



Monthly Publication
July, 2010

Article Notes

Water Sampling Procedure for Coliform Bacteria Testing.

1. Samples are accepted Monday through Thursday.

2. Samples should arrive at the laboratory within 24 hours.

3. Remove screen from faucet and sterilize opening by flaming or swabbing with rubbing alcohol.

4. Run water for 5 minutes then carefully fill bottle to the line and replace lid.

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Midwest Flooding Creates Drinking Well Problems

Rural areas served with personal drinking water wells may consider testing those wells for bacteria.

Excessive flooding in the Midwest this summer may have contaminated many wells leading to the presence of coliform bacteria. Since contaminated well water may not taste, look or smell any different than clean water, the only real means to determine the presence of bacteria is through an inexpensive water analysis for coliform bacteria according to Duane Osmanski, Operations Manager of Ward Laboratories, Inc. in Kearney, NE.

Osmanski said that the Ward Laboratories coliform test identifies a large group of bacteria that live on plants and in the gut of mammals. Further, Ward tests for the presence of E.coli which would indicate the likelihood of fecal contamination in the well water.

Osmanski said the presence of coliform bacteria in a drinking water well would require chlorination to clean the well. The chlorination process is a simple process and details can be found on the Ward Laboratories website (www.wardlab.com) or through the University of Nebraska's NebGuide (Publication G1761). Contaminated farm or recreational ponds, on the other hand, are more difficult to clean after contamination because the area around the pond needs to be treated as well as the pond itself, Osmanski said.

Osmanski said the well water test is very easy to complete and begins by requesting a water analysis kit from Ward Laboratories which includes a sterile sample bottle.

To test the water, any screening or filter device needs to be removed from the faucet. The faucet needs to be sterilized with alcohol or by flaming the faucet opening. Water should run freely from the tap for five minutes before the sample bottle is filled. For best results, the sample should be shipped overnight to Ward Laboratories, Inc. immediately after collection by an overnight service. The test costs \$13.00 per sample and results are sent to you by email immediately after approval by laboratory personnel. Osmanski said the Ward Laboratories analysis takes 24 hours to complete and recent advancements make the test nearly error proof to insure accurate results.

Even without the recent flooding presently in the Midwest, Osmanski said a drinking well analysis should be completed annually for several years to insure the water is safe for human consumption. If the well is safe for 3 to 5 years, the analysis can be conducted every two or three years after that.

To order supplies go to
<http://www.wardlab.com>

**For a water sample kit email
customerrep@wardlab.com
Or call 1-308-234-2418 or
800-887-7645**