

Advice Sheet 22: Drinking Water Assessment

Water for human and animal consumption

Mains water supply is routinely tested by the water supply companies as a legislative requirement to ensure the safety of drinking water supply. The treatment and supply of water for drinking and human use is a highly specialised and legislated industry.

Analysis of this water includes analysis for human toxic elements, pesticides, nitrates and microbiology. The analysis process and the water is inspected by the UK Water Inspectorate, an agency of DEFRA, as part of the Water Quality Regulations.

What needs to be analysed

The UK water inspectorate insist that water is analysed for microbiological content, chemical content, metal content and other factors including taste, smell and looks. This analysis must be performed to UKAS standards.

NRM Policy on Drinking water assessment

NRM is rarely asked to perform this assessment because mains water supply should already be tested by the supply company. Occasionally we will be asked to perform an analysis of drinking water from an onsite supply, such as a well or a bore hole.

Whilst NRM is a UKAS accredited laboratory, it is not accredited for these methods in drinking water and as such does not undertake analysis of drinking water quality.

Where can I get drinking water assessment?

NRM recommends that you contact your local water supply company. All the major water companies have large laboratories designed to analyse large numbers of water samples for drinking quality and will be able to provide assistance.

What about the analysis of water samples for irrigation purposes?

NRM are specialists in this kind of analysis – consult NRM Advice Sheet 20.