Healthy, Wealthy, and Wise
Practical Knowledge for Everyday Living

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In This Issue:
Agent’s Corner/Did You Know? 1
Consumer Alert: Energy Drinks 1
The Bitter Side of Sweet? 2
The Price of Nostalgia 2
Hidden Poison: Mercury 2
Shades of Chocolate 3
E. coli: Tiny but Dangerous 3
Flavor of the Month 3
HCE & Guild News 4
Birthdays 4
Upcoming Events 4
Contact Information 4

Agent’s Corner

Happy New Year!
The year 2006 is over. Let go of the disappointments of last year, but cherish the accomplishments. Tear down the rearview mirror of your life—never look back.
The upcoming year is going to be a great one—full of friends, family, and fun! Remember to smile and laugh as often as possible.

Make the most of your life. ☺

Samantha Kennedy, M.S.
Family & Consumer Sciences Agent

Did You Know?
Iceland consumes more Coca Cola per capita than any other nation.

Tom Sawyer was the first novel ever written on a typewriter.

No NFL team that plays its home games in a domed stadium has ever won a Super Bowl.

Cat urine glows under a blacklight.

Consumer Alert: Energy Drinks

They come in small quantities that pack a big wallop. They’re targeted towards teens and young adults and are advertised as cool and sexy.

What are they? Energy drinks.

Their popularity has increased exponentially in recent years, sparking controversy and concern.

Energy drinks such as Red Bull, Rockstar, Monster, and the new Cocaine promise to provide the consumer with instant energy to keep them going in a busy world.

Most of these drinks have exotic formulations, with various herbal ingredients topping the list. However, what provides the energy jolt is a supersized quantity of the common stimulant caffeine. Massive quantities of sugar are also added for good measure.

The final verdict has not been rendered regarding the nutritional hazards of energy drinks, if any. However, it is well documented that excess amounts of caffeine can cause dehydration, headache, and nausea. Too much sugar can lead to weight gain and cardiovascular problems.

Drink at your own risk!
Hidden Poison: Mercury

Mercury can be found in many common household items, including thermometers, thermostats, fluorescent lamps, and appliance switches. Mercury and its compounds are extremely toxic and most household items that contain it are safe unless they are broken.

Always properly dispose of items that contain mercury. Never throw them away in the household trash. Call the local trash company to find out how to properly handle these items.

When replacing items that contain mercury, look for mercury-free alternatives.

Following the proper procedure, you can clean a small mercury spill yourself. Vacuумing a mercury spill puts mercury into the air. Sweeping mercury breaks apart the beads and spreads them.
Shades of Chocolate

If only chocolate was a vegetable. Then we wouldn’t have to feel so guilty about eating it.

But do we really need to feel guilty?

Chocolate has a lot of beneficial qualities. It’s high in the minerals potassium and magnesium, both of which are essential for bone health and heart function. It is also a good source of vitamin D, vitamin E (an antioxidant), and the B vitamins thiamin and riboflavin.

The darker the chocolate, the healthier it is for you. Dark chocolate—the kind with a higher cocoa content—contains more nutrients than milk chocolate. Why? Because milk chocolate contains more sugar than its darker counterpart. Also, studies have shown that milk may interfere with the absorption of antioxidants from chocolate.

As for white chocolate, it’s not really chocolate. It contains no cocoa (that’s why it’s white) and therefore none of the nutrients cocoa has to offer.

E. coli: Tiny but Dangerous

E. coli is a very unassuming organism. It invades your body and takes up residence, causing you severe discomfort in the process.

E. coli is everywhere. Living mainly in the intestinal tracts of cattle and humans, it can make its way—via poor hygiene practices—into fresh food sources, where it can spread like wildfire under the right conditions.

The recent outbreak involving ready-to-eat spinach is one such example of this tiny organism’s ability to spread.

Following simple food safety practices can help curb E. coli’s spread. Always wash your fruits and veggies—even if the package says “prewashed.” Always clean and sanitize cutting boards and utensils after each use. And always, always wash your hands thoroughly before preparing food.

Flavor of the Month: New Year’s Black Eyed Peas

Eat your way to good luck in 2007 with this recipe!

Ingredients
2 lbs. black eyed peas
1 tsp. baking soda
1 lb. country ribs
1 tsp. salt
1 Tbsp. sugar
1/4 tsp. red pepper
1 large onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic

Directions
Soak black eyed peas overnight. Wash peas and cover with water and baking soda. Bring to a good boil. Drain.

In a heavy pot, brown country ribs, onion, and garlic. When the ribs are golden brown, add peas, salt, sugar, and red pepper. Cover with hot water and bring to a fast boil. Reduce heat and simmer on low for two hours.

Yum!
### Volunteer News: HCE & The Guild

**HCE News:** The next meeting will be held, January 8, 2007 at 3:00 pm. We will discuss the schedule for the year and plan programming. Anyone planning to attend the District IV meeting January 24, 2007 in Riverview should contact the office as soon as possible. The deadline for registration is January 10, 2007. If you have any questions please contact Sharon at 722-4524 ext 232.

**GUILD News:** With the busy January schedule around the fairgrounds we will only meet on Monday the 8th this month. Although there are actually five Mondays—two are holidays with the office closed and the other two the fair will be using the buildings. We will have our Birthday lunch on the 8th so plan on coming out to share the fun. We will also have a sign up sheet to man the fair booth so don’t forget your calendars.

### January Birthdays

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carole Ransford</td>
<td>January 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brenda Rogers</td>
<td>January 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Betty McLeod</td>
<td>January 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dee Anderson</td>
<td>January 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regena Byrn</td>
<td>January 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sue Wiedmeyer</td>
<td>January 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ilona Gans</td>
<td>January 26</td>
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Happy New Year to everyone and may all your wishes come true in 2007!!!!

### Upcoming Events & Important Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 1, 2007</td>
<td>Happy New Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CES Office Closed</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 8, 2007</td>
<td>Guild Birthday Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1:00 – 3:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 8, 2007</td>
<td>HCE Meeting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3:00 – 4:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 15, 2007</td>
<td>Martin Luther King Day</td>
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<td></td>
<td>CES Office Closed</td>
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<td>January 18, 2007</td>
<td>Manatee County Fair</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 28, 2007</td>
<td>“A Barn Raising Good Time”</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 24, 2007</td>
<td>HCE District IV meeting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Riverview</td>
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### Happy New Year to everyone and may all your wishes come true in 2007!!!!

### Manatee County Extension Service

**Solutions for your life.**

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[http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu](http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu)

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**