

## Electric blanket safety

Snow and cold nights have finally come! One of the easier ways to cut down on the expenses of heating your home during the winter is to turn down the thermostat at night and either throw more blankets on, or use an electric blanket.

Although an electric blanket may look like an ordinary cloth blanket, its electric parts and wiring mean special care must be taken with its care and use. The following safety precautions are recommended for electric blanket users:

-Read the manufacturer's instructions before using the blanket.

-Don't use the blanket on an infant, helpless person or anyone insensitive to heat.

-Do not tuck in the wired area of the blanket. Overheating can result in the risk of fire between the mattress and the box spring.

-Don't use pins. They may damage the wiring.

-Keep the control away from an open window. A cold draft may affect the operation of the thermostat so that a higher temperature than desired may your baby. Baby should hear -Avoid bunching or folding the blanket when in use to prevent overheating.

-Turn the blanket off when not in use.

-Unless otherwise marked and instructed, do not dry-clean

your electric blanket. The solvents used may cause the blanket's insulation to deteriorate.

-Always follow the instructions for the care and laundering of your electric blanket.

-If you have a problem in the operation of the blanket stop using it and consult the manufacturer or the dealer.

-As with any other electric appliance check its cords and connectors for wear.

Use blankets that display the UL Listed label—it means that the design of the blanket has been investigated and found to meet nationally recognized safety standards.

## Extension Notes



from Pennie Little and Clint Jacks

## Beef cattle market report

The cattle market during the past month has been characterized with liberal supplies of market-ready cattle. The wholesale beef trade has been somewhat depressed, interest rates have reached the 20's, and the New York and Chicago futures markets have undergone one of the broadest and steepest declines on record. Prices declined on the futures markets for almost all commodities from wheat to cotton to cattle to gold, reflecting even higher interest rates, concern over a possible Soviet invasion in Poland — and, of course, the problem of traders being forced to sell some of their holdings to meet their bets. All this has put a cloud over the cash markets,

even though most analysts agree that cash prices would not start their rebound until after the first of the year.

Yield grade continues to be a large price-determining factor as Cchoice yield grade 2 and 3 have many outlets, but the back-up of yield grade 4's are finding few outlets.

Feedlot supplies of market-ready cattle continue to be current. Buyers in some areas were forced to leave their respective buying areas in order to get enough cattle for immediate kill requirements. In fact, one large central Washington plant shut down due to the "lack of cattle." In all, there seems to be adequate cattle to meet the current demand.

## Popcorn an unbeatable snack

Popcorn has a lot going for it. Not only does it taste good, but it is also one of the cheapest snack foods available. Each cup of unpopped kernels make 30 to 35 cups of popcorn and a quart of popped popcorn costs between three and eight cents. At such a bargain basement price, it's no wonder Americans consume about 33 quarts of popcorn per person every year.

Popcorn comes in two varieties, white and yellow. One pops as well as the other. The yellow type usually has bigger kernels which pop bigger than the white. The smaller white popcorn is usually more tender. After long term storage, popcorn may not pop as well because it has lost some moisture. However, it can be reconditioned. Simply fill a

quart jar three-fourths full of popcorn and add one tablespoon of water. Cover and shake often until water is absorbed. In two to four days, the popcorn should be ready for good popping and eating.

Remember, also that there are only 25 calories per cup of popped popcorn. For each tablespoon margarine added, calorie content climbs by 100!

## Eleven steps to good reading

Were you satisfied with your child's recent report card? If there were some problems in the area of reading, then the ability to read is almost a necessary skill for living in our modern society. It is also a magic key to learning and to developing imagination and creativity.

All parents want their children to read, but good readers are not made by just wishing. Good readers are guided and developed. And that development is strongly influenced by parents during five years of informal "learning" before children start school. Learning to be a good reader starts long before your child even sees a book. It begins with the baby who enjoys the sound of a parent's friendly voice—talking, singing, rhyming—and begins to develop language and rhythm skills even before he or she understands that the sounds have meanings. Here are some things you can practice with your child or pass on to a new

mother.

**Step 1:** Talk a lot—and sing to your baby. Baby should hear rhythmic nursery rhymes and songs from the day of birth. By seven or eight months, baby may be ready for a simple picture book. **The right time to begin is when your baby is ready to listen.** This first introduction to books will probably involve simply pointing to a picture and naming the object: "Ball," "Dog," but soon you will both enjoy the addition of sounds: "Bumpety Bump," "Bow-wow."

**Step 2:** Begin using books when the child is ready to listen. **Step 3:** Play with sounds with the baby. By 12 or 14 months baby may look at a picture while you read a short verse. By 18 to 24 months, baby may even turn the pages as you read (or say) a nursery rhyme or jingle.

Using a book while a baby is so young is important; it makes lap sitting, snuggling and shared cloneness happen. And

baby begins to associate the pleasure of closeness with books. This is important to future attitudes about reading. Reading can be a pleasure or a chore, depending upon the way it is introduced.

**Step 4.** Make reading time a shared pleasure. Make this a time when your child gets your complete attention.

As your baby gets older, plan a regular reading time into the daily routine. Let your child pick the first story. Be ready to read it again and again if asked—and you will be, for little children love the familiar. When you introduce a new story, let your child ask questions and play with words and ideas.

Pause occasionally and talk about the pictures. If your child seems bored with the book or reading, stop.

**Step 5.** Reading time is also idea time, looking time, and love time.

By three and four most children talk a lot. Listen. Encourage your child to talk of

each day's activity. Ask simple questions that will expand the narrative and increase language skills. "You saw a dog?" "What color was it?" "Where do you suppose it was going?"

Four-year olds like simple word games. Make up stories together in which all the words start with the same sound or use rhyming words or words that imitate. Let your child "read" to you and show him or her that answers to "why" questions can be found in books.

**Step 6.** Encourage your child to talk.

**Step 7.** Speak clearly yourself, to your child.

**Step 8.** Play games that will encourage clear speech.

Four- and five-year-olds love to explore. These are good years in which to provide experiences for your child to bring to reading. Visits to the zoo, supermarket or post office, planting a garden or looking at a family album or TV program can develop new

interests that can be gratified with books.

**Step 9.** Help your child find books that match his or her interest and experience.

Some parents spend large sums of money on books and children's magazines. Usually, a few become favorites. Others gather dust on bookshelves. You can encourage reading, and obtain books without spending large amounts of money. How? Get to know your library—and take your child for visits. At first you will carry your baby as you make your own selections. Later your child will select books, too (by age three). Surround your child with good books. Enjoy reading yourself—both alone and with your child—and you will have built a strong foundation for a lifetime of satisfying reading.

**Step 10.** Use the public library as a friendly and exciting resource.

**Step 11.** Set a good example for your child by enjoying books yourself.



## Sign up for 4-H Clubs

**\*Decorative Painting Club—** Leader, Kathleen Moses. Meetings every other Thursday. Next meeting Feb. 12th, 5:00-6:30 p.m. Kathleen Moses' home. 3rd-6th grade boys and girls welcome.

**\*Home Skills club—** Leader, Mary Yordy. Meetings every Thursday, 3:30-5:00 p.m. in the

4-H Room above the Daycare Center. Next meeting Feb. 3rd. 3rd-6th grade boys and girls welcome.

**\*Beginning Clothing—** leader, Pat Smith. Meetings every other Monday, 3:30-5:00 p.m. in the 4-H Room above the Daycare Center. Next meeting is Feb. 16th. 4th-6th grade girls

and boys welcome.

**\*Leatherwork club—** Leader, Carmen Pinkal. Meetings every other Wednesday, 6:30-8:00 p.m. in the 4-H Room above the Daycare Center. Next meeting Feb. 4th. 4th-6th grade girls and boys welcome.

**\*Beadwork Club—** Leader, Caroline Tohet. Meeting every

Wednesday 3:30-5:00 p.m. at the Community Center. Next meeting Feb. 4th. Age 9-18 boys and girls welcome.

**\*Creative Arts Club—** Leader, Gwen Leonard. Meetings every other Tuesday 6:30-8:00 p.m. at Gwen Leonard's home. Next meeting Feb. 5th. 4th-6th grade girls and boys welcome.

To become a member of one of these clubs sign-up at the Extension Office in the Old Administration Building, call in your desire to be a 4-H Club member to the Extension Office 553-1161 Ext. 238, or go to the next club meeting of your choice.