

This column features questions from readers submitted via the Web site. To submit a question to Small Acre Sam, visit BarnyardsandBackyards.com. If your question is featured, you will receive a free one-year subscription to *Barnyards & Backyards*!



ask Sam

question

Dear Sam,

We are in the process of planning out our place on 37 acres we've owned for seven years. We hope to start construction next spring. We have two horses so we'll be building a barn and a corral. We have friends who bought an existing property nearby who have had problems with their well water quality apparently due to where their corral is located. Can you suggest some things we should keep in mind as we plan the placement of our barn and corral to avoid these types of problems?

— Anne

Dear Anne,

Aside from the obvious concerns about manure in corrals leaching into a shallow water table (which can cause issues with *E. coli* among other things), you should also think about the location of your septic system, where you will be parking and working on vehicles and equipment, and where you might store gasoline, pesticides, and other chemicals. Shallow alluvial aquifers (where the water table is tens of feet deep in permeable sands or other sediment) are highly susceptible to contaminants leeching in through the surface. Drinking water wells should be as far away from the above potential contaminant sources as practical.

If you drill a deeper well (hundreds of feet), your drinking water will be less susceptible to surface contamination, but the well bore itself can be a pathway for surface contaminants if the well is not completed (cemented around the well casing) properly. Be sure to ask around to ensure you are hiring an experienced driller. This is one big investment that should be taken very seriously and should be done right the first time.

— Sam



answer