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For Immediate Release

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Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie County recommends three publications for cleaning up and rebuilding a home after a flood. These publications can be downloaded from the Extension website or obtained from FEMA or the CCE office at 173 South Grand Street.

- 1) **Repairing Your Flooded Home - an excellent 57 page booklet published by the American Red Cross and FEMA.**
- 2) **Initial Restoration of Flooded Buildings**, a 4 page FEMA publication that was prepared for residents in the aftermath of Katrina.
- 3) **The ABC's of returning to Flooded Buildings**, a 3 page FEMA publication that was also prepared for the aftermath of Katrina but valuable for any flood affected area.

According to Cornell University Extension Associate Mark Pierce regarding the dangers of mold growth in buildings that have been flooded, Mr. Pierce reported that, in his experience in past floods, “ many homeowners were so anxious to get their homes cleaned up and put back together that they did not allow enough time for the wood framing members to dry out. They removed wet porous materials such as gypsum wall board and insulation products, cleaned out mud etc in wall cavities, and then immediately installed new insulation and new gypsum wallboard. But since the wood framing members were still saturated with water these poor folks had an explosion of mold growth in their walls a few weeks later and had to go through the process all over again.”

According to Mr. Pierce, “All porous materials that got wet should be removed. The typical advice is to remove all materials to 1 foot above the water line. Then areas of the house exposed to flood waters should be disinfected with a chlorine/water solution. This solution is less about preventing mold growth than it is about killing any germs and bacteria left behind by polluted flood waters. The best method for stopping mold growth is to get rid of water saturated porous materials and then to get the rest of the building dried out as soon as it is safe to get back in the building.”

Mr. Pierce emphasized that “all wood framing elements, wood sub-flooring etc. needs to be dried out so that it has a moisture content of less than 15%. You cannot determine the moisture content of wood unless you test it with a

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moisture meter. It may take several days or longer to get the wood members dry.”

Ms Janiczek reported that Cornell Cooperative Extension will be obtaining a moisture meter to loan out to county residents. Cornell Cooperative Extension provides equal program and employment opportunities.

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