

When is the last time you had your drinking well water tested...

...if it has been over two years, you have waited too long!

The Towns of Arlington, Dekorra, Leeds, and Lowville, in collaboration with Columbia County, will offer rural well users an opportunity to test their drinking water in February 2018. The last time the towns and county offered this opportunity was in 2007 with one hundred and sixty-three households participating.

In February, 2018, the towns and the county are once again offering a **DRINKING WATER TESTING PROGRAM!** We want to make it convenient for you to test your well water, and learn about potential threats and techniques to keep your drinking water safe for you & your family.

It is easy to get involved...

1.) Choose one, two or all three of the test options that are explained in this packet.



2.) **Pick up and pay** for your drinking water testing bottle(s) at either the Arlington Town Hall, *Dekorra at Poynette Village Hall*, Leeds Town Hall, or Lowville Town Hall on **Saturday, February 17th @ 8-10:30 am:**

- ◆ Arlington — 200 Commercial St.
- ◆ Leeds — N1485 Pribbenow Dr., Arlington
- ◆ Dekorra at Poynette Village Hall, 106 S. Main
- ◆ Lowville — W6604 Traut Rd., Poynette



Payments for kits may be made using a **check** or **money order**. Please make **checks** or **money orders payable to: Columbia County UW-Extension**. The testing lab is only able to take 150 samples from all four towns, so the distribution of testing kits will be on a **first-come-first-serve-basis**.



3.) You will **take your sample(s) and drop-off** your sample at your town hall (*Dekorra residents may drop-off sample at the Poynette Village Hall*) on **Monday, February 19th @ 7-8 am & 5:30-6:30 pm**.

4.) **Pick up your test results** at the *Drinking Water Testing Overview & EDUCATIONAL* session on **Thursday, March 22nd, 6:00-8:30 pm**, at the **Leeds Town Hall**, N1485 Pribbenow Dr., Arlington 53911. **Registration & test result distribution starting 5:30 pm. The program will start 6:00 pm** and conclude by 8:30 pm. The educational program is designed to help you:

- ◆ learn what you can do to keep your water safe
- ◆ interpret your results (your individual results will be confidential).
- ◆ learn more about the region's groundwater quality

If for some reason you are unable to participate in the February 2018 water testing program you may pick up a drinking water homeowner's testing kit any other time of the year, during business hours, at the Columbia County UW-Extension Office in Portage (new location: 112 E. Edgewater, Room 212). For current forms, pricing, and other helpful information, visit the UW-Extension *Water & Environmental Analysis Lab* at UW-Stevens Point website (<https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/weal/Pages/Homeowner.aspx>).

Sincerely,

George Plenty
Arlington Town Chair

Michael Dorshorst
Dekorra Town Chair

James Foley
Leeds Town Chair

Curt Walters
Lowville Town Chair

Drinking water tests prices:

- ◆ Homeowner = \$52
- ◆ Metal = \$49
- ◆ DACT Screen = \$30



Payments may be made by **check or money order only**. Make checks or money orders **payable to: Columbia County UW-Extension**

Sponsored by:	For more information:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Towns of Arlington, Dekorra, Leeds, and Lowville ◆ Columbia County: Land & Water Conservation, UW-Extension & Health & Human Services ◆ UW-Stevens Point & UW-Extension Center for Watershed Science & Water and Environmental Analysis Lab (WEAL) 	<p>Columbia County, 112 E. Edgewater St., Room 212, Portage, WI 53901</p> <p>Kurt Calkins, Columbia County Land & Water Conservation 608-742-9670, kurt.calkins@co.columbia.wi.us</p> <p>Kathleen Haas, Columbia County, UW-Extension, 608-742-9680, kathleen.haas@ces.uwex.edu</p>

Why Test your Drinking Water?



Municipalities are required to test their water supplies regularly to ensure the water is safe to drink. Since there is no requirement to test a private well except for bacteria when it is first drilled or the pump is changed, you are responsible for making sure your water is safe. Most private wells provide a clean, safe supply of water; however, contaminants can pollute private wells, and unfortunately you cannot see, smell or taste most of them. Therefore, you should test your water on a regular basis.

What Tests are Available?

You can choose one, two or all three testing packages. If you are uncertain which test to do, we recommend the *Homeowner Package*, which analyzes seven different aspects of your water and will give you a very good indication of your water's condition.

Homeowner Package—\$52

Nitrate – This is a form of nitrogen that can dangerously reduce the amount of oxygen in the blood of infants under six months old. It may also harm the fetus. Nitrate is a common contaminant from fertilizers, septic systems, and animal waste. It may also indicate the presence of other contaminants or pollution pathways through the soil.

Bacteria – Bacteria, viruses, and parasites in water can cause disease. A coliform bacteria test indicates the possible presence of disease-causing bacteria from human or animal waste. Coliform bacteria are the most common contaminants found in private water systems.

PH – Indicates the water's acidity and helps to determine if water will erode plumbing.

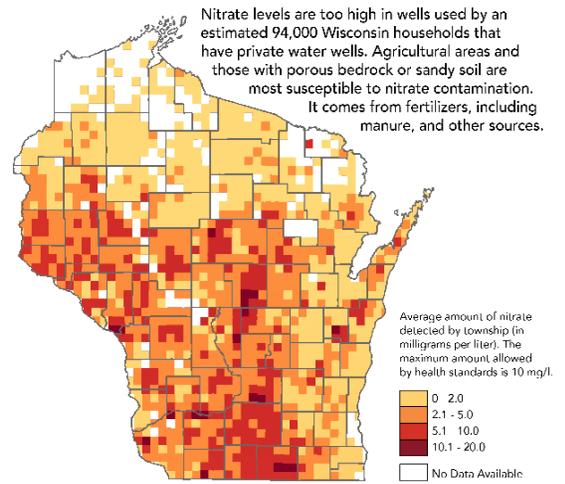
Hardness - Helps determine the need for water softening and also indicates corrosivity.

Conductivity - This measures the ability of water to conduct an electrical current due to dissolved substances in the water and can be used to signal the presence of contaminants.

Corrosivity Index - A combination of several tests, this indicates the tendency of water to corrode your plumbing or for lime deposits to form in pipes.

Chloride – High concentrations of chloride often indicate contamination problems from septic systems, fertilizers, landfills or road salts.

Nitrate in drinking water around Wisconsin



CREDIT: Katie Kowalsky/Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism

SOURCE: Well Water Quality Viewer, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point's Center for Watershed Science and Education; Private Drinking Water Quality in Rural Wisconsin, Journal of Environmental Health, 2013.

Metals Package - \$49

Lead & Copper – can be leached into the water from pipes or solder and can present a significant health threat. Lead was typically used in pre-1985 plumbing.

Iron - is a naturally occurring trace mineral. In concentrations over 0.3mg/L it causes taste & color problems.

Zinc - a trace metal that is toxic in elevated concentrations. It is not naturally occurring, but comes from corrosion of galvanized plumbing or water tanks.

Sodium - a 30 mg/L standard is not beneficial to health, as prescribed by the US EPA and world health organizations. Sodium is often found in groundwater in elevated amounts due from road salts, water softening salts, or septic system effluent. It is used to exchange with calcium and magnesium in water softeners. It causes elevated blood pressure in susceptible individuals. Natural levels are usually less than 5 mg/L.

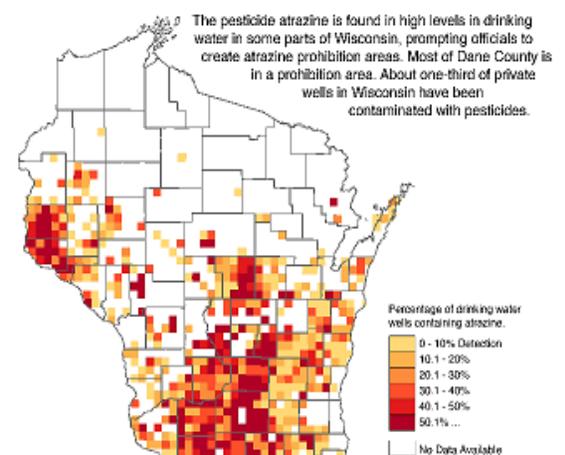
DACT (Triazine Screen) - \$30

The most common pesticide found in WI's groundwater is atrazine, which is used to control weeds in corn crops. A triazine screen (DACT screen) is generally a good first indicator of pesticide contamination in wells that are located near corn fields.

Pesticides in Your Water?

Several pesticides have been found in Wisconsin's groundwater. Some of these have entered groundwater as a result of their use on farm fields. Others have been found in groundwater following spills and improper disposal. If your well is located within 1/4 mile of a corn, soybean or vegetable field, you should test your well water for pesticides. You should also consider a pesticide test if your well is within 1/4 mile of an area where pesticides are manufactured, stored, mixed or loaded into application equipment. The health effects of pesticide exposure depend on a variety of factors, including the toxicity of the chemical, the dose, the duration and timing of exposure and the exposure to other chemicals.

Pesticide prompts prohibition zones



Credit: Katie Kowalsky/Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism

Sources: Well Water Quality Viewer, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point's Center for Watershed Science and Education; Wisconsin Groundwater Coordinating Council Report to the Legislature, 2015; Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection website; Atrazine prohibition areas.



Columbia County Drinking Water Testing & Education Program