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Water: an essential part of everyone's daily lives, one of the basic needs for all human life, and yet we take it for granted. Even though we live in a country where most people have access to clean water, people living rurally can still struggle with access to drinking water.

Before we had access to rural water, our only source of water was from a well. Well water was a struggle, as we were always dealing with issues such as high iron, well collapses, and the high costs that come with maintaining a well.

And even then, the water was not great quality. Well water was not drinkable straight from the tap without purification. Our other main source of water was bottled water or jugs. Not only can this be expensive, but it is also not very economically friendly. Since water from the store comes in plastic bottles, this creates high plastic waste, and even when recycle, it is still not better than having access to fresh water. When we had well water, sometimes the water was a whole rainbow of colors. At times the water was perfectly clear, and at other times it was yellow, or pure orange. When we finally got the access to rural water, we got rid of our water softener and salt, also cutting waste. Our direct access to this drinking water has cut grocery costs drastically and we use less plastic compared to someone who does not have the same luxury we do.

Our well water was extremely damaging to all our appliances and even cloths. For a while, we were not able to buy white or light-colored clothing because they would all turn orange after only a couple of washes. The minerals in the water would build up in our washer, in the shower heads, sink faucets, and stain toilets and showers. We could not even wash vehicles with the water because it left an orange rusty dust on the vehicles and could easily cause them to start rusting. After we switched to rural water, that changed. We replaced all of our showers and toilets and showers, and they have not been stained orange since the switch to rural water.

Well water does still play a very important role on our farm, though. We have many large gardens in many different areas around the yard. Our plants benefit from the iron in our water as well as the evergreen trees. We use the well water on our plants because the water is cheaper to use on the plants than the rural water is. We do have to be careful with the well water when we water some of the plants because if we get it on the metal siding of our house, it leaves an orange rusty residue. Also, the water is not treated like our rural water is. Last growing season, we had issues with plants dying, but as soon as we switched to only watering them with our well water, they thrived. We grow a lot of our own food during the summer growing season. In the summer heat, our plants cannot grow with rainwater alone, so still having the well is beneficial. We also have a pool, and again, during the hot summer, it is nice to have the cheaper well water, even though we do not drink it. With very minimal chemicals and running the filter, it is easy to remove any lingering rust in the water. Although undrinkable straight from the tap, the well water still has value for us.

We have the luxury of having both well and rural water. It gives us the freedom to drink water straight from the tap to cut wastes from plastic water bottles, all while having access to water that is great for our plants. Many people living rurally do not have this luxury. The ability to have clean, drinkable water is something that I will be forever grateful for because many do not have this possibility.