

INSIDE GRUNDY COUNTY
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In light of the recent winter storms we have experienced, I thought it might be helpful to remind you of two important resources available through Iowa State University Extension that you can turn to with most any question.

The first is the Families Extension Answer Line. Consumers get answers about, food safety, food preservation, home environment, child development, cleaning, consumer management, food preparation, household equipment, nutrition, textiles and laundry that they “need to know now,” when they call the Answer Line at (800) 262-3804 or go online at www.extension.iastate.edu/answerline/. Questions on these topics are answered by professional consumer and family scientists.

Evelyn Beavers, Answer Line coordinator, commented, “I had calls about odor in refrigerators start to come in this week; that’s a timely topic with power outages across Iowa”. “Food safety questions are a big concern when food is subject to unsafe temperatures.” Beavers said calls do pick up during emergencies, but food-related calls stay strong all year and account for 63 percent of inquiries. The service received 21,957 calls and 219,979 visits to its Web site in 2006.

Although food questions are the most frequent, Beavers said that indoor air quality ranks as one of the most important topics consumers ask about. “Usual air quality questions concern mold, mildew and radon gas,” she said. “I tell callers that inside the home, no mold is a good mold.” We also receive questions about carbon monoxide detectors. They are especially important to have in a home if you’re using emergency space heaters.

“When you want to talk to a person, call Answer Line,” Beavers said. “Otherwise, search our Web site or send an e-mail. You’ll get research-based answers supported by ISU Extension specialists and university researchers. Consumers can be assured that they’re getting accurate information.”

Calls are answered Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. A Relay Iowa line (phone linkage for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals) is available at (800) 735-2942. Questions also can be sent by e-mail to answer@iastate.edu.

The second resource is the Iowa Concern line. By calling Iowa Concern, **1-800-447-1985**, you have access to an attorney for legal education, stress counselors for caring for yourself and others, and information and referral services for a wide variety of topics dealing with finances, crisis, disaster and overcoming adversity. In addition, Iowa Concern maintains this web site: www.extension.iastate.edu/iowaconcern/ which features an extensive *Frequently Asked Questions* database for legal, financial, crisis, disaster, and personal health issues. The web site is also the link to Iowa Concern's Live Chat service. Live Chat immediately connects you with a stress counselor where you can "talk" (type) one-on-one in a secure environment. All Iowa Concern services are available 24 hours a day 7 days per week at no charge.

For more information, contact the Grundy Office of ISU Extension at 319-824-6979.