

## When Have You Tested Your Private Water Well?

Private water wells should be tested annually. The Texas Well Owner Network, with support by the Brazoria County Office of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, the Houston-Galveston Area Council, the Texas Water Resources Institute, and the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board is providing a water well screening day for area residents on March 8, 2012 at 21017 County Road 171, Angleton, Texas. Please turn samples in by 10:00 a.m.

Samples from private water wells will be screened for common contaminants including fecal coliform bacteria, nitrates, and high salinity. The cost is \$10 per sample.

The presence of fecal coliform bacteria in water indicates that feces (body waste from humans or warm-blooded 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 used for irrigation may damage the soil or plants.

Pick up a sample bag and sampling instructions from the Brazoria County AgriLife Extension Office. You can contact the Brazoria County Extension Office by calling (979) 864-1558 to receive an approved water sampling bag and instructions for taking your well water sample. It is very important that only sampling bags from the County Extension Office be used and all instructions for proper sampling followed to ensure accurate results.

A meeting explaining screening results will be held at 9:00 a.m. on March 10, 2012 at the Pearland Community Center, 3523 Liberty Drive, Pearland, Texas. For more information, please contact the Brazoria County Extension Agent, Corrie Bowen, or Watershed Coordinator Aubin Phillips of the Houston-Galveston Area Council. 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.

Support for the Texas Well Owner Network program is provided through Clean Water Act §319(h) Nonpoint Source funding from the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under Agreement No. 10-04.