



County of San Luis Obispo
 Department of Public Works
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COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO

June 2006

2005 Water Quality Report County Service Area #23—Santa Margarita

To our customers

The County of San Luis Obispo is pleased to present this annual report describing the quality of your drinking water. We sincerely hope this report gives you the information you seek and have a right to know. Este informe contiene información muy importante sobre su agua de beber. Tradúzcalo ó hable con alguien que lo entienda bien.

YOUR WATER SUPPLY

Your water comes from groundwater wells located in Santa Margarita. The water is cleaned through a natural filtration process as it trickles down through the ground. During this process, water may also pick up minerals or contaminants found in the soil, either natural or man-made. Groundwater is normally very clean and is simply disinfected with chlorine to help minimize viral and bacterial contamination.

The wells are routinely monitored for contaminants and the results are submitted to the California Department of Health Services (CDHS). The findings are evaluated relative to the California Drinking Water Primary and Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) standards. In 2005, previously completed sanitary surveys and source water assessments for the Santa Margarita system were updated by County staff. The studies were conducted to locate potential sources of contamination or contaminating activities in the watershed and assess their impact on the water system. The updated studies included a review of water system information, meetings with water system staff, and field reconnaissance. No significant changes were noted in the watershed survey and the source assessment concluded that the wells continue to be most vulnerable to the following activities for which no associated contaminant has been detected in the water supply: gasoline station. A copy of the complete assessment is available at:

California Department of Health Services
 1180 Eugenia Place, Suite 200
 Carpinteria, CA 93013

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 San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

You may also request a summary of the assessment be sent to you by contacting Kurt Souza, CDHS Regional Engineer, Santa Barbara District at (805) 566-1326, or John Beaton, Water Quality Manager, County of San Luis Obispo at (805) 781-5111.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The Santa Margarita CSA Advisory Committee meets the first Thursday of every month at 7:00 pm in the Community Hall. The public is welcome to attend. The San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors meets every Tuesday (except the 5th Tuesday in a month) in the board chambers located in the new County Government Center, 1055 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo. The Board holds budget hearings during the month of June. Interested persons should check the Board's agendas for specific dates. Agendas for all Board of Supervisors meetings are posted in some County libraries, the County Government Center, and on the Board of Supervisors internet web site at www.slocounty.ca.gov.

SANTA MARGARITA WATER FACTS

- We use 2 1/2 times as much water in the summer as in the winter
- 2/3 of the summer demand is for landscape water.
- Conserving existing resources reduces the need to develop new, more expensive sources.

Tips to save water, energy, and money

OUTSIDE	INSIDE
Water only as needed	Install low-flow toilets and fixtures
Mulch plants	Wash full loads of dishes and clothes
Water in the morning or evening	Fix leaks
Inspect for leaks and broken, blocked or mis-aligned sprinklers	Turn off the faucet while washing dishes, shaving, brushing your teeth, or soaping in the shower
Replace unused lawn with a ground cover	Take shorter showers

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have questions regarding this report, please contact John Beaton, Water Quality Manager, at (805) 781-5111 or Email: jbeaton@co.slo.ca.us.

WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.SLOCOWATERQUALITYLAB.ORG

KEY TERMS

Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) - The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water.

Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG) and Public Health Goal (PHG) - The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs are set by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and PHGs are set by the California Environmental Protection Agency.

Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level (MRDL) - The level of a disinfectant added for water treatment that may not be exceeded at the consumer's tap.

Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal (MRDLG) - The level of a disinfectant added for water treatment below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs are set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Primary Drinking Water Standards (PDWS) - MCLs for contaminants that affect health along with their monitoring and reporting requirements, and water treatment requirements. Primary MCLs are set as close to the PHGs (or MCLGs) as is economically and technologically feasible.

KEY TERMS (Continued)

Secondary Drinking Water Standards (SDWS) – MCLs for contaminants to protect the taste, odor, or appearance of the drinking water. Contaminants with SDWSs do not affect health at the MCL levels.

Treatment Technique (TT) – A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

Notification Level (NL) – The concentration of a contaminant that, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirement which a water system must follow.

No Standard (NS) – Contaminant for which there is no established MCL.

Not Detected (ND) – Contaminant is not detectable at testing limit.

pCi/L – picoCuries per liter (a measure of radioactivity)

ppm – parts per million, or milligrams per liter (mg/L)

ppb – parts per billion, or micrograms per liter (µg/L)

CU – color units

NTU – Nephelometric Turbidity Unit

TON – Threshold Odor Number

LI – Langelier Index; Noncorrosive = Any positive value, Corrosive = Any negative value

2005 Water Statistics

- **Santa Margarita Water Production**
⇒ 61.2 million gallons
- **Average Daily Demand**
⇒ 167,583 gallons

SOURCES OF DRINKING WATER

The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity.

Contaminants that may be present in source water include:

- **Microbial contaminants**, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife.
- **Inorganic contaminants**, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally occurring or result from urban stormwater runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming.
- **Pesticides and herbicides**, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban stormwater runoff, and residential uses.
- **Organic chemical contaminants**, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, and septic systems.
- **Radioactive contaminants** which can be naturally occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the California DHS prescribe regulations which limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. The California DHS regulations also establish limits for contaminants in bottled water which must provide the same protection for public health.

OPERATIONS

All operators who work for the County are certified by the California DHS. They are knowledgeable professionals dedicated to maintaining an excellent water system and providing you with the best quality water possible.

WATER TESTING

Water analyses are performed by the San Luis Obispo County Water Quality Laboratory. The lab is certified by the California DHS as an environmental testing laboratory for bacteriological and chemical analyses. Federal and State requirements dictate that all regulatory analyses be performed by certified labs following approved procedures.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Water is supplied to the community of Santa Margarita via two wells, Well #3 and Well #4. Well #3 is deep, contains elevated levels of iron and manganese, and produces less water than Well #4.

Well #4 is the main system well. Water from this well can be corrosive, which allows metals from water lines and faucets to dissolve into the water. To render this water less corrosive, a combination of caustic soda and a corrosion inhibitor (ortho-phosphate) are added to the delivered water.

The optimal range of ortho-phosphate in the distribution system is between 1.5 and 2.2 ppm. The optimal range for pH is between 7.4 and 8.0. Measured levels of lead and copper at customers' taps have been below the maximum allowed levels since the corrosion control combined treatment began.

While your drinking water meets the current standard for arsenic, it does contain low levels of arsenic. The standard balances the current understanding of arsenic's possible health effects against the costs of removing arsenic from drinking water. The California Department of Health Services continues to research the health effects of low levels of arsenic, which is a mineral known to cause cancer in humans at high concentrations and is linked to other health effects such as skin damage and circulatory problems.

All community water systems were required to comply with the new USEPA arsenic MCL of 10 ppb by January 23, 2006. In the past, raw water from Santa Margarita Well #3 has had arsenic levels above the new 10 ppb standard, however measured levels since 2002 were below this limit. The iron and manganese treatment system on Well #3 also removes arsenic. All water delivered from Well #3 was treated and had arsenic levels below the new 10 ppb level. Arsenic has not been detected in Well #4.

Well #4 is shallow and considered to be "under the influence of surface water" which means it is more vulnerable to microbial and other contaminants. In recognition of this, we continuously monitor turbidity and chlorine residual from the well to verify that proper disinfection has occurred.

GENERAL DRINKING WATER INFORMATION

All drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the USEPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline, 1-800-426-4791.

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. USEPA/Centers for Disease Control guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline, 1-800-426-4791.

Additionally, the USEPA Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water maintains a website with useful information on drinking water. The address is www.epa.gov/safewater/. Additional information can be obtained by accessing the American Water Works Association's website at www.awwa.org, the California DHS website at www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/ddwem/index.htm, or by calling John Beaton, Water Quality Manager, at 781-5111.

WATER SYSTEM MASTER PLAN

The County of San Luis Obispo Public Works Department has prepared a Water System Master Plan for CSA-23 in Santa Margarita in order to more effectively provide water service to our customers. The Plan addresses improvements needed to meet the water needs of the community including supplemental water, water storage, and pipeline improvements. The Water System Master Plan for Santa Margarita CSA 23 can be viewed on the County internet web site at www.slocountywater.org.