

## Private Well Sampling Procedures

### Step 1: Deciding to sample the well.

The main reason why department staff would be collecting a private well sample is to identify wells that exceed groundwater standards for pesticides and nitrate as part of:

- a groundwater investigation,
- follow up sampling to an acute or chronic spill of an agrichemical,
- a routine sampling program, or
- a statistically-designed survey.

DATCP staff should not let a well owner talk them into sampling a well, if it wasn't their intention to do so. It is ultimately the responsibility of a private well owner to make sure their own water is safe to drink. A well owner can collect a sample and submit it to the State Lab of Hygiene or many other Wisconsin labs for analysis of triazine, nitrate, bacteria or other tests.

### Step 2: Discussion with the well owner.

Provide the well owner with the brochure titled "Well Water Sampling". Make sure the well owner understands the implications of having a sample taken. A well sample that exceeds an enforcement standard for a pesticide can lead to further investigation, cleanup of a spill, an atrazine prohibition area, or prosecutions for violations of other Department rules. **Never take a sample without permission of the well owner or an adult resident. Never take a sample or enter a home to take a sample without an adult resident present.**

Find out as much as possible about the well (Wisconsin Unique Well Number, well depth, casing depth, condition of well, previous sample results we may not know about, other problems with the well). Note if the property is a farm or non-farm residence. Make sure the name, address and phone number are recorded correctly. Geolocate the sample location using a GPS.

### Step 3: Take the sample.

Take the sample from a point relatively close to the well. The water should be collected before it goes through any filter or water softener. Purge the well (cold water) for at least five minutes (at least one pump cycle) to assure fresh water that is representative of the aquifer. Use care to not touch the mouth of the jar or inside of the bottle cap. Wear disposal nitrile gloves when sampling a well involved in a groundwater investigation or as a follow up to an acute or chronic spill. Fill the appropriate number of one-liter amber glass bottles from the lab and keep them chilled until delivery to the lab.

### Step 4: Complete the Pesticide Sample Collection Record form

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A separate Pesticide Sample Collection Record form must be completed for each new premise that is sampled. If there is more than one well sampled at one location, then one form can be used with each well sample having a different sample ID on the form.