

Recognize The Risks With Drinking Water

As environmental issues continue to garner more attention across the globe, certain concerns that represent the public's collective unease continue to emerge. Contamination of drinking water has long been a hot-button issue, and one that was once again being brought to the forefront in 2015.

Those who want to be proactive in protecting their communities from contaminated water can follow these tips.

Get drinking water tested. Find a reputable local laboratory that specializes in testing drinking water. Start by calling the water authorities where you live or in surrounding towns, which may have a list of local, independents labs. The EPA may be able to help as well. Contact their safe drinking water hotline at 800-426-4791. You also can buy a testing kit from home improvement retailers to conduct routine tests yourself.

Install a water filter. Water filters may be connected to the main water source in a home or attached to faucets. These devices can help filter out any other impurities that may be affecting the taste or quality of drinking water.

Watch groundwater



contamination. Be cautious about what you release into the soil in and around your home, especially if you rely on well water. County health departments may test for nitrates and bacteria, but you may require more in-depth testing from an outside service if you suspect a problem.

Get connected with municipal alerts. Water-main breaks and other instances may require the shutting off and flushing of municipal water systems, which may introduce contaminants. Always follow suggested water-boil and cleaning guidelines issued in your area.

By heeding these tips, residents can protect themselves against contaminated drinking water.



Store Manager Hal Adams (right) and Marty Townes (left) stand ready to greet customers at the Weakley County Farmers Co-op.

WEAKLEY COUNTY FARMERS CO-OP

Comparing Large Scale Farming Operations To Home Gardens

DAVID FISHER
News Writer

It is essential for farmers, as well as home gardeners, to stay informed about the latest and greatest products to keep their crops healthy.

Hal Adams, who has served as manager of the Weakley County Farmers Co-op in Martin for the past 38 years, says to be a successful, most farmers these days have large scale farming operations. He explained the high cost of equipment requires farming a lot of acreage to pay for it – usually around 1,000 acres or more.

To make the most efficient use of the land they own and /

or rent, farmers use the latest in high tech chemicals to kill harmful insects and weeds. They also use the best hybrid seeds available and apply the proper nutrients to obtain the highest possible crop yields.

Many big time farmers now have college degrees in agriculture science so they have the best chance of being successful.

Farming is more of a business than it once was and farmers must decide the best way to sell their products, based on market prices and other factors. This goes back to the law of supply and demand. When it's a good year for growing particular crops, there is an abundance of product (corn, soybeans,

etc.) But this means lower prices for the farmer. If it's a lean crop-growing season and the supply is low, the demand remains high, which results in higher prices. So, farmers must attempt to figure out which crops are best to plant in any given year. Many hedge their bets by planting multiple crops. The big three in Tennessee are corn, soybeans and cotton.

To insure against loss of profit due to drought or disease, farmers usually purchase crop insurance.

Farmers often look to their suppliers to help them understand the pros and cons of the latest chemicals and provide recommendations for the proper amount to apply per acre.

The home gardener, likewise, seek the best plant varieties to plant in their gardens. For this group of growers, it's often more about the quality of the vegetables they grow than the quantity. Many garden varieties are better tasting, but more easily damaged in shipping than the varieties typically raised for commercial use. This means home gardeners can grow more tasty produce than they can purchase at the market.

Pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers used in the home garden are packaged in smaller quantities than what would be used in large-scale farming operations, but they do the same thing – increase crop yields.

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Cheryl McClure, Katie Vincent and Angie Kelly greet customers inside The Color Shop, located on the corner of Broadway and Fredrick Street in Martin.

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The Color Shop Talks What's New For 2016

DAVID FISHER
News Writer

Local citizens looking to remodel their homes have a variety of new products to choose from.

According to Richard Kelly, along with his son, Nicolas "Bubba" Kelly, and daughter, Angie Kelly - owners and operators of The Color Shop, located on Broadway Street in Martin, free advice is available for those wishing to upgrade the appearance of their interior and exterior spaces.

"Cheryl McClure, who has 25 years experience as an interior designer, is on hand to offer remodeling advice," Angie said.

Richard states some of the new products for 2016 include: waterproof vinyl snap-together flooring that comes in planks; new selections of tile, including ceramic and stone backslashes; super durable indoor and outdoor carpet; and ceramic, laminate, tile, linoleum; and hardwood flooring that comes in wider widths (5-6 inches).

Richard says he recommends Farrell-Calhoun brand paint,

which has been made in Tennessee since 1906. "One of the new paints is an optic-latex (oil-based latex)," Richard said. "There are also a lot of new colors on the market. The neutral colors, greens, yellows, and aqua are always very popular."

Angie states, new types of windows, blinds, and countertops (quartz, granite and marble) are available to choose from.

With "Green" craze that's sweeping the nation, many homeowners are refinishing and restoring old furniture, giving it new life.

Simple Ways To \$ave Money At Home

Invest in a programmable thermostat. It will automatically adjust the temperature in your house, saving you energy while you're out for the day, away on vacation or sleeping.

Switch all of your lightbulbs to CFLs (compact fluorescent light) or LED bulbs. They last longer and use up to 75 percent less energy than standard incandescent bulbs, saving you money on your electric bills.

Insulate well. Use insulation

with a high R-value, such as Roxul Comfortbatt, to top up insulation in your attic. Aim for an R-value of 50 or a depth of 16 inches. For whole home efficiency, ensure other areas of your home are well insulated, such as crawl spaces, basement headers, walls and ceilings. It will keep your house cool in the warm weather and take the stress off your air conditioning unit.

Stop air leaks around your

home by sealing existing gaps and cracks. Use caulking or weather stripping around doors and windows. Installing a door sweep is also a good idea.

Replace old appliances with energy-efficient models. Only do laundry or run the dishwasher when you have full loads.

Remember that many little improvements can add up by providing valuable monthly savings for you, while protecting our environment for the future.