

Private water well screening set for February 9 in Burnet

Test results meeting on February 10

The [Texas Well Owner Network](#) is hosting a "Well Educated" water well screening February 9 in Burnet to give area residents the opportunity to have their well water screened.

Joel Pigg, [Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service](#) program specialist and TWON coordinator, College Station, said the TWON program is for Texas residents who depend on household wells for their water needs.

"The program was established to help well owners become familiar with Texas groundwater resources, septic system maintenance, well maintenance and construction, and water quality and treatment," he said. "It allows them to learn more about how to improve and protect their community water resources."

Water samples will be screened for contaminants, including total coliform bacteria, E. coli, nitrate-nitrogen and salinity.

Water samples can be dropped off from 8:30-10 a.m. at the [Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service](#) office for [Burnet County](#), 607 N. Vandever, Burnet or at the Central Texas Groundwater Conservation District office at 225 S. Pierce, Burnet. The cost of water sample screening is \$15 per sample.

The follow-up meeting to explain the results of the screenings will be at 1:00 p.m. February 10 at the Burnet County Extension office, 607 N. Vandever, Burnet.

The screening is presented by AgriLife Extension and [Texas Water Resources Institute](#), TWRI, partnership with the AgriLife Extension office in Burnet County, and the Central Texas Groundwater Conservation District.

Sampling instructions

Joel Pigg, AgriLife Extension program specialist, Bryan-College Station, said area residents wanting to have their well water screened should pick up a sample bag, bottle and instructions from the AgriLife Extension office or the Groundwater District Office.

"It is very important that only sampling bags and bottles from the AgriLife Extension office be used and all instructions for proper sampling are followed to ensure accurate results," Pigg said.

Private water wells should be tested annually, he said. The samples will be screened for contaminants, including total coliform bacteria, E. coli, nitrate-nitrogen and salinity.

Pigg said it is extremely important for those submitting samples to be at the February 10 meeting in order to receive results, learn corrective measures for identified problems and improve their understanding of private well management.

Well water contaminants, concerns

Pigg said research shows the presence of E. coli bacteria in water indicates that waste from humans or warm-blooded animals may have contaminated the water. Water contaminated with E. coli is more likely to also have pathogens present that can cause diarrhea, cramps, nausea or other symptoms.

The presence of nitrate-nitrogen in well water is also a concern, and water with nitrate-nitrogen at levels of 10 parts per million is considered unsafe for human consumption, he said.

"These nitrate levels above 10 parts per million can disrupt the ability of blood to carry oxygen throughout the body, resulting in a condition called methemoglobinemia," Pigg said. "Infants less than 6 months of age and young livestock are most susceptible to this."

Salinity, as measured by total dissolved solids, will also be determined for each sample, he said. Water with high levels may leave deposits and have a salty taste. Using water with high levels for irrigation may damage soil or plants.

To learn more about the programs offered through the network or to find additional publications and resources, visit <http://twon.tamu.edu>. For more information, contact Joel Pigg at 979-845-1461 or j-pigg@tamu.edu.

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