

When Have You Tested Your Private Water Well?

Private water wells should be tested annually. The Lubbock County Office of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service is sponsoring a water well screening day for area residents on May 24th.

Samples from private water wells will be screened for possible contamination from common contaminants including fecal coliform bacteria, nitrates, and high salinity. The cost is \$5 per sample. Make checks payable to Lubbock Livestock Committee.

The presence of fecal coliform bacteria in water indicates that feces (bodily waste from humans or animals) may have contaminated the water. Water contaminated with fecal coliform bacteria is more likely to also have pathogens present that can cause diarrhea, cramps, nausea, or other symptoms.

Water with nitrates at levels of 10 parts per million (ppm) is considered unsafe for human consumption. Nitrate levels above 10 ppm can disrupt the blood's ability to carry oxygen throughout the body, resulting in a condition called methemoglobinemia. Infants less than 6 months of age and young livestock are most susceptible.

Salinity as measured by Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) will also be determined for each sample. Water with high TDS levels may leave deposits and have a salty taste. Additionally, using water with high TDS for irrigation may damage the soil or plants.

You will need to pick up a sample bag and instructions from the Lubbock County AgriLife Extension Office located at 916 Main Street Suite 201 in Lubbock. You can contact the Lubbock County Extension Office by calling 806-775-1680. It is very important that only sampling bags from the Lubbock County Extension Office be used and all instructions for proper sampling are followed to ensure accurate results. Samples should be delivered to Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center at 1102 E. Farm-to-Market 1294 on May 24th by 9:30 a.m. where testing will be conducted.

A meeting explaining your screening results will be held on May 25th at **6:00 p.m.** at Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center. It is extremely important to be at this meeting to receive your results, learn corrective measures for identified problems, and to improve your understanding of private well management.