PROJECT SUMMARY

Rural Drinking Water Quality

Investigating drinking water quality available to rural Australians in NSW not connected to regulated water (2008-2009)

Funding: Faculty of Science, ILWS

Investigators/researchers: Dr Andrea Crampton and Dr Angela T. Ragusa (both ILWS)

Description

Although water quality is normally perceived to be an issue for the developing or "third world" nations, for residents of rural Australia it is very much a local and personal issue. More than half of the tanks tested had E. Coli levels above, up to 230X, that deemed acceptable in accordance with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines. The majority of consumers were unaware of the risks associated with drinking raw water.

Further, few took steps to minimise their risk through accepted water management practices. The participants wereadamant that despite not knowing about the risks they still wanted to be in control of their own water rather than accept any government intervention. Finally, most noted that they preferred their tank water to town water and that it "made 'em stronger" although they would take more care in relation to at risk groups such as the very young or the very old.

Outcomes

One referred publication, two more in development. Field day presentation at Slopes to Summit in Woomargama 2010 and an artistic instalment as part of the Water onTap exhibition in Albury, 2010 several newspaper articles and radio interviews.


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