

Marks Remarks by Mark Rowen Lincoln County Educator 11-17-08

Now that colder weather is here, a focus on the indoor air quality of the home is necessary. Statistics show the indoor air in a home has more pollutants than the outdoor air and can have a significant effect on one's health. Here in South Dakota probably the pollutant of most concern is RADON. This is a colorless, odorless radioactive gas that is found naturally because of the breakdown of uranium in the soil and rocks. It seeps from the ground and is present in the outdoor air at all times. This gas collects in the home through cracks in walls and floors of basements or in the crawl space and at high enough concentrations it can affect overall health. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. behind smoking. The radon gas is breathed into the lungs; small radioactive particles are emitted into the lungs and over prolonged exposure can develop into lung cancer. Most of the counties east of the Missouri River are considered zone one level areas. This means the homes have the highest potential for above normal radon exposure. Homes need to be tested to know the radon level and thus the exposure level. This can be done by purchasing a radon test kit from the:

Dept of Environment & Natural Resources
Joe Foss Building
523 E Capitol Rm 217
Pierre SD 57501
Telephone 1-800-438-3367.

Follow the directions on the test kit thoroughly and send it to the address requested. The results will be sent back to you.

If correction for high levels is required, consult a qualified Radon mitigation person. A listing of qualified people is also available from the above address. These people have the training necessary to help remedy the problem. Most mitigation cost run between \$800-2500, depending on the radon levels.

For more information about this or other topics contact the Lincoln County Extension office at 764-2756.