

Winter Brings A Silent Killer

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) - Carbon monoxide, known as the silent killer, is an indoor pollutant that becomes more of a hazard as winter approaches, says an expert in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences.

Carbon monoxide reacts with the hemoglobin in blood, reducing the body's capacity to distribute oxygen throughout the body. In high concentrations, it will cause unconsciousness and death.

Carbon monoxide is one of the deadliest indoor pollutants because it is colorless and odorless and can build up concentrations within a single room or throughout the entire house. The symptoms of low-level concentrations—fatigue, dizziness, headaches and nausea—often are mistaken as individuals' maladies.

"People often don't read the clues properly. You assign the headache to a stressful day. You assign the dizziness to too little coffee," said Adams Penn State professor. "You go to bed in this polluted environment to get better, and if you're lucky, you'll wake up in the morning."

Adams said carbon monoxide is produced by combustion, par-

ticularly the burning of wood and fossil fuels. Such products as woodstoves, fireplaces, chimneys, stoves, furnaces, water heaters and kerosene or gas space heaters can become deadly if homeowners are not vigilant.

Adams said every homeowner should invest in carbon monoxide detectors (which are very different than smoke detectors). She recommends placing one in each bedroom at a minimum.

Homeowners can check for carbon monoxide themselves, Adams said, by careful observation. If any gas-operated appliance burns with a yellow flame, the appliance needs adjustment. "If the flame isn't blue, it's item to call for service," Adams said.

Woodstoves and fireplaces also are carbon monoxide producers, and Adams says only heating professionals or masonry contractors should check for possible leaks. "Homeowners can check for creosote buildup and bird and animal nests," she says.

Adams says that homeowners should ensure that fireplaces have a proper air draft. In addi-

tion, all open fireplaces should have glass fire doors. "Make sure you burn 100 percent wood products. Never burn laminated wood or pressure-treated wood, because they contain hazardous chemicals," Adams said.

Kerosene heaters also can be dangerous pollutants if used improperly. Adams says such space heaters must use only the proper fuel and should be strictly maintained by the homeowner.

"Kerosene heaters must be vented to an exterior air source," Adams points out. "Opening one window isn't going to help unless there is a cross draft. You're really polluting your environment unless there is a good indoor-outdoor air exchange."

Adams says ventilation and proper maintenance are the keys to reducing carbon monoxide risk. She suggests that homeowners check appliances yearly, adjusting them when necessary. She also recommends making room in the budget for carbon monoxide detectors in every room.

"It can be a big expense, but how can you put a value on a human life?" she said.



Mifflin County 4-H Baby Beef Club

The Mifflin County 4-H Baby Beef Club, banquet was conducted Nov. 20 at Lewistown Hoss's Steak & Sea House.

There were about 75 people in attendance.

A punch bowl and social was held.

After dinner there was the presentation of awards. Awards were given for the best books of 1998. Winners included first-year member (a tie) Adam Felmlee and Laural Tate, intermediate Adriene Shank, and senior Emily Vandegrift. Fifteen dollars was put in their beef club account as an award.

Pins were given out to first year members, five year members, and a ten-year member. Entertainment was Old McDonald's Farm. The animals were played by the following: Tim Plank, Emily Vandegrift, Adam Felmlee, Nikki Houser,

Cassandra Houser, Doug Brubaker, and Steven Dupert was Old McDonald.

The Nov. 5 meeting of the beef club was held at the Mifflin County extension office. The election of the 1998-1999 officers was held.

Results of the election are president, Lucas Parkes; vice president, Lisa Macknair, secretary, Amy Reed; assistant secretary, Natalie Byler; treasurer, Steven Dupert; and news reporter, Lisa Macknair.

Final plans were made for the banquet in November at the Lewistown Hoss's.

New members filled out enrollment cards. Members must sign up by Dec. 31. You must have your steer in your care by Jan. 1. TB shots were also given out.

A video was viewed on caring for your animals. Many interesting and helpful points were brought up in the video.

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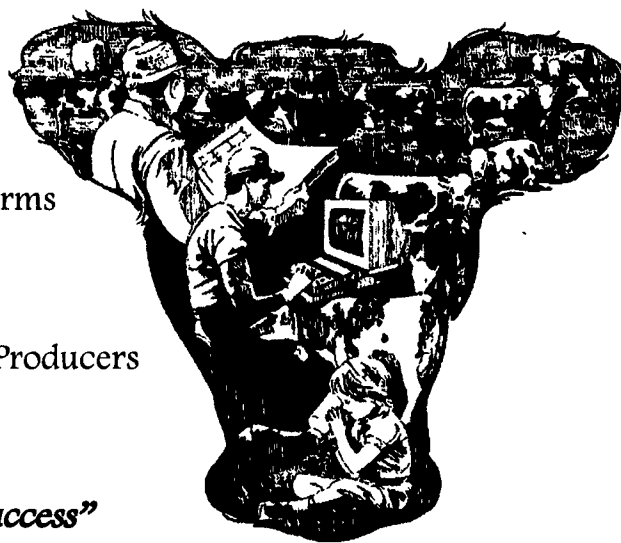
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