OKLAHOMA

Farm & Ranch*A*Syst

Worksheet 6

Assessing the Risk of Drinking Water Contamination from Household Wastewater Treatment

Why should I be concerned?

Your septic system is a potential source of disease-causing bacteria and viruses, household chemicals, and nitrate. If the system is not functioning properly, it is possible that your well water can be contaminated, threatening the health and well-being of your family.

The goal of the Oklahoma Farm & Ranch*A*Syst program is to help you protect the ground water that supplies your drinking water.

How will this worksheet help me protect my drinking water?

* It will take you step by step through your drinking water well condition and your management practices.
* It will rank your activities according to how they might affect the ground water that provides your drinking water.
* It will provide easy-to-understand rankings that will help you analyze the "risk level" of your drinking water well condition and your management practices.
* It will help determine which of your practices are reasonably safe and effective, and which practices might require modification to better protect your drinking water.

How do I complete the worksheet?

1. Use a pencil. You may want to make changes.
2. For each category that is appropriate to your farm or ranch, find the statement that best describes your conditions. (Leave blank categories that don't apply.)
3. Look to the right of the statement under "score" and circle 3, 2, or 1.
4. Add all circled scores to obtain the total score for the worksheet.
5. Using your total score and the ranges provided at the end of the worksheet, mark your risk rating in the appropriate box for low, moderate, or high risk.

The procedure doesn't take long to complete.

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SEPTIC SYSTEM LOCATION

SCORE (circle)

In Relation to Well

Low Risk:	Drainfield is more than 100 ft. downslope from well.	1
Mod. Risk:	Drainfield is 100 ft. upslope from well, or 75 ft. or more from the well at the same elevation.	2
High Risk:	Drainfield is less than the recommended separation distance from the well.	3

TYPE OF WASTE DISPOSAL SYSTEM

Low Risk:	Use of an approved and maintained lagoon rather than a subsurface drainage system.	1
Mod. Risk:	Two or fewer subsurface drainage systems per two acres.	2
High Risk:	Cesspool or open line septic systems. More than two septic systems per acre.	3

SYSTEM CONDITION AND MAINTENANCE

Septic System Age

Low Risk:	Less than 10 years old.	1
Mod. Risk:	Between 10 and 20 years old.	2
High Risk:	More than 20 years old.	3

Condition of Drainfield

Low Risk:	All lateral lines functioning properly.	1
Mod Risk:	-----	
High Risk:	One or more lateral lines not functioning properly.	3

Septic Tank Maintenance

Low Risk:	Scum and sludge levels checked each year and pumped as needed.	1
Mod. Risk:	-----	
High Risk:	Scum and sludge levels never checked and tank never pumped out.	3

Traffic Pattern

Low Risk:	All traffic routed away from tank and drainfield.	1
Mod. Risk:	Only occasionally drive small vehicles over system.	2
High Risk:	Frequently drive over system with vehicles or occasionally with heavier farm equipment.	3

SYSTEM CONDITION AND MAINTENANCE

SCORE (circle)

Frequency of Sewer Back-ups

Low Risk:	Sewer never backs up into house. Sewage never surfaces in yard.	1
Mod. Risk:	Sewer backs up into house occasionally, or sewage surfaces in yard.	2
High Risk:	Sewer backs up into house frequently. Sewage frequently surfaces in yard.	3

HOUSEHOLD PRACTICES

Water Use

Low Risk:	Use water-saving fixtures and appliances. Fix leaks, and follow most water conservation recommendations.	1
Mod. Risk	-----	
High Risk:	High water use. Leaky fixtures.	3

Sink Garbage Disposer

Low Risk:	Don't use sink for disposal of grease, oil, fat, or coffee grounds.	1
Mod. Risk:	Occasionally use sink or disposer for disposal of grease, oil, fat, or coffee grounds.	2
High Risk:	Daily use of sink or disposer for disposal of grease, oil, fat, or coffee grounds.	3

TOTAL SCORE: ☐

Check the appropriate overall risk category for your well based on your total score.

☐ **Low Risk** (9-14) ☐ **Mod. Risk** (15-20) ☐ **High Risk** (21-27)

* **Low Risk**—Your system is generally functioning well, but a few improvements could be made. Look at those areas where your assessment of risk was greater than the "low risk" category and identify which improvements could be made.
* **Moderate Risk**—Several deficiencies need improvement. Identify areas where your rating was greater than "low risk." Areas rated as "high risk" should be improved as soon as possible.
* **High Risk**—Your system has several serious problems and major changes are needed. All areas rated as "high risk" should be improved immediately. Continued use of your current system could pose a serious threat to your family's water supply.