



Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency

Healthy People, Healthy Communities

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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Water Quality Concerns in the Town of Mendocino

On August 24-28, 2009, the Mendocino City Community Services District made emergency repairs at the sewage treatment plant located at the far west end of town. The repairs necessitated wastewater to be diverted to the plants overflow pond. On August 28, repairs were complete, the pond was pumped dry, and plant flow returned to normal.

At about this time a resident located immediately adjacent to and east of the plant complained of foul smelling water coming from their well. The well is a shallow well located approximately 100 feet away from the pond. The Division of Environmental Health (DEH) was notified on September 15, of a water sample taken from the well testing positive for the presence of fecal bacteria. DEH staff visited the neighborhood on September 18, to obtain information on well construction in the area and to collect additional water samples.

Well construction varied from old, poorly constructed, shallow wells to newer deep wells installed to meet sanitary requirements. DEH staff collected water samples from five wells. Two samples collected from shallow wells tested positive for bacteria, but none of the samples were found to contain fecal bacteria. Another shallow well in the area that was tested by residents also was reported to be free of fecal contamination.

DEH staff conducts inspections at food facilities in Mendocino and those establishments on private well have water samples collected. Of the most recently collected water samples from sixteen food establishments, none were found to contain fecal bacteria.

Aside from the one positive sample there does not appear to be fecal contamination of water wells in the vicinity of the Mendocino sewage treatment plant. The source of contamination in the one well has not been determined. DEH staff recommendation is for homeowners whose water is supplied from shallow wells to have the system inspected and repairs and upgrades made as required to minimize the risk of harmful bacteria getting into the water supply.

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