Impact Statement: Radon Education

State Issue: Healthy, Safe and Affordable Housing Environments
Scope: Statewide

Summary
The UGA Radon Education program focuses on creating a healthier home environment by reducing indoor contaminants, specifically radon. Educational programs and information are available throughout Georgia, with a focus on counties at greater risk of exposure to radon in the home. Testing for radon and mitigation are encouraged.

Situation
Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer, resulting in an estimated 20,000 deaths every year (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2005). Georgia has the highest incidence of radon-induced deaths in the southeast, with more than 800 Georgians dying from lung cancer due to Radon exposure. You cannot see, smell or taste it, so the only way to know if your home has a high radon level is to test it. Exposure to elevated indoor radon levels was set forth as an important national public health issue in the Department of Health and Human Services Healthy People 2020. Two basic solutions were set forth in Healthy People 2020: (1) mitigate homes and buildings with high radon levels; and (2) increase the amount of new buildings with radon-resistant new construction features.

Response
University of Georgia Extension Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) agents provided programs and outreach activities about the dangers of radon, radon testing and mitigation. Nearly 1,800 adults and youth participated in radon education workshops. An additional 521,730 Georgians received radon information and resources through broadcast and print media.

Impact
UGA Extension distributed around 2,500 radon test kits and one-third of the individuals who received radon test kits tested the radon levels in their homes. Of those testing, 24 percent had elevated radon levels. Individuals with elevated levels were contacted by a radon educator and provided information and consultations. Seventy-four individuals reported mitigating their home to resolve the radon problem. Reducing radon level in Georgia homes contributes to the national goal of mitigating 10 million homes by 2015, saving 6,500 lives.