

Helpful Hints For Getting The House Ready For Colder Weather

No matter where you live, temperature changes and inefficient homes can cause drafty rooms or cold floors underfoot.

Cold air can leak into your house around doors, windows, light fixtures, electrical outlets and gaps in corners, causing rooms to feel drafty and uncomfortable.

As cold air seeps in through leaks, warm air can escape through other leaks and cracks.

Some homeowners may worry about sealing their houses too tightly; however, this is very unlikely, especially in many older homes.

According to the experts at the U.S. Department of Energy, the biggest leaks for escaping air are often found in the attic, and recessed lights are another common location.

And if you have a fireplace, be

sure to close the damper when you're not using it.

Many drafts and air leaks are easy to locate because they can easily be felt -- like those around doors and windows.

But cracks and holes hidden in basements, attics and crawlspaces are usually bigger culprits. Sealing these leaks with caulk, spray foam, or weather stripping can greatly improve your comfort and reduce hefty utility bills.

You can fix some of these things yourself, but for the best solutions you probably need to hire a heating and cooling contractor.

Ask your contractor to check that your heating and cooling system is providing enough air to each room, and to check ducts for air leaks and balanced airflow.

Most importantly, after any home sealing project, have a heating and cooling technician check

to make sure that your combustion appliances (gas- or oil-fired furnace, water heater, and dryer) are venting properly.

Home sealing should also help solve the problem of cold floors, especially if you take the time to make sure your house is properly insulated, as well.

Although some types of floor coverings (such as, stone, tile, wood or concrete) will naturally

feel cold on bare feet, insufficient insulation or air infiltration could be the cause for cold floors.

Common locations for cold floor problems include floors over garages, basement floors and floors over crawlspaces.

Proper insulation will help keep your home warm in the winter and cool in the summer.

There are several common

types of insulation, such as fiberglass, cellulose, rigid foam board, and spray foam.

When correctly installed with air sealing, the proper types of insulation can deliver comfort and help lower energy bills during the hottest and coldest times of the year.

Remember that insulation works best when air is not moving

through or around it.

So it is very important to seal air leaks prior to installing insulation to help ensure you get the best performance from the insulation.

To learn more about proper home sealing and insulation, visit the government's free energy-efficient home improvement Web site at www.energystar.com.

Flu Shots Critical For Young Children

The flu is more serious than a common cold, but flu shots can help keep your family safe. Plain and simple.

In fact, influenza is the leading cause of vaccine-preventable deaths for kids, but despite recommendations from health experts, many parents still don't have their children vaccinated.

A new report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows only a small fraction of the children who need to get a flu vaccination actually get one, despite the CDC recommendations that all children six months to five years old should get vaccinated.

Indeed, a recent survey by the Visiting Nurse Associations of America (VNAA) found almost half of moms of children under five do not get their kids vaccinated every year.

Of the 45 percent of these moms who did not follow CDC recommendations to get their kids vaccinated against the flu, one-third said they did not think it was necessary.

It is estimated that each year in the United States, more than 20,000 children less than five years old are hospitalized due to the flu, and children less than two years old are even more likely to be hospitalized by the flu.

"Nearly 100 American children under five years of age die every year from influenza," stresses Richard Kanowitz, president of Families Fighting Flu.

The CDC's recommendation for flu vaccinations extends beyond all children ages six months to five years old, to anyone in frequent contact with these young children -- meaning moms, dads, grandparents and child care providers.

The VNAA's survey found moms of children in this age group need help fighting the flu.

According to the survey:

* More than 75 percent of moms of children under five DON'T get their whole family vaccinated against the flu. Many moms mix the needle because they don't have time or their children are too afraid.

* The majority of moms say they are not very concerned about their child developing serious flu complications.

* Only two percent of moms are concerned about a member of their family catching the flu at home.

* Forty-three percent of moms say their approach to the flu season is to "let nature take its course."

Remember, children can be at high risk for health complications due to the flu. And with just one sick family member at home, more than 60 percent of household surfaces can harbor the flu virus, making it important to disinfect germ hot spots.

So, while vaccination is the first step in flu prevention for most young children, parents should also take these simple steps at

home:

* Sing and Scrub: Make sure kids wash their hands the right way. They should wash frequently with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds (the time it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice).

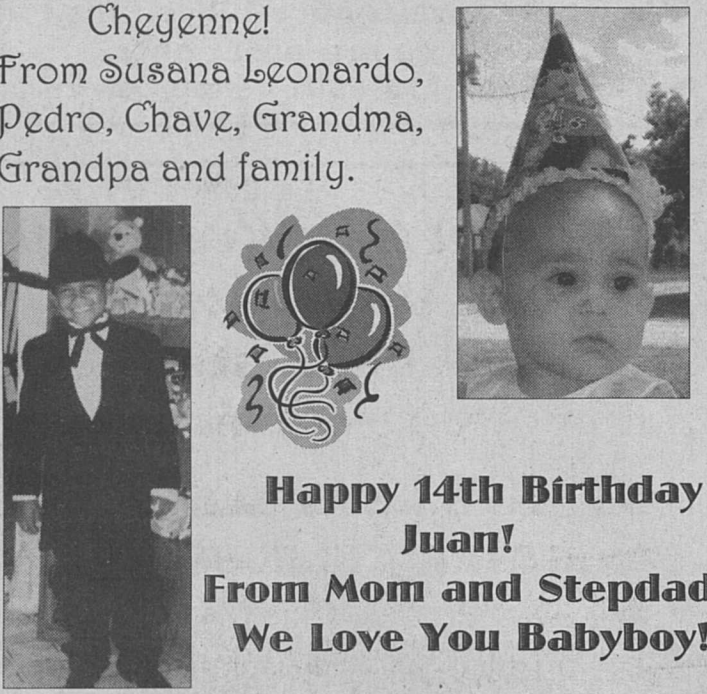
* Disinfect Hot Spots: Kids can touch up to 300 surfaces in 30 minutes, so be sure to disinfect the surfaces kids touch most frequently -- like doorknobs, light switches, faucets or plastic toys. Use a disinfectant designed to kill cold and flu viruses.

* Do the Elbow Cough: Teach kids to cough into elbows, not hands where they're more likely to spread bacteria and viruses through touch.

For more flu fighting tips, visit www.familiesfightingflu.org.

Happy 1st Birthday
Chyzenne!

From Susana Leonardo,
Pedro, Chave, Grandma,
Grandpa and family.



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Juan!

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Texas Crop Weather Report

Texas Crop Weather
Texas Agricultural Summary for the week of Oct. 15 to 21 by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture:

Scattered showers were prevalent in the Eastern half of the state.

Winter wheat planting continued in the Northern High Plains as some producers were holding off for rain in the Northern Low Plains.

Cotton harvest was underway throughout most of the state as fields continued to defoliate.

Good yields were reported in Northern High Plains as corn harvest neared completion.

Sorghum harvest continued in the Panhandle.

Peanut harvest continued in the High Plains and South Texas.

Soil moisture was short to adequate across the state. North East Texas received the most rain with 0.50 to 1.5 inches of rainfall.

The South Central Texas received 0.25 to 1.50 inches of rainfall.

The Panhandle received 0.01 to 1.50 inches of rainfall.

The Edwards Plateau and South Texas received 0.01 to 0.25 inches of rainfall.

The Trans-Pecos received the least amount of rainfall with zero to 0.01 inches of rainfall.

Livestock continued to be in good condition across most areas of the state.

Final hay harvests continued across most of the state.

Ranges and pastures remained in good condition in most areas of the state, but most areas could use some rain.

Field Crops Report
Small Grains: Winter wheat planting continued in the Northern High Plains.

Winter wheat was in need of

rain in the Southern High Plains as some fields were beginning to dry out.

Wheat planting stopped in some areas of the Northern Low Plains as farmers were holding off until adequate moisture arrives.

Continuous dry weather was creating a problem in the wheat fields of the Cross Timbers.

Early planted wheat in South Central Texas was looking good, but could use some moisture.

Wheat condition was mostly fair to good statewide.

Cotton: Cotton harvest was underway and going strong in the Northern High Plains.

Excellent yields were reported in the Southern High Plains as harvest continued.

Many producers in the Southern Low Plains were defoliating their cotton and preparing for harvest.

Harvest was in full swing in the Blacklands.

Leaves were beginning to fall and fields were turning white as producers were preparing for harvest in the Trans-Pecos.

Cotton harvest continued in South Texas as it neared completion.

Cotton condition was mostly fair to good statewide.

Corn: Good yields were re-

ported in Northern High Plains as corn harvest neared completion.

Statewide, corn condition was mostly fair to good.

Sorghum: Sorghum remained in good condition as harvest continued in the High Plains as weather permitted.

Sorghum conditions were mostly fair to good statewide.

Peanuts: Peanut harvest continued in the Southern High Plains and the Northern Low Plains.

Peanut harvest started in South Texas.

Peanut conditions were mostly fair to good statewide.

Fruit, Vegetable and Specialty Crop Report
Pecans were developing and looking good in the Blacklands as producers were getting ready for harvest.

Pecan harvest was underway in South Central Texas.

Livestock, Pasture and Range Report
Livestock continued to be in good condition across most areas of the state.

Final hay harvests continued across most of the state.

Ranges and pastures were beginning to show some signs of stress due to lack of moisture.

Range and Pasture conditions were fair to good statewide.

Cattle On Feed Down Three Percent

Cattle and calves on feed for slaughter market in Texas feedlots with capacity of 1,000 head or more totaled 2.84 million head on Oct. 1, down three percent from a year ago.

According to the monthly report released by the Texas Field Office, the estimate was up four percent from the Sept. 1 level.

Producers placed 590,000 head in commercial feedlots during September, up 19 percent from a year ago, and up 13 percent from the August 2007 total.

Texas commercial feeders marketed 480,000 head during September, down six percent from last year and down 13 percent from last month.

On Sept. 1, there were 2.43 million head of cattle and calves on feed in the Northern High Plains, 86 percent of the states total.

The number on feed across the area was down one percent from last year but up four percent from the September total.

September placements in the Northern High Plains totaled 511,000 head, up 12 percent from the August total.

Marketings were down 14 percent from last month to 415,000 head.

Cattle and calves on feed for slaughter market in the United States in feedlots with a capacity of 1,000 head or more totaled 11.0 million head on Oct. 1, 2007.

This inventory was 4 percent below Oct. 1, 2006.

Placements in feedlots during September totaled 2.43 million head, nine percent above September 2006.

September placements of cattle and calves weighing less than 600 pounds totaled 610,000 head; 600 to 699 pounds totaled 505,000 head; 700 to 799 pounds totaled 570,000 head; 800 pounds and greater totaled 740,000 head.

Marketings of fed cattle during September totaled 1.71 million head, three percent below 2006.

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Lower dressing utility & cutter cows 42-47
Thin Cows 30-40

PACKER BULLS
Heavyweight bulls 58-67
Utility cutter bulls 48-57

STEERS

	#1	#2
150-300 lbs	135-155	110-130
300-400 lbs	130-145	110-125
400-500 lbs	122-133	100-118
500-600 lbs	106-118	93-103
600-700 lbs	95-104	87-94
700-800 lbs	93-100	82-92

HEIFERS

	#1	#2
200-300 lbs	135-150	110-128
300-400 lbs	108-123	92-105
400-500 lbs	104-115	90-100
500-600 lbs	98-108	85-95
600-700 lbs	92-102	86-91
700-800 lbs	85-94	78-84

STOCKER COWS
Good Stocker Cow/Calf Pairs 875-1050
Medium Cow/calf Pairs 750-870
Common Cow/calf Pairs 625-745
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