

Wholly Water

ECan Laboratory's Newsletter

E. coli P/A vs MPN

We perform two types of *E. coli* tests here at ECan.

For those wanting a simple and inexpensive indication of their water quality, we offer the Presence/Absence (P/A) test. This will tell you whether or not *E. coli* is detected in your sample, but does not give an indication of the level of contamination, if any.

To get a count of the number of *E. coli* present, we use the Most Probable Number (MPN) method instead. The sample is poured into a sterile sealable tray containing a number of wells. We determine how many of these wells turn "positive" for *E. coli* and then consult a chart to get an estimate of the count or "Most Probable Number", hence the name.

Both methods require incubation for 24 hours before reading the result. For this reason we prefer not to receive samples on Fridays as this creates weekend work for our Lab staff.

Both of these are standard methods as recommended by the Drinking Water Standards for New Zealand 2005.

Water is the only substance on earth found naturally in three forms – solid, liquid and gas.

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Firstly, we send our congratulations to Tracey Hickey at Ashburton Meat Processors as the winner of the gift basket. This was part of our February promotion. Thank you to those of you who sent in replies to our survey, your responses have been noted with interest. We are pleased that the majority requested our newsletter to be published quarterly and this will continue.

We will be conducting our annual Customer Survey soon and for those who responded that they are willing to be contacted, this will take place in June.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Q** How long can I store my supply of water in the case of emergencies?
A Indefinitely – as long as the container has not previously been used for the storage of dairy products and is kept in the dark once filled. *(Remember - the requirement is at least 3 litres per person per day and you need enough water for at least 3 days supply. Don't forget you need enough water for your pets as well).*

STAFF PROFILE – Paul Woods (Senior Chemist)



Paul has been analysing water for over 30 yrs. During this time he has worked as a researcher and water analyser for MAF, MWD, DSIR and ESR. Samples have come from: soil, plants, sewage, irrigation leaching, rivers, lakes, sediments, estuaries, seawater, bores and taps. In the laboratory Paul specialises in instrumentation and automation and today we see the results in our modern automated ECan Laboratory.

BAR CODING OF BOTTLES

You will have noticed that there are bar coded labels on most bottles we send to you. The bar codes are shown on both sides of the labels and are used for sample identification, tracking of samples through the laboratory and to help in the automation of loading samples to instruments. Each sampling point has a unique ID number, which is displayed at the top of the label.

This has been very cost and time effective, which enables us to pass on savings to our clients.

