

## Water Testing Information Available for Oconto County Residents at Fair?

Do you have a private well and are you curious about your water quality? Oconto County UW-Extension staff will have water quality test kits for home drinking water available at this year's Oconto County Fair in Gillett.

Many private well users know very little about the quality of the water in their well. The only way to determine the safety of the water for human or livestock consumption is to have the water tested by the well user. Water testing should be a regular routine for private well users since water quality can change over time.

You will be able to purchase a testing bottle for \$3. You will receive all the information to obtain a sample from your home water system to send to the State Certified Lab for analysis.

Visit the UW-Extension Booth in the exhibition building on the following dates and times:  
Friday, August 22 – 11 a.m.–12 Noon; 3-4:00 p.m.; 5-6:00 p.m.

Saturday, August 23 – 3-4:00 p.m. and 5-6:00 p.m.

Did you know that it is recommended you test your well water yearly? The recommended test is the Homeowner Package including the following:

- Total Coliform Bacteria which tests the bacteriological safety of a water supply.
- Nitrate plus Nitrite-Nitrogen. These are the most common chemical contaminants in Wisconsin groundwater. They may also serve as an indicator of the potential presence of other contaminants, such as pesticides or trace organic chemicals from septic system effluent.
- pH to measure the relative acidity of the water (useful in assessing the corrosivity of water to plumbing).
- Alkalinity to give you the amount of bicarbonate, the major anion in water, related to pH and corrosion.
- Hardness which measures the amount of calcium and magnesium (important if water softening is considered).
- Chloride – an indicator ion that, if found in elevated concentration, indicates potential contamination from septic systems, fertilizer, landfills, or road salt.
- Conductivity will measure the total dissolved mineral in water. Change in conductivity or unusual ratio of conductivity to hardness may signal presence of contaminants.
- Corrosivity Index is a calculation to determine the tendency of water to be corrosive or scale forming.

The Homeowners Package is \$40 total (including the \$3 sample bottle charge paid in advance of the test). You will be asked to fill out an information sheet and locate your property on a plat book map, or (to speed things up) have your property description with you when you come to the fair. We'll need your township and legal description. Information and fees for additional tests will also be available.

The tests kits are also available anytime of the year at the UW-Extension office, Oconto County Courthouse, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

For additional information on water quality and/or natural resources, please contact Dale Mohr, Community, Natural Resource and Economic Development Agent, Oconto County UW-Extension, 301 Washington Street, Oconto WI 54153, (920) 834-6846), [dale.mohr@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:dale.mohr@ces.uwex.edu).

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