**Developing Countries Farm Radio Network**

Pack 13, Item 14

Type: Script

Date

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**Keep your drinking water clean**

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Information on this topic was requested by DCFRN participants in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, India, Malawi, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Sierra Leone.

Presenter: Lorna Jackson

**Special note**

1. Before using the information in this item, please read the notes at the end concerning related DCFRN items.

2. When presenting this item, you may want to discuss water-borne diseases common in your area. Gastro-enteritis, dysentery, cholera, typhoid, worms, giardia, Guinea-worm, bilharzia(schistosomiasis), and hepatitis can all be carried by water.

3. Keeping water sources clean is a community issue. You should make every effort to stress this in your interpretation of the item.

**Suggested introduction**

We at this radio station are part of a worldwide information network that gathers farming and health information from developing countries all over the world. It's the Developing Countries Farm Radio Network, sponsored by the Canadian International DevelopmentAgency, Massey Ferguson, and the University of Guelph.

Through this Network, we bring you information on ways to help people stay healthy. Today, we're going to talk about keeping your water supply clean. Here's Lorna Jackson.

**JACKSON:** We all want to keep ourselves and our families healthy. To do this, one of the things we must do is to make sure that the water we drink is clean. If it's not good, clean water, it can have tiny, invisible disease germs and other things in it that can make us sick. Water sources can get these bad things from human or animal wastes—that is, from faeces or urine.

If you get your drinking water from open sources, like ponds or rivers, a good place to get it is at a spring that runs into that water source. Whatever you do, though, try to keep animals away from the place where you fetch the water. Some people build a fence around this area to keep animals away. If you get your drinking water from a stream or river, get it from up the river ashort distance from where animals or people could make it dirty—that is, where animal or human wastes get into it or even where people wash clothes or bathe.

The best way to use water from any open source like a river, lake, or pond, is to dig a well close to it. The water in this well will be cleaner because it has been filtered through the ground.

Generally speaking, the safest, cleanest water comes from underground, from springs and wells. But even spring or well water isn't good if bad germs get into it. And where do most of the germs come from that get into spring and well water? From animals and people, of course.

First, let's think about animals and how you can keep their manure and urine from getting into your water source.

To begin with, you know that the ground in places where animals drink always gets wet, muddy, and dirty. If this happens near the spring or well, some dirty water could get into the water source. So that this won't happen, some people set up a special livestock watering place at least 20 metres (65 feet) away from the water source. They then arrange to move water from the spring or well to a water trough at this livestock watering place.

You also know that human wastes must not get into the water. For this reason, if there's a latrine in the area, it should also be at least 20 metres (65 feet) away from the water source.

Now it may be that where you live, the beginning of the rainy season is a time when many people get sick with diarrhea or other illnesses. If this happens, it's probably because when the rainwater runs over the ground, it washes dust, dirt, manure, and other garbage into the water sources. Of course there's not much you can do to keep this dirty water out of open water sources, butyou can keep it out of a well by building up the sides around the opening, so the dirty water can't flow into it.

At this time, though, when water sources are most likely to get dirty, many people stay healthy by drinking clean rainwater. Perhaps you already do this after collecting it from the roof of your house or other building. If you don't, you could use a bamboo trough or gutter under the roof edge to make the water run into a water container.

Now by the end of the dry season, before the rains come, quite a lot of dust, dirt, and insects have collected on the roof. So it's a good idea to let the first good rain-shower wash off the roof before you start collecting water for drinking. Then after that, the rainwater should be clean enough to keep for drinking.

Some people drink rainwater all the time during the rainy season. And some people have several large, clean storage containers to keep enough for most of the dry season as well.

Now thinking about containers for storing drinking water—whether they are outside your house or inside, it's important to wash them out well before putting clean water into them. They must then be properly covered to keep out dust, dirt, and insects.

Of course, any container that holds water for drinking must be kept clean all the time. I'm not only talking about water storage containers, but also about the cup or ladle that's used for dipping out water. It should only be used for that purpose.

Then there's the bucket used for drawing up water out of the well; the same care must be taken to keep it clean. Dirt and germs can very easily get into springs and wells if people put dirty buckets or their hands into the water. In many communities, just one special clean bucket is used for drawing water from the spring or well. Great care is taken to keep it clean, and when not in use, it's kept in a safe, clean place, near the water source.

Now in many communities, the water source is shared by many people. When this is the case, in order to do some of the things I'm suggesting today, everyone must agree to do the same. If each person does this, people will not get sick as often as before.

In summary then:

Keep animals away from wells, springs, rivers, or ponds, where you get drinking water. If possible, animal watering places should be at least 20 meters (65 feet) from the water source.

Latrines also should be at least 20 metres (65 feet) away from the water source.

Use a clean jug or bucket for your drinking water.

Store the water in properly covered containers, out ofreach of animals and small children.

Never let anyone put their hands into the water that's used for drinking.

And finally, rainwater is good to drink if you collect itand store it properly.

Clean water is valuable. It will help to keep you and your family healthy. Do whatever you can to keep it clean.

For the Developing Countries Farm Radio Network, I'm Lorna Jackson.

**Notes**

1. This item relates to information in other DCFRN items concerning diarrhea:

Your Child with Diarrhea Needs Lots to Drink - DCFRN Package 7, Item 10A

A Special Drink for Your Child with Diarrhea - DCFRN Package 7, Item 10B

Worm Eggs and Germs Spread Disease - DCFRN Package 8, Item 10

Your Child with Diarrhea Needs Good Food - DCFRN Package 12, Item 14.

All these items concerning diarrhea can be used effectively as a series.

2. Another DCFRN item describes how to make a bamboo gutter, or eavestrough, for collecting rainwater. You may wish to use the information in that item before using this item. It is:

Bamboo NO-COST Eavestrough - DCFRN Package 6, Item

**Information sources**

1. Rain Catchment and Water Supply in Rural Africa: A Manual (1982, 83 pages), by Erik Nissen-Petersen. Published by Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., London, UK. <https://www.ircwash.org/sites/default/files/213.0-82RA-166.pdf>

2. Waterlines: Appropriate Technologies for Water Supply and Sanitation, Vol. 5, No. 3, January 1987. This issue includes simple technical information on rainwater harvesting and storage. <https://www.developmentbookshelf.com/toc/wl/5/3>