

Initial Nitrate Testing Results for Private Wells

Results as of May 2020



The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) has designed a Township Testing Program to determine current nitrate-nitrogen concentrations in private wells. The initial results represent what people are drinking regardless of well type or well age and nitrogen source(s). Program testing and the summarizing of results are ongoing. Tables were created with current data, May 2020.

Table 1: Initial Township Testing Results¹

County	Number of Townships Tested	Initial Number of Wells	Number of Townships with Wells Over the Health Risk Limit (≥ 10 mg/L Nitrate-N) (Listed by percentage of wells exceeding the health risk limit.)					
			<5%	5-9%	10-19%	20-29%	30-39%	$\geq 40\%$
Becker	3	200	0	1	2	0	0	0
Benton	4	732	1	2	1	0	0	0
Big Stone	3	92	3	0	0	0	0	0
Blue Earth	5	642	4	1	0	0	0	0
Brown	3	107	1	2	0	0	0	0
Carver	1	160	1	0	0	0	0	0
Chippewa	3	185	0	2	1	0	0	0
Chisago	2	382	1	1	0	0	0	0
Clay	11	497	11	0	0	0	0	0
Cottonwood ²	4	34	3	0	0	0	0	1
Dakota ²	15	1,378	2	2	3	1	5	2
Dodge	7	654	3	1	3	0	0	0
Douglas	9	1,864	7	2	0	0	0	0
Faribault	3	134	3	0	0	0	0	0
Fillmore	24	1,477	2	3	8	8	3	0
Freeborn	2	71	2	0	0	0	0	0
Goodhue	22	2,071	7	6	6	2	1	0
Houston	10	576	3	1	1	4	1	0
Hubbard	6	1,106	1	2	3	0	0	0
Kanabec	1	115	1	0	0	0	0	0
Kandiyohi	4	313	3	1	0	0	0	0
Lac Qui Parle ²	5	72	0	1	4	0	0	0
Le Sueur	2	248	1	0	0	0	0	1
Lincoln ²	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	1
Lyon ²	2	37	1	0	1	0	0	0
Meeker	2	245	2	0	0	0	0	0
Morrison	11	1,222	0	2	8	0	0	1
Mower ²	12	852	4	5	3	0	0	0
Nicollet	1	26	0	0	1	0	0	0
Nobles ²	4	45	0	0	0	0	0	4
Olmsted	11	1,057	5	4	1	1	0	0

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In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this information is available in alternative forms of communication upon request by calling 651-201-6000. TTY users can call the Minnesota Relay Service at 711. The MDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

Table 1: Initial Township Testing Results¹ continued

County	Number of Townships Tested	Initial Number of Wells	Number of Townships with Wells Over the Health Risk Limit (≥ 10 mg/L Nitrate-N) (Listed by percentage of wells exceeding the health risk limit.)					
			<5%	5-9%	10-19%	20-29%	30-39%	$\geq 40\%$
Otter Tail	32	4,533	19	6	7	0	0	0
Pipestone ²	9	115	0	0	0	0	2	7
Polk ²	5	140	5	0	0	0	0	0
Pope	6	303	1	2	3	0	0	0
Redwood ²	1	15	0	1	0	0	0	0
Rice	4	478	3	0	1	0	0	0
Rock ²	7	171	0	0	0	0	0	7
Scott	4	488	4	0	0	0	0	0
Sherburne	6	2,070	0	3	2	1	0	0
Stearns	14	1,883	5	6	3	0	0	0
Steele	4	264	3	1	0	0	0	0
Swift ²	11	195	9	1	1	0	0	0
Todd	9	797	4	5	0	0	0	0
Wabasha	14	1,087	1	0	8	4	1	0
Wadena	4	252	0	1	3	0	0	0
Washington	2	526	0	0	1	1	0	0
Watonwan ²	1	44	0	1	0	0	0	0
Winona	13	940	2	2	5	1	1	2
Wright	5	1,315	5	0	0	0	0	0
Total	344	32,217	133	68	80	23	14	26

¹The initial township testing results include data from all wells initially tested regardless of well construction or nitrogen source. Final results are determined using two rounds of sampling and a process to remove wells with construction concerns, insufficient construction information and those near potential non-fertilizer sources of nitrate. In many cases wells are removed from the final data set because homeowners didn't participate in the second round of testing. Final results represent wells that are potentially impacted by a fertilizer source. The MDA uses the results to prioritize future work to address nitrate concerns, as described in the NFMP.

²Some townships in the county have less than 20 wells. The MDA considers less than 20 wells inadequate to characterize a township for purposes of the NFMP.

Additional Information

Township Testing Program: www.mda.state.mn.us/townshiptesting

Minnesota Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan (NFMP): To learn more about the NFMP, the state's blueprint for preventing or minimizing impacts of nitrogen fertilizer on groundwater, visit: www.mda.state.mn.us/nfmp

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