

Virginia Household Water Quality Program

2023 Annual Report



Virginia
Cooperative
Extension

Virginia Tech

The Virginia Household Water Quality Program provides affordable, confidential water testing and education to the

1.6 million, or 19 % of Virginians

who rely on wells, springs and cisterns for household water.

Municipal water supplies are regulated in the U.S., but maintenance, testing and addressing problems with

private water supplies are the responsibility of the owner.

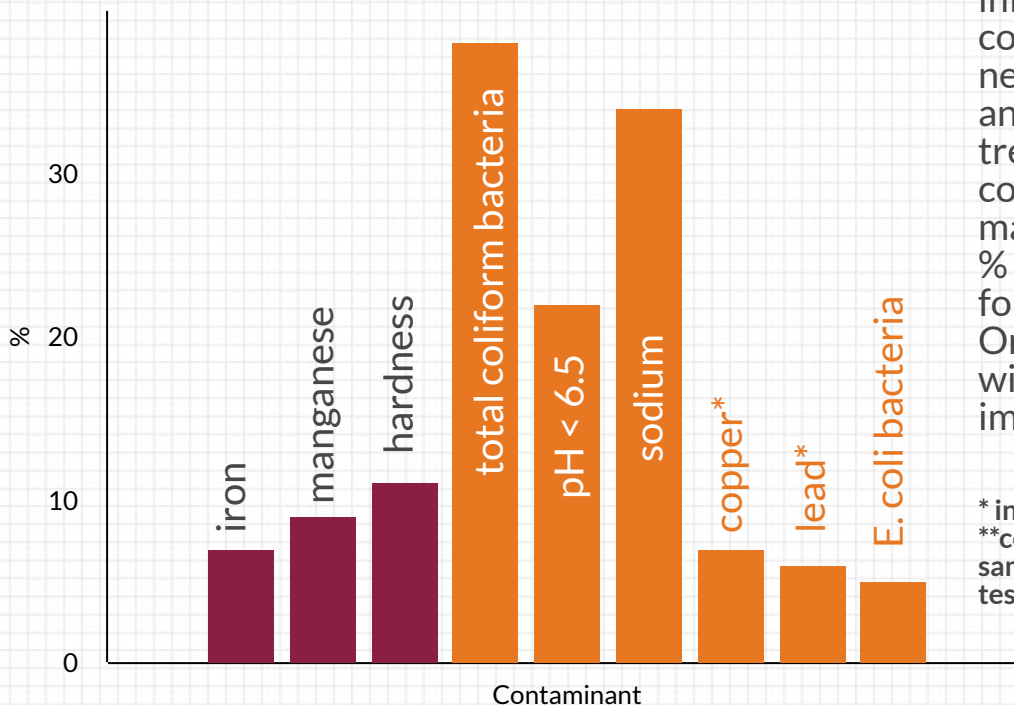


3,611 samples analyzed

-serving 8,866 Virginians

in 91/95 counties

What's in the water?



Household water quality is influenced by geology, well construction and condition, nearby sources of contamination, and, within the home, water treatment devices and composition of plumbing materials. Maroon bars represent % of samples exceeding standards for NUISANCE contaminants. Orange bars signify contaminants with associated HEALTH impacts.**

* in first draw household tap water samples
**contaminants found in less than 5% of samples not shown; more information on testing here.

Value



Participation in a VAHWQP clinic is designed to encourage subsequent, annual testing using a commercial lab. If delivered commercially, the value attributed to the 82 VAHWQP drinking water clinics offered in 2023 would be \$1,155,520. The cost to the 2023 participants was \$234,715, a cost savings of about 80%. In addition, grant funding and donations** reduced the cost of testing for families, making the program more accessible for many.



Annual well testing is recommended. Of 2023 participants, 40% report NEVER testing their water before and 30% have tested only once (with any lab). Of our survey respondents, 54% were new to the program; 22% have participated once; 20% 2-4 times and 5% 5 or more times.

*based on estimate of \$20 per analyte; **grant funding and donations from Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project, Virginia Environmental Endowment Community Conservation Program and local funding secured by collaborating Extension offices.

Impact



93% of participants stated that they understand their water test results

Participants were asked what recommended actions they already took or planned to take:

	did it since clinic!	plan to in a year!
install treatment or improve function of existing treatment devices	19.8 %	21.5 %
shock chlorinate (circulate chlorine through well and plumbing to kill bacteria)	14 %	11.7 %
improve maintenance water system or move a source of contamination	8.5%	13.2%
seek additional testing	5 %	16.7%
use bottled water	10 %	5 %

Program satisfaction survey*

*administered online; RR=26% n=949

1-completely disagree; 5 = completely agree

I gained useful information. → 4.9

4.8 ← It was affordable.

I feel empowered to manage my water supply. → 4.7

4.9 ← I will recommend this program to my friends and neighbors.

This program was valuable to me. → 4.9

4.8 ← It was easy to participate.



VAHWQP Participants Say:



It was reassuring to see that the quality of our water is good. I appreciate the zoom meeting that explained results in great detail. Thank you!

I love that the Extension is offering this at an extremely affordable price so that all in the community can participate. Invaluable service.

It's a great public service for rural folks to be able to know their water is safe. Thank you for making this accessible and affordable.

I appreciate the focus on community health and ensuring that as a well owner I'm given the tools to properly take care of it and ensure it's successful operation.

It was valuable to us because we had recently moved into a home that used well water and we were unfamiliar with the system and how to determine if the water was of good quality. The testing was well explained and easy to follow, affordable (to say the least), and the results were informative. We also appreciate the explanations of how to care for the well to keep it safe and what to watch out for now and in the future. I think this was an excellent program that was run extremely well.

Visit us online! www.wellwater.bse.vt.edu

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