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Private Drinking Water Wells
By Sharon Skipton, UNL Extension Water Educator

A series of six new University of Nebraska – Lincoln Extension NebGuides will help rural families understand and manage their private drinking water systems. The NebGuides, developed by UNL Extension faculty Sharon Skipton, Jan Hygnstrom, and Wayne Woldt, are available online at http://water.unl.edu/drinkingwater/publications and can be downloaded free of charge.

Private Drinking Water Wells: Planning for Water Use helps rural families determine if the well capacity will meet their water demands. The flow rate must be capable of providing the total quantity of water needed every day. In addition, temporary large demands that occur throughout the day must be considered.

Private Drinking Water Wells: Water Sources focuses on Nebraska's groundwater resources. Groundwater provides approximately 85% of the water used for human consumption in Nebraska, yet its existence, movement, quantity, and quality remain a mystery to many.

Private Drinking Water Wells: The Water Well addresses the well location and construction. A contaminated well is a serious problem that can be costly and time-consuming to solve. Often, contamination can be avoided by proper location, construction, and maintenance.

A water distribution system is needed to pump water out of the well to the surface and deliver it under pressure to the place where it will be used. ***Private Drinking Water Wells: The Distribution System*** focuses on this system, which typically consists of a pump with motor, pressure storage tank, and a control device such as a pressure switch.

The small amount of maintenance required by most private drinking water well systems should be performed by a professional licensed by the State of Nebraska. ***Private Drinking Water Wells: Operation and Maintenance for Mechanical Components*** explains the operation and maintenance services that a licensed professional might offer.

Private Drinking Water Wells: Operation and Maintenance for a Safe Well helps rural homeowners maintain a safe drinking water supply. It provides an overview of potential water quality contaminants known to exist in Nebraska, wellhead protection that can be initiated, recommendations for having water tested, and treatment technology available for home use.

The series of publications is the result of a collaborative effort between the University of Nebraska – Lincoln Extension, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, the Nebraska Well Drillers Association, and the Nebraska Onsite Waste Water Association, all of whom place a high priority on protecting Nebraska's drinking water resources. Partial funding was provided by the Nebraska Well Drillers Association, the Nebraska Onsite Waste Water Association, and the Water Well Standards and Contractors' Licensing Board.