

Water Testing Guidance for Edible Sprout Growers

Growers producing edible sprouts must use **potable** water to soak and water their sprouts. The use of untreated surface water in sprout production is prohibited. Water testing requirements depend on whether the producer is using municipal or well water.

Municipal Water

Producers using municipal water to grow their sprouts must obtain a copy of their municipality's most recent annual water quality report. Any contaminants of concern should be highlighted in the report, but compare the contaminants in your water to those in the table below AND send the report to CNG.

Well Water

Prior to certification, a sprout producer must make inquiries to relevant experts* regarding which contaminants are known to be present in their local water supply. See this [EPA Private Drinking Water](#) page for links to more resources. Producers must keep records of these inquiries, including:

- Date of inquiry
- Name and affiliation of the person contacted
- List of contaminants of concern in local groundwater

If the experts indicate the presence of contaminants of concern in area water, the grower must submit a water sample to a lab to test for those contaminants. **Well water users are required to test their water for E. coli annually.** These test reports must be submitted to CNG.

Growers can compare the contaminant levels on their tests to those in the table below.

**Relevant experts include: local or state health department officials, NRCS (Natural Resource Conservation Service) agents, state environmental protection or pollution control agencies, local well drillers, and regional water testing companies.*

EPA: Acceptable Levels of Drinking Water Contaminants

The following table lists some of the most common water contaminants and the EPA's Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for each. The MCL is the EPA's maximum amount of a contaminant that may legally be present in drinking water. To see the full table with a list of over 90 contaminants and their MCLs visit this page: [EPA National Primary Drinking Water Regulations](#).

Contaminant	Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)
E. coli	0
Chlorine	4 mg/L
Chloramine	4 mg/L
Fluorine	4 mg/L
Arsenic	0.010 mg/L
Nitrate	4 mg/L
Lead	0.015 mg/L

Food Safety Resources for Sprout Producers

[Reducing Microbial Food Safety Hazards in the Production of Seed for Sprouting: Guidance for Industry](#)

[Good Agricultural Practices for Sprouts](#)