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Free Private Water Well Testing Available to Homeowners Affected by Flooding

The Papio-Missouri River NRD, Lower Platte South NRD and Midwest Laboratories, in cooperation with the Douglas County Health Department and Sarpy/Cass County Health Department, will offer a limited number of well water quality tests to private homeowners affected by flooding, at no expense to the homeowners. Midwest Laboratories has offered to cover 50% of the laboratory testing costs, and the NRDs will cover the remaining 50%.

Laboratory testing will determine the presence and levels of total coliform, E. Coli, and nitrates. Such testing should be performed on every individual domestic well that was impacted by flooding prior to use of the well as a drinking water source. Each homeowner should obtain a sample bottle and testing kit from the Douglas or Sarpy/Cass County Health Department. Then, using an outdoor hydrant or faucet closest to the well, homeowners should run the well for an hour or until the water is clear before taking the sample. Homeowners must deliver the sample bottle to Midwest Labs at 13611 B Street in Omaha within 24 hours of taking the sample.

Test kits can be obtained on Wednesday, March 27th from 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. at the following locations:

- Sarpy/Cass Health Department, 701 Olson Drive, Suite 101, Papillion, NE
- Louisville Senior Center, 423 Elm Street, Louisville, NE
- Waterloo Fire Department, 405 7th Street, Waterloo, NE

If a well owner is unable to pick up a sample bottle and instructions during this time, test kits may also be obtained at each County Health Department, the P-MRNRD offices at Chalco Hills Recreation Area, or directly from Midwest Laboratories.

The results of the water quality tests will be sent directly to each homeowner by Midwest Labs. If the initial well water quality test confirms the presence of bacteria in the well, the homeowner should contact a licensed well technician or follow the procedures prescribed by the health departments to disinfect the well with a mixture of bleach and water. The appropriate amount of bleach should be based on recommendations from the health department in accordance with the diameter and depth of the well. Please contact the Douglas County Health Department at 402-444-7481 or the Sarpy/Cass Health Department at 402-339-4334 for additional instructions and information.

Once the well is disinfected, water should not be used for drinking or cooking until a second sample is tested to confirm that the disinfection was effective. Homeowners should obtain a second sample 7 to 10 days after disinfection and deliver it to Midwest Labs. Only after test results confirm that there is no harmful bacteria or nitrates in the well should the water be used for human consumption.

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