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Private water well screening set for Sept. 18 in San Antonio

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SAN ANTONIO — The [Texas Well Owner Network](#) is hosting a water well screening Sept. 18 in San Antonio to give area residents the opportunity to have their well water screened.

The screening will be from 8:30–10 a.m. in the conference room at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service for [Bexar County](#), 3355 Cherry Ridge Drive, Suite 208.

A meeting explaining screening results will be at 6:30 p.m. Sept. 19 at the same location.

The screening is presented by [AgriLife Extension](#) and [Texas Water Resources Institute](#) in partnership with the AgriLife Extension office in Bexar County.

John Smith, AgriLife Extension program specialist, 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 in Bexar County. Bottles and bags will be available at least a week before the turn-in date.

“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,” Smith said.

The samples must be turned in by 10 a.m. on the day of the screening. The cost for each sample is \$10.

Smith said private water wells should be tested annually. Samples will be screened for common contaminants, including total coliform bacteria, E. coli, nitrate-nitrogen and salinity.

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, Smith said.

“Water with nitrate-nitrogen at levels of 10 parts per million is considered unsafe for human consumption,” Smith 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. Infants less than 6 months of age and young livestock are most susceptible.”

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, and using water with high levels for irrigation may damage soil or plants.

Smith said it is extremely important for those submitting samples to be at the Sept. 19 meeting to receive results, learn corrective measures for identified problems and improve their understanding of private well management.

At the program, Lee Marlowe, sustainable landscape ecologist for the San Antonio River Authority, will discuss the river authority and its current projects. Roger Andrade, groundwater protection manager with the Edwards Aquifer Authority, will discuss the aquifer and the authority's purpose.

For more information, please contact the AgriLife Extension office in Bexar County at 210-631-0400.

To learn more about the programs offered through the network or to find additional publications and resources, please visit <http://twon.tamu.edu>.

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