

Potty Pointer

Credit Card Changes for 2010

Beginning Feb. 22, 2010, new rules regarding consumer credit accounts go into effect. Here's an overview of some important changes:

- 1) **Introductory rates must last for at least six months.** For new accounts, regular rates can't be increased for at least 12 months unless payment is more than 60 days late.
- 2) **There will be new limits to fees.** Annual fees and/or application fees are limited to 25 percent of your beginning credit limit. Over-the-limit fees can't be charged unless you choose to allow over-the-limit purchases.
- 3) **Look for changes in your bill and statement.** Credit card companies must deliver your bill at least 21 days before the payment is due, the due date should be the same each month, and the bill should include information about paying off your balance.
- 4) **New protections will be put in place for young adults.** Consumers under age 21 who want a credit card will need proof of ability to pay or a co-signer. Co-signers will have to agree to any limit increases.
- 5) **Two-cycle billing will no longer be allowed.** Consumers who carried a credit card balance ended up paying more interest under the two-cycle billing method than the average daily balance method.

For more information, contact your local County Cooperative Extension Service Agent.

