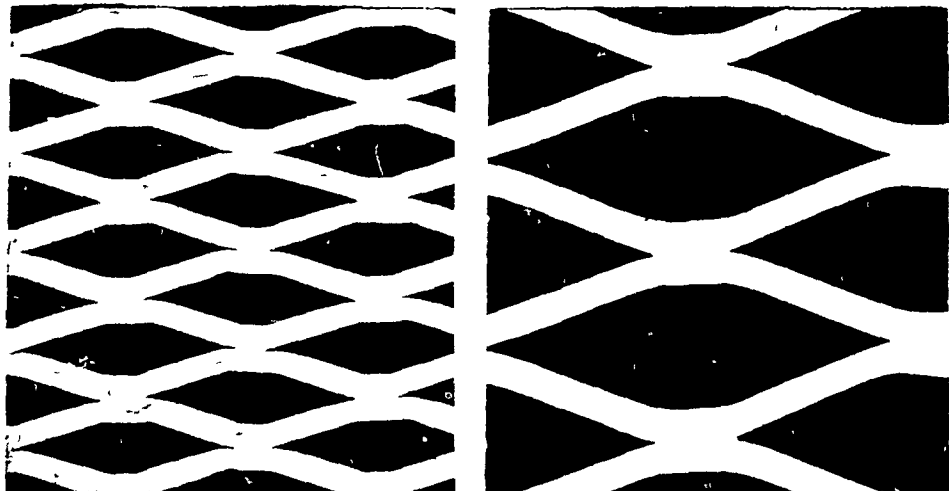
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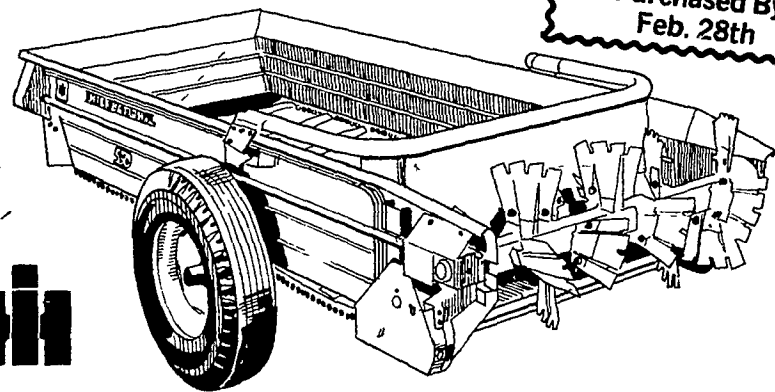
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