

## North Dakota's Fire Loss Trend

By  
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**T**HERE is a serious upswing in fires on North Dakota farms. In the past six months, since July 1, 1946, there has been more than \$75,000 worth of farm property lost in fires. In the entire preceding year—July 1, 1945, to June 30, 1946, this loss was less than \$46,500.

On the other hand, city property loss is on the downward trend. Comparing figures for the corresponding times, they show that for the 1945-46 fiscal year the loss was slightly more than \$728,000 and for the last six months of 1946, less than \$96,000.

The loss of life in fire speaks the most alarming message. Although the figures are not broken down into city and rural, there have been 26 North Dakotans killed by fire since July 1, 1946. In the preceding year, only 14 died this way.

Here is a tabulation of these figures:

### North Dakota Fire Losses

	July 1, 1945, to June 30, 1946	July 1, 1946, to December 21, 1946
Persons Killed	14	26
Rural Property Loss	\$ 46,455.30	\$75,100.52
Loss Other Than Rural Property	\$728,107.41	\$95,993.67

According to the State Fire Marshal who is responsible for the compiling of these figures, 37 percent of this past year's fires were caused by faulty heating systems, including defects in furnace, piping and chimney.

To reduce this one biggest factor in rural fire loss, farmers must thoroughly inspect and correct their home heating systems. Rusted-out stove pipes must be replaced. Chimneys and stove pipes should be cleaned, too—at least once a year. Inspect the furnace jacket in the home and make sure it is sound.

Never store ashes, hot from

the furnace, in anything but metal containers, and always away from paper, wood or other burnable materials. The ash pile itself, must be located a safe distance from the buildings.

Never pile kindling wood or trash against the furnace.

Above all, apply common sense in using the draft on your furnace to "force" extra heat.

Second place on the fire tragedy list is claimed by matches and smoking. These caused 19 percent of all North Dakota fires this past year. All farmers should nail up and enforce "NO SMOKING" signs in the barn, and at the gasoline pump or barrel. There are many other places, of course, but these two are the starting points of most farm fires due to matches and smoking.

Finally, never use kerosene or gasoline to "quicken" the fire in the kitchen range. Some North Dakota farm people die doing this every year. It may take longer using paper and kindling, but it's safe.

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