



USDA-CSREES 2007 National Water Quality Conference

Housing and Environment Educational Circulars: Your Household Water Quality

A series of University of Georgia (UGA) Cooperative Extension publications known as “Your Household Water Quality” was designed to help consumers identify and manage water quality problems in private water systems. Unlike users of public water systems, owners of private water sources (including wells, springs, and cisterns) are responsible for ensuring the quality of their drinking water. Since private water systems are more susceptible to contamination than public systems, private well owners should take steps to safeguard their health. Measures include routine water supply testing and well head maintenance and protection. “Your Household Water Quality” publication series includes: Arsenic in Your Water. Inorganic arsenic contamination in water supplies may be due to natural, agricultural, or commercial sources. Consuming inorganic arsenic may cause abnormal heartbeat, decrease in blood cells, gastrointestinal irritation, skin diseases, and circulatory problems. If an initial test does not reveal dangerous levels of arsenic, yearly follow-up testing is not recommended unless consumer notices an obvious change in water in water quality or in routine testing results for minerals. Mercury in Your Water. Mercury contamination in water supplies may be due to natural geological activity, combustion of fossil fuels, mining, or commercial products. Consuming mercury may cause damage to the brain and kidneys. Should consumers test their water and find elevated levels of mercury, a home water treatment system should be considered. Arsenic in Your Water and Mercury in Your Water are brief, non-technical, and designed for county-delivery or to be used on their own to answer common questions. Both publications are available in print and in PowerPoint presentations through county Cooperative Extension offices or via the UGA Cooperative Extension website: http://www.fcs.uga.edu/extension/house_pubs.php. In addition to Arsenic in Your Water and Mercury in Your Water, the “Your Household Water Quality” series features eleven other publications highlighting common private well contaminants.

Author: Jorge H. Atilas and Paul Vendrell
University Affiliation: University of Georgia
Co-Author(s): Philip M.Herrington