

NEWS



Land Services Department
Environmental Services
322 Laurel Street, Suite 14
Brainerd, MN 56401

CROW WING COUNTY

BRAINERD, MINNESOTA 56401

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 27, 2011

CONTACT: Mitch Brinks
(218)824-1125

CROW WING COUNTY TO PROVIDE WELL TESTING AT COUNTY FAIR

The Crow Wing County Land Services Department, in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) will offer a free nitrate water-testing clinic at the Crow Wing County Fair August 3-5, 2011 in the Land Services-Natural Resource Building.

Shallow aquifers beneath sandy soils in central Minnesota are highly susceptible to nitrate contamination. Nitrates are the most common contaminants in Minnesota's groundwater, and in some areas of the state a significant number of wells have high nitrate levels. With that in mind, experts recommend that private well owners who get their drinking water from wells should test their water regularly. "This is an opportunity for folks to bring a water sample from their well to be tested for nitrates" stated Mitch Brinks, Water Protection Specialist for Crow Wing County. "The best part is that we will have the results ready in minutes and it's free" added Brinks.

To participate in the testing, homeowners are asked to bring at least one-half cup of water in preferably a clean plastic or clean glass container. To get a good sample, allow the tap to run 5 to 10 minutes before filling the container. Homeowners with distillation units, reverse osmosis or other nitrate removal systems should take two water samples - one before and one after the treatment process. This will determine if the system is working. Homeowners with just a water softener need to take one sample, either before or after the water passes through the water softener.

Samples should be taken no more than 24 hours before the testing and must be kept refrigerated prior to testing. To ensure accurate results, homeowners should mark the container with their name, phone number and a well identification number if more than one well is sampled. Homeowners who wish to remain anonymous should choose an easily recognized "code number" to identify their sample. It is not necessary to provide information about the well or well location.

Samples will be analyzed on the spot - the process usually takes less than five minutes - and results will be given directly to the homeowner. If the nitrate level in a sample is elevated, clinic staff can refer the homeowner to certified labs that will retest the water. For questions about the clinic or how to take a water sample contact Mitch Brinks at mitch.brinks@co.crow-wing.mn.us or (218) 824-1125.

#####